

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE KIND OF PREACHING FOR OUR TIMES.

No. II.

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FIRST of all, the preacher should cultivate a *certain quick sensitiveness* to the demands of his place and time. The most important qualification for the physician is that he have the diagnostic instinct. Let him detect the nature of the disease; the books will indicate the treatment. For a preacher to dwell continually upon one set of principles would be as though the physician were to confine himself to one or two remedies for all sorts of disease; while for the former to satisfy himself with administering to his people merely a whole body of divinity in regular course, and say, "this now should make them all right," would be as though the latter were to treat his patient with the entire contents of the pharmacopœia, and say, "I can do nothing more for you than this!"

The quick sensitive apprehension of his people's spiritual requirements, this is a primal necessity. Not some generic but special sense of it. Not merely a scholarly comprehension of the world's general ailments, but those of his own people. A genuine sympathy indeed with the great problems the great world is thinking about, so that if any of those problems are vexing his hearers he may be able to help solve them; but, more than this, a subtle understanding of individual wants among his people, which comes partly out of a natural aptitude and largely out of the cultivation of the spirit of love, enabling him to give to every man his portion in due season. What are called sermons for the times may on occasions be altogether untimely, and if continuously dealt in will become most utterly so; while yet it shall be the height of cruelty to close one's eyes to the public, social, literary, political, and philosophical situations and needs, and let the most thoughtful and practical minds in the congregation suffer for lack of sympathy, stimulation and wisest direction. The old simile holds, and the preacher is a fisherman, and must cast different flies for different sorts of fish, and may not foolishly complain against God or nature if the trout will not take to a bait intended for a sturgeon.

mission and his heraldship. He shall discern the applicability of divine truth to every human condition, and realize and proclaim it everywhere, that religion and all the humanities have close alliance, and in their final essence are indeed one. In accord with the very latest and most important deduction of modern science that the seventy odd elements of matters are finally resolvable into two, and possibly one; it shall be his province to show that all the virtues that make homes beautiful, and patriotism sacred, and bravery renowned, and fidelity in manhood and womanhood an eternal honor, all the fruitings of the Spirit, are but various manifestations of the one primary and eternal substance of the divine love; between them all he shall see no disputatious rivalries, but a universal drawing and cohesion; their various compoundings in different souls shall only make the world more glorious and benignant; diversities of operations, but the same God working all in all.

II.—LUTHER'S TABLE TALK.

BY PROF. J. O. MURRAY, D.D., DEAN OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

THE title of this book is suggestive of the worth of its contents: "Dis. Martini Lutheri Colloquia Mensalia; or, Dr. Martin Luther's Divine Discourses at his Table," etc., "which in his life time he held with divers learned men (such as were Philip Melancthon, Casparus Cruciger, Justus Jonas, Paulus Eberus, Vitus Dietericus, Joannes Bugenhagen, Joannes Fosterus and others) containing questions and answers touching Religion, and other main points of Doctrine, as also many notable Histories and all sorts of Learning, Comforts, Advises, Prophetes, Directions and Instructions. Collected first together by Dr. Antonius Lauterbach, and afterwards disposed into certain commonplaces by John Aurifaber, Dr. in Divinitie."

In its English version this book has had a remarkable history. From the translator's preface we learn that Rudolphus II., instigated by the Pope, made an "Edict thorow the whole Empire that all the aforesaid printed books (Luther's Divine Discourses, etc.) shall be burned; and also, That it shall be death for any person to have or keep a copy thereof; . . . which Edict was speedily put in Execution accordingly, in-so-much that not one of all the said printed books, nor so much as any one copy of the same, could be found out, nor heard of in any place." In the year 1626 a German gentleman, Casparus Van Sparr, wishing to build a new house upon the foundations of the old one in which at the time of the edict his grandfather lived, and, making some necessary excavations for the purpose, discovered hidden there a copy of the *Colloquia Mensalia*. It "was wrapped in a strong linen cloth, waxed all over with beeswax within and without." At the time of this discovery Ferdinand II. was Emperor of Germany. His known hostility to the cause of Protestantism led Mr. Van Sparr to measures of extreme caution in

guarding his discovered treasure. He sent it to England, to Capt. Henri Bell, who had been employed by the English government in national affairs, and who had seen military service both in Hungary and Germany. With him Mr. Van Sparr had become acquainted while he was in Germany, and had known that he was well versed in a knowledge of the High German. To him accordingly the book was sent, with an accompanying letter urging Capt. Bell "that for the advancement of God's glorie and Jesus Christ's church, (he) would take the pains to translate the said book, to the end that the most excellent Divine work of Luther might bee again brought to light."

Capt. Bell informs us in his narration that he at once set about the work of translation, but was hindered by other business from much progress in it. About six weeks after beginning the translation there occurred this remarkable event, which is given in his own words: "It fell at that time, I being in bed with my wife, one night between twelve and one of the clock, shee being asleep, but myself yet awake, there appeared unto me an antient man, standing at my bedside, arraid all in white, having a long and and broad white beard, hanging down to his girdle who, taking me by the right ear, spake these following words unto me: 'Sirrah, will you not take time to translate that book which is sent unto you out of Germanie? I will shortly provide for you time and place to do it!' And then he vanished away out of my sight." The time and place were provided in the following equally singular manner: About a fortnight after this occurrence two messengers were sent from the Council Board with a warrant of committal to the Gatehouse, Westminster. Thither Capt. Bell was taken, and there he remained for ten years, five of which he spent in the "translating of the said book."

Meantime Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, hearing of the book and its translation sent his chaplain, Dr. Bray, to Capt. Bell with a request that he would send to the Archbishop "the said original book in Dutch, and also (his) translation." With this request Capt. Bell seemed loath to comply, possibly having had some experience in lending books, possibly distrusting Laud's intentions. The next day, however, the chaplain came again, bringing the Archbishop's word of honor that the book should "be as safe in his custodie—if not safer—than in mine own. For he would lock it up in his own Cabinet to the end that no man might come unto it but only himself." Captain Bell seems to have made a virtue of necessity and sent the book. Two months passed and Laud sent him word that "he had never read a more excellent divine work" and asked to retain it still longer.

A year thus passed. Captain Bell again demanded the return of the book. Again Chaplain Bray asked in behalf of the Archbishop for further favor in the matter. Another year went by, and the patient lender sent unto his Grace an humble petition for the return of his

book, but stating that otherwise he should "bee enforced" to complain of him to the Parliament. This message brought the book and also a generous gift of 40li in gold. He gave assurance, too, that "hee would procure order from his Majestie to have the said translation printed." Laud was shortly beheaded. The House of Commons then having heard of the translation, sent for Captain Bell and his work. It was then referred to the Assembly. On November 10, 1646, the Committee of Assemblie reported in favor of its publication, and the House of Commons in February following gave order for the printing thereof. The report of the Committee of the Assemblie on which this order was passed is worth producing: "We find many excellent divine things are contained in the Book worthie the light and public view. Amongst which Luther professeth that he aꝓknowledgeth his error which hee formerly held touching the real presence *corporaliter in Coena Domini*."

"But wee find with all many impertinent* things: Some things which will require a grain or two of salt; and some things which will require a marginal note or preface." Such is the history of the remarkable manner in which this Table Talk of Luther saw the light in England. It is well worth the study of any one who wishes really to know what manner of man Martin Luther was. It is hardly saying too much to say that its study will give a more life-like picture of the Great Reformer than any formal biography. It holds up all sides of this many sided champion of the faith.

Luther's views on preaching are given at some length. Himself a mighty preacher, it is interesting to know what he regarded as the secret of power in the pulpit. In fact the homiletic value of all this part of the Table Talk is good. Not so much, perhaps, for any fixed rules as for hints. It is evident that to Luther's mind the preaching office was one of equal dignity and responsibility. In his view it out-ranks all other callings. All theological teachers as such must give place to the ministry in point of spiritual honor and spiritual power. The few illustrations subjoined will indicate more fully Luther's attitude towards the Christian pulpit. That he did not rush into the ministry with hardy confidence is apparent from the following:

"When the Prince Elector of Saxony, through Dr. Staupitz, caused me to be called to the office of preaching, I had fifteen arguments with which I intended to refuse my vocation, but they would not help. At last I said, 'Loving Dr. Staupitz, you will be the cause of bringing me to my death; I shall not be able to subsist.' Then, said he, 'Well, on in God's name. Our Lord God hath many businesses: He hath need also above in Heaven of wise people.'"

Philip Melancthon once asked him, after he had preached at Dres-

* According to the usage of the word at that time, irrelevant matter.

den before the Prince Elector and other Princes as to the manner in which his sermons were prepared. It was just the question any modern preacher would have liked to ask. Luther answered as follows : " I used not to catch and fasten every point in particular, but only the chief and head points on which the contents of the whole sermon depend. . . . Afterwards in speaking such things fall into my mind of which before I never thought ; for if I should comprehend every word I should deliver, and in particular should speak of every point, then I shall not so briefly run through."

Luther was in fact no friend to long sermons as is apparent from the Sixthly in the qualifications he once named as making a good preacher : " First, to teach orderly ; Secondly, he should have a readie wit ; Thirdly, he shall be eloquent ; Fourthly, he should have a good voice ; Fifthly, a good remembrance ; Sixthly, he shall know when to make an end ; Seventhly, he shall be sure of his things ; Eighthly, he shall venture and engage, body and blood, health and honor by the Word ; Ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and baffled of every one."

The Great Reformer had a great dislike for preaching which shot over the heads of the people. He liked plain talk. He never used courtly phrases himself. He shunned carefully all Scholasticism in the pulpit.

" As Doctor Erasmus Albert was called into the Mark of Brandenburg, he desired Luther to set him down a manner and form how he should preach before the Prince Elector. Luther said, ' Let all your preaching be in the most simple and plainest manner ; look not to the Prince but to the plain, simple, gross and unlearned people of which cloth the Prince himself is made also. If I in my preaching have regard to Philip Melancthon and other learned Doctors, then should I work but little goodness. I preach in the simplest sort to the unskilful and the same giveth content to all. Hebrew, Greek and Latin I spare until we learned ones come together ; as then we make it so curled and finical that God himself wondereth at us.'"

On another occasion, in the same vein, he said : " When I am in the pulpit, then I resolve to preach only to men and maid-servants. I will not make a step into the pulpit for the sake of Philip Melancthon, Justus Jonas or the whole University." And in speaking of preachers and preaching he has this timely hint and homely illustration for the pews : " The defects in a preacher are soon spied. Let a preacher be endowed with ten virtues and have but one fault, yet the same one fault will eclipse and darken all his virtues and gifts. . . . Dr. Justus Jonas hath all the good virtues and qualities that a man may have ; yet, by reason that he only hummeth and spitteth, therefore the people cannot bear with that good and honest man."

Readers of Coleridge will remember that graphic description of Luther's struggle with the Devil in the Wartburg Castle, when he flung

the inkstand at his adversary. And the student of Luther's Table Talk cannot help noting the strongly emphasized views Luther holds about the Devil. For him Satan is no mere impersonation of evil, no abstract shadowy doctrine, but a being whose power is terrible, and who plays a mighty part on the earth as a destroyer. "Whoso," said Luther, "would see the true picture, shape or image of the Devil, and would also know how he is qualified and disposed, let him mark well the commandments of God in order, one after the other, and then let him place before his eyes an offensive, a shameless, a lying, a despairing, an ungodly, insolent, blasphemous man or woman whose mind and cogitations are directed in every way and kind against God, and who taketh delight in doing people hurt and mischief; then he seeth the right devil carnal and corporeally." And he traces through, the analogy between "head, tongue, throat and neck, breast, heart, belly, hands and claws, will, lust and desire." It recalls the saying of a New England divine* that the existence of such a man as Napoleon I. is an *a priori* argument for the existence of a personal devil.

Luther held that the devil is causer of death and of all sickness and diseases. "I verily think that all dangerous diseases are merely blows and plagues of the devil. . . . When ungodly doings and all manner of sins get the upper hand, then the devil must be our Lord God's hangman. As then he bloweth in the world plagues, pestilences, famines, etc." Somnambulism, in his view, was also a work of the devil. "He leadeth some also sleeping out of their beds and chambers unto high, dangerous places, insomuch that if, through the defense and service of the loving Angels they were not kept and preserved, he would throw them down and cause their deaths."

It is a singular instance of the mixture of faith and credulity in the Great Reformer, that while he eschewed all exorcism by priestly office or muttered formulas, that he made him (the devil) often flee with jeering and ridiculous words and terms, giving a specimen too coarse for quotation here. In short, some of his views about Satan are sheer superstition. Instances of this are given on pp. 386-7 of the Folio Edition of 1652. "How the Devil can Deceive People and Beget Children." "Of a Changed Child at Dessau." The old folk lore of the changeling is made by him the property not of fairies malign or benevolent, but of the Devil. He "hath this power that he changeth children and instead thereof layeth devils in the cradles. . . . But," he adds, "such changelings live not above eighteen or nineteen years." Chapter xxxv, in which he talks about the devil, is a very strong mixture of sense and superstitions. It shows one thing very clearly, however, that he was in dead earnest when he flung that inkstand at the Wartburg, and thought he was flinging it at the devil himself. It was not a dream or vision, as Coleridge seems to think. Our age has so far

*Dr. T. Thayer, of Newport, R. I.

drifted from belief in the personal devil it may do us good to read what Luther thought of the question.

Luther was in some respects far ahead of his age, but in others he seems to have followed in the old paths of superstition. In Chapter lxx of his *Table Talk* upon the subjects of Astronomy and Astrology he accepts the old Astronomical notions. This is not strange, for Copernicus published his work, "*De orbium cœlestium revolutionibus*," only three years before Luther's death. Luther, however, seems to allude to Copernicus, who, in 1630 had brought his discoveries to the notice of scholars in this passage :

"I am now advertised that a new Astrologer is risen, who promiseth to prove that the earth moveth and goeth about, not the firmament, the sun, moon, nor the stars, like as when one sitteth in a coach or in a ship and is moved, thinketh he sitteth still and resteth, but the earth and the trees go run and move themselves. This fool will turn the whole art of astronomy upside down, but the Scripture standeth and teacheth him another lesson whom Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth."

But while Luther thus reasons on the subject of astronomy he is very strong in his condemnation of astrology and astrologer. "Phillip Melancthon holdeth strictly over astrology but he never was able to persuade me thereunto." He argues against the whole art, quotes the case of Esau and Jacob, "born together of one father and one mother at one time and under equal planets, yet nevertheless they were wholly of contrary natures, kinds, and minds." He nicknames the astrologers star-peepers and sharply indicts believing in the stars, trusting thereon or being affrighted thereby as idolatry. Taking this high ground against astrology in an age when such men as Melancthon believed in it, it may be to some a matter of surprise that in Chapter xxxvi, of the *Table Talk*, he accepts witchcraft as not only credible but as actually occurring, giving instances which had won him to his observation.

"I had lately a matrimonial cause in hand. A wicked woman by poison intended to make away (with) her husband, insomuch that he vomited and cast out little vipers. When she was put to the torture she refused to confess anything, for such witches are altogether dumb and condemn the rack ; the devil will not suffer them to speak. But such actions are sufficient proof for them to receive condign punishment to the example of others." The belief in witchcraft lasted for more than a century after Luther in England, Old and New. It is not strange, all things considered, that Luther held such views and believed such stories.

Luther was a scholar as well as a man of the people. He had a scholar's tastes as well as convictions. He believed in higher education not only as concerns high interests of the church but of the state

as well. "Woe be to Germanie that thus forsaketh the schools, neglect, contemn and suffer them to decay and fall. Woe to the Bishop of Mentz, who suffereth the universities at Erfurt and Mentz to be devastated and scattered, whereas with one word he is able to preserve them. Woe unto him that he suffereth so many churches and foundations to fall and to be spoiled. He will in time have leisure to build up the sheepfolds when the wolves have devoured the sheep." Chapter lxxvii, of Schools and Universities.

It will strike some as strange—quite as strange as his belief in witchcraft—that Luther favored the acting of comedies, the Roman comedies especially. In chapter lxxii of Studying, he says: "The acting of comedies ought not to be debarred for the sake of the boys in schools." He gave two reasons for it. "First, the exercise in the Latin tongue it secured; Secondly, the instruction and admonition they contain. Plautus was a favorite author in the Middle Ages. Luther meets the objection that they sometimes depict corrupt morals by saying "Christians ought not altogether to fly and abstain from comedies, because now and then gross tricks and dallying passages are cited therein; for then it will follow by reason thereof we should also abstain from reading in the Bible." His comments on Music, chapter lxxvii, are all of them delightful. They are quaint but sincere expressions of the delight he had in it and of its promise as a moral helper. He believed in it as a branch of education. Not only for common schools but for theological seminaries. "I always loved music. Whoever hath skill in this art the same is of good kind fitted for all things. We must of necessity mention music in schools; a school-master ought to have skill in music, otherwise I would not regard him; neither should we ordain young fellows to the office of preaching except before they have been well exercised and practised in the school of music. Next unto theology I give the place and highest honor unto music." "I would not for a great matter be destitute of the small skill in music which I have."

One great point of interest in the Table Talk is its disclosure of Luther's feelings for Melancthon. It records his deep love for him, his high estimate of him, and yet his frank criticism of what in his beloved Philip seemed faulty. "I am Isaiah (said Luther, be it spoken without boasting) to the advancement of God's honor (whose work and gift it is only and alone) and to spite the devil. Philip Melancthon is Jeremiah; that prophet that stood always in fear, though he did chide too much, ever so like him, it is with Melancthon." He cannot put up with Melancthon's belief in astrology, but he can praise Melancthon's theology heartily. "We find no book where the sum of Religion or whole Divinity is finer computed together than in *Locis Communibus Philippi Melancthonis*; all the Fathers and Sententarios are nothing comparable thereunto." In chapter xiii, "That only faith in Christ

justifieth before God," we find a most interesting record of a discussion on this point between the two reformers. It is entitled "of Philip Melancthon's disputations held only with Luther about the article of Justification," anno 1536. It is a series of questions by Melancthon with their answers by Luther. Want of space precludes any quotations. But what a view it gives of the way in which the reformers were working on the great subject. The whole book is full of characteristic sayings on a great variety of subjects, mainly theological of course. He speaks out his mind not caring sometimes to ask how far it squares with the doctrines of the church. His rough and ready wit appears in many a comment. His genial hearty nature gives the whole book the healthiest of tone. What has often appeared as Luther's table talk is only selections from the larger volume. But no book can less bear such abridgement. It should always be published entire. If studied thus in its complete edition it does not give us our traditional Luther. It gives us the picture of a man who can bear all the light which can be thrown upon his career. No one can study his table talk without feeling that Luther was a man needing nobody to apologize for him, nor to explain him. Seen in all the freedom of intercourse with his friends we only admire, esteem and love him the more.

III.—BODY AND MIND IN CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY GEORGE M. STONE, D.D. HARTFORD, CONN.

NO. III.

PERSONAL SACRIFICE, TRUE AND FALSE.

It is a suggestive fact that one of the representative temptations presented by the Adversary to our Lord, was designed to induce Him to a presumptuous use of His body. The instigation was flavored with one of the most gracious promises of Scripture. It was promptly met with the brief but inclusive declaration "Again it is written thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Very subtle temptations have always mingled with thoughts of personal sacrifice in the life and service of the Christian believer. There is such a nobility in the idea of yielding up ourselves in part or totally to personal suffering, as frequently to make us unwary respecting any possible element of evil in it. We feel that the altitude is so great, and the atmosphere so rare and pure, that the Tempter will not climb up there. He mingles, however, with the sons of God, and presents himself on the same day and date with themselves, so that even in the heroic purpose which seems to lift us out of ourselves, we may safely try the spirits. The necessity of judicial calmness in this trial is emphasized by those periods in ecclesiastical history, when an undeliberate and irrational desire for martyrdom, has impelled men, women and children to ask that their blood might be shed for Christ. In these instances we have presented a significant contrast to the wise avoidance of all unnecessary