

ops are perhaps more plenty, and perhaps less needed, than admirable preachers. Still, it will naturally strike thoughtful readers as curious, that so marked a man and so loyal a son of the Church should not have been singled out for high ecclesiastical preferment. The truth seems to be, that, paradoxically, his very fitness for rule stood in the way of his becoming a ruler. It is authentically, I believe, related that, having once to preach before the Queen of England, he ventured on the freedom of addressing some part of his discourse directly to her. He was perhaps consciously following classic example found by him in the great seventeenth-century preachers of France, of whom he was an admiring and assiduous student: by the way, his habit of dividing his printed sermons, after the French manner, into parts, marked in the middle of the page with Roman numerals, is probably a note of this. Louis XIV. was equal to accepting such personal appeal from his preachers as a compliment, but Victoria resented it from Liddon. As the Queen of England is, by virtue of her queenly office, also Head of the English Church, Canon Liddon had cut off from himself the stream of ecclesiastical promotion at the very source from which it springs.

I have thus set forth those characteristics belonging to the man which seem to me to have most profoundly and most vitally affected Canon Liddon's quality as preacher. I need to add explicitly what has been already implied, that he augmented the power which was naturally his by the most sedulous self-culture and by wide-ranging scholarship.

As to the method by which he did his pulpit work, his master secret lay in the element of opportuneness. He was an alert and sagacious student of the signs of the times in which he lived. He took advantage of current incidents that attracted public attention, and made them help him preach the gospel. It is hardly too much to say that, if he had not, by his habit of doing this, kept people always in the uncertain expectation of hearing from him something fresh on living topics, he could not, with those somewhat closely-reasoned, thoughtful sermons of his, have continued to command the large popular audiences that he did. But, apart from such immediately and strikingly recognizable allusions to things of the moment, there was also a deeper, and a more difficult, as well as a more truly useful, element of opportuneness omnipresent in Canon Liddon's discourses. These were emphatically, and in the best sense of the expression, sermons for the times. They fought the battle, not of yesterday, but of to-day. They saw the true strategic point, and made for it. They sought to master and to keep the key of the position. Everything was done as in the immediate presence of the foe. The flank was guarded, the rear was covered, the front was serried impenetrably hard. The column was ever in the act of "insupportably advancing."