

## The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Dec. 3, 1896.

### The Mind of the Master.

A THOUGHTFUL and timely paper was that read by Rev. J. A. Turnbull to the Toronto Ministerial Association, on the nature of the views expressed by Rev. Dr. Watson in the "Mind of the Master." Timely, because the author is borne along on the crest of a wave of popularity and his works are widely and carefully read. Thoughtful, because the position taken is fundamental and it is most ably sustained. Mr. Turnbull says:

"There are many positions taken in the book which may well be called in question, there are many ideas advanced which will not be suffered to pass unchallenged. But it is his attitude toward the Inspiration of Scripture, and the Doctrine of the Atonement that specially arrests the attention and calls for a most vigorous protest. In describing the development of truth, Inspiration is ignored, or if at all recognized is placed in such an obscure corner that it escapes detection. He grants that 'between the apostolic writings and those of the after time there is a gulf fixed,' that 'there is a difference between the old masters and the modern which does not require to be put into words.' But he nowhere states what makes this difference; what it is that fixes the gulf; for were he to admit that it is Inspiration he would then find it impossible to draw the broad line he does between the Gospels and the Epistles, or the still broader one between the Old Testament and the New; for in all alike it is the Word of God.

"The effect of this teaching on many minds will be, not to render more divine and valuable the words of Jesus in the Gospels, but to lower the Epistles to the level of mere human productions, whose truthfulness must be tested at every step by reference to the Gospels, before being accepted; whose authority may be called in question; and whose doctrines and spirit may be criticized; and in all these the author sets the example. It is but an echo of German speculations which speak of 'the Pauline conception of the Gospel,' 'Paul's Christological Speculations,' etc.

"As to the Atonement he most positively rejects the substitutionary character of the death of Christ. He quotes the great passage, 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many'; but he empties the word 'ransom' of all but the dregs when he says, 'that in order that every one might understand in what sense He ransomed men from their sins, took the salvation of Zaccheus as an illustration.' The incident referred to tells us what a wonderful deliverance was brought to Zaccheus, but not one word is told us as to the ransom that was to be paid by Christ, we require to look elsewhere for this additional truth. He quotes 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' But throughout the whole

chapter he substitutes 'Cross' for 'cross' and 'His Cross' for 'his cross,' and says 'Jesus did not describe His Cross as a satisfaction to God, else He had hardly asked His disciples to share it.' Again 'Jesus nowhere commanded that one cling to His Cross, He everywhere commanded that one carry His Cross.' The Cross of Jesus we can never carry. It is our own individual cross we are commanded to bear; and it is difficult to understand how any one could so misquote the words of Jesus. Such a distortion of Scripture with a purpose is so palpable that it is unpardonable.

"Throughout the book there lie scattered many precious gems of thought and of language. Frequently a part of the truth is presented with power and beauty. But half-truths are sometimes the most insidious and dangerous of errors. Did this book stand by itself it would receive little more than a mere passing notice. But it has been preceded by two books, which, whilst colored at times with the same errors exhibit such a power of pen, skill in delineating character and mastery of pathos that they have laid hold of the hearts of all and raised the author to the very pinnacle of popularity. These have secured for 'The Mind of the Master' an entrance and influence, which it would not otherwise have gained, and have increased its power to do harm.

"As an ardent admirer of 'Ian Maclaren' I am exceedingly sorry that he has published this book, which cannot claim to be in any sense the peer of his other productions. His reputation as an author and theologian has suffered and his influence for good has been most seriously weakened."

### Searching the Title.

One of the ablest of the church papers of Scotland is the "Free Church of Scotland Monthly," a paper, the management of which preserves the best traditions of the church and of religious journalism. We have to acknowledge frequently, its intelligent interest in the work of the Church in Canada and its kindly references to the cause of the North West Missions of the church. Nor is it slack in striking an editorial blow for its own church and cause when occasion offers. Recently the *Belfast Witness* printed a sentence which, as awakened the righteous ire of its lively contemporary in Edinburgh and forthwith the scabbard is thrown away. *Belfast* remarks: "The Free church for the first years of its existence maintained strongly that they were the real original Kirk of Scotland. They have latterly given it up as hopeless and senseless." This last sentence cannot be tholed so Edinburgh replies: "If the *Witness* had not been a Presbyterian paper, and the organ of the Irish Presbyterian church, we would not have condescended to notice this unintelligent remark." Then comes a bit of interesting reminiscence and argument worth reproducing: "Our contemporary may be assured that the Free Church has not relinquished its claim to be regarded as the original Kirk of Scotland, and has not the slightest intention of giving it up. If the writer had read the history of Disruption times he would have learned that the commissioners from his own church then presented themselves in the Free and not in the Established Assembly, and that their leader, Mr. Denham of Derry, on that occasion said: "We are sent to appear before the church of our fathers, and we feel bound to regard this Assembly as the representative of that church. We feel, and we act upon the conviction, that you are not schismatics, that you are the true Church of Scotland, and we have therefore come and tabled our commissions with you." Dr. Henry Cooke, the greatest man the Irish Church has yet produced, followed up these expressions immediately afterwards in a sympathetic speech. It is, we may say, in these circumstances a little