

Pastor and People.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

BEAUTIFUL FEET.

BY HANNAH ISABELLE GRAHAM.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him
that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace
Isaiah lii. 7.

How beautiful are the feet
Coming over the mountains of sin
With glad tidings of pardon and peace,
A new era on earth to begin.
They sought out the souls that had fallen
Like stars from the pure sky above,
And marked out a way of return
To the mansions of glory and love.

Though weary, wounded, and sore
They traverse mountain and glen,
Till each wandering sheep is restored
To the fold of its Master again.
On errands of mercy they speed,
Forgiveness they haste to impart,
And when sorrow darkens a home
They bring comfort and peace to each heart.

Oh, tireless, wonderful feet!
That earth's thorny pathway have trod,
Ye show us what pity can dwell
In the infinite heart of our God,
When He humbled Himself to become
A pilgrim on life's weary road,
Thus sharing the sufferings of men
And bearing humanity's load.

Help me, Saviour! to follow the steps
Imprinted in love divine
By a lonely traveller passing along
The hard, dusty highway of time;
For they lead to the beautiful land that lies
Away beyond life's troubled sea;
Where our tired, travel-stained feet shall rest
In green pastures forever with Thee.
Seaforth.

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THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGY.

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, B.A.

The apostle Peter, who is considered to be the least intellectual of the New Testament writers, tells us that it is the duty of the Christian disciple to be ready to give an answer (apologia) concerning the hope that is in him. But even here there is room for great difference of opinion. Some might regard the answer as an effort to make plain the way of life to the enquirers, while others might conceive of it as a courteous attempt to remove the misconceptions of unbelievers regarding Christian faith and life. There are many articles written in these days for preacher's magazines and homiletic reviews discussing the question as to whether the preacher of the gospel ought in the pulpit to have the liberty of dealing with apologetic questions. No doubt these discussions do good. They are useful to the writers at any rate in helping them to make clear to themselves their thoughts on a great subject. But for the preacher it is a good thing that he must in his God-given sphere be true to himself, and deal with all subjects in the light of the cross. Those who think that Paul on Mar's Hill was too apologetic and that therefore his mission to the Athenians was a miserable failure are welcome to their opinion. But others can claim the right to believe that the discourse in question is a product of the highest inspiration which is now beginning to bear abundant fruit. The recognition of the religious instinct which is behind all superstition, and the fine spiritual perception of the all-pervading presence and power of God, is here blended with a tenderness and charity which is essential to the highest kind of missionary work. Perhaps neither Peter nor John would have faced the situation in exactly the same way but it is surely cause for gratitude that the Christian apology can manifest itself in such a variety of ways; that in itself is a testimony to the power and truthfulness of the living gospel.

At the beginning of the last century the Christian religion in England was in a feeble depressed condition, the enthusiasm of the great Reformation movement had died away, and a cold, pretentious, shallow rationalism was spreading everywhere; the Puritan Revolution had for the time spent its force and had given way to a terrible reaction in which the ideals and hopes of noble men seemed to perish. Whether we take for our authority the coarse satire of Swift, or the

calm statement of Butler, we know that sceptics were exultant and thought that Christianity was so thoroughly played out that it was no use to waste arguments upon it. This may be regarded as a despondent or superficial view of the situation which leaves altogether out of count "the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal," and who were crying, "Lord, how long?" The great God had His answer ready both to the prayers of His people, and to the sneers of the wicked unbelieving world. That answer came in a quickening influence which made itself felt in every sphere of life, and in every corner of the world. One cannot deal with such great things within the compass of a paragraph, but there is one incident of the great movement which suggested these few words and which may be briefly mentioned here. Two of the great men of the eighteenth century were Wesley and Butler. Butler was the son of a Dissenter who entered the ministry of the Church of England, and who by his great gifts and noble character won his way to high position (he might have had the highest) in that church. Wesley on the other hand was a churchman by birth and education whose labours were destined by God to be the starting point of many new movements and new churches. What a great contrast between these two men! Butler of whom it was afterwards said that he "had been wasted to that see (Durham) in a cloud of metaphysics, and remained absorbed in it," and Wesley, the fervent evangelist, the sober theologian, and masterly organizer. These two men met at Bristol in 1739. If Butler had realized the significance of the man with whom he was dealing he would no doubt have left some account of these conversations. As it is, we are dependent upon the methodical Wesley for all our information, and while this is no doubt substantially correct we need to remember that it represents only one party in the case. Wesley, who had been preaching powerful sermons to the Kingswood colliers, after discussing with the Bishop the doctrine of "justification by faith," disavowed all claim to "extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Spirit," and stated that "he never had and believed he never should" administer the holy sacrament at his meetings; but when he was told that he had no commission to preach in that diocese, he replied that "as a priest of the church universal" his commission was to preach everywhere. This is substantially what we know about the meeting of these two great men. They parted each going on his own way, each fulfilling his special mission. It is possible that they misunderstood and misjudged each other. One seemed to be touched with fanaticism and the other appeared to be a "mere moralist." To-day the Church of Christ honours both these men, and recognizes that both of them rendered extraordinary services to the cause of true religion. In which then is the Christian apology? Is it in the work of the evangelist or of the philosopher? It may seem absurd to put such a question because the answer to it is considered to be self-evident. No doubt God's answer to a worldly scepticism was in the preaching of the "simple gospel" which both through Arminian and Calvinist came in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit, so that the dead were raised and to the poor the gospel was preached. This we admit without reserve and with rejoicing. But we believe that the great thinker was also a true apologist. The apologetic of Butler in the precise form in which he used it is out of date, for as scepticism changes its form it must be met and answered in new ways. The apology which consists in the actual quickening and conversion of souls through a living gospel can never be out of date. This is true, but at the same time it would be difficult to over-estimate the great Bishop's services to Christian thought and life. Against the pretentious deism of that time his arguments were irresistible. We must not now attempt to discuss the nature of that argument, or to show how

thoughts which struck powerfully against the unbelief of that time have been turned against faith in our own day. On the whole we believe that Butler's influence has been on the side of soberness and reverence in the realm of thought. As Fichte (perhaps the least known of the great German philosophers) has influenced English thought through Carlyle; so Butler has indirectly been a power in the lives of people who never heard his name. There are people who are so thorough in their appreciation of the practical side of the Christian religion, or so richly endowed with enthusiasm, or have such power to brood calmly over great spiritual truths that they rejoice in the self-evidencing power of our Father and do not feel the need of any other apologetic. Let them congratulate themselves but let them not despise any honest attempt of faith to justify itself to reason. We know that the Christian faith appeals to our whole manhood, and that along with other gifts it brings the highest and best intellectual satisfaction. Forms of thought must change, no mere formula can satisfy us forever. In this sphere it is particularly true that "The old order changeth, yielding place to new And God fulfils himself in many ways, Lest one good custom should corrupt The world."

For there is nothing that corrupts thought like stagnation, the parrot-like repetition of well-worn phrases from which the life has departed. Is this not a matter for thankfulness that while we have a living gospel meeting the passing, practical needs of every day, we have also a faith which is ready to look all the facts of life in the face, and justify the ways of God to men. An intolerant dogmatism may be content to accept a shallow agnosticism as an ally in the realm of religious thought, but Protestantism must ever urge upon men the need of a clearer knowledge as well as of a firmer faith.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul according well
May make one music as before
But vaster."

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SOCIAL REFORM AND THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. W. G. HANNA, B.D.

The complex life of our day presents new problems to the Church for solution. Hitherto her attention has been directed to the individual. Now society stands before her and asks, What can you do for me? The individual must be regarded as ever, but individuals are constituent elements of a social organism which conditions their life to an extent that must be reckoned with. Hence the urgent demand for new chairs of Christian ethics and sociology. Hence, too, the growing literature on the subject. Among recent books, one of the most suggestive is this volume by Professor Commons.

In the opening chapter, "The Christian Minister and Sociology," he shows the reasons for our social problems, and points out what Christian ministers can do for their solution. These problems have arisen mainly through the failure of Christian people to do their duty to the dependent classes. Ministers can show their people the facts and point out their responsibility for existing conditions, just as in the advocacy of Foreign Missions. He rightly says that the only solvent of social troubles is Christian love, bringing the extremes of society together under the impelling consciousness that each is his brother's keeper. Christian ministers are the natural leaders of the people in the discharge of this duty, and if the people are turning to atheistic agitators it simply shows that "they are losing faith in their natural leaders and know not which way to turn."

The next chapter deals with "The Church and the Problem of Poverty." Poverty lies

at the base of all social troubles, and the solution of this problem will go a long way toward their settlement. It is a religious as well as an economic question, and the church has a definite duty in relation to it. For spiritual life is affected by daily surroundings. The responsibility of wealth for the lessening of poverty, the adjustment of the relations of capital and labor according to the golden rule, and the improvement of the condition of the poor are concerns of the church. If a large number of the people are in wage slavery, dependent on the will of another for the means of subsistence, living so close to the poverty-line that the slightest economic disturbance pushes them over; if the home be comfortless, and "the parents doomed to long hours and exhausting labor seven days of the week, what is to be expected but intemperance, vice and crime." If the masses are becoming alienated from the church and drifting into materialism, is it not because she has failed to manifest a sympathetic interest in them? In order to avert the danger of such a drift she must know them better than she does now; she must study their social conditions, their home life, their trials and struggles, their wrongs and sufferings, and come into friendly touch with them. There is force in Prof. Commons' question, "Why should not ministers and church members study sociology just as they study theology?" If the first commandment be to love God, the second to love our neighbor is like unto it.

An awakening and stimulating chapter on "The Educated Man in Politics," prepares the way for the consideration of a living question, "The Church and Political Reform." "When the best plans for social reform have been clearly enunciated it will often be found that the laws of the land must be reformed to make them workable." This of course means a reform in legislative methods. "The real legislators of America to-day are the powerful corporations. They are the managers of the party machine and the lobby." The machine and the lobby rule the legislative chambers. To remedy this condition of things, the author argues powerfully for proportional representation, the initiative and the referendum in legislation, secret ballot and civil service reform. What is true of the United States is true of Canada almost as fully, and public affairs need the influence of Christian people. Those who wish to recognize their responsibility, should read this enlightening chapter.

Prof. Commons' treatment of "The Temperance Reform" has very special value as a new presentation of important facts that are often overlooked in dealing with this question. Intemperance is a demand of the nervous system for an anaesthetic or anodyne. It springs from predisposing and exciting causes. Heredity is a predisposing cause producing a diseased nervous organism and enfeebled will. Parental responsibility is grave. A nervous predisposition to intemperance readily yields to exciting causes all too prevalent, such as innutritious food, unsanitary dwellings, ill-ventilated shops producing exhaustion and desire for stimulants, the voluntary idleness of the rich with its consequent ennui, and the involuntary idleness of the workingman inviting temptation. Intemperance is not simply a habit, but a disease, and must be treated as such. Prof. Commons advocates the establishment of industrial hospitals where inebriates might be treated till cured. But for cure, all the causes of the disease must be considered, and this requires the widest range of social reform. Prohibition there must be, but he who works for prohibition alone, and ignores other phases of social reform, works with one hand bound.

Under the heading "Municipal Municipalities" the author deals with the economic revolution in "distributive industries." All industries for the public service should be owned by the municipality and operated in the interest of its citizens. This would eliminate many chronic social grievances, and lighten the poor man's burden, as well as lessen the possibilities of civic misrule. For the attainment of this desirable object a feasible and highly suggestive plan is here proposed.

A clear and elaborate statement of proportional representation is given at the close and will be highly valued by those who wish to understand it. The book is written by a vigorous thinker who has thought himself through the subjects of which he treats, and is introduced by Prof. Ely in terms of high commendation. It is a welcome addition to sociological literature.

* Social Reform and the Church. By Prof. John R. Commons. University of Indiana, with Introduction by Prof. Richard T. Ely, 8vo. T. Y. Crowell & Co. New York.