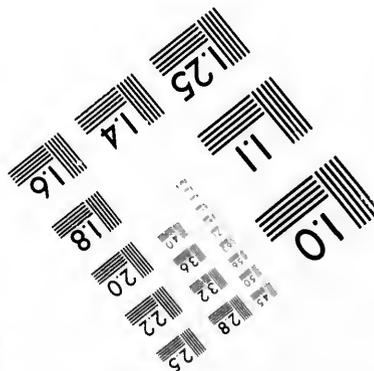
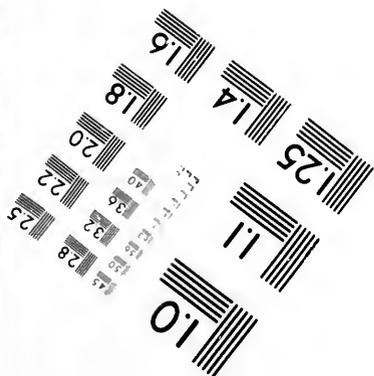
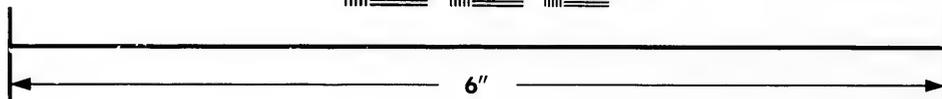
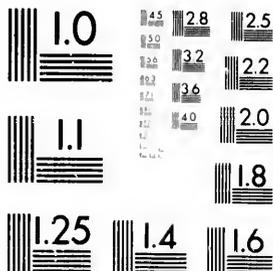


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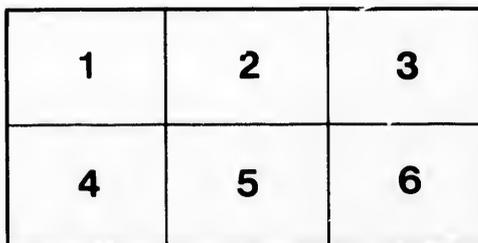
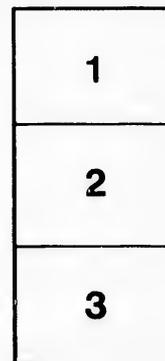
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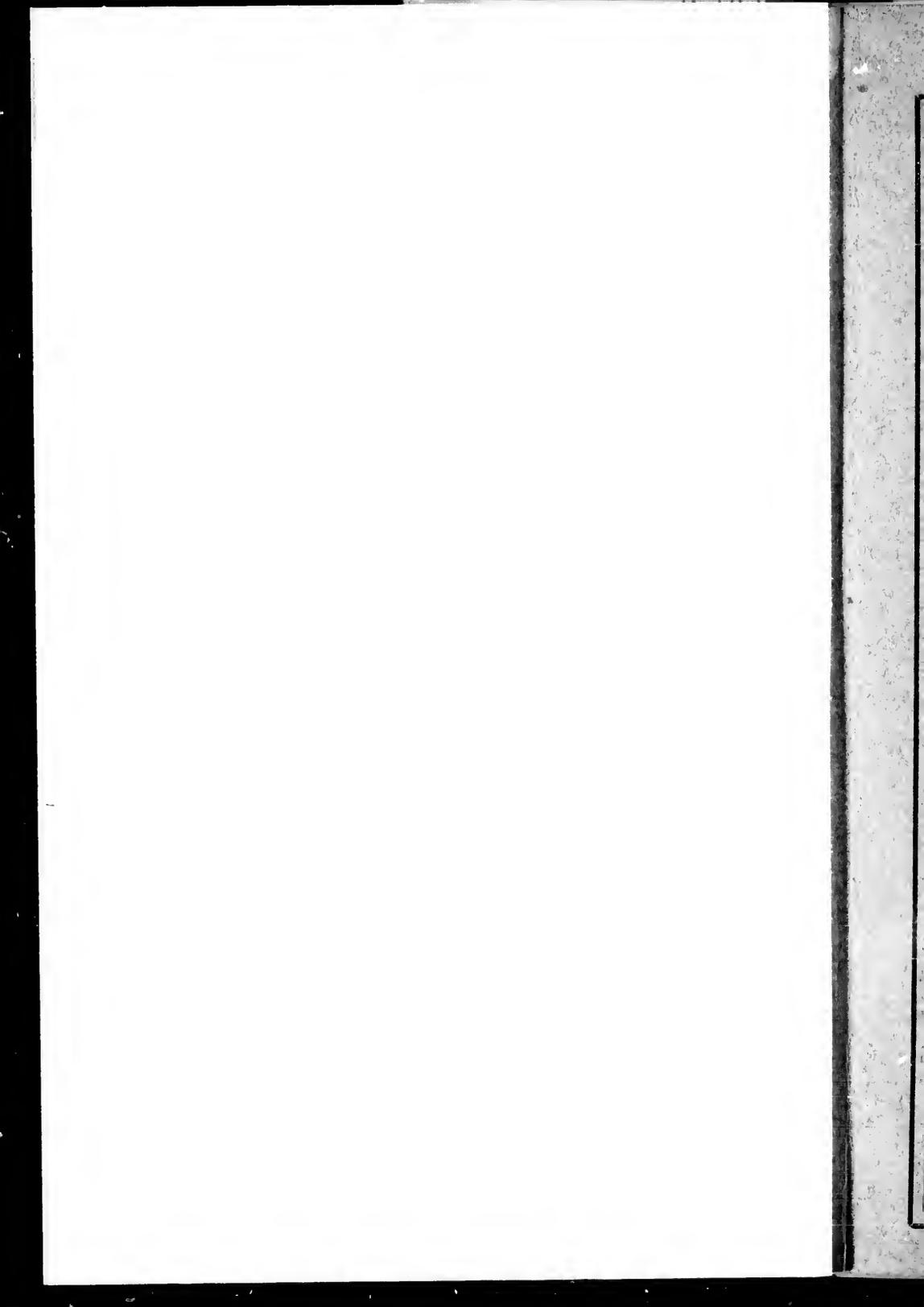
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MANITOBA COLLEGE.

THREE GREAT PREACHERS

(VINET, LIDDON AND NEWMAN)

— BEING —

The Opening Lecture of the Theological Department,

OCTOBER 30TH, 1890.

BY REV. JOHN M. KING, D.D.,

Principal of Manitoba College.

WINNIPEG :
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THREE GREAT PREACHERS.

(VINET, LIDDON AND NEWMAN.)

— BEING —

THE OPENING LECTURE OF THE THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

At the recent opening of the session of the Theological Department of Manitoba College, Rev. Principal King delivered the following lecture:—

Among the too numerous subjects assigned to the chair of the Principal of Manitoba College, Homiletics, at least since the Rev. Mr. Pitblado's regretted departure, has had to have a place. In dealing with this branch of preparation for the ministry, my plan has been to state and expound with as much fulness as possible the more important principles of the Science or the Art (it is both); and in addition to pass in review some of the more eminent preachers, both of earlier and of later times, with the view of ascertaining their distinctive merits and of fixing attention on the sources of their power.

In pursuance of the latter part of this plan, and as also supplying a subject which may not be without interest to the Christian public, who have favored us with their presence, I desire to speak to you this evening of an illustrious triad of preachers; Vinet, Liddon and Newman. Superficially viewed, they may appear to have very little in common, more closely regarded they will be found to have much; I am not concerned, however, to justify their combination in this lecture by any other consideration than this, that they have all been, in very different degrees indeed, helpful to myself in exercising the ministry; more, perhaps, than any other preachers, whose acquaintance has been made simply through their published writings. Of the three, one spoke in French, the other two in our English tongue. The former ended his career almost half a century ago, the grave has just closed over the two latter. Exercising their gifts in spheres wide apart, and amid very different surroundings, it will be found that in their hearts they adored the same Saviour, and by their eloquence vindicated the same essential and eternal verities.

VINET.

Vinet, the first named, was born towards the close of the last century in Lausanne, one of the most beautiful cities in Switzerland, or, indeed, in the world; having at its feet the blue waters of the lake of Geneva, and in the distance, but in full view, the majestic and snow-clad peaks of Mont Blanc. He received his education in his native city, which then as now was the seat of an ancient school of learning. He was destined to the ministry by his father, but having early displayed literary and philosophical abilities of a high order, he was, at the age of twenty-two, appointed professor of the French language and literature in the University of Basle, receiving ordination as a minister of the Gospel about the same period. In that famous border city, even at that early date the scene of zealous missionary enterprise, Vinet continued to teach from 1819 to 1838. There probably he formed those decidedly spiritual views of religion, which are found in all his discourses. In 1838 he was recalled to his native city as professor of theology; a position which, first in connection with the ecclesiastical establishment, and afterwards with the newly formed Free Church of the Canton de Vaud, he occupied until his death. He was in his day a prolific author, giving to the press as many as twelve or fourteen volumes on various subjects of a literary, philosophical or religious character. It is his sermons only with which we have to do here. These were given to the public at various times, and comprise in all several volumes. A large number of the most striking of them have been made accessible to the English reader in two volumes, entitled respectively, *Vital Christianity* and *Gospel Studies*.

The sermon must take its character to a large extent from the audience to which it is addressed. Its form, its contents even, must be governed in some degree by the needs, the tastes, certainly by the intellectual and moral appreciations of those whom it is designed to help. Vinet addressed himself largely to men of culture, many of whom were either uneasy in their hold on the Christian faith or had actually relinquished it under the influence of the materialistic and skeptical thought of the age. It was his aim to recover for them their impaired or their lost religious convictions. This aim he seeks to accomplish by calling attention with rare and penetrating insight to the spiritual in man, and to the adaptation of the gospel to all its deeper needs and its loftier aspirations. The worthlessness of all material splendors; the insignificance of all merely intellectual achievements, the transcendent glory

of the moral and the spiritual above all triumphs of intellect, as seen in the widow's mite cast into the treasury, in the box of ointment broken by the hand of prescient love on the Saviour's person, in the tears of penitence washing His feet; the mystery of human sorrow, the boundlessness of human aspiration, the blending grandeur and beauty of the Saviour's character, the power which belongs to the heart—to love—to apprehend and to verify the gospel; these supply him with the lofty themes on which he discourses with marvellous force and eloquence. Without being formally and directly an argument for Christianity, these sermons are only the more really an apologetic of the most effective kind; one by which the faith of many a hesitating believer has been greatly strengthened. A brief quotation will be of more service than any description in enabling you to understand and appreciate this characteristic of the discourses of Vinet. "Humanity hath separated itself from God. The storms of passion have broken the mysterious cable which retained the vessel in port. Shaken to its base, and feeling itself driven upon unknown seas it seeks to rebind itself to the shore; it endeavours to renew its broken strands; it makes a desperate effort to re-establish these connections without which it cannot have either peace or security. In the midst of its greatest wanderings, humanity never loses the idea of its origin and destiny; a dim recollection of its ancient harmony pursues and agitates it; and without renouncing its passions, without ceasing to love sin, it longs to reattach its being full of darkness and misery to something luminous and peaceful and its fleeting life to something immovable and eternal. In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions which cover the earth are an insult to the unknown God, who is their object. But in the midst of these monstrous aberrations, a sublime instinct is revealed; and each of these false religions is a painful cry of the soul, torn from its centre and separated from its object. It is a despoiled existence which in seeking to clothe itself, seizes upon the first rags it finds; it is a disordered spirit, which, in the ardour of its thirst, plunges all panting into fetid and troubled waters; it is an exile who in seeking the road to his native land, buries himself in frightful deserts."

But these discourses are much more than a powerful argument for the Gospel; they are a singularly beautiful exhibition of its contents and of its spirit. They are the former mainly, indeed, in virtue of being the latter. They are not less

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

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

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feeble, I give to them the milk which has nourished myself. When some of us become stronger than the rest we will together demand the bread of the strong." Hence the entire freedom from cant, the naturalness, the wise and attractive reasonableness of the discourses composed in such a spirit; contrasting, oh, how strongly, with the wild extravagance, the vulgar exaggeration, the frank egotism which is displayed by more than one prominent pulpit of our day. Surely popularity is purchased at too great a cost, when it involves the sacrifice at once of the sacredness of the sanctuary and the self-respect of the preacher.

There is still another characteristic of Vinet's sermons, too striking to be passed over even in this brief estimate; they are marked by a certain tinge of sadness—marked, not marred; it is in part even the secret of the charm which they have for the sensitive reader. For the tone of melancholy, if one must designate it by such a term, which pervades them, is that of a pure and gentle spirit, saddened and chastened by the sight of human sin and human suffering. One has only to listen to its strains to confess their spell. "Every soul, doubtless, carries within itself a treasure of sorrow. It is even a condition of our nature, that in all our joys, even the most intense I know not what sorrow ever mingles, as in a song of gladness, a hollow murmur, or a stifled groan. It might be said that the very voice of joy awakens in the depths of the soul a slumbering grief;" or again "Life is passed amid temptations to joy incessantly repressed. Joy has moments, sorrow the whole of life. That is a moment of joy when a cherished hope is realized; that is a life of sorrow, when we feel that the successive realization of all our hopes has not filled the infinite abyss of the soul. That is a moment of joy, which gives us the smile of a beautiful day; the sun so pleasant to behold, the free development of any of our powers, the feeling of existence in the plenitude of health; that is a life of sorrow which hurries promiscuously to the abyss before us our good and our evil hours, our pains and our pleasures, nay more, our soul itself; for the thoughts and affections of which it is composed precede us to the tomb, while of all that we possess and all we have been, we can retain nothing, no, not even our most cherished griefs." Or once more "From the very sources of our happiness spring forth bitter sorrows. Our most tender attachments arm death with some of his sharpest darts; for although St. Paul has said with truth that "the sting of death is sin," it is true that this sting multiplies itself and makes sharp points of all the flowers with which we deck our heads. Every crown of

flowers, sooner or later, becomes a crown of thorns." And what depth of reflective thought, as well as tenderness of plaintive sorrow have we not in these words! "To blunt the sting of grief, time is better than pride; but time wears out the soul as well as all the rest. The power of forgetting is only a weakness. Life thus becomes less sorrowful, but it also becomes less serious, less noble."

It is almost unnecessary to add, after what has been said and what has been quoted, that Vinet has found warm admirers in every country which his works have reached; not only in his native Switzerland, but in Germany, in France, in England and in America. His sermons are not indeed popular in the ordinary sense of that term. They are for the most part religious essays or meditations. They are made to be read and re-read. That is perhaps their defect as sermons. They have to seek and to select their audience, but they hold it without difficulty when once found. How indeed could it be otherwise with discourses which exhibit so rare a union of intellectual and moral excellence, such originality of conception, such depth of insight, such elevation of sentiment, such precision and beauty of expression, such wealth of imagination, such warmth of affection, such tenderness, such humility. Add to this a personality singularly bright and gentle, enriched with the best culture of France and Germany, and adorned with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," and it cannot surprise us that Vinet has won a very high place in the esteem and affection of thoughtful Christians in Europe and America. Years before I made my first visit to the continent of Europe, he had passed out of life, but at one point and another—in a lovely chateau, the home of a refined Christian family, on the slopes of the Jura, and in the midst of a quiet Moravian community in Germany—I met those who had known the man as well as waited on his teaching, and had cause to note the warm and reverend affection with which they cherished the memory of his blending genius and goodness. For myself (if I may be permitted a personal allusion on this occasion) I confess I owe more to Vinet for intellectual stimulus and spiritual help than to any uninspired teacher.

LIDDON.

In passing from Vinet to Liddon, we encounter many striking contrasts; the one philosophic and critical, the other authoritative and dogmatic; the one timid and self-distrustful, without the courage to open his mouth even once in the beautiful and spacious cathedral of his native city, the other to the last, filling with his ringing voice and his stately periods the far larger St. Paul's; the one carrying conciliation to the verge of compromise, the other dogmatism to the verge of defiance. Each was in a manner true to his nationality; in the one the light touch, the airy brilliance of the Frenchman, in the other the vigorous directness, the robust self-assertion of the Englishman. In Liddon we miss the philosophical insight, the subtle beauty, the sweet persuasiveness of Vinet, but we find in him on the other hand, a massiveness of thought, a grandeur of statement and an authoritativeness of utterance, which Vinet cannot claim. Enquirers after truth will linger over the pages of the one; the mass, even of the thoughtful, craving above all else, certainty in regard to spiritual things, will hang on the lips of the other, or, as death has now sealed these, will turn to the writings in which the author has expressed his unshaken faith in the great Christian verities.

In addition to his great Bampton lecture on the Divinity of Christ, Liddon published from time to time several volumes of sermons, some of them preached in Oxford, before the University, and others, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Those in which, so far as my acquaintance goes, he is seen at his best are found in the two volumes entitled "University Sermons" and "Some words for God." But while naturally of unequal merit, they are all strong, and bating their sacerdotalism true to Scripture teaching and strengthening to faith.

At the time of his death, a few weeks ago, Liddon stood by almost universal consent at the head of the English pulpit. Whenever it was known that he was to preach, the great cathedral was filled with an audience embracing indeed all classes, but in which there were sure to be found many men of liberal culture, and among them some of the leading intellects of the day. Young men of education waited with eagerness on his ministrations. Many Londoners had for years never missed an opportunity of hearing him; and his popularity seems to have continued without diminution to the last. What was its secret? No single explanation, we may be sure, will suffice. There must have been more than one element of power in the preacher who could attract and re-

tain through so many years an audience so large and of such a character.

In accounting for this success we are safe in giving a foremost place to the prominence which the great and supernatural facts of redemption, and the doctrines which grow out of these facts, received in his preaching. These are not simply presupposed, argued, defended; they are proclaimed, and proclaimed with an authority which comes not from the speaker, but from God who has put His word into his mouth and with an enthusiasm which is born of his own assured faith in their verity. He is not a philosopher propounding a theory, not a critic inquiring into the truth of a system, not a mere moralist enforcing a code of ethics; he is first and before all else a preacher, a man with a message which he has received, in which he believes, which it is his to expound and apply, but in any case to proclaim, and to proclaim in the very terms in which it has been given and with all the marvellous significance attaching to it. Not his to reduce by a single hair's breadth the vast proportions of the truth, not his to tone down the dimensions of the supernatural, whether as displayed in the Saviour's incarnation and Godhead or in the sinner's regeneration to newness of life; his rather to assert and to emphasize it, wherever Holy Scripture teaches him to find its presence, whether in creation or in redemption; sometimes, perhaps, as in his sacramentarian views, to discover and assert its presence where it is not.

Liddon's preaching is thus distinctively doctrinal, even dogmatic. The great common places of religion,—God and eternity, sin and grace, redemption and atonement, death and judgment, are neither ignored, nor thrown into the back ground. On the contrary they are constantly upon his lips. They form the staple of his discourse. The only effect on the preacher of the destructive criticism or of the impudent denials of the time—and it is unmistakable—is to compel a deeper and truer conception of these essential and eternal verities, to stiffen the grasp with which they are held, and to intensify the emphasis with which they are proclaimed. It should be added, as all important to an understanding of his success, that these verities so often superficially viewed, assume a deeper significance, become invested with a more solemn grandeur, in the hands of this great preacher. Set in the light of his powerful intellect and glowing imagination, they are seen to possess larger proportions, to have deeper and wider implications in the principles of human reason and the facts of human experience, than had been previously discerned: while ever and again there flashes out some allusive phrase,

or some flaming metaphor, which at once widens and illumines the spiritual horizon, or opens out in it new and boundless vistas for thought and fancy to explore. As the result, the hearer is both confirmed in his faith in revealed truth and made to feel its possession to be a more than ever inestimable treasure.

I cannot doubt that these qualities in the sermons of Canon Liddon supply the main explanation of their wonderful power. Something no doubt was due to the speaker's fine presence, to his powerful and melodious voice heard distinctly at the farthest point in that vast building, to his passion born of deep conviction, to his massive and stately oratory, and to the unique and attractive personality, which was behind the words and lent them weight; but after due allowance has been made for all these, it still remains true, that what more than all else gave this far-famed preacher the power to attract and to retain his crowding audiences, was his strong grasp of the fundamental verities of the Gospel, his deep and devout insight into their meaning and the assured and assuring confidence with which he never ceased to proclaim them.

One point more, and we take farèwell of Liddon. I have spoken of the vein of melancholy which is so frequently met with in the sermons of Vlnet. A similar tinge of sadness appears, though perhaps less obtrusively, in those of Liddon. With all the strong personal faith which they express, they cannot be spoken of as predominantly hopeful. There are frequently forthcoming in them, not only the sad vicissitudes of human life, its inconsolable griefs, but also the weary struggle of the faith, its dark outlook, the possibility of partial and temporary defeat even, before the hour of final triumph. The sorrow, the unrest, the oft baffled endeavour of the age is again and again sympathetically reflected in the words and the tones of the great preacher; and just therein lay a part of his charm. You know the spell which is exercised over us by the pathos of the plaintive song, by the notes of the minor tune, even by the hues of the fading year. You know that that joy is ever the most attractive, in which is heard a faint undertone of sadness, as that beauty is the most fascinating in which is seen a tinge of melancholy, such as all the great painters, therefore, have thrown into the face in which they sought to embody their highest conception of female beauty, that of the mother of our Lord. In any case, whether a part of their charm or not, a shade of gloom is an unmistakable feature in the sermons of Liddon, as it is indeed, also in those of his great compeer; Who does not feel its spell in his hymn, "Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom"? To him we now turn for a very brief period.

NEWMAN.

Newman as a preacher is chiefly known to those of the present day through eight volumes of "Parochial and Plain Sermons" delivered by him, while still a minister in the Church of England. It is usual to speak of him as a great preacher, and if the greatness of the preacher is to be measured by the effect produced by his sermons, he must be held to be a very great one. It has been said of them by one well qualified to form a correct judgment, they "have done more than any one thing to mould and quicken and brace the religious temper of our time; they have acted with equal force on those who were nearest and on those who were furthest from him in theological opinion." It is certain they have entered as a quite appreciable force into the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation: They may be said even to have accomplished little less than a revolution in the prevailing style of preaching, making it much less conventional and much more direct and practical. And their influence has been confined to no one branch of the Christian church. It has probably been even more felt in the Non-conformist churches than in that body to which, as all Protestants will regret, their author deemed it dutiful to transfer his allegiance. Yet it is easy to read these sermons without having forced on one's attention any single excellence or any combination of excellences, so unusual as to account for this wide and deep influence. They do not often startle the reader by the boldness and originality of the thought, as do those of Frederick Robertson. They have not the tender pathos and exquisite beauty of the discourses of John Kerr, and they are still farther removed from the elaborate word-painting of Guthrie. Nor does the preacher, like Chalmers, carry his audience along on a flood of impassioned speech. All these legitimate and natural means of impression, Newman seems as if on set purpose to avoid. He does not once step aside from the direct path in which his theme leads him to lay hold of a striking thought or to cull a flower of rhetoric. His imagery is throughout of the simplest kind and is such as serves, merely to display the thought, never to attract attention to itself. He shuns sedulously not only exaggeration, but even vehement emotion, as if it were not a strength but a weakness. His speech is for the most part as calm and unimpassioned, as it is precise and clear. The usual qualities of the orator are conspicuously absent, and indeed his warmest admirer declares "he was utterly unlike an orator in all outward ways." What then was the secret of his great power?

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

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

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

tery does he possess over the instrument which he wields in the English tongue, that the thought takes at once and without effort the fitting form; the allusive metaphor, the ornament, when there is any, comes naturally, spontaneously and not as having been sought. The language is always precise and clear, often beautiful, but the hearer no more thinks of the simplicity and beauty of the terms in which the thought is couched, until attention is called to it, than the spectator charmed with the distant landscape, thinks of the purity of the atmosphere through which it is seen. There the rugged mountain peak or the river gleaming in the sunlight, is everything; here the supernatural fact, or the spiritual truth. This I need scarcely say is the very perfection of style. And it does not only possess a great charm, in the sermon at least it possesses high ethical value. It betokens a mind too serious, too strongly seized of the truth, too much in earnest concerning the ends to be served by it, to lend itself to rhetorical ornamentation. It betokens the preacher's confidence in the power, his sense of the majesty, of the truth which it has been given him to proclaim. Any studied beauty of expression in a sermon, any beauty of form which detains the mind is at once a rhetorical mistake and a moral fault, and the latter is the worse blemish—the more injurious—of the two. Let us be thankful then, at a time when frequent recourse to rhetorical artifice, labored ornamentation of the thought and accompaniments still less defensible, seem to proclaim in so many quarters the speaker's distrust in the ability of the thought itself to hold men, for preachers like Newman, who have the courage to stake all upon the naked truth—who are too reverent, too much in earnest, to furbish with the trappings of rhetoric that sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Third:—Once more, and more important than all else as explaining the great influence undeniably exerted by these sermons, there is the obvious and unmistakable sincerity of the preacher; a something in his method of presenting truth, which gives to his statements, even when most directly spiritual, a distinct note of reality. For one thing there is the entire absence of exaggeration—of the swollen phrases, which are born of the craving for immediate impression, as distinct from the desire for lasting good. There is the absence also of conventionalism—of modes of expression that belong to the pulpit only and are not heard at all in common life. All is simple and natural. The preacher speaks about God and Christ and sin and salvation, and heaven, always with reverence indeed, never with the vulgar familiarity and still less

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with the buffoonery which are too often employed and which are at war both with religious feeling and good taste, but he speaks of them at the same time with a directness and a circumstantiality, such as we might employ in speaking about the friend who visited us yesterday or about the business we are going to transact to-morrow; or in writing to a person regarding a country with which we are familiar and which he is about to visit. There is as the result an air of realness given to the subjects of which he treats, which in the measure of it is very rare, but which is at the same time most helpful to the hearer. Evidently the world of spiritual things is a very real world to him. He has looked it in the face. He has scrutinized it closely, and he speaks of it with a simplicity and a directness and withal a confidence that must go far to make it real to others also. This is indeed about the most original and distinctive characteristic of the sermons of this great preacher; as it is one of their highest merits, if not indeed their very highest. For there is scarcely any service, which a Christian man can render to his fellowmen more important at least in our age, than to invest the spiritual world with realness to them; not to divest it of its mystery, for if that were possible, it would be a loss and not a gain, but to take it out of the region of cloudland and dream and give to it the air of definite, undeniable reality, which we must believe belongs to it. To do this, it must be altogether real to the man himself. His speech regarding it must be obviously and entirely sincere. It must be impossible for even the most sensitive hearer to detect in it the false and therefore the disenchanting note. This was in a high degree, and with all his faults, the service which Newman rendered to our common Christianity and by it he made not simply the Oxford of his day, but the pulpit of England and of America in ours, his debtor.

I have thus passed in review, at undue length, I fear, these distinguished preachers, all of whom "now rest from their labors." As the result, I trust, they stand out before you in their distinct individuality; Vinet, the calm, philosophic enquirer, the representative of reason in relation to religion, original in thought, graceful in speech, lofty in character, sweet and gentle in spirit, looking with wistful and tender sorrow, even on those who hesitate to enter, or who actually turn away from, the great temple of truth and love within which he worships. Liddon, the princely preacher, the representative of authority, of dogma in religion, cultured, stately, eloquent, witnessing with a power which in our age has not been surpassed, if indeed it has been equalled for the super-

natural facts of redemption, and the bitterly assailed but indestructible verities of the Christian faith; and Newman, the subtle, severe, devout analyst of Christian character and action, keen in thought, clear and musical in expression, confident in belief and practical in aim, the representative in the years in which alone we are concerned with him—probably his happiest and most useful—of the revived piety of the Church, of which he was so great an ornament, and to which his withdrawal from its ministry was so great a loss.

In conclusion, gentlemen of the theological classes, I extend to you in the name of the senate and in my own name, a cordial welcome to the Institution, whether you are returning to it to resume, in some cases to complete, your studies, or whether you are entering it for the first time. Whatever the lecture of the evening has done for others or has failed to do, I hope it has deepened in you the sense of the importance and dignity of the work of preaching. I shall regard it as the highest service which I can render you, as your teacher in Homiletics, much more important even than any instruction in the principles of the science, if I can help you to feel the grandeur of the preacher's office, inspire you with the ardent desire to excel in it, and lead you to regard all gifts, whether natural or acquired, whether of vigorous thought or of graceful speech, as having their very highest value in the power with which they clothe you, to expound, to apply, and above all, to proclaim Christ's message of love, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

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