

Pastor and People.

THAT WHICH CONCERNETH ME.

Dear Father, I have brought my pain to Thee,
And given it all into Thy tender hand,
Striving to think Thy wisdom wise for me,—
Wisdom my blindness fails to understand.

And yet my grief has grown so dear
I cannot give it to Thee and forget;
I come again, my Father, full of fear,
And take it back again to hurt and fret.

And cry against Thy heaven, "I know best.
I cannot, will not, leave it all to Thee.
Oh, help me, Lord! I need Thy peace and rest,
Yet in this one thing Thou hast need of me.

"Do for me what I pray; Thou canst not know
How all my life is beggared of its bliss
Shouldst Thou deny my great desire; and so,
I pray Thee, take all else, but leave me this."

O foolish soul! O weak, unloving heart!
That which concerns thee He will perfect make.
To trust unquestioning is all thy part;
He will deal gently for His mercy's sake.

—Grace H. Duffield.

LIVING EPISTLES.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

A letter in flesh and blood! A letter in a life! A letter acting out all the hidden mystery of thought and conviction and feeling and glorious purpose! There is something transcendently beautiful, reaching even to the sublime, in such a conception. And such is every true Christian. Every genuine child of God is an epistle of Christ. A letter written by Jesus to be read by the eyes of men, and to be interpreted by the consciences of men, and to be so influential over the hearts and wills of men, as to secure imitation. A lovely life is a mighty, controlling force. All life is magnetic upon human hearts, either by way of impulse to higher and nobler developments, by way of impulse to meaner or less manly courses. It either builds up or disintegrates, it either inspires to worthier activities or leads to paths that reach to ruin. No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. Every man, therefore, is by the very necessities of his nature acting morally and spiritually upon all about him, either for evil or for good. He cannot by any possibility escape from this, except by denuding himself of his humanity. What a thought then is this to carry about with us! We are like Leyden jars, charged with electric force, to affect all with whom we come into contact. They receive the impression we make, it may be negative or it may be positive. No one exists in a neutral condition. He is either good or bad. Christ, the Lord of men, says: "He that is not with Me is against Me." Because men remain undecided regarding the acceptance of the good, they do not on that account remain undecided concerning the evil. While they are in this state all their influence is thrown into the scales of the evil. They are ministers of evil. I doubt not for a moment that many may be found who think it is otherwise. But it is not so. We are either on one side or the other; for Christ or against him; working for the up-building of His kingdom or striving consciously or unconsciously for its overthrow.

One of the loveliest characters men can contemplate is that of a consistent Christian. He is one of God's moral miracles. An argument for the truth of Christianity that cannot be refuted. A plea for its adoption that no one can resist. A proclamation of its gracious, beneficent, saving influence, which is at once powerful, and prolific of results. A consistent Christian is a magnificent missionary. He works conviction, and wins conquests without a word. His silent life is a searching and successful testimony. As William Cowper sings of England's warrior:

Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.

So might we sing of every warrior of the Lord. It is not profession that acts this way, the saying, "We are the Lord's;" but it is in actually being the Lord's. Men care nothing for our confessions, but they do care for our conduct, they care nothing for our professions, but they do care for our practice. They care for the thing, and not for the theory. Reality is what they require, and rightly so. It alone reveals the truth of the profession. And just as the skilful artist need not place beneath his painting a description of what it is, neither does a truly Christly man need to run through the streets crying, "I am a Christian! I am a Christian!"

All who look on him may see in him the marks of the Lord Jesus. How thankful we are for all those who in Christendom are shining like lights, and bearing about in themselves the clear evidences of kinship with Christ! May they be multiplied without number! But what shall we say of those who in heathendom do the same? Shall not our praises rise higher and sweep out in wider circles? Certainly.

A beautiful instance is given by Professor Henry Drummond in his "Tropical Africa." Speaking of one of his African cortege, named Moolu, he says, "Mission blacks at Natal and the Cape are a byword among the unsympathetic, but I never saw Moolu do an inconsistent thing. He could neither read nor write; he knew only some dozen words in English; until seven years ago he had never seen a white

man; but I could trust him with everything I had. He was not 'pious;' he was neither bright nor clever; he was a common-place black; but he did his duty and never told a lie." What more could be said? This surely is enough, and is so satisfactory in every respect. But this just warms up the professor to recall this charming incident: "The first night of our camp, after all had gone to rest, I remember being roused by a low talking. I looked out of my tent; a flood of moonlight lit up the forest; and there kneeling on the ground, was a little group of natives and Moolu in the centre conducting evening prayers. Every night afterwards this service was repeated, no matter how long the march was, nor how tired the men." Then Dr. Drummond says: "I make no comments. But this I will say—Moolu's life gave him the right to do it. Mission reports are often said to be valueless; they are less so than anti-mission reports. I believe in missions for one thing, because I believe in Moolu."

Moolu was an epistle of Christ, a living epistle.

Here is another instance, from our own land, touching the Red men of the forest; given by a credible witness, voluntarily:

"I am a member of a duck-shooting club, located in the marshes of Lake St. Clair. Adjoining our club house we have a shanty where our punters (Indians from Walpole Island of the Chippewa tribe) live whilst employed by us. Last October there were twelve in our party shooting, and one of our number, one evening, wishing to speak to his punter, went to the shanty door and called to his man; not receiving a reply, and hearing voices inside, he opened the door and found the twelve Indian men and the squaw, whom they have to do their cooking, on their knees at evening prayer. These men belong to the English Church and to the Methodists, and evidently the work of the missionaries is bearing good fruit. We find these men willing, sober, honest and truthful. I have never heard them utter an oath, and their honesty is well attested. Should any member leave his knife or pipe and tobacco in his boat when landing at night, his punter will be sure to bring it in to him, though these articles are very tempting to Indians."

These instances put to the blush many who have had better opportunities of learning of Christ, and of doing his will. And they teach us this important lesson, that it does not require large knowledge to live holily, if we will only be obedient to the truth we know, by the Holy Spirit. If we will but be true to Christ, the little we may know becomes large enough, and puts us in a position to grow. Knowledge gained and knowledge kept for knowledge's sake does us no good, save work out our condemnation. John Williams, while labouring at Raiatea, speaks of the godly sincerity of the converted cannibals; "They all maintain family worship," he says, "and very many of them pray privately morning and evening. On one occasion, a native complained of the prevalence of evil thoughts in his mind, and of attempts of the evil spirit to make them grow there, and observed that when he went to pray in the bush on the preceding day, just before he knelt down, a multitude of evil thoughts rushed into his mind, and he said within himself, 'If Satan would approach me in the likeness of man, I would fight with him and stone him to death.' 'Now,' added he, 'our teachers, is this a good thought or a bad thought? Tell me that we all may know.'"

What a testimony lives like these bear. They are luminous with the heavenly light of divine grace. They witness a good confession before many witnesses. Hence this question comes home to us: Are we living epistles? Let us seek grace to be such.

A REMARKABLE OLD MAN.

Everybody is speaking of the wonderful versatility and vivacity of that "Grand Old Man" who, two months ago, celebrated his eightieth birthday. But perhaps everybody does not know that we in Scotland possess another grand old man, in some respects even more wonderful. Dr. David Brown is now, I believe, in his eighty-seventh year; and yet, though it may be that his ear is a little dull to hear, his eye is not dim nor his natural force abated. To speak now-days of Edward Irving seems to most of us to dive into a far, dead past, yet here we have still with us in very real flesh and blood, the man who was his assistant and friend, long before that "gift of tongues" and other aberrations drove him from the Presbyterian pale. Dr. Brown is not so widely known as the great "G.O.M." But a man who was an Aberdeenshire parish minister long before the Disruption, who was once at the head of a large congregation in the very thick of Glasgow (St. James), who was then made professor and now is Principal of the Aberdeen Free College, the man who has written hand in hand with Canon Fausset that well-known Bible commentary, whom every Millenarian has talked of for over forty years as author of "Christ's Second Coming," and who sat for years in the Jerusalem chamber side by side with almost all the most learned and scholarly divines in Britain, revising our English New Testament—that man must be known to far more than a select few.

Men were amazed to hear such a patriarch making so eloquent and scholar-like a speech in moving for a committee to revise the Confession and its formula at the last Assembly; and it is only a few months ago since we saw his name posted up in huge letters, announced to give an evangelistic address in Mr. Ross' famous tabernacle in the Cowcaddens of Glasgow. Is there any other man of eighty-six who could have done the same? All his friends well know how keen and eager is Dr. Brown's interest in all the currents of thought of to-day; and none is more friendly and warm-hearted to-

wards young aspirants in theology. But I must confess I was more than ever struck with the venerable principal's wonderful freshness, when I chanced to light upon him last week in a railway carriage at the Waverley station in Edinburgh. He had come all the way from Aberdeen to attend the College Committee, and was now returning, quite alone, by no means looking as if he would either ask or need any assistance. Before the train started he had entered upon an eager talk which he poured into our willing ears, and which went on uninterruptedly, despite all the clatter of railway cuttings and the rattle of wheels, until our station was reached. He told of "the very satisfactory letter" which had just been read from Dr. Dods, and spoke most feelingly of his love for one who he felt sure was a most earnest believing man. Indeed, so far as one can judge, the above-mentioned letter ought to put an end to all the serious antagonism to the highly-esteemed and cultured, yet of late sadly imprudent, Professor of New Testament Exegesis; and we have information from the most orthodox circles of the opposition which leads us to think it will. What was said about Dr. Bruce we hardly feel at liberty to repeat. Everyone seems to agree that the charges against him are far more serious; a neighbour in our carriage had just bought his new book, and, as he cut the pages, ominously shook his head.

From Dr. Dods the conversation naturally strayed to Unitarians. Like everybody else Dr. Brown does not think that he or anyone is called on to judge who are Christians. "Many of the evangelical Unitarians are most devout men," he said; "but all I can say is, their views are not mine. There is my very dear and life-long friend, Dr. Martineau (of almost equal age). I was asked not long ago to sign the testimonial presented to him from most of the great scholars and divines in Britain on the occasion of his jubilee. But, having read it, I said I could not sign it, because of a clause to which Dean Bradley, of Westminster, also took exception, about religion standing free from all historical basis. However, I wrote to Dr. Martineau myself, saying he was well aware I both admired and loved him better far than many of those who had signed. By return of post I received his reply, saying, 'I don't believe in mechanical inspiration myself. But here is what I understand by the evangelists' plenary inspiration. Take the account of our Lord's trial. One false witness appeared and declared that Christ said, 'I will destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up.' The judge would ask, 'Are you sure he said that?' that he said, 'I will destroy and not destroy this temple?' 'Yes, I am sure. I will swear to it.' Plenary inspiration will make a man sure even of his tenses; but supposing the judge asked, 'You are sure he said destroy? Did he not say demolish?' Only mechanical inspiration could secure accuracy like that." The doctor did not add whether the minister of Queen's Cross was fully satisfied.

But now our journey's end was reached, and we said a warm good-bye, fervently hoping that our venerable friend would be spared among us until the Free Church's fast approaching jubilee; and far longer, please God.—*Eglais Bhreat, in the Christian Leader.*

THE POPULARITY OF HERESY.

There are no disabilities for heresy in these enlightened times, either civil, social, religious, political, or reputational. On the contrary, it is the quickest route to greatness. It is the short-cut to renown and popularity. The modern heretic has all the glories of martyrdom without its sufferings. Modern culture is popularizing heresy, especially in religion. If a minister in these days is dull, stupid and unattractive, and cannot induce people to come and listen to his instalment of platitudes, let him give forth some of the "ideahs" of modern "culchah," announce himself an advanced "think-ah," give vent to a few heretical opinions which will bring him into rebellion against the constituted authority of his church, and his reputation is made. The depleted exchequer will suddenly swell, the empty pews will fill up, the aisles and vacant seats will be called into requisition to accommodate the increasing multitudes who flock to hear the hero of heresy. If he speaks at a public meeting his rising is a signal for a perfect ovation of applause, such as only a prince or warrior chieftain might expect. The newspapers are all in his favour; they eulogize him as a persecuted man who is fighting for liberty, and exhaust the dictionary supply of bitter expletives to characterize his opponents, who are narrow, bigoted, hypocritical, and everything bad. It at once raises a man to national importance, and gives him a national reputation.

If a man can only get up a good heresy case now-a-days his fortune is made. He need not be brilliant, or profound, or scholarly, or eloquent, or specially attractive, but only eccentric and heretical. A man now has only to declare himself an evolutionist, contradict the Mosaic account of the creation and the fall, deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, affirm that the inspiration of Isaiah and Paul was the same in kind and only different in degree to that of Shakespeare and Tennyson, affirm the incarnation and the resurrection are not historic realities, but rhetorical draperies to illustrate the idea of the indwelling of God in man, and the rising of man into a new life—let him do all these or any one of them, and men will throw their hats into the air and shout themselves hoarse in his glorification. The newspapers at any rate will espouse his cause and advertise him gratuitously all over the world. Who would not live in the nineteenth century and be a heretic?—*Christian Evangelist.*