

by slow argumentation. There is a noble largeness, too, in the style of his mind, a constant resort to first principles, a walking in the light of eternal and infinite things, a telescopic rather than a microscopic habit of vision. And he is a poet, though we do not know that he ever wrote a stanza of verse. Did ever you hear such gorgeous descriptions of nature, such imaginations of things unseen? How he seems to live in the life of all living things, as if he were the soul of the trees, the flowers, the streams, the winds, the birds, and the flocks, and not a mere spectator. Mark, too, that curious felicity with which he handles the English language—how clear his style without baldness, how affluent without turgidity. No one misses his meaning. It is the dialect of the great world outside, not that of the cloister. It will not be long before you discover what a great heart is his. He loves God more than he fears Him, and “comprehends what is the height and depth and length and breadth” of His love as few Christians do. And can you not see what a genial nature this is man-ward also? nothing dark, sullen, or malignant about it, not a grain of the Pharisee, but wide enough to understand and to feel for all men, making him such a man as an outcast would feel he could approach. And by reason of the honour that he has for the image of God in man, his deep sense of the sacred rights of every human being, he is such an uncompromising foe to Slavery. Dr. Cheever fights it with his conscience, condemning, denouncing, and cursing; Beecher rather with his heart: the one makes you angry with the slaveholder; the other pitiful to the slave: the one has more of Sinai, the other of Calvary. So prominent is this feature of love to men in Mr. Beecher’s character, that it gives form to all his doctrine and all his work. His labours have a very directly practical aim, to turn sinners from their sin, and lift them up out of their misery. He is not engaged in building up a system or school of theology, as his ultimate end; his work is on living men. And so intent is he on this, that he is very tolerant even of doctrinal errors in those who try to do good, so much so, that many think he is not evangelical himself, a flagrant mistake we are sure. Another trait sure to come early into notice, is, an out-and-out independence. Indeed he rather seems to go to an extreme in this, going a little out of his way to show that he does not care what people say of him, taking a certain mischievous delight in shocking your sense of propriety. It is of no use to try to gag this man, or to bring any considerations of expediency to bear upon him, if he feels like speaking out. Nothing can be fashioned less according to established professional usage than his entire system of operations, in the pulpit and out of it. No man has been more spoken against, nor could any one have kept to his course with more cheerful persistency through all opposition. Last, but far from the least, of the gifts of Mr. Beecher we must mention his infinite humour. He could produce a number of *Punch* every day, if he would let himself be “as funny as he can.” He sees the laughing side of everything. It is of no use to try to resist the spell, when he is in the mood,—laugh you must. How many a popular error, how many a man of shams, untouched by solid argument, angry denunciation, or pathetic appeal, has been struck down in a moment, never to rise again, by a single sentence, or a mere epithet of his!

This is the kind of man who is standing before you to preach. You notice, by the way, how very unclerical his garb is. No white neckcloth is ever seen round his neck; his coat is in shooting jacket shape,—you are thankful that at least all the garments are black. But who can fancy him in full canonicals—gown and