

adapted to transform a cold, inert faith into a devout and living homage, than to conquer doubt, or to replace unbelief by faith. They are distinctly evangelical, brimful of Gospel truth, but it is Gospel truth in its great principles rather than in its minute details,—Gospel truth on its ethical more than on its doctrinal side, in its spirit more than in its letter. And they are instinct throughout with warm Christian feeling. The emotion, indeed, is not loud and vehement, it is calm and repressed rather than stimulated; but it is there all the same; now tender and regretful, now elevated and joyous, always deep and healthful. The reader of these discourses feels himself to be in contact throughout with a man of broad views and of warm human sympathies. The harsh and narrow dogmatism which so often repels the enquirer on the threshold is conspicuously absent; but it is not replaced in Vinet's case, as in that of many preachers of liberal culture, by mere humanitarian ethics or weak sentiment. The cross, with all its offence, if with all its mysterious power of attraction, is there and is central, as it should be. "Stripped of the great fact of expiation," says Vinet, "and all that cluster of ideas connected with it, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds, an ordinary morality; for others, an abyss of inconsistencies." Again "It is not so much the Gospel that has preserved the doctrine of the cross, as the doctrine of the cross that has preserved the Gospel." "All the might, all the reality of Christianity in each Christian is there and only there. Even the lessons and example of Jesus Christ, in order to become living and fruitful, require a ray darted from the cross."

But these discourses, marked by such uncompromising devotion to the distinctive truths of the Gospel, are worthy of our attention not only because of what they say, but even because of what they do not say. Their reticence itself is instructive. Rather desiring complete agreement with D'Aubigne, Gaussen and others of the Geneva school, in the details of Christian doctrine than actually attaining it, the preacher scrupulously abstains from statements which might present the appearance of a greater degree of accord with these distinguished exponents of evangelical thought than he had really reached. Indeed there is scarcely any feature in these sermons more marked, as there is none more worthy of imitation, than their severe truthfulness, their prudent reserve, the determination of the speaker everywhere manifest to keep utterance well within the limits of conviction and of feeling. "We have forbidden our words," he says, "to transcend the limits of our personal emotions; an artificial heat would not be salutary." "Feeble, I address myself to the

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