

What lent such a commanding and persistent influence to those sermons preached during the second quarter of the century from the pulpit of St. Mary's church, Oxford. I mention just three considerations.

First:—The profound spiritual insight of the preacher. The most cursory reader cannot fail to be struck by the subtle and penetrating analysis of human character and action on the religious side, which these sermons display. They are not, indeed, purely subjective. The great facts of redemption have their full place accorded to them and the leading Scripture characters are made to pass in succession before us. But they are predominantly subjective. It is mainly religion in human action, the truth as honored or dishonored in the life, the workings of sin and of grace in the heart, of which they treat; and the treatment is of the most searching kind. The strange complexity of motive at work in lives at least partially Christian is unravelled fearlessly and with apparent ease. The wiles and feints of the deceitful heart are laid bare. The disguises with which self-love seeks to cover up departures from truth and righteousness are stripped off with pitiless hand. Often the sermon in its calm and severe arraignment of human conduct seems a kind of rehearsal of the judgment; only the preacher passes sentence on himself as well as on others and is careful to unfold the grace which is still within reach. Newman's preaching is thus at once intensely spiritual and intensely practical. The spiritual good of the bearer is not once lost sight of and the character under which that good is sought is of the very highest kind. Such sermons, for example, as those entitled "Knowledge of God's will without obedience," "Promising without doing," "Obedience the remedy for religious perplexity" are models of calm, sober, instructive statement, and of solemn and earnest appeal. The preacher is far advanced in his art who cannot learn from their study to preach still better, and the private Christian is not to be envied who can rise from their perusal without profit.

Second:—There is the great excellence of their style—the marvellous clearness, precision and simplicity of the expression—as a farther explanation of the power exerted by these sermons. It is true, the preacher seems to have concerned himself little, if indeed at all, with the form his thought was to assume. He was too intent on the thought itself to allow of this. There is no discernible effort on his part after force or beauty of expression; no long drawn metaphor, no elaborate antithesis to suggest that the form in which the thought is clothed is the result of much care and work; but such mas-