

falling off in the character of its religious teachers, for we are quite safe in affirming that, from the Reformation downwards, there never was a period when its several religious denominations present such a brilliant phalanx of gifted pulpit orators. Among these, Mr. Caird held a distinguished place, long before he became generally known as the author of "Religion in Common Life." The materials, however, for testing his claims to his high popularity, were then somewhat scanty, being mainly derived from "the hearing of the ear." Now that we have a dozen of his sermons, carefully prepared by himself before us, we are in a better position for forming a correct estimate of his powers as a Christian orator, and for judging how far he is likely to retain the high place which in this character he at present holds. For ourselves, we think his position tolerably secure. Doubtless, in pulpit eloquence, as in other things, fashions may change, and the style of preaching which is the admiration of one age may have no attractions for another. Yet we believe that Mr. Caird's sermons have qualities which promise something better than a fugitive popularity, and are fitted to secure them a permanent place among our religious classics.

If it is asked what these qualities are, our answer is, that they are substantially those which secured to the late Dr. Thomas Chalmers his world-wide fame as a pulpit orator. Dr. Chalmers' strength and effectiveness as a preacher were, we conceived, mainly derived from three sources:—First, from that intense and burning earnestness, which enabled him, by a kind of mental electricity, to convey to the bosoms of others the vivid convictions of his own. Secondly, from the respectful deference paid him by all classes of his hearers, the most intellectual of whom he compelled to feel that in listening to him, they listened not to a mere theologian of the schools, but to a man more than their match in every literary and scientific accomplishment. Thirdly, and more especially, from the marvellous power which an exuberant fancy gave him, of reproducing in a thousand brilliant forms and hues, such ideas as he wished to impress on the minds of his hearers; and of fastening on them their undivided attention, till he not only secured them a permanent seat in their intellects, but, so far as human eloquence could do it, made them instrumental in stirring up the torpid energies of their consciences and hearts.

These, beyond all doubt, were the qualities of Dr. Chalmers' eloquence, to which his unbounded popularity and triumphant career as a pulpit orator were chiefly due. And they must be very dull and unobservant hearers, who, in listening to Mr. Caird, fail to perceive that these are the most prominent characteristics of his eloquence also. The last of these more especially, the most captivating of them all, bathes, as in a flood of light, all his discourses. He never announces an important principle, nor states a weighty truth, to throw it hastily aside. He dwells upon it, examines it from every point of view; ransacks every province of nature, and every department of science, literature, and art, in quest of illustrative images and analogies for placing it in those lights which his sense of its importance demands—his mind, throughout the whole process, acting as a kind of kaleidoscope, at every turn of which the object contemplated assumes a new, brilliant, and captivating form.

Dr. Chalmers, it is generally admitted, in-

dulged to a faulty excess this faculty, by which he threw such a spell over the minds of his hearers. He, in fact, so roused in us exercise, that some of the most brilliant of his sermons are one continued blaze of magnificent tautology, his mind, as Hall of Leicester remarked, showing incessant motion, but no progress, like a door turning upon its hinges. Mr. Caird, it must be acknowledged, sins in this respect also, but not to the same extent. His images and analogies, too, were never vague nor shadowy, as many of those conjured up by Dr. Chalmers were; nor are they introduced at random. They all present well-defined forms, and are so skilfully adjusted to the several positions which they occupy, that instead of being mere rhetorical embellishments, each forms a link in a close and compact chain of argument or illustration. Hence he advances, where Dr. Chalmers would have stood still.

The truth is, that the mental and moral powers of Dr. Chalmers, though all of them largely developed, never were properly poised. And, therefore, in their exercise, they jostled and interfered with each other, his imagination sometimes running away with his judgment, and his fiery passions as often leading both captive. It is not so with Mr. Caird. His intellectual, his imaginative, and his emotional development, are undoubtedly large; and in the volume before us, we see all these powers in a state of busy, sometimes of intense activity,—not, however, as independent, still less as hostile forces, but as cordial allies, guided by a cool controlling head: and such is the harmony with which he makes them work together, that in reading his sermons we can scarcely refrain from thinking that some of them must have been thrown off, *currente calamo*, in those "bright moments favourable to mental exertion, when thought flows quick, and the spirits are high, and winged fancies come in precious visitations on the soul." But such an idea, we conceive, would be a mistake. The first rough copies may have been written in such happy moments of inspiration; but each sermon, we doubt not, in the form which it now wears as a symmetrical, harmonious, and artistically blended whole, is the result of unseemly excrescences lopped off, gaping chasms filled up, and sharp angles smoothed into roundness by a hand directed in its movements by the eye of taste. If the materials of these beautiful structures have been furnished by the poet and the rhetorician, we think we have sufficient evidence that the logician laid the foundation, drew up the plans, and superintended the workmanship.

Perhaps, after thus adverting to the points of argument between Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Caird as pulpit orators, it may not be irrelevant to glance at those in which they differ. The most important of the latter are more of a physical than mental character. The countenance of Dr. Chalmers, in private society so genial and bland in its expression, was, in the pulpit, the most stolid that could be well looked at. His pronunciation was provincially broad; his gestures and attitudes awkward and grotesque; his voice weak and unmusical, and his long periods pumped up from his lungs in short jerks, and convulsive explosions of squeaking gutturals. Mr. Caird is the very reverse of all this. His elocution is good; his personal appearance interesting. Every glance of his eye, every movement of his hand, and every attitude of his body, are instinct with expression. And all these unite in seconding the utterances of a voice of com-

manding power and great flexibility; which, though it sometimes breaks down, is in general so completely under his control, that he can adapt it at will to every variation in his style of address, from the simply didactic to the most vehement bursts of impassioned earnestness.

Mr. Caird differs also from Dr. Chalmers in his treatment of the English language. The Doctor's style of composition was certainly very original, vigorous, and fresh; but he set at defiance all the recognised canons of good writing. He coined *ad libitum* words of his own; he used old words and combination of words in new senses; and while pouring out his thoughts in a rhythm peculiarly his own, he kept up a running fire of brisk antitheses, epigrammatic points, and high-sounding alliterations, to which no lungs could adapt themselves.—not certainly his own. Mr. Caird is entirely free from such faulty peculiarities. He is a thorough master of the English language, and such is his command of its rich treasures and varied idioms, that without one deviation from the *usus et arbitrium* of its purest classics, he finds it a fit exponent of all the moods of his mind, whether the intellect, the fancy, or the emotions ask for expression. In his hand, the language is a many-toned instrument of marvellous power and compass. It never fails him, let him strike what key he will.

To this let us add,—what is, after all, the crowning excellence of Mr. Caird's sermons,—that their subject-matter is as weighty as their eloquence is brilliant. With all their exquisite and elaborate polish, of none of them can it with truth be said "materiem superabat opus." They contain not one sentence that is controversial in form. But they who understand the drift and prevailing tendencies of the age, in regard to religion and morals, will easily see that he has an eye to these, both in his selection of subjects and in his mode of discussing them; so that while some of them possess enduring interest for their doctrinal, experimental, and practical value, others are, though indirect, yet able vindications of Bible Christianity against more than one class of assailants—against infidels and sceptics, who laugh at what they call a book-revelation—against those theologians who would improve it after a plan of their own, by reading the Bible with German spectacles—and against others who think the Bible best understood when studied in the light of medieval Romanism, and thus labour to transform Christianity, the religion of the enlightened intellect, the renovated heart, and the self-sacrificing life, into a superficial, sensuous, self-seducing system of formal ritualism and esthetic emotion.—*Edinburgh Christian Magazine.*

PRESENTATION.—On Friday, the 16th inst. a deputation, consisting of elders and other representatives of the congregation of the parish church of Kilmale, waited on the Rev. Mr. Clerk, their pastor, and in name of the congregation, presented him with a handsome pulpit-gown and cassock, in token of respect and affection entertained towards him by the people among whom he ministers.

DEGREES OF D.D.—The Senatus Academicus of King's College, Aberdeen, have conferred the degree of D.D. on the Rev. Andrew Todd, minister of Alva, the Rev. Jas. Seilar of Aberlour, and the Rev. Robert Smith, minister of the first charge of Old Machar.