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THE THEOLOGUE.

VOL. I. — MARCH, 1890. — No. 2.

Presbyterian College, Halifax.

FOREKNOWLEDGE AND FOREORDINATION.

ROM. VIII. 29.

“For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.”

AS children of God, we are joint-heirs with Christ: and if we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified with Him. The suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory. And there is much to support us under it. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities. And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, seeing that they are the called according to his purpose. For their well-being is guarded by a chain of gracious deeds on their behalf that spans the two eternities. It begins with purpose, which includes foreknowledge and foreordination, and proceeds through calling and justification to final glory.—Such is the line of thought. Our present object is to consider the two links into which the divine purpose is resolved.

We begin with the second, viz: foreordination. Its ultimate aim—that relating to the Son of God—is that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Its immediate object—that relating to true Christians—is their conformity to the image of Christ. They are to be Christ-like. There is nothing requiring us to limit the image of Christ to a mere blaze of light surrounding his human form. We may be conformed to the image of Christ, here and now by having in us that mind which was in Him. And the mind of Christ means such love to the Father as delights to do his will, though at the cost of toil, self-denial and suffering. Our pathway to the crown may lie, as his did, through

the cross. If so, we must set our face steadfastly towards Jerusalem. The very thing to which we are predestinated is conformity to Christ. That conformity may expose us to persecution. Nay, a whole furnace of affliction may be necessary to refine our dross, and complete the process of conformation to the image of our Lord. Either way, it will become the heir of glory to be a coward. We may well brace ourselves for the endurance of adversity, when we know that all things are working together for our good.

We now turn to the more difficult part of our investigation. The first link of the golden chain is foreknowledge. Foreknowledge of what? The thing ordained in likeness to Christ. What is the thing known? If we look to the context we find that Christians are represented as loving God (v. 28). Does God's foreknowledge of them mean that he foresees they will love him? And is such foresight the basis of their foreordination to grace and glory? The protest of John occurs to us, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jo., IV. 10). And earlier in this epistle (ch. V. 8) Paul says, "God commendeth His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The first movement of love is on God's side, not on man's. How then can His foreordination be based on foresight of our love, or of any of its manifestations, such as faith or obedience?

Before we go further let us examine whether the Greek word foreknow can be understood so as to denote something more than simple prescience.

In 1 Pet., I. 2, the sojourners of the dispersion are described as elect according to the foreknowledge of God—just as in v. 28 of this chapter Christians are described as being called according to his purpose. Foreknowledge in this instance connotes prearrangement—unless we say that that idea is sufficiently conveyed by the word elect. Perhaps the meaning is that the readers addressed were elect *sojourners* according to the forethought of God, in which case the prominence given to the idea of absence from the heavenly home makes it still more clear that forethought denotes prearrangement, followed up by providential care, and not mere prescience. There is the same connotation in the Latin word provide (literally foresee), as well as in the English expres-

sions—to see to, to see after, to look after. In classical Greek *to know* may be used in the sense of to judge—either mentally, by forming a decision for one's self, or in a legal process, by deciding a case. And in like manner *foreknow* occurs in the sense of judge or determine beforehand—in some way involving a practical element that goes beyond mere intelligence, by giving effect to it. It may be worth while to cite an example. In Xen. Cyr. II., Cyrus being present at a conference between his uncle and Cyaxares and ambassadors of the King of India, asks leave to say what he *knows*—*i.e.*, what he thinks, the resolution he has formed in his own mind. What he wants to tell is not a piece of information he has picked up, but his mind in the matter—the conclusion he has come to. For on obtaining leave he at once turns to the Indians, and announces an important decision in reference to the business on which they had come. After they were gone he tells Cyaxares that he had not had much money when he came and now he had spent most of it on the soldiers. True, their rations were provided by Cyaxares. But he thought it a wise policy to attach them to his person by a lavish bestowment of prizes and rewards when they did what pleased him as their commander. He then goes on to add, “*Foreknowing* these things as now explained, I find that I need more money.” The *foreknowing* here obviously denotes not merely the perception of a wise method of training his army, but the adoption of it, and the actual practice of it to the extent of almost emptying his coffers. He had provided for the carrying out of a plan or policy which his insight suggested. *Foreknowing* includes prearranging with a view to ultimate results—seeing to these things, carrying out these views. The object of this practical foreknowledge, however, is a policy not a person. As regards grammatical construction, we may find a closer analogy in the usage of the Hebrew. “Lord, what is man that thou shouldst *know* him? or the Son of Man that thou shouldst make account of Him?” (Ps. CXLIV. 3). *Know* here means attend to, care for. The question is not about God's omniscience. The wonder is that God should notice man, take an interest in his affairs. “You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth” (Amos III. 2)—*i.e.*, cared for, made the objects of special favor. We might render it—you only have I chosen. The thought is slightly different in Ps. I. 6, “The Lord

knoweth the way of the righteous"—*i.e.*, he approves of it. Probably the expression used by Amos was present in the Apostle's mind when he wrote (ch. XI. 2), "God did not cast away his people whom he *foreknew*"—*i.e.*, on whom he set his mind beforehand, whom he previously selected for himself. So here, "Whom he foreknew—*i.e.*, whom he previously set his mind upon, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." In ch. XI. 2, he is speaking of the choice of Israel as a nation; here, of the choice of individual Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile: but the meaning of the word is the same. And taking it in this sense, the progress of thought is simple and clear. God's favor and God's image must go together. Men who are admitted to the one must be adorned with the other. Those on whom He set His favorable regard are destined to be Christ-like: and this blessed destiny is wrought out in them by their effectual calling, their justification, and their glorification. This very conjunction of thought—favor in order to holiness—is presented in another example of the use of the word *know* in Hebrew. In Gen. XVIII. 17-19, the Lord says: "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have *known* him (*i.e.*, set my mind on him, chosen him for my friend), to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."

The reason why God sets his mind before hand on some men—selects them for his friends—is not stated. And where God has not spoken, it becomes us to be cautious, and somewhat diffident, in the conjectures. With this promise, let us glance at the explanations offered. The Pelagian says God foresaw that they would stand their probation successfully, in the exercise of their natural powers. The Arminian says God foresaw that they would believe, being aided by universal grace. The Calvinist meets these explanations with a deliberate negation, setting forth that God's election is without any foresight of faith or good works or perservance in them, or any other thing in the creation, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto, but simply of his own secret counsel. It might seem as if the antagonism between

these opposing views could not be more complete. Yet on reflection we may discover one spot of common ground. Salvation presupposes one indispensable condition on the part of the creature—that it be a *subjectum capax*—capable of being saved. This condition is purely negative in its character: it has no power to create movement: the movement is all out of God's mere free grace and love. It is not therefore the kind of condition repudiated by the Calvinist. But it is indispensable. Calvinist and Arminian must agree that it is a *conditio sine qua non*.

Now are we entitled to affirm that this condition exists in every human being? Do we not read of men whom it is impossible to renew again unto repentance?—of a sin that is unto death? There is a slipshod way of talking about omnipotence that throws this whole subject into confusion. We do not expect omnipotence to make twice two five instead of four, or to draw a plane triangle for us, every point of which shall be at the same distance from the centre. Of course there is no weight too heavy for God to lift, no mechanical force too powerful for him to counteract. And he knows as no one else how to touch the inner springs of emotion and effort in the heart of man. But may there not be some inner citadel of personality that even omnipotence holds sacred? And may there not be a condition, in some instances, of that citadel, deeper than acts of disobedience, more reccondite than unbelief, but pressing with mysterious energy towards an evolution into obdurate rebelliousness, that to the eye of omniscience presents a *subjectum non capax salutis*? A deficient susceptibility to the claims of divine goodness—a deficient *capacity* for being touched by these claims,—might go a long way towards constituting such a condition. The image of God might be blurred and marred beyond renewal. Even when all are dead in trespasses and sins, some may be further gone in decomposition than others. In short there may be a difference between man and man, not in merit, where all of themselves are worthless, not in attractiveness, when all of themselves are vile, but in salvability—in capacity for being enlightened, purified, blessed.

Of one thing we may rest assured: that the secret counsel of God is not mere arbitrariness or groundless haphazard. Its aim is that the Son of God might be the first-born among many

brethren. Among its grounds may be considerations that transcend not merely our knowledge but our capacity of knowing or understanding in our present state. Let us trust the wisdom and the love of God to realize the glorious issue. And in the meantime, whilst His ways are past tracing out, let us still exclaim with the Apostle: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God."

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE last day of 1889 witnessed a notable funeral ceremony in the capital of the English nation. There in the celebrated abbey of the Confessor, amid the monuments of the great and good of past ages, all that was mortal of Robert Browning was tenderly and reverently laid to rest.

Other funeral ceremonies in that same temple of the dead have been far more imposing, far more distinguished for sombre pomp; but to a meditative mind few could have been more touching and suggestive. The mist and fog which prevailed outside shrouded in gloom the interior of the building in which were gathered representative leaders in the Science, Art, and Literature of Britain. The funeral services, while simple, were most impressive. As the last sounds of the tolling bell died away, the deep tones of the organ pealing forth resounded through the vast edifice, accompanied by the voices of the choristers as they sang, in the words of the Psalmist, the eternity of God and the brevity and uncertainty of human life. The most affecting part of the service was, however, the singing of the beautiful lyric, "He giveth His beloved sleep," the work of the late poet's gifted wife. As the words of this exquisite poem, wedded to strains of the most beautiful music, echoed through the abbey, cold and unsympathetic must have been the heart that was not touched thereby. On the conclusion of the choral services, the body of the poet to whom after his life of toil,

"More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,"

this "beloved sleep" had been given, was committed to the tomb to rest side by side with those of the great singers, whose monuments and busts crowd almost to repletion the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Here lie the ashes of men whose works will be remembered as long as the English language continues to exist, but among them all few deserve to rank higher either in character or achievement than he who last of all has come to rest among them, Browning has won for himself a position among the noblest names in English literature. And though the circle of his devoted admirers must necessarily remain limited, there is none who will deny that in him has passed away perhaps the greatest literary man, and certainly one of the greatest poets of our age—one who richly deserved the honor of a resting-place within the shrine that holds the remains of England's mighty dead.

Browning was great both as a man and as a poet. In him great intellectual ability and poetic power were combined with sound common-sense and a perfect realization of the nature and requirements of his surroundings. The saying of Dryden that

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,"

while not absolutely true, seems to find confirmation in the weakness and general unfitness for the duties of life, which men of genius have often exhibited. It has not always happened that he who wrote a true poem has lived one. Indeed the contrary has often been the case, and many of those whom the Muses have favored have been among the most unfortunate of men. In such poets the poetic faculties have been developed at the expense of the practical. There are other poets however, and these the greatest men, whose power is due, not to the abnormal development of one or more particular faculties, but to a full and perfect development of all parts of their being; so that while able to hear and see what is unrevealed to ordinary men, to add to all they touch

"The gleam,
The light that never was on sea or shore,
The consecration and the poet's dream,"

they have yet been capable of guiding themselves wisely and well in the ordinary relations and duties of life.

As examples of this latter class, Shakespeare and Milton may be cited among English poets, and to the same class Browning belonged. Browning began to write verses at a very early age, and while still young solemnly dedicated himself to the pursuit of poetry and entered upon a course of study designed to help him in his life-work. This latter incident calls to mind a similar one in the life of Milton, and is but one of many that show Browning's sound common-sense.

The chief events of Browning's life are well known, but of his inner soul-life we know little or nothing, except what we can gather from his works. Browning disliked publicity and that modern prying spirit that seeks to disclose to the world the private life and feelings of any celebrated man. He very seldom, even in his works, consciously revealed the secret workings of his soul. He desired and endeavored to write dramatically, to depict the thoughts and feelings of others rather than his own. And yet, though he did not consciously disclose his own personality, he did so unconsciously. It seems a necessity that every author should to a greater or less extent do so. There is an indissoluble connection between the character of the artist and that of the work he produces. By his works, the fruit which he produces, he must be known. Sometimes we may have to examine the work very carefully before we find the true character of the writer, but there it is concealed within the work. Every author impresses his own personality upon his writings, and few have left this impress more clearly stamped upon their work than Browning. To his poems then we must turn if we would gain some adequate idea of the man he was. In them, often by a single expression or line, sometimes by a passage in which the fire of his spirit breaks the bounds of self-imposed restraint, we find revealed the various aspects of the poet's character. Though in his works he often writes dramatically, yet the spirit that underlies them all may be discovered, and this spirit was a part of Browning's self.

One of the first things that strikes one on reading Browning is the rugged grandeur of his poetry. Perhaps the roughness is at first so conspicuous as to displease and discourage the reader; and yet if he reads on, he will see that although there is roughness there is beauty too, though generally grand and mighty in character. This ruggedness is manifest in the thoughts. They re

massive, rough-hewn. It is manifest too in the strong combinations of consonantal sounds which often give such a peculiar melody to the verse, and in the images and illustrations, especially those drawn from nature. The effect of it all is similar to that produced by an imposing mountain scene, and this rugged grandeur is impressed everywhere on Browning's works. It is the outcome of his nature which is attracted to what is massive and powerful.

On further acquaintance with Browning's poems we are surprised at the extent of his bearing and at the keenness of his intellect. His works are treasuries of recondite learning. From almost every conceivable source, from the works of the most different ages and lands he has gathered a wealth of knowledge, religious, scientific, philosophical and artistic, which is all brought into use in the portraying of the thought and feeling of the different epochs and characters depicted. Like Milton, Browning seems to have taken all knowledge to be his province. His works are full of evidences of his vast erudition. Nor is the keenness of his intellect less clearly marked. It is seen in the skill with which he depicts past times and analyzes character and motive. With few strokes but those the strokes of a master hand, he paints for us a picture in which a past epoch and its characters are displayed before us with graphic accuracy. His great interest is in the life of the soul and he takes delight in analyzing and depicting character. The more subtle the analysis required, the more complex the character depicted, the more pleasure does the poet seem to take in his work, and it may even be said the more successful is he in it, for Browning undoubtedly possesses a marvellous power of portraying the most mysterious psychological situations.

This peculiar keenness of intellect is especially seen in the "Ring and the Book." There the same story is told by eleven different narrators, and to the tale as told by each of them a different colouring is given by the character of the speaker. Surely, keenness of insight into human nature and the workings of the human mind must have been possessed by the poet who has written such a work, for in doing so he must have for the time entered into the feelings and occupied the standpoint of each speaker.

And this brings before us another prominent characteristic of Browning as revealed by his works. I refer to his breadth of

sympathy and his many-sided nature. His sympathy with and capacity for appreciating character is well-nigh universal. He has presented us with faithful and kindly delineations of a great range of characters, from the simple Breton peasant to the highly artificial and complex products of the Renaissance or the last ages of Greek Philosophy. The same breadth of sympathy is seen everywhere throughout the poet's work. Few poets have been more spiritually minded and religious, and yet none have appreciated more the pleasures of existence. He is pre-eminently a philosophic poet, and yet none have entered more into the spirit of the light gaieties of life. But for all this, Browning has no pleasure in the idler and the frivolous trifler. In his last epilogue he asks—

"What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?"

Beneath all his gaiety there is a serious manly tone. Life is something more than play. It is discipline. It is education. Pleasure is not an end, but a means,—a means of developing man's nature and of helping him to realize himself.

Another phase of the poet's character is its strength and vigor. This is shown by the indomitable perseverance with which he worked, and despite the attacks of critics fought his way to fame and gained for his work acceptance and favor. It is seen also in the heartiness with which he loved or hated. Not to mention his sonnet on Fitzgerald, which all lovers of the poet could wish he had never written, the passionate strength of his nature is sufficiently proved. This same robustness and strength is seen, too, in his philosophy of life. He is the preacher of action. His motto, as expressed by himself, is—

"Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!"

It is also seen in the gusts with which he describes the "wild joys of living"—

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew embraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair."

What a revelation do these lines give us of Browning's nature! These are not the words of a misanthrope, the musings of a

dreamer. They are the expression of the joys which a sound soul in a sound body finds in life. They are full of force and vitality.

The last phase of Browning's character that we shall notice is his belief in and strong attachment to Christianity. He thoroughly understands the questioning and skeptical spirit of the age. But his great soul cannot rest in doubt; he cannot be satisfied with negations. He must have something positive. He has fought his way to a belief in Christianity, and holds by that faith with perfect confidence. His strong nature holds firmly to that system which, whatever uncertainties and doubts may arise, affords the only key to unlock life's mysteries and solve its problems; and his philosophy, as we shall see, is founded on a belief in its fundamental doctrines.

These then, are some of the traits of Browning's character which are brought most prominently before us in his works. Let us now briefly consider these works themselves, and in doing so we shall direct our attention first to the message and then to the manner of the poet.

With Browning himself the first of these was the most important. He cared more about what he said than about the form in which his thoughts were expressed. He looked upon himself as one whose mission was to declare the truth, and held that the truth itself was never to be sacrificed to outward graces of expression. He felt he had a message to deliver, and to deliver it was the great business of his life. To him poetry was far more than a mere pastime or a means of affording pleasure to others. It was the most exalted means of making known to man the highest and grandest truths. These truths it is the privilege of the poet to perceive and his duty to declare to others. Hence it follows that the philosophic and didactic bulk so largely in Browning's poems, which are intended to convey to us the poet's message, and this message consists mainly of the emphasizing and restatement of several of the leading principles and doctrines of Christianity.

We have noticed that from his works Browning must be judged to have been a religious man. He is also a Christian poet. His poetry which deals with the deepest problems of life, works out the solution of these problems on Christian principles. In his

works we are continually struck by the way in which he emphasizes the importance and significance of human life. In this respect his teaching is an antidote to a spirit widely spread in the present age. This spirit, which finds expression in the poems of Matthew Arnold is one of pessimism and hopelessness that is pathetic in its despair. To those pervaded by it life seems unutterably sad. "Most progress is most failure." Life is a hopeless struggle against fate. Man, placed here in an almost helpless condition, is controlled by circumstances over which he has no control, and is limited on all sides by bounds he cannot overstep. Filled with high aspirations, he seems to have them only to realize the impossibility of attaining them; possessed of infinite capability for joy and progress, he finds life inadequate to satisfy his longings. Clear and decided is the tone in which Browning answers the saddening wail of despondency over the hopefulness and vanity of life. Life may indeed be vain and hopeless if it be the whole span of existence. But Browning holds it is not. He believes firmly in the immortality of the soul. He accepts this life with all its limitations and apparent failures. These limitations are necessary to an imperfect stage of development. In them, and still more in the failure of life and the prevalence of evil he sees an argument for immortality.

"I have lived then, done and suffered, loved and hated, learnt and taught,
This—there is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught,
Goodness with triumphant evil, power with failure in the aim,
If (to my own sense, remember! though none other feel the same),
If you bar me from assuming earth to be a pupil's place
And life, time,—with all their chances, changes—just probation's space."

This doctrine of life as a stage of probation runs through all Browning's poetry. Life is but a period in the soul's history. It is a time for action, for development. Browning's motto for life is—

"Aspire, break bounds! I say
Endeavour to be good and better still,
And best! Success is naught, endeavour's all."

Strenuous endeavour is the duty of all. We are to aim high and strive after the realization of our aspirations. We may not realize them, but this should not discourage us, for

"'Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do."

Indeed, did we fully realize our aspirations, this would only prove that they were not sufficiently lofty. Ultimate success is not to be expected in this life, but by endeavour after what is noble man not only shows what the possibilities of his nature are, but progresses towards a higher stage of existence. Thus there is a hopeful as well as an action-inspiring tone in Browning's message. Looking upon life as he does this must be so. Even in this life he expects the clouds to roll away. Life is not all sadness. It is not even mainly so. Spent in earnest striving after self-realization and development, it is the prophecy of something grander and more perfect beyond, and gleams of that future glory brighten the present with their radiance. In his last poem, Browning has given us a synopsis of his philosophy as well as of his character, when he describes himself as

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

Another point in Browning's teaching that may be touched in passing is the importance he attaches to the individual man. His interest is in the life of the soul. In his opinion "little else is worth study." In this respect he is to some extent at variance with the spirit of the age. The vast increase in our knowledge of the universe leads us to think but little of the importance of this earth and of those who dwell upon it, and to treat as a very unimportant thing the life of a single individual. To many it is

"But as the snowflake on the river,
A moment seen, then gone forever,"

disappearing almost as quickly and leaving little more trace behind. Science is inclined to look upon men in the mass. Nature—the material forces and elements of the universe—bulks most largely in the scientific mind. Browning's teaching is a reaction from this view of matters. With him the individual soul is the most important existence for the development of which all nature may be said to exist.

In all the points of Browning's teaching we have referred to, the influence of Christian principles is clearly seen; but there are other parts of his message in which he deals more directly with particular Christian principles and doctrines, and explains the

way in which he understands and accepts them. And this part of his teaching is most important and instructive. Especially is this true of the way in which he emphasizes the personality of Christ as the vital power of the Christian religion. He recognizes the truth and power of Christianity not so much because of its high ethical precepts, but because of the power it gives man to practise these precepts. Men have always known far more of what was right than they have lived up to. What was needed was something to induce them to *do* the right. This Browning finds in the person of Christ—the God-man. He says in “Christmas Eve”—

“ And thence I conclude that the real God-function
Is to furnish a *motive* and *injunction*
For practising what we know already.
And such an injunction and such a motive
As the God in Christ.”

He also recognizes that other experience of spiritual life which we term conversion. This, as expressed in his phraseology, is set before us as an awakening of the soul to the need of a struggle after higher and better things, as an implanting of new principles and aims, and as the beginning of a new life. To use the words of Prof. Corson, “ With Browning salvation means that revelation of the soul to itself, that awakening, quickening, attitude-adjusting of the soul which sets it gravitating towards the Divine.” And this readjusting of the soul’s spiritual relations comes from a knowledge of Christ, as Browning himself emphasizes, and not from a mere knowledge or acceptance of a system of doctrine.

“ Does the precept run ‘ Believe in Good,
In Justice, Truth, now understood
For the first time ? ’—or ‘ Believe in me
Who lived and died, yet essentially,
Am Lord of Life ? ’ ”

With Browning Christianity is a life and not a mere system of doctrinal truth. Christ is to him the Alpha and Omega of the gospel; and in this emphasizing of the personality of Christ as the power of Christianity, he delivers one of his most beneficial messages to his generation.

Such are some of the chief points in the message Browning presents to us. It remains that in closing we examine the manner in which the message is delivered and the form of his works. Few great writers have been so continuously and keenly criticised

as Browning. Both the matter and the manner of his poetry have been most vigorously attacked, and as ardently defended.

If as Matthew Arnold defines it the province of poetry, is to serve as a "criticism on life," it must surely be admitted, that the portrayal and analysis of the life of the soul which is Browning's subject, falls well within that domain. But while this is admitted, it is still true that moral and philosophical disquisitions in verse do not constitute poetry, and with these too many of Browning's works are filled. In his poems he usually combines the depicting of a psychological situation, or the analysis of a character with the teaching of some moral or philosophical truth. Where the interest is in the former subject and where there is little of the didactic we have the poet at his best. Where the latter is more prominent we have poetic failure. We have thought, it is true, but mere thought is not sufficient for poetry. There must be a spiritual influence superadded. Life and inspiration must be breathed into the thoughts and words by the poet's soul entering into them. This is impossible in a philosophical treatise or in a piece of calm sustained reasoning, and because it is so, many of Browning's pieces can never rank as true poems. Browning's poetry is not however wholly didactic and he has written enough genuine poetry to give him a very high place among English poets. There is in his poetry none of the pure imagination of Shelley. He cannot lose himself in his subject for any length of time. He stands apart from a scene and describes it. He enters into sympathy with, but does not lose himself in his subject. His descriptions of nature take on to some extent the characteristics of his own mind. He excels in the grand and majestic. The roll of the thunder and the howling of the blast, the rugged and lofty mountains, all that is mighty and grand are associated with our views of him. He describes at times softer and lovelier scenes, but even in his description of them there is something severe and earnest. He delights in nature, but it is not for him the principal thing. His chief interest is as we have noted in the life of the soul. His descriptions of her moods are either introduced as the background of a picture or incidentally as illustration in the course of the piece.

These features of Browning's poetic genius are most characteristic and fit him to be an analyzer of character. He is

essentially dramatic. It is perhaps as a portrayer of various phases of spiritual experience that he has been most successful. His men and women will live in literature. In his dramas however, he was not successful, for in them he depicts as he himself says "action in character" rather than "character in action," the latter of which alone can be properly presented on the stage. But though unsuccessful in his dramas, he found another way of exercising his dramatic power, and in his favourite monologue, he discovered what in his hands is a most powerful and efficient means of exhibiting character, and also of incidentally depicting the scene and the external circumstances amid which the character is developed. Several of his monologues are almost perfect. The versification, the thought, the feeling, the character and the scene are all in keeping with one another, and combine to afford pleasure to the reader. And not only as entire poems is their perfection marked, but many of them contain passages in which the author writes under the influence of an inspiration that gives to his usually somewhat rough sounding verse, a melody, a spontaneity, and a felicity of expression that is above the attainment of studied art.

The poetry of Browning has often been characterized as obscure; a charge that is to some extent true. It is certainly a pretty severe mental discipline to follow him along some of his tortuous lines of thought, in which exercise the difficulty is increased by the inversion and omission of words in which he frequently indulges. Another difficulty arises from the fact, that in most of his poems he plunges at once into the midst of a situation, so that it is well nigh impossible at first to perceive what the scene the poet is depicting really is. With respect to the first of these sources of obscurity, it has been remarked that it is due to the difficult and abstract nature of the subject rather than to the confusion of thought; and as to the second it is well to note that Browning is continually indicating by a word or phrase the setting of his picture, and a careful eye is needed to note these little touches which are so apparently insignificant and yet reveal so much. With careful study both sources of obscurity will cease to confuse the student, and it is ever to be remembered that Browning is an author who must be studied and not merely

read. Still whatever may be said in palliation of his obscurity it will ever remain a blemish on his work.

Another fruitful subject for attack is Browning's versification. And here, too, it must be admitted that there is some ground for the criticisms that have been so frequently made. Browning's versification is sometimes unpleasant. His rhymes are frequently uncouth and barbarous, and thus he occasionally mars the effect of a passage he intended to be impressive. But when all is said it must be owned that his verse is generally pleasing, and has at times a unique charm. Upon it has been impressed to some extent the character of the past. It is grand, majestic, sonorous. It has little of the easy grace that marks the verse of Tennyson, and none of the almost cloying sweetness of Spenser. It is strong and visible like its writer, and its consonantal combinations have a music of their own which in many places is singularly appropriate. The sustained strength of his blank verse and its suitability for expressing his thought and carrying on an intricate chain of reasoning is a point that also deserves remark.

It would be vain to attempt to fix the position that future ages will assign to Browning. It seems probable that many of his works will soon be forgotten. Some of them have, indeed, never attained to any great popularity or reputation. His message to us of his own time may also be forgotten by succeeding generations living under different circumstances. Only so far as he has preserved his philosophy of life in poems whose beauty and perfection of form and expression are sufficient to attract readers will it continue to influence posterity. His longer poems are interesting, as showing the greatness of his mind and the acuteness of his intellect, but in themselves have little that can rescue them from oblivion. It is by his shorter poems that Browning will be known to posterity, and it is well that such is the case, for in the best of them are preserved in perfect form the principles of the message he sought to deliver; and they reveal him in his happiest moments as a graphic and sympathetic depicter of character, as a master of terse and forcible expression, as a writer of melodious verse, and as a man who, however great his works, was yet greater than them all.

J. S. SUTHERLAND.

HOW TO WRITE AND SPEAK THE GOSPEL.

WHEN asked for an article on Homiletics, I wondered what I could say that had not been frequently and well said by many distinguished men. I could not do better than recommend your readers to study the Classics of the Art. If a young preacher is in danger of indulging in too much rhapsody, what so good for him as the perusal of "Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon?" If inclined to extreme conciseness and hardness of logical reasoning, what better than the study of Fenelon's "Dialogues on Eloquence?" If desirous of more profound acquaintance with the art of writing and speaking the Gospel, could he do better than consult "Lectures on Sacred Eloquence" by Campbell, or the work of Porter of Andover so largely borrowed from it? If he would have in concise form everything valuable that has been said on the topic, where could his wishes be so well met as in the matchless work of Vinet, the "Chalmers of Switzerland," not to speak of the works of Alexander, Schaff, Cressly, Ripley, Dabley, Brodice, MacIlvaine, and the host of contributors to Homiletic Reviews and Magazines? Why would you have me "bring coals to Newcastle?"

I can think of no reason, save that you wish a leaf from my own experience in this matter. I will therefore give it for what it is worth.

The time was when written discourse for the pulpit was esteemed a great evil. It was customary for people to watch the preacher's hands closely to detect whether or not he used the "paper." All have heard the good story of "thirdly fleein' oot o' the window;" and all have heard how Dr. Chalmers scored one of his greatest triumphs by extracting from a prejudiced old Scotchwoman the remark—"Yon was fell readin'." The day of sweeping condemnation of written sermons has gone; and a wiser and more practical age has come to understand that men have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given them." One man preaches most effectively when, without note, manuscript, or other assistance, he addresses

the people in a free, natural, and hearty manner. Another man is most powerful when having committed his thoughts to writing, his ready memory takes them up and he delivers them memoriter. A third is only at home, and does his best, when, having devoted many a thoughtful hour to the composition of his sermon, he takes it to the pulpit, and uses it to kindle himself and his congregation into a glow of interest and enthusiasm. I believe there should be no stereotyped method of preaching, but that every one should study and practice the method for which he is best fitted.

Much preaching in the present day is of the hortative style. Many a so-called sermon is but a string upon which are hung half a dozen anecdotes, and a dozen clever sayings of clever men, and a few exhortations at the close. Such sermons may tickle and amuse the ignorant and superficial; they may arouse salvationist excitement; they belong to the religion of drums, tambourines and spook-bonnets; they stir up the emotions of the less thoughtful and intelligent; but they are not the style of preaching adapted to an average Presbyterian Congregation, where, if anywhere, we expect to find men of intelligence, versed in the Scriptures, and able to understand and appreciate what is more solid and substantial.

Taking it for granted that an effective Presbyterian preacher in these days must be a well-read man and a ready writer, I cannot urge too strongly all our young preachers to read much and write more. I find it necessary to read everything that my congregation reads, besides a great deal that they never see. I find it also necessary to write my sermons in full. Perhaps others will think this bondage. I can only say I find in the practice my highest freedom.

Let us suppose the young preacher is well educated, has passed successfully through school and college, has a fair acquaintance with history and literature, has studied and knows the writings of classic authors in modern as well as in ancient times, understands the teachings of philosophy mental and moral, and is familiar with the system of doctrine revealed in the scriptures. Let us suppose also that he is awake to what the world is doing now; that by perusal of newspaper and magazine literature he is well furnished with a treasury of the facts and principles that are the social and religious forces of the age; suppose that not only is he educated,

but licensed to preach the everlasting gospel, permitted to make proof of his abilities, and to fulfil his ministry, how is such a young preacher to proceed? With the gospel in his own breast, and love to its author kindling all his energies, and the deep desire to do good and save and educate souls, how is he to preach? How is he to prepare the sermon for the congregation, and when prepared, how is he to preach it?

1. Speaking from experience, I think his first difficulty will be *his text*. Where is he to get it? What shall it be? Text-hunting will be one of his worst trials. He must have a text. It won't do to preach from a topic with a verse of Scripture tacked on as a motto. It won't do to take a proposition, or an idea, get on its back, and gallop away from the verse announced—It won't do to use a verse as a mere pretext for a discourse. The preacher must have a *text*—"an inspired notification of his subject to an assembly of worshippers." I like to get a clear and simple statement. I don't like to choose texts in whose words there is an apparent contradiction, or texts which call for too much curious critical matter. I search for texts that bear upon the present necessities of my people. A thousand things are happening every day upon which it is necessary to flash the light of the gospel. I try to keep an open eye, and an open ear, and a sensitive heart, and when a subject once lays hold of me, it is surprising how numberless the texts that sometimes troop up inviting my notice. For example, last week a lady was telling me of the conservative character of the former congregation who worshipped in my church, and how as they sat in their high-backed pews, they seemed to care little who came or did not come to church. One thing led to another until I heard of the existence in some quarters of some of the same old spirit. When I came to choose a text, the words "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have thereby entertained angels unawares" pressed themselves so strongly on my attention that I could not help preaching on them. Something similar happens very frequently, and I am led to think if the young preacher keeps one open eye on the Bible, and the other on the daily condition, conversation, motives, and forces at work among his people, he will not find text-hunting such a difficult task as it sometimes is.

2.—Now that I have my text what follows? I used to be greatly puzzled *how to begin* the sermon. I am no longer puzzled. I have found that the way to begin is just *to begin*, without much formality of elaboration of introduction. Some remark about the person who first uttered the text, or the manner of the speaker when he used the words often helps me to break ground and get away into my subject. Frequently I draw a graphic word-picture of the surroundings of the text, endeavoring to transport my hearers to the place and time when the words were uttered or written. Sometimes I begin by a brief statement of some view of my subject opposed to what I am about to expound. Whatever the introduction, I aim to have it short, single, striking, so that my hearers may not have more than a moment or two to wait before the door is opened.

3.—I do not often state formally the heads of discourse. I always avoid letting the people know what I propose to do. The surprise element of preaching serves a good purpose in securing continued attention. None the less I myself know what I am going to say, and I study to say it in the most effective way. I am more attached to the Topical Method than to either the Primitive or Medieval plans of handling a text. When I preach to children or very ignorant people, I emphasize the text, word by word. That is the Primitive or Verbal Method. The Medieval or Scholastic Division, which makes one head of the subject, one of the predicate, and one of the copula, is too artificial and artistic, and too frequently violates unity. My method is to state a simple, single proposition, and never to lose sight of that one proposition all through the sermon. I may have two points, or three, or four, or five, but I see to it that they are all integral parts of the one simple proposition. Then I try to make everything in the sermon, argument, arrangement, illustration, fact, doctrine, scripture, all converge towards a single purpose. My object from the outset is to persuade the heart and mind of every hearer, that what I am uttering is the truth, that the proposition is true and has upon him a practical bearing. Consequently I keep the artificial out of sight as much as possible. I hide the scaffolding of division. I never say firstly, secondly, thirdly, in conclusion, one word more, and finally—but I rush from head to head and from point to point, not

so particular to make a well balanced sermon, as to carry my hearer's attention and assent to the close.

4.—I have sometimes heard the criticism that a sermon had too much matter in it, but I never allowed it to influence me in the writing of a sermon. I believe in crowding thoughts into a sermon, rather than in spreading them out. I think it wise to gather all my forces, and marshal them in every sermon. It secures unity the better. It enables me to give every one his due portion in due season. It keeps in view the fact, that the time is short and we are called to declare the whole counsel of God; and it helps the better to stir up the minds of the people in the way of remembrance. For these reasons I take no thought for the morrow in preaching, but crowd as much into each sermon as is consistent with moderate length, sufficient illustration, and the capacity of my audience.

But some one asks what is moderate length? That depends. In some cases twenty minutes is too long; in others forty minutes too short. I don't think an average man can deal satisfactorily with a subject sufficiently important to preach about, in less than thirty-five or forty minutes. Nothing is so provoking to an intelligent hearer as just when he is beginning to be interested, to have the preacher cease. It reminds one of the Englishman's experience in a Paris restaurant. He had ordered a mutton-chop for his lunch, but was compelled to wait long for it. At length the dapper waiter appeared with one little perfectly cooked tasty morsel on a platter, and with much garnishing set it before the Briton. Hungry, almost ravenous, he stuck his fork into it, put it in his mouth and swallowed it at a mouthful, exclaiming "Yes, that's it, bring me along some." One feels, when a good sermon is only twenty minutes, like the hungry Englishman asking for more. Perhaps, however, it is better to send people away hungry, than stuffed.

5.—In writing a sermon I do not employ the same style as when writing for a paper or magazine. I try to remember, and to keep the remembrance every moment vividly before me, that what I am writing is to be spoken to the people—and so I try to speak through my pen. The whole scene is conjured up, church, pulpit, pews, gallery, choir, organ, sexton. The bell has stopped. The devotional exercises are over, and I stand up to speak. Now

for it; and with that vision in my mind, I try to write words simple, earnest, practical, pointed, sometimes pungent and searching. If I write argument, I have my hearer in sight and I think of how he will meet it, and I parry his thrusts. If I use illustration, I fancy I see his kindly eye and sometimes his amused smile. If I quote Scripture, I think I hear his conscience respond. If I appeal to his heart, I think I see the starting tear and feel the trembling of his heart-throb, so that when the sermon is written it is such that it cannot properly be preached to any other congregation—Consequently when asked to preach elsewhere I find it impossible, without many alterations to preach an old sermon. The cap is made to fit one head, and will need altering before it fits another.

6.—I do not make very much of *originality* in preaching. Some preachers, I know, denounce want of originality as one of the worst sins in the preacher's calendar, and think that originality in the pulpit covers a multitude of sins. There is such a thing, and it is not uncommon, as *original dulness*. Men having few ideas of their own, and disdaining to use other men's ideas, make a sorry display of sermonic emptiness. I don't believe in using skeleton sermons, nothing is so debilitating as these miserable crutches. But I believe that good thoughts and illustrations are legitimately our own as soon as we have heard them. Plagiarism is as dishonorable in the pulpit as elsewhere, but all use of other men's thoughts is not plagiarism. In the absolute sense man can originate nothing. He can only change the forms and combinations already at his hand, and that is true not merely of nature and science but of mental productions. In the revealed word of God, in the revelations of nature, in the discoveries and investigations of philosophy, in the wealth of striking thoughts and ideas that have fallen from the lips of men of sanctified genius, in the wide field of modern literature and in the familiar sights and sounds of daily life, we have an immense treasury of ideas; and the reproduction of truth and thought from any and all of these sources, provided we have thought it out ourselves, albeit other and abler men have thought it out before us, gives the utmost scope to the preacher's genius; and while it is always better if possible, to gather material at first hand, it can never be wrong to adopt, reclothe, and utter thoughts started by others.

7.—Another leaf from my experience is an increasing desire to *be practical*. I remember a time when almost every sermon I heard had a practical conclusion. Men used to preach for forty-five minutes or more expounding doctrine, arguing in proof of some proposition, and they were wont to reserve only a moment or two for a word of application. Now I seek to apply everything as I proceed. I endeavour to make every sentence tell upon the lines and conduct of my hearers. I like to flash a practical turn of the text upon the audience when it is not expecting it; and to hold up the mirror when the face is not in its readiest and prettiest pose. I am not so fond of dwelling on the sins and iniquities of the Jews as upon the iniquities of Englishmen and Scotchmen of this 19th century. I preach much of course on justification by faith, but the longer I live the more I am inclined to emphasize the truth that “faith without works is dead being alone.” I have great faith in that “Imago Christi” of which James Stalker, an honored classmate of my own, has written so devoutly and so beautifully. The words and deeds of Jesus in all the relations of life becomes more and more the grand theme of my ministry. There is in them an uplifting and governing power that is found nowhere else. Preach Jesus on the Cross of course. That is the centre of all true life. But don’t forget Jesus in the home, the state, the church, society. Preach Jesus as the substitute of course; but don’t forget to preach Him as the Friend, the Man of Prayer, the Student, the Worker, the Sufferer, the Philanthropist, the Preacher, Teacher and Winner of Souls.

8.—And now, fortified with a written sermon, composed in such a way and of such materials *how is it to be spoken by me in the pulpit*. Had I a quick retentive memory probably I would commit it and leave my manuscript at home, but I have not such a memory. Had I ready command of choice words and a fluency such as some possess, I would probably read it over a number of times, master its thoughts and trust to the moment for the language. But I am not fluent. Were I a weak, poor reader, compelled to fasten my eyes on my paper the most of the time, I would do anything rather than read sermons. What others should do I do not presume to say. I merely describe what I attempt in the matter of delivery.

Beginning in the key of natural conversation, I seek to pronounce every word with fulness and exactness, and to give the right emphasis to words, syllables, clauses and sentences. I try to be as natural as possible, imitating no particular model. I study the demands of the sentiment. If I am arguing, I speak in a quiet, earnest tone. If I am quoting Scripture, gravity and reverence are aimed at. If I am denouncing sin, I speak strongly and with indignation. If I allude to Jesus and His love, I employ tones of tenderness and pathos. On the whole I seek to combine gravity with nobility in the delivering of a discourse.

There are two things I try to avoid, viz., all extravagant or imitative or unmeaning action and gesture, and secondly, the dulness of what is well known as a pulpit tone. It would take more than a usual quantity of grace to keep a congregation awake under some preaching I have heard. It seems fitted to produce torpor, and the eyes insensibly close. If my congregation is to be kept awake, attentive, on the alert for what I am to say, I must be truly animated in the delivery of the discourse. I do not mean that I should speak in a loud voice. Loudness and monotony often go hand in hand. I do not mean vivacity of gesture; that is artificial, and nothing artificial should be seen in the pulpit. What I mean is that whole expression of the preacher which betokens earnestness. Coming into the pulpit with a heart imbued with his subject, a subject on which he has spent his best thought, with thoughts best arranged so as to promote harmonious movement, he enters upon the act of preaching as if he meant business. The scene imagined in the study while writing is now actually before him. The manuscript is there, but it serves only as fuel to kindle and keep up the fire of animation. He remembers he is speaking to immortal souls, and that what he says is to tell forever on their lives, and he says it as if he meant it, and the people believe he means it, and they give him their ears. The world is shut out; one voice is heard, and the stream runs on, getting deeper, getting stronger, getting more active until the end, which is reached somewhat suddenly and not after long drawn out hammering. In some such way I try to preach; of course I do not always, or perhaps ever, reach my ideal, but I do try to deliver God's message in such a way as to convince the people that it is God's message and not mine.

Such, Mr. Editor, are a few leaves from my experience in the Art of writing and speaking the gospel. True, my experience is not the most venerable. 'Tis but eighteen years all told. If you think it too crude and immature, do not print it. Seek the words of wisdom that fall from the lips of more venerable men. I could easily have theorized—more easily have given you other men's experience. "But such as I have, give I thee." Wishing well to your excellent enterprise, and hoping that the 'Theologue' may have a long and blessed career.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

L. G. MACNEILL.

St. John, N.B., January 9, 1890.

A STRANGE WORTHY.

LATELY I chanced to see on a bookseller's counter a small volume described on the neat blue cover as "Claverhouse, by Mowbray Morris." On examination I found this to be a biography of Claverhouse, published as one of a Series by Longmans, Green and Co. under the general designation of, "English Worthies," and edited by no less an authority than Andrew Lang. Any one moderately acquainted with Scottish history will be surprised to find Claverhouse classed among English worthies. Sprung from a Scottish family of considerable antiquity, he had no connexion with England either by birth or by marriage. As the Union between Scotland and England was not accomplished till sometime after his death, he owed allegiance to the King of England as King of Scotland. And the term, *worthy*, must be understood in a sense altogether new ere Claverhouse can be placed under that category. When we find the man who in his own time and ever since has been known as, "The bloody Claverse"; who owned in one of his letters that he was called, a persecutor, and who called himself in the same letter, "a cleanser," ranked among "English worthies" and thus

placed among the great men who have lived virtuously and have conferred lasting benefits upon their country, we are forced to exclaim, is Saul among the prophets? In other words; is a man who was noted for nothing but harrassing his fellow citizens and shedding their blood, and who died in an attempt to restore a despot to the throne which he had disgraced by oppression to be classed among men of worth anywhere?

The authors of this Series have evidently taken advantage of some indefiniteness in the meaning of this term, in order to make Claverhouse appear in a new character. Without attempting a definition, it will generally be admitted that the name cannot be given to a man of depraved life, or to one who has prosecuted his purposes by actions which are criminal, or to one who has either injured or no more than failed to benefit mankind. As to his private life it must be conceded that Claverhouse was free from many of the vices prevalent in his time. At the murder of Brown of Priesthill in May, 1685, he is described by Wodrow as uttering "horrid and brutal oaths" which, though it may be questioned by those who would wish to throw doubt upon Wodrow's trustworthiness, is not the least likely part of the narrative. Men who commit atrocious crimes, often strive during the commission of them to drown the voice of conscience and stir up evil passions by blasphemous language. In any case, profane swearing would not in that day have been considered in any other light than as a gentlemanly accomplishment and particularly useful in the way of distinguishing men of fashion from Puritans and Covenanters. There may be some doubt about the profanity and we feel disposed to give Claverhouse the benefit of this doubt; for his was a settled ferocity that needed no stimulants and went to its bloody work with the cold rigor of a machine. Certainly he appears to have been uncontaminated by the licentiousness of the Restoration. He was no trimmer and probably no possible bribe could have induced him to abandon the cause which he had espoused. He was no lover of pleasure and no idler. In one of his letters from London he writes as if the pleasures of the Court of Charles II were irksome, and as if the transaction of business would have been more agreeable. Though there is evidence that he was willing to have some share in the spoils arising from fines and con-

fiscations, he appears to have profited less in this way than the corrupt and greedy statesmen by whom he was employed.

In fact, under an exterior of great calmness and behind features almost feminine in delicacy, Claverhouse nourished a deep enthusiasm. This fanaticism was as intense as that of those whom he called fanatics and whom he despised. He hated the Covenant and all who adhered to it. He made it his business to hunt down conventicles and drive the people to the Episcopal worship by fines and penalties of all kinds, extending to torture and bloodshed. He believed in episcopacy in the church and despotism on the throne. In the intensity with which he viewed the objects of his love or hatred or desire or ambition he looked from a superior height upon the vulgar vices and mean trickery of the political cabal with which he was associated. He resembled a highly tempered and glittering blade of steel fitted for any deed that required sharpness and despatch. In his views of church and state he was certainly a fanatic, and in his view of life he was probably a fatalist. His picture has been admirably drawn by the master hand of Sir Walter Scott, who is said to have had a portrait of him hanging in his study. The description corresponds with such engravings as have been published in the illustrated editions of Wodrow. "Graham of Claverhouse was low of stature and "slightly, though elegantly formed; his gesture, language, and "manners were those of one whose life had been spent among the "noble and the gay. His features exhibited even feminine regularity. An oval face, a straight and well formed nose, dark "hazel eyes, a complexion just sufficiently tinged with brown to "save it from the charge of effeminacy, a short upper lip, curved "upward like that of a Grecian statue and slightly shaded by small "mustashies of light brown, joined by a profusion of long curled "locks of the same color, which fell down on each side of his face, "contributed to form such a countenance as limmers love to paint "and ladies to look upon." The novelist evidently drew this picture from a careful study of the portrait.

None but the most blind and bigoted Jacobites can deny that he overstrained his commission, and during the eleven years which formed the whole term of his military service in Scotland built up a reputation beyond all others for relentless severity. Probably

he did not love the effusion of blood but he thought it necessary and he shed it. There were coarser men and more brutal persecutors; such as Turner, or Dalzell, or Grierson, or Lauderdale; but none so energetic, indefatigable and unpitying. During the latter part of his service, familiarly known as "The Killing Time," it was: "Take the abjuration oath or die." No time was lost and then the remorseless persecutor rode off in search of fresh victims—thus fulfilling to the utmost limit of the law the mean office of hunting a helpless peasantry. And for this he is admired as a hero by men in a distant age who enjoy a liberty of speech and worship and belief which they owe to those whom Claverhouse shot down and which he did all he could to prevent. By tortures, by fines, by nocturnal visits, by raids at all hours of the day and night, by spies in every place and, particularly, in the churches, by oaths, by confiscations, by arbitrary imprisonment and by a complete system of terrorism, accompanied by frequent executions he earned for himself a reputation for cruelty which will never die and which the quixotic efforts of a small party of admirers will never be able to efface.

It is but a poor excuse that these barbarities were perpetrated in accordance with the rules of military duty and that he had his orders. As a specimen of the style of defence adapted by Mr. Mowbray Morris in this book one passage may be given. "For Claverhouse, it should be also and always remembered, may be implicitly trusted to speak the truth in these matters, for the simple reason that he was not in the least ashamed of his work. We may well believe that it was not the work he would have chosen; but it was the work he had been set to do; and his concern was only to execute it as completely as possible. He was a soldier, obeying the orders of his superiors, for which they and they only were responsible." The apologist does not write in a bitter spirit but such is the style of defence, and a very wretched defence it is. Claverhouse had during part of the time civil as well as military jurisdiction: and while he had military command he had ample power to mitigate the rigor of his instructions. But the commissioners chose him because he was a zealous and capable instrument, and the way in which he executed his office shows that the work was to his liking; for he was fanatically devoted to the

church, which was ruled by bishops and to the throne, which at least after 1685 was filled by a Roman Catholic. And then his choice of the service was voluntary and if he did not like it, he could have resigned his commission. It is no defence that he was a "soldier of fortune," or in other words a mercenary who takes service with any power for the sake of pay, for such service is always a matter of choice, and while zeal, political or religious, may be some excuse for actions that the rest of the world would call crimes, money is so far from being an excuse that it takes away the only defence and degrades the supposed hero to the level of criminals of the the basest order.

Not only did this man whom Jacobites, Episcopalians, and their allies delight to honor confer no blessing upon his country, but his success would have been an unmitigated curse. The cause in which he fought and in which he died was not only despotism but arbitrary power of the meanest and most degrading kind. It was the cause of passive obedience to a family whose restoration had been hailed with such delight and passionate enthusiasm by all classes, that feeling as well as policy might have led them to publish a complete indemnity for the past, and to follow a constitutional way of governing for the future. But James the *second* declared that his will should be law and, when parliament would not pass his measures, then he proclaimed them to be law by his own authority. But Claverhouse did not succeed in his endeavor to support the falling house, and the men, whom he fined and imprisoned and tortured and shot down, triumphed. The whole nation came over to their side. We now enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty for which the Covenanters shed their blood. The attempts of a few critics, controlled not by scientific truth but by strong and, in some cases, romantic prejudices, will persuade few indeed to regard Claverhouse as a worthy hero or the cause in which he labored as a worthy cause.



SPIRIT MUTTERINGS.

CLASSES were over for the day, and I betook myself to the large library-room in quest of material for a popular discourse, which the Powers that Be had bidden me prepare for the following week. I searched high, I searched low, I took down dusty volumes, and referred again and again to the catalogue but nothing to my purpose could I find, and accordingly I sat down almost in despair of extracting these heads and an application from my text.

The aspect of the outside world was very different from my gloomy feelings. Bright cheery rays of an afternoon sun were glancing on the waters of the Arm, and tracing on the ground a network of shadows from the leafless trees. As the sunshine streamed into the room upon me it coaxed my churlish feelings into a reverie on the crosses of a divinity-student—on the toiling and moiling at sermon-making—and on the lumber of ancient learning stored on the shelves around me. Ere I knew it, a hubbub of moanings, murmurings, and every kind of jargon was resounding in my ears with such din, that at first I could distinguish nothing. As I became accustomed to the uproar, the sounds grew more distinct, and I began to imagine that they must come from the books—which I soon found to be true. The murmurs, and muffled speech sounded human, and the manifold complaint so touched my heart, that I rose and went in the direction of the loudest voice. This proceeded from a series of volumes bound in sombre colours with white patches on the backs bearing the titles. Taking courage from the respectable appearance of the books, I asked the meaning of the noise, and the following reply came forth in tones as solemn as those of the Delphian Oracle; “We are the spirits of great men of old, imprisoned in paper leaves and binding of cloth and leather, and we groan for that we are dishonoured by these who study here, inasmuch as not even once do they take us down that they may learn our wisdom.” Hereupon the spirit fumed, bubbled and boiled with rage. At the first lull in his passion I asked him who he was. “I am the spirit of that old divine, John Owen, and when on

earth my face was solemn, my deportment grave, my conversation wise, my speech heeded by all." Here the spirit waxed still more wroth and in incoherent words continued; "But now though I dwell in full twelve sets of twenty-four volumes each, attired in every garb such as is lawful for a Puritan to wear, this generation doth pass me by." I broke off the conversation as I saw that the good spirit was growing unbecomingly passionate, and I wandered off to another whose complaints came forth in long-rolling sentences from a frame that quivered like a volcano belching out fire and lava. So furious had been his anger that his paper leaves had turned yellow and the leather backs had shrivelled up and gaped at the seams. His apparel was anything but comely and bespoke a mind diseased. To a question from me this answer was returned in grandiose style:

"Institutio Theologiæ Elencticæ in qua status controversiæ perspicue exponitur, præcipua orthodoxorum argumenta proponuntur et vindicantur et Fontes Solutionum aperiuntur, authore Francisco Turretino in Ecclesia et Academia Genevensi Pastore et S. S. Theologiæ Professore, MDCXCVI."

Latin had become strange to me since leaving College, and the conversation being anything but entertaining, I turned aside to a small book with a comparatively contented voice, which to my delight was English. Sheep-raising was its theme, and the spirit told me how in former days a rustic farmer who had at heart the welfare of this college bequeathed him to it. The gift was not altogether valueless, for at times he is consulted in "Pastoral Theology" by the older students. This occasional perusal was the secret of his self-complacency as well as of the excessive anger of Turretinus and Dr. Thomas Browne, the latter having even burst the sides of the volume in which his reflections on Moral Philosophy were contained, through indignation at his low-bred neighbour.

The manners of the sheep-farming spirit jarred greatly on me also, and I hurried off to another side of the room where the complaints were not so loud. Here I found a voice of great pretension, and I listened as he told, now in Latin and again in English, how he had dwelt in Geneva, how he had in many a contest in theology come off victorious, how faultless was his system of Divinity, how he received his meed of honor from none but a few

youths of great promise who aspire to a new-fangled order known as *Divinitatis Baccalaurei*, and who are wont to take his counsel. I broke off in the midst of Calvin's harangue attracted by a loud jabbering such as might come from a troop of monkeys, and indeed I could with reason liken my new acquaintances to these creatures, so snarly and snappy were their dispositions, and so unwilling were they to vouchsafe to me any intelligible answer to my questions. The bindings had a foreign look, and I concluded that the spirits were also foreigners who had come from the South Sea Islands, and from Arabia, and from Syria, and from France, and from Germany; and others of them their throaty voice proclaimed to be Jews or Gaels. In the company of these foreigners I took no pleasure, and while I thought on the strange medley of sounds a squeaky voice, tremulous with ridicule, drew me away towards a dusky set of volumes, whose spirit would now and then shrill out violently some jeer, thereby causing great damage to his encasement. I found that it was the dandy Hume, enclosed in a very shabby covering, who was making merry over his place among the Theologians. This was his usual shriek: Is Saul also among the prophets?

Sceptics, above all jeering sceptics please me less than foreigners, and I was glad to turn to the spirit of the Westminster Confession, which had been long striving to gain my ear. His complaint differed from that of the others. His tone was eager, and he besought me as for his life, while he told how some sought to narrow his dwelling-place so that he could no longer abide therein; and with entreaty he urged me to hold fast by him and encourage my fellows to band themselves against those who would maltreat his venerable spirit. I felt for the poor spirit, and my compassion was increased by words that reached me from the bottom shelves—feeble words in deep bass tones as though from some Church father; and it was even so, for the plaint was that of Poli murmuring against the weaklings of these latter days who lack the strength to handle the ten-pound tomes of his *Synorum Criticorum*. And yet more, it moved my pity to behold huge spiritless books, homes abandoned by their former occupants, mere "Bodies of Divinity," in which Leigh, Ridgley, Gill and Doolittle had once dwelt.

The loudest murmurs came from the old theologians and apostolic fathers, but there were also a few modern spirits whose ejaculations were those of contentment betokening frequent removal from their shelves. These modern spirits however were few in number compared with the fathers of the church, clad in sheep-skins and goat-skins.

Above the din that rose around me, I fancied I could hear voices from some room beyond, and the cries resembled the words *Palestine has been explored*. But books on such a theme were unknown to me, and I concluded that gibbering ghosts were pent up in some of the secret closets of this haunted house.

Then new sounds began to swell upon my ear, and I seemed to hear a mighty contention and great strivings as of those who would enter the door but could not. The fray increased, and respectable names of modern theologians were bandied to and fro—Flint, Dods, Warfield, Lightfoot, Westcott, and many others. They would fain come in; they boasted of the fine new garbs in which they were attired, and claimed that their volumes were fresh, covered with gilt, adorned with all the colours of the rainbow. They sent up cries of rage at being hindered from entering the door and dispossessing the old spirits, who had moaned long enough on the shelves. I began to grow greatly alarmed and went to learn the reason of the outcry, but on opening the door I shrank back in horror, for there before it sat a formidable shape,—

“ If Shape it might be called, that Shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb.
Or Substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart. What seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.”

And on this crown was emblazoned in large letters *Impecuniosity*.

Again I saw students huddling together along the halls, and plucking their hair and crying, “ Woe to us; woe to us; for that we have Greek criticals and Hebrew criticals, and sermons and homilies, and who will deliver us from the monster that restrains the spirits who would give us aid.”

The Professors having long striven to slay the horrid shape, likewise bewailed, though with more seemly lamentation, and cried, “ What noble knight will arise and destroy for us this beast ? ”

Thereupon the cries increased so that I awoke, and lo! it was a dream.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

WE are pleased to notice the energetic and effective work that is being done by the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavour in Halifax and Dartmouth. At a late union meeting of these societies, an effort was made to bring more prominently before our citizens the nature of their work. Most convincing evidence was there given of the great good this organization is accomplishing, and of its adaptation to fill a want long felt in the church. Between the Sabbath School and full church-membership a link was wanting. Young people left our Sabbath Schools at the most critical period of their lives, with no special and regular efforts being made by the church to foster good impressions already produced. Societies were formed with various attractions for the intellectual, social, and moral welfare of the young; but it was found that spiritually they were little benefitted by these. The spiritual element was not sufficiently prominent, being kept subordinate to other ends. The Christian Endeavor Society, on the other hand, is wholly of a religious nature; and is succeeding where the others failed. Its rapid extension in nine years to its present proportions of over half a million members, is a sufficient indication of its inherent worth. Our clergymen who have branches of this society in their congregations, speak of it in the highest terms. It encourages bible-study; brings clearly before the careless, examples of practical piety; trains young Christians to speak and work for Christ; and acts as a quickening impulse upon the whole church. The constitution of the society is good. The pledge requires no more of a Christian than he should consider his duty without it. It imposes work which none feel to be burdensome, and which is calculated to develop greater effort. The prayer-meeting topics, neatly arranged for the year, present a great variety of suggestive subjects well suited for the young. The "Golden Rule," the organ of the society, is ably conducted and of invaluable assistance; though we think it would accomplish yet better work were it a cheaper paper with wider circulation. The more we

see of the working of this society, the more heartily does it commend itself to us; and we think that soon it, or something similar, will be considered as essential to our church organization as the Bible class or Sabbath schools.

THE Presbyterian ministers of Halifax and Dartmouth, have very wisely arranged to exchange pulpits, once every month. There are many advantages from such a system. The ministers will have more time for visiting their people, which is quite an important part of their work. A successful pastor may do more real and lasting good than a brilliant preacher. They will also be relieved of study to a certain extent, which, to a minister who has to prepare two sermons every week, is no small item. We know of no position in life, that calls for more thought and more persistent study than that of a city minister. It requires genius of the highest order, to produce two good sermons every week, so that even this small relief ought to be hailed with pleasure by pastors and people, for all will profit by it.

It will also tend to a more fraternal feeling among the congregations. The members of the different congregations will learn, that all goodness is not centred in their own pastor; so that one will not say I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos. The sovereignty of Christ cannot be kept too prominently before us.

Apart from this, however, we must remember that our congregation is only part of the whole Church, and that our minister belongs to the Church more than to us. The congregational idea is far too prominent in many places. No enterprise meets with such favour as one which will make our own congregation more influential or respectable, and very often the good of the Church at large is sacrificed to local interests. We need to learn that we are part of a grand church, and where local interests clash with the good of the whole, let the wider view be taken. We might mention cases, where the desire to build up a central congregation has prevented the establishing of mission churches in promising localities, till it was too late. And on the other hand, the desire to hold on in opposition to other denominations, has been the cause of continuing missions which never can increase, and this at the expense of men and money very much needed elsewhere.

It might be well to consider, whether this idea of exchange of pulpits might not be extended still further, even to the adoption in a modified form, of the Methodist system of allocation of ministers for a term of years. Long pastorates in many cases are very desirable, but very often the congregational wheels would run more smoothly, if, after a number of years the minister were removed to another field where he might do better work. When pastor and people are not in sympathy, and such cases do occur, good work cannot be done; and it would be well if some way of escape were provided, without causing such a jar as now takes place, when a minister is forced to resign perhaps through no fault of his. Practically our present system does not secure long pastorates, except in a few cases, and such could easily be provided for under any system.

Another important advantage of such a system is that when a mission is to be established in a promising locality, the whole church is at the back of it. Any one of the ministers may be sent to such a place, and the men best suited for building up a cause can be chosen. With our present system such places are almost sure to get the men whom no other place wants, and so the cause goes back.

Thus let us learn lessons from our sister churches, and they in turn can learn from us, until each having assimilated the good points of the others, we shall become so much alike, that we cannot help being one. Then unity and brotherly love will be supreme over all nice distinctions in doctrine, and Christ will be all in all.

THE Reports for the past year, that have been presented by the different congregations of our church, on the whole shew cause for congratulation. True, in some instances there may be a falling off, but taking the church as a whole steady progress has been made. This is what might be expected in the light both of prophecy and experience. The leaven is to spread until it leaveneth the whole lump. The principles which the church teaches have proved themselves adapted to the practical needs of humanity. Looked at carefully and impartially, the Christian religion compels us to only one conclusion; which is at

the same time the only reasonable one : hence, as Prof. Drummond says, in order to get larger numbers of our young men to openly avow Christian principles, the church has only to present them in such a manner as will arrest their attention and convince their reason. We do not mean by this that the cold, dry exposition of doctrine is all that is required, as if man were a mere reasoning machine ; for the truth must be presented in an agreeable and attractive manner if it is to impress. The more presentable it is the more likely is it to win and control. But, on the other hand, mere sentimental preaching is not sufficient to win those whose allegiance is most desirable. Both the heart and mind must be influenced, if the word that goes forth is to accomplish what is desired.

Although expecting and fully believing in the church's advance and final supremacy, yet it affords satisfaction to receive from time to time definite testimony in proof of her progress. There is evidence in our reports that faithful and honest work is being done by our ministers. Faithful in the rebuttal of error, loyal to truth, ready ever to raise their voice on those occasions on which they may add to the sum total of truth or *adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour, the work in which they are engaged is blessed and the church of God extended.

It is unfortunately true that there are some who are actively and deliberately engaged in opposing that extension, and who seek to shatter to its very foundations that old faith that has been, and is, such an elevating power in the world. But let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. In dealing with such opponents, the Christian minister is sometimes at a loss what course to pursue. We think a mistake is often made in giving such people too much time and attention. It is as useless to endeavour to make any direct impression on a certain class of opponents of Christianity at the present time, as it would have been for our Saviour to have entered into an argument with the false accusers and perjured witnesses, who vainly sought to incriminate Him as He stood before the Council. An exposition of the truth even by Him who was Truth Incarnate, could produce no effect upon such ; therefore the attempt was not made. Various types of the characters represented at that gathering are to be found at the present day ; and Christ's followers will find,

that in reference to them the example of the Master may here as elsewhere be profitably followed. It is no part of the mission of Truth to act as an advertising medium for the propagation of error. To go to the extent of engaging in public discussion with blatant Infidels, is not only to soil the skirts of Christianity, and lift erroneous doctrines into greater prominence, but also to engage in a most unworthy cause, those energies that should be devoted to the most important of all undertakings,—the saving of souls from the power and penalty of sin.

The parting mission of the risen Saviour was not that His people should be engaged in foolish questions, or doubtful disputations, or in strifes about words to no profit; but in making disciples and in building them up in the principles of truth, righteousness and Godliness. In proportion as we are true to this mission, will our efforts be successful in upbuilding the church of God, in rebuking error, in destroying the works of darkness, in saving men from sin, and in nurturing noble Christian characters. If this is done, the works of Christianity may very safely be left to speak for it; as they must commend it to all not hardened by sin or wilfully blinded by their own perversity. Christianity consists not simply of doctrine but mainly of practice; hence our aim should be so to live as that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed having no evil thing to say of us. The success that attends their efforts, notwithstanding the increased activity of the powers of evil, warrants us in believing that the large majority of our ministers are true to this inspired teaching. As students it should be our aim to so thoroughly fit ourselves for coming duties, as that no phase of God's work that may be entrusted to us, may suffer; but that we too may prove good and faithful servants.

MODERN criticism has invaded precincts long regarded as sacred. Even the clergyman who was once looked upon as a superior kind of being is now closely scrutinized, and his methods of work are freely discussed, occasionally indeed from mere delight in fault-finding, though censure is too often justified by some incapacity or high-handed dealing on the part of the

minister himself. This overturning of the almost papal infallibility of the parish minister, while undoubtedly a great improvement on the former state of things, has brought evils in its train; but it is not our intention to discuss how far this new feature is advantageous to the church or otherwise.

We purpose making a few suggestions from the student's standpoint, which may be of service to our fellows for the avoidance of that most common rock of offence—ministerial inefficiency—which has been brought into prominence by the spirit of criticism above referred to.

In the first place, we should remember that the minister is for the church and *not* the church for the minister. Bearing this in mind we can deduce two requisites, apart from the higher endowments of the Holy Spirit, for every minister who would be worthy of his vocation. He should primarily fit himself with every mental qualification in his power, that he may present the truth in as attractive a way as possible. This of course involves hard work—very hard and often monotonous work, but he has chosen his calling and must be prepared to abide by the consequences of his choice, and his duty is to consider the needs of his people and not his own comfort. Indolence in a minister is surely doubly reprehensible. Unless, as students, we root up this vice, we shall in our ministerial life have a thick growth of habits to clear away. At college we acquire right methods of study, and lay by store of material from which we may draw in the future, thus fortifying ourselves beforehand against the possibility of pulpit inefficiency.

But the active duties of the pastorate consisting in personal contact with the people, are well-nigh, if not equally, as important as pulpit work, and hence the second qualification of the ideal minister is Christian gentlemanliness. A man must not be merely a good preacher, he must be all things to all men. Kindly and polite in his intercourse with his people, of an urbanity that will place him on a par with the most refined of his flock, attentive to the most humble, without patronizing them, and without free from everything that savours of dogged obstinacy. In these respects he follows in the footsteps of his Master, and of the apostle Paul who in his epistles evinces a most delicate regard and genuine considerateness for those

to whom he writes. The Christian gentleman will come off more than conqueror from conflicts in which a boorish or arbitrary course of conduct would only have increased the strife.

It is as students that we must accustom ourselves to treat the opinions of others with the respect which is their due, that we must seek to acquire a courteous bearing that will offend none, equipping ourselves in what way soever we may deem likely to fit us for an office, the responsibility and dignity of which should be the most powerful incentive to a careful preparation.



COLLEGE NOTES.

An unknown friend has very kindly presented each of the students of Pine Hill, and those in Dalhousie who are looking forward to the ministry, with a copy of Dr. Paterson's life of Dr. Geddie. In the name of the students we heartily thank the donor for the very acceptable gift.

The opportunity which the students have of attending the course of lectures, provided by the Halifax Y. M. C. A., should not be neglected. Professor Seth's talk on Wordsworth was highly appreciated by all, and to those familiar with the poet, it was a treat.

Our home in Pine Hill like all other habitations of man was invaded by La Grippe. Some had symptoms, some thought they had. Some were sick a few very sick. When we thought all danger past another victim was laid low. This seemed the most unkindest cut of all for the doctor had to be called in and soon a rash appeared on the victim's face, accompanied with more or less delirium. After several visits the physician having diagnosed the case pronounced it measles. This was a relief to us as it at once explained the *rashness* of the *Grippe*.

The Pine Hill Presbytery, of whose formation we gave notice in our last, has been holding meetings at intervals. The heresy case was dismissed for lack of evidence. A meeting of the Synod was held recently. At the first sederunt the question of college extension was discussed. A resolution was brought forward proposing the enlargement of our present building, by the addition of a mansard roof and wings. Several important considerations were advanced in support of this resolution; but the majority of the meeting were in favour of the disposal of the present building and the removal of the college to a site near the University. The question was referred to a general students meeting, an account of which we hope to give in our next issue.

Mid sessional examinations are over and now we are on the home stretch for April, when our feathers will again be in danger. April is the moulting season for college birds. Then also we fly to all parts of the land.

The Elocution Class is doing good work under the able direction of Miss McGarry.

The professors propose to substitute for the usual monthly sermon on Sabbath afternoon, a conference for the discussion of religious subjects. The professors to preside in turn and all to join in the discussion.

Our College Societies are all doing well. The prayer meeting is attended by all who can possibly be present, and a good spirit pervades the meetings. Although we have had many interesting meetings of our debating society, it was felt by our students that more attention should be paid to literary subjects, and accordingly it has been resolved to devote the remaining meetings of the society to the consideration of such themes. A very interesting discussion of Mathew Arnold was held last Thursday evening. A paper was read by Mr. Greenlees treating of his life and his position as an agnostic and the expression of his views in his poetry. The subject having been thus opened up the members were not slow to follow up the lines of thought suggested. Next evening will be occupied with the poetry of Browning illustrated by readings from several of his best poems. We believe that the benefit of these meetings will be seen in an increased literary interest among our students.

Since the Xmas. vacation the number of general students' meetings has been somewhat smaller than usual, until the last few weeks, when things have been rather lively. Our students' meetings are thoroughly enjoyed by all. A friendly passage at arms on some debatable question acts as a tonic on the whole system, fills the mind with fresh vigour, and rouse up the sluggish blood to freer circulation. The good feeling and respect for the opinions of opponents, which characterize all our discussions, are highly commendable. Few if any attempts at sarcasm or wit at the expense of the feelings of others have been made.

The recent cold weather has made very apparent the want of suitable heating apparatus in the college buildings, the dining room having been especially uncomfortable. A single grate is quite insufficient to heat such a large room, and we hope that by next year an improvement will be made to at least the extent of having it warmed by one or more stoves pending a change in the system of heating the building.

On Friday 21st, in response to the kind invitation of Mr. Fraser, Principal of the Institution for the Blind, a goodly number of students were present at an entertainment given by his pupils in exhibition of their methods of work. Those present were very much pleased with the exercises of the evening which consisted of vocal and instrumental music, reading, writing and mental arithmetic in all of which and the proficiency was marked. The shrewdness of the principal was shown in the course of his remarks when he explained that his object was not merely for pleasure but to enlist our sympathy and secure our help in furthering his plans for the erection of a new wing to the building. We are glad to know that already \$7000 out of the \$12,000 necessary have been subscribed and we hope that the remainder will soon be forthcoming.



REVIEW.

IMAGO CHRISTI: THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST, BY REV. JAMES STALKER, M. A., New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1889.

One of the most significant and hopeful tendencies in the theological teaching of our day is the application of the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ to the various problems of life. This tendency will receive fresh stimulus and onward sweep from the volume before us. Mr. Stalker is a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, well-known on the other side of the Atlantic as a preacher of marked spiritual insight and rare intellectual power. He is revered as a teacher by thousands who never saw his face or heard his voice, because they owe to him their clearest conceptions of our Lord and His greatest Apostle. The lives of Christ and Paul written by him have run through a large number of editions. Models of condensed exposition, crystal clear in thought and statement, and put together with exquisite literary taste, they were eagerly welcomed as supplying a felt want by many who longed for brief yet adequate presentation of the salient features in the character and work of the founder and of the expounder of Christianity. One who could do so much was expected to do more. He has amply fulfilled the expectation by writing "Imago Christi."

"Imago Christi" is a new imitation of Christ. Thomas à Kempis's immortal work, while possessing a charm and helpfulness all its own, is not adapted to the fuller religious life and peculiar environment of the 19th century christian. Its usefulness, as Mr. Stalker points out, is marred by defects more or less inseparable from the time and circumstances in which it was written. Penned by a monk and coloured by the spirit of the cloister, it cannot speak with power to the freedom and perils of the larger world in which we move and have our being. Its author was a man who lived one hundred years before the Reformation republished the cardinal doctrines of Pauline theology, so we can scarcely wonder at the scant justice it does to such fundamental truths as righteousness by faith and union with Christ; and worst of all, it labours under the serious limitations

of an imperfect realization of Christ as the Lord of thought, the standard of conduct, and the dominating figure in human life.

Hence the need for a new imitation of Christ. Mr. Stalker had not the daring courage consciously to buckle himself to the task of supplying this want, but circumstances led him into a line of research which qualified him for the task. Modestly yet with sure-footed conviction, he put the result of his studies of Christ's teaching by example into a series of chapters covering the different departments of man's activity. It is no exaggeration to say that by so doing he has made his readers his lasting debtors.

The plan of the work is to divide the circle of human life into segments, each of which embraces a definite sphere of experience and duty. How our Lord conducted Himself in each is clearly, often picturesquely told. He is presented to us as our Model in the home, in the state, in the church, in friendship, in society, in prayer, in studying the Scriptures, in working, in suffering, in philanthropy, in winning souls, in preaching, in teaching, in feeling and in wielding influence. So in the words and deeds of the Perfect One we are furnished with true foot prints on the sands of time, by help of which we can guide our steps into paths of righteousness and peace.

Tempting extracts appeal for quotation, but, even if my space permitted, it would be unfair to tear gems from their appropriate setting. One I may be permitted to give, not so much because it is better than many other passages as because of its forceful application to those who look forward to spending their lives in the noble work of preaching. In speaking of Christ as a preacher, Mr. Stalker says: "Of course the subjects which formed the substance of Christ's preaching cannot here be enumerated. It must suffice to say that His matter was always the most solemn and vital which can be presented to the human mind. He spoke of God in such a way that His hearers felt as if to their eyes God was now light, and in Him was no darkness at all. As He uttered such parables as the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son, it seemed as if the gates of Heaven were thrown open and they could see the very beatings of the heart of the divine mercy. He spoke of man so as to make every hearer feel that till that moment he had never been acquainted either with himself or with the human race. He made every man conscious that he

carried in his own bosom, that which was more precious than worlds; and that the passing hours of his apparently trivial life were charged with issues reaching high as heaven and deep as hell. When He spoke of eternity, He brought life and immortality, which men before then had only vaguely guessed at, fully to light, and described the world behind the veil with the graphic and familiar force of one to whom it was as no unknown country. Is it any wonder that the crowds followed Him, that they hung spell-bound on His lips, and could never get enough of His preaching? Intoxicated as men are with the secularities of this world they know deep down, that they belong to another, and, interesting as the knowledge of this world is the questions about the other world, will always be far more fascinating to the spirit of man. Whence am I? What am I? Whither am I going? Unless preaching can answer these questions, we may shut our churches. That voice which sounded on the Galilean mountain side, and which spoke of these mysteries so familiarly, we, indeed, shall never hear, till we hear it from the great white throne. But the heart and the spirit that embodied themselves in these sounds never die; they live and burn to-day as they did then. Whenever a preacher strikes correctly a note of the eternal truth, it is Christ that does it. Whenever a preacher makes you feel that there is a world of realities above and behind the one that you see and touch; whenever he lays hold of your mind, touches your heart, awakens your aspiration, rouses your conscience—that is Christ trying to grasp you, to reach you with His love, to save you. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

"Imago Christi" is emphatically a book for theological students and ministers. It gives new glimpses into the character and work of our Lord. Fresh in thought, devout in tone, epigrammatic in style, and thoroughly loyal to the truths of revelation, it comes as a boon to preachers weary of the shallow and sentimental stuff offered to them as mental pabulum. It has one other quality, too often conspicuous by absence in theological literature, the quality of inspiring enthusiasm. Through all its pages there runs a glow which frequently breaks into a flame to warm as well as lighten. Be sure to buy it, and when you have bought it—read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it.

DAVID SUTHERLAND.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

McL. Harvey, \$1.50; Hon. D. C. Fraser, Rev. J. R. Coffin, Rev. G. Hamilton, Rev. James A. Forbes, Rev. C. Bruce, Rev. J. D. McGillivray, Rev. Dr. Pollock, \$1.00 each; G. M. Johnson, D. L. Harvey, Rev. M. Campbell, F. W. Thomson, J. A. McGlashan, Miss M. A. McLeod, J. W. Falconer, R. A. Falconer, Charles McKay, Simon Fraser, J. D. Logan, Dr. Currie, Prof. McGregor, A. V. Morash, Rev. M. G. Henry, Rev. R. C. Quinn, Rev. E. S. Bayne, Rufus Harvey, Rev. A. W. Mahon, Rev. J. S. Carruthers, Rev. J. K. Bearisto, Rev. Dr. McClelland, Rev. George Fisher, Joseph Greenlees, Rev. D. McGregor, Rev. George McMillan, Rev. John McMillan, Rev. A. Campbell, Rev. Dr. McKnight, Rev. David Wright, Rev. J. H. Chase, Rev. J. F. Forbes, Rev. D. McDonald, Rev. J. R. Munro, Miss Minnie Fraser, Robert Frew, Alex. McKenzie, Hon. David Laird, Rev. Willard McDonald, Mitchell Fisher, Rev. J. A. McKenzie, Rev. R. D. Ross, Rev. W. Dawson, Rev. J. G. Blair, J. P. Falconer, Rev. J. M. Robinson, Rev. T. A. Nelson, Wm. Glassie, Rev. A. W. Lewis, John McKenzie, A. H. Henderson, Prof. Tweedie, Rev. R. McLeod, Rev. A. McMillan, J. K. Fraser, Rev. K. McKenzie, Rev. J. W. McLennan, Robert Grierson, Rev. H. H. McPherson, R. Mellish, Rev. Thomas Sedgwick, Rev. T. Cumming, Rev. H. K. McLean, Rev. D. McDougall, J. A. Matheson, 50 cents each; D. McDonald, 30 cents.

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