

## HARDENED IN A BELIEF.

The man whose opinions are fixed and unalterable is embedded in a rock where the possibilities of growth and expansion are so limited that practically, for this life at least, he has come to a standstill; or, more correctly, he is slowly disintegrating and going backward to a point where he may begin anew. Whoever hardens in any beliefs which he at present holds, certainly misses the divine influence of a power that would keep us, as it keeps all nature, malleable, and subject to perpetual renewal and advancement on higher planes. In God's world nothing is so complete that it does not incessantly strive toward completion; and no truth may be so entirely grasped in our limited human sphere that we shall not see it in a broader light on the higher, bolder promontories of understanding.—*N. C. Messenger.*

## SOURCE OF THE DIVINE PERSONALITY.

BY F. L. THOMPSON.

In Bishop Foster's "Prolegomena, Studies in Theology," pp. 248-50, he discusses the source of the idea of God. After concluding that the divine existence can be affirmed by the reason, he advances to the question of the divine personality. He says: "Is He personal or impersonal? On this point nature, including the moral and reasoning consciousness of man—that is, including the human mind—again becomes the oldest and primary source of light. But the ray that comes to unaided reason from nature upon this point is so dim, and in some aspects so utterly absent, that reason finds herself bewildered, and declares that the light is not sufficient to enable her to render her a satisfactory verdict."

In other words, Bishop Foster would teach us that reason is unable to affirm the personality of God. We had supposed that there were two arguments, or perhaps two forms of the same argument, demonstrating upon a basis of reason the divine personality; one from external nature, and the other from the existence of the individual. The argument from nature may be stated as follows: The universe exhibits thought. There cannot be thought without a thinker. The cause of the universe, therefore, is a thinker. And a thinker is a person. (See Cook "On Conscience.") The argument from

individual instance differs somewhat, but is, after all, substantially the same. It goes back to causation as its foundation.

Every effect must have a cause. That cause must be adequate. I am an effect. I am a thinking effect. I require, therefore, a thinking cause. A thinking cause is a thinker. A thinker is a person. The volume is exceedingly valuable and suggestive on every page, and has been greatly helpful to the writer. The argument requiring a revelation to apprehend the character of God will not be questioned, neither the argument demonstrating the ability of reason to group the idea of the existence of God, but we do question whether reason is not also able to offer us the idea of the personality of God.—*Sel.*

## MR. CAUGHEY AT DEADMANSTONE.

The lesson for the morning was Revelation ii. When reading the fifth verse—"And will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"—power came upon me to exhort some backslider present. I did so, with an extraordinary assurance that there was such an one present; talked to him as if he and I were alone with God; described what he was, what now; what his house once was, a place of prayer, its state now; that he was once a "candlestick," giving light in his household, but now he was like an empty and lightless one. My appeals became sharper and sharper, that God was about to remove the candlestick out of his place into the grave, into perdition, unless he repented.

My gestures became violent; "not sawing the air, thus and thus," as Shakespeare deprecated—that would have been well in this instance; "spreading themselves abroad" did the mischief with the brass candlestick to the right. Out of its socket it went, rolling to and fro till it found a resting-place far enough from the pulpit, but happened to hit nobody, though the chapel was full.

Surely it could not be helped. Did not design it, for certain. I seized it as an illustration of the lightless backslider, that thus and thus, he should be removed out of his place suddenly, unless sudden repentance prevented the terrible catastrophe.

My soul was strangely moved. The backslider was present, came forward to be prayed for, and the Lord saved him. Re-lighted the candlestick, and sent him home to his house with his heart all flaming with the love of God.—*Earnest Christianity.*