

THE
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THEOLOGIAN OF THE DAY—
CANON LIDDON.

FOR more than twenty years, Canon Liddon has been known to the English public in the two-fold character of academical theologian and preacher. Since 1870, he has been Ireland Professor of Exegesis in the University of Oxford; and previously, he filled for some time the post of Vice-President of Cuddesdon Theological College, and was also Examining Chaplain to the late Bishop of Salisbury. But, while discharging academical functions, he was always a preacher; and the sermons which he preached during his years of academical labour would fill many volumes. It was less needful for him than for most preachers to abandon, in the pulpit, academical modes of thought and speech, as he usually addressed academical, or, at all events, educated audiences; but it will help us to understand his personal and theological proclivities if we take note of the fact that, although always an academical teacher, and never a parish clergyman, he has shown a marked disposition to give to the preaching of the Word the place of honour in the work of his life. Unlike his late colleague, the present Bishop of Durham, who seemed to regard himself as, first, professor and theological writer, and then preacher, and whose valuable contributions to theology have been given to the world in the shape of elaborate treatises and learned articles in Reviews, Canon Liddon has made use of no other vehicle of publication than the sermon.* This, we imagine, is more than an accident. It is not to be explained by simply saying that, when a writer has found a vehicle of addressing the public, in the use of which he excels, he will not readily abandon it for another; and that the most eloquent preacher in the Church of England is not likely to be allowed leisure to compose set theological treatises. If we are not mistaken, Canon Liddon has a preference for the sermon, and honours it as the speech of the Church. He is without sympathy for the

* Even the Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord are in the form of sermons, although the notes certainly make the book a valuable theological treatise.

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home sphere, will the zealous servant of Christ find such opportunities of abundant usefulness?

Since all this is well known abroad, the foreign resident and the colonist cannot understand the reluctance which is exhibited on the part of ministers and preachers to volunteer for foreign service. They wonder at it exceedingly. As they look at things, there is no comparison between home and colonial work. When they visit their fatherland, they are surprised to find men of ability contented to labour in such depressing circumstances, and to expend their energies for such poor returns. And they are ready to form a humble opinion of the individuals who are thus content. It would be a wholesome lesson, were the opinions freely expressed abroad, concerning the ministerial "gentlemen of England who live at home at ease," to reach their ears. These utterances certainly would not encourage their self-esteem, or lead them to suppose they had played a heroic part in life.

But while, as is often intimated, this reluctance to foreign service may be a sign of the Church's spiritual poverty, it is far more a fruit of our insular ignorance. The sea that washes these shores seems to render every region beyond them so strange and unkindly, that it requires some violent wrench to lead men to think of work abroad. It is taken for granted that at home alone are comfort, usefulness, and success to be found; while, abroad, there is a barbarism which only dire necessity could compel men to face. The opposite of all this is nearer the truth. Ask any one who has had experience, both at home and abroad, and his reply will be prompt and decided. May the time speedily arrive, when the opportunity of service abroad will be considered an honour and a promotion. That will be a happier time for the Church, both at home and abroad, for nothing would more quicken its languid life. But this is a consummation which we can reach only by prayer. The Divine direction for meeting the difficulty of the plentiful harvest and paucity of labourers is—Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth (ἐκβάλλη), labourers into His harvest.

A. F. DOUGLAS.

WHAT IS PRESBYTERIANISM?

UNLESS we greatly misjudge, it would be a timely service if a brief manual of Presbyterianism, in an attractive style, were prepared for the people of our congregations. Such a manual could hardly fail to kindle a fresh enthusiasm in behalf of all that touches the interests of our beloved and historic Church. It should, we suppose, embrace a treatment of the subject under the following heads—viz., Presbyterianism in polity, in doctrine, in worship, in history. We propose to make a few hints on each of these points.

1. *Presbyterianism in Polity.*—A presbyter is an elder; and a

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Church in which a body of elders forms an active and efficient governing force is, in so far forth, a *Presbyterian Church*. And no intelligent Bible student needs to be informed that such an eldership has existed in the Church, at least from the time when that Church was held in Egyptian bondage. Out of the burning bush came the command, "Go, call the elders." And from this time we read of these elders, in Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, down to the exile. From exile they returned with the people. Among the first antagonists of Jesus were "the elders." The apostles ordained elders in every city. These elders continued, as we believe, among the Waldenses down to the time of the Reformation. With a single exception, they then reappeared in every great body of believers. Thus, through all the changes in the Church, the eldership has been our pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Moses passes away, and Joshua; the rule of the Judges and the Kings comes to an end; with Malachi, the heroic race of the old prophets expires; and at last, priest, Levite, tabernacle, temple, altar, sacrifice, and the holy city itself, are all abolished, while the eldership, modified as to some of its functions, yet the same in its essential character, still remains, and will remain to the end of time, as the one, enduring, ruling office in the Church of God. And in heaven, with the four living creatures who represent the whole body of the redeemed, the four-and-twenty elders represent the ministry and government of the Church.

The New Testament elders include those who bear rule only, and those who both preach and rule, 1 Tim. v. 17. As rulers, all are on a footing of perfect equality; and the preaching elders are all of equal rank and authority. Neander writes,—“It is certain that every Church was governed by a union of the elders or overseers chosen from among themselves, and we find among them no individual distinguished above the rest.” And Dr. John Reynolds, second to no ecclesiastic of the Church of England in his time, replying to an offensive sermon of Bancroft, wrote as follows:—“All who have for five hundred years past endeavoured the reformation of the Church have taught that all pastors, whether they be bishops or priests, are invested with equal authority and power.”

But the Bride of Christ is one, not many. And organisation is a Presbyterian instinct. A score of Presbyterians in contiguity in the heart of Asia will as surely organise themselves, by the election of a board of ruling elders, as the sun will rise in the morning. Half-a-dozen Presbyterian Churches, find them where you may, will inevitably form themselves into a Presbytery, and the Presbyteries into a Synod, and the Synods into a General Assembly. A member of a Presbyterian Church, tried and censured by a Church-session, may appeal to the Presbytery, thence to the Synod, and thence again to the General Assembly. It is, as the writer believes, the inherent and inalienable right of every member of a Presbyterian Church, even the poorest and

humblest, to have his or her case finally adjudicated upon by the whole Church in General Assembly convened, or by a commission, the representative of the Assembly, and thus also the representative of the Church.

“The radical principles of Presbyterian Church government and discipline are:—That the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, emphatically called the Church; that a larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein; that, in like manner, a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united,—that is, that a majority shall govern; and consequently, that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories, till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church.” (See note under Chapter XII. of the “Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.”)

The power exercised by the eldership is that of the Church which it represents, and for which it acts. For the purposes of their appointment, the elders are the Church. Their acts are, within their sphere, the acts of the Church. This power includes,—1, That of ordination, the power to say who seem to possess the qualifications necessary for the discharge of the duties of the eldership, and to authorise their entrance into office. Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery; Paul, as an elder, laying on his hands with the rest, 1 Tim. iv. 14, 2 Tim. i. 6. 2, The power to embody the chief doctrines of Scripture, as seen in the light which the Holy Ghost has given them, in a Confession of Faith; 3, To prepare and issue a directory of worship; 4, To establish constitutional rules, in accordance with which the power vested in the Church shall reach its objects; and 5, To prescribe the terms upon which applicants may enter, and members remain in the Communion of the Church.

This, then, is Presbyterianism, as a system of Church government. Its core is the eldership—the whole eldership being the organ for the exercise of the power of the Church, and a portion of it, specially ordained thereto, being appointed to discharge the duties of the pulpit and the pastoral office; as rulers, all elders being on a footing of perfect equality, and as ministers, all on a like level of perfect equality. There is no *primus inter pares*,—no first among equals,—but all are *pares in Christo primo*—all equals in Christ who is the first. The whole Church is compacted into unity by a system of courts—lower, higher, and highest—the lowest being subordinate to the next higher, and all to the highest. “Here,” writes Alexander Henderson, one of the framers of the Scotch Solemn League and Covenant, and Scotch Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, “Here is superiority without tyranny, parity without confusion and disorder, and subjection without slavery.”

Of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the late distinguished Roman Catholic, Archbishop Hughes,

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wrote as follows :—“Though it is my privilege to regard the authority exercised by the General Assembly as usurpation, still, I must say, with every man acquainted with the mode in which it is organised, that, for the purposes of popular and political government, its structure is little inferior to that of Congress itself. It acts on the principle of a radiating centre, and is without equal or rival among the other denominations of the country.”

2. *Presbyterianism in Doctrine.*—As the venerable Dr. Samuel Miller well says, “Presbyterianism has generally been distinguished for the stress it has laid upon sound doctrine.” Its symbol is the open Bible. Its watchword is, “to the law and to the testimony.” It has been wont to lend an attentive ear to the voice of the Spirit as uttered in the Word, Ezek. iii. 17 ; 2 Tim. i. 13 ; 1 Tim. iv. 6. May the day never come when, on this point, it shall allow itself to utter an uncertain sound !

The system of doctrine with which it is most closely allied is that which men call Calvinism. Of this system, as embodied in the Westminster Confession, the able and candid Dr. Curry, of the Methodist Church, writes :—“It is the clearest and most comprehensive system of doctrine ever formed—a comprehensive embodiment of nearly all the precious truths of the Gospel. Some of the best fruits of Christian life, and the noblest specimens of Christian character, have been exhibited among those who have been, at least in theory, Calvinists.” And the words of the historian Froude have become quite familiar : “When all else has failed, . . . Calvinism has ever borne an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity, and has preferred rather to be ground to powder, like flint, than to bend before violence, or melt under enervating temptation.”

This system, as we understand it, embraces the following points—(1.) The sovereignty of an infinitely wise and holy God, who created the worlds after a plan of perfect wisdom, and who retains absolute control over them, even to the smallest atom and to the most insignificant event ; (2.) the condition of man by nature, not that of weakness or sickness, but that of death, and therefore of doom to burial in everlasting darkness ; (3.) the purpose of infinite goodness to rescue from that death a multitude which no man can number ; (4.) for this end, to give the Son of God, very God of very God and perfect man, made of a woman, made under the law, to live a life of perfect obedience, and die the death of the cross, and by this life and this death to furnish a complete satisfaction to Divine law and justice, and to effect a reconciliation to God of those for whom the obedience was rendered and the death endured ; (5.) the gift of the Holy Spirit to apply to the heart this purchased redemption, to regenerate the soul, and enable and persuade it to embrace Jesus Christ as He is offered in the Gospel ; (6.) justification by faith, pardon and acceptance on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinner, and received by faith alone ; (7.) the sure perseverance to the end of all the justified.

From some cause or other, Presbyterianism in government has ever shown a strong affinity for Calvinism in doctrine. Mr. Barnes finds the secret of this affinity in the oneness of principle that underlies the two: the principle of regularity, of government, of order; the idea that things are, and should be fixed and stable, that the affairs of the universe, of society, of individuals, should be guided by settled principles and not left to chance and haphazard. Calvinism recognises the truth that God works through decree, and towards a predestined end. Thus Presbyterian government and Calvinistic doctrine are twin children of the same great ideas of order, rule, regularity; and hence, with rare exceptions, they are found together.

3. *Presbyterianism in worship.*—The genius of Presbyterianism repudiates a fixed and imperative liturgy; for, not only do the infinitely varied and ever varying needs of man defy attempts to reduce them to programme, but, as history unmistakably testifies, such liturgies tend—though, in the experience of many excellent Christians, true piety counteracts the tendency—yet they do tend strongly toward what is known as “Ritualism;” and Ritualism, again, tends strongly to substitute the things which the eye hath seen and the ear hath heard, for the things which the eye hath *not* seen and the ear hath *not* heard; further, it tends to discharge both brain and heart from participation in the worship of God, to reduce worship to mere formal rite and ceremony, and to replace the preaching of the Word of God’s inspiration with the reading and saying “Amen” to prayers of man’s composition.

Presbyterianism makes it a chief duty of the Church, by preaching, to place and keep revealed truth before the minds of the people. The command which Jesus left with His disciples, as the clouds received Him out of their sight, was, Go, *preach* the Gospel. The apostle says, Christ sent me not to administer sacraments, but to *preach*, and he writes to Timothy, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . *preach* the word;” and preaching has a direct bearing upon worship. True preaching and hearing *are* worship.

True worship is the response of the heart to truth perceived by the mind. The heart is the bell. Truth is the tongue of the bell, and the perceiving mind is the force that brings the tongue of the bell against its sides. It is the *perceived* majesty of God that fills with awe, the *perceived* justice of God that fills the sinner with dread, the *perceived* goodness of God that fills with grateful love. And Presbyterianism lays it upon the minister to spend large portions of every week, in filling his mind, by study and prayer, with some great, commanding truth of God’s holy Word; to come into the pulpit on the Sabbath day, and, under the stimulus imparted by these truths thus pondered and prayed over, to lead the people in their devotions; and the people are to come to the house of God from their closets, where they have prayed for their pastor, that the good Spirit may rest upon him as a spirit of grace and supplication, and may give him insight into their wants and woes, their yearnings,

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their discouragements, the spiritual and other necessities of themselves and their households, so that he may gather them up in his spirit, and bear them on his heart before the throne of heavenly grace. When the people listen in this spirit to the Gospel message, the truth goes into mind and heart, and becomes food for their devotions. And this service, when the ideal is at all realised—as in millions of instances it is realised—is social devotion in its loftiest style.

4. *Presbyterianism in history.*—This is a subject with which Presbyterians should be very familiar. That Presbyterianism, wherever its roll-call is answered by more than a corporal's guard, should make itself felt in the course of events, is a simple matter of necessity. Accustomed as Presbyterians are to the exercise of the right of private judgment; constituted as they are into a series of representative governments, the people being the depositary, and their chosen representatives being the organ of Church power, it would be very strange if they sat quietly by, and took no part in the great movements that so largely involve the interests of Christ's kingdom among men. There have been times in which Presbyterians were constrained simply to testify and endure. But there have also been times, in many a land, where there was found other work to be done.

When Francis the Second, Catherine de Medici, Charles the Ninth, and the Guises undertook the extirpation of the best half of the French population, Presbyterians were not the men to come forward, and, quietly laying their heads upon the block, to ask the privilege of having them taken off. When every right of man was menaced, the Huguenots found a Coligny to organise and lead them; and from that hour, through all the horrors of the Saint Bartholomew Massacre, on through the awful years of the Dragonnades, Presbyterianism testified and fought, bled and died, for the good old cause. And it is enough to make man thank God that he is a man, to read the story of Presbyterian heroism in the Netherlands during the awful days of Philip and Alva!

The very name of Scotland calls up a host of thrilling associations. More than once, the patriotic activity of the General Assembly saved the Reformation in Britain; and once at least, Presbyterianism saved constitutional liberty for mankind. When Wentworth could write to his master from Ireland, "In this island, the king is as absolute as any prince in the whole world could be;" when Laud could report to his royal chief, that, thanks to the Court of High Commission and his omnipresent spies, no conventicle could be held in the realm without his cognisance; when Charles, with his Star-Chamber, held the State where Laud held the Church, and only one Mordecai sat in the gate to disturb the peace of the despots and break the monotony of despotism—then it was that Presbyterianism in Scotland spoiled the whole well-laid scheme! Then came the wild outburst at St. Giles' Church in Edinburgh, followed by the sublime scene in Greyfriars Churchyard, where men signed the Covenant with their own blood,—scenes and acts which, in their

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remote consequences, took off the heads of Wentworth, Laud, and Charles, and secured liberty for mankind!

Carlyle says, "The tumult in the High Church at Edinburgh spread into a universal battle, a struggle over all these realms; there came out, after fifty years' struggling, what we call the glorious Revolution, a Habeas Corpus Act, free Parliaments, and much else." Macaulay writes, "To this step"—that is, the attempt to enslave Scotland—"our country owes its freedom." And Hallam writes, "In its ultimate results, it preserved the liberties, and overthrew the monarchy of England."

While persecution was developing Presbyterian heroism in Scotland, it was peopling the wilds of America with Presbyterians; and at the first blast of the trumpet of independence, they sprang to arms, every man of them, to lay down those arms again only when independence had been secured. Mr. Bancroft truly says, "The first voice publicly raised in America, to dissolve all connection with Great Britain, came, not from the Puritans of New England, not from the Dutch of New York, not from the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch and Irish Presbyterians." In the Congress of the Declaration, there was just one clergyman, and he was a Presbyterian; and when the assembly wavered, his eloquent voice proved a heavy weight in the scale of decision.

Nor should our Presbyterian manual lack vivid portraits of the characters which have been formed in its nursery, and have illustrated the brilliant pages of Presbyterian history. There should appear that scene in the old Bastille—a venerable man in chains, King Henry III. standing near, his courtiers all around, while the king exclaims, "Recant, or I shall be compelled to give you up to your enemies. These two girls here are to be burned to-morrow." "Sire," replied Palissy, the potter, "listen to me, and I will teach thee to talk like a king. *I cannot be compelled to do wrong!*" And Knox should be there, in many a crisis of his eventful life; as when on trial before the Queen upon a charge of treason, and, reminded that he was not there to preach, exclaiming, "I am here to speak the truth; and speak the truth I will, impugn it whoso list." Melville, too, should be depicted there, sent to remonstrate with King James against some of his many outrages, catching the monarch by his robes, and exclaiming, "Thou God's silly vassal, there are two kings and kingdoms in Scotland; King James, and King Christ Jesus whose subject King James is, and of whose kingdom he is not king, lord, nor head, but a member."

Nor should women be omitted from the record; as, for example, Charlotte de Laval, sitting by her husband, the great Admiral Coligny, on the balcony of their castle, and asking, "Husband, why do you not openly avow your faith, as your brother Andelot has done?" "Sound your own soul," was his reply: "are you prepared to be chased into exile with your children, and to see your husband hunted to the death? I will give you three weeks to consider, and then I will take your advice." She looked at him a moment through her tears, and said, "Husband,

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the three weeks are ended ; do your duty, and leave us to God !” And he did ! There, too, should be seen Mrs. Welsh, the daughter of Knox, pleading with King James to allow her dying husband to return to Scotland, and breathe once more his native air. “ He may, if he will conform,” is the brutal reply. Gathering up the corners of her apron she answers, “ Your Majesty, I will sooner kep his head here !”

We are thoroughly persuaded that a more familiar acquaintance with the nature of our polity, the history of our Church, the services it has rendered to all the best interests of man, and the characters that have glorified its career, would fill especially our younger people, with a new enthusiasm for all that pertains to its name, its interests, and its growth in the world.

WILLIAM P. BREED.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BURGH RECORDS OF EDINBURGH DURING THE REFORMATION.

MUCH light has been thrown on early times by the publication of historical records preserved in public or private collections. In Scotland, the Maitland and the Spalding Clubs, and the Scottish Burgh Records Society, have given to the world a valuable and interesting series of extracts from the records of the chief burghs ; while the Wodrow Society has rendered a special service to the cause of Presbyterianism. Important work has also been accomplished by individual writers, such as the elder M'Crie, who drew his material largely from original sources. But something still remains to be done. Old documents are still to be exhumed, and are only waiting to be brought to light in order that they may, in return, shed a light peculiarly their own. We propose making some brief extracts from the Records of the Town Council of Edinburgh about the time of the Reformation in Scotland. These documents have, as yet, been only partly published. We shall confine ourselves to those entries which throw light upon the ecclesiastical history and the moral condition of the country at that period.

One prominent feature which presents itself, even in these official entries, is the thoroughness of the Reformation in Scotland. The Town Council of Edinburgh displayed the same determination which showed itself nearly everywhere throughout the country, to make a clean sweep of everything Popish. The wealth that had hitherto been employed in maintaining the Romish religion was now set apart for the support of the Protestant ministers (an appropriation which was even then called their “ sustentacion”), the creation and maintenance of hospitals and colleges, and other “ godly uses.” Thus, with reference to the church in the city, the Council, in 1560,