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LORD BYRON.

TO whom or to what we should look for the origin of a great poet, whether to his ancestry, immediate or remote, or to the time in which he was born, is a question which is more easily asked than answered. Heredity may account for much, but it does not account for Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, who were without progenitors, and are without descendants. Nor are they to be accounted for by the periods in which they lived, and the circumstances by which those periods were distinguished—the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the indomitable national and the robust intellectual activity of the age of Elizabeth, or the life-and-death struggle between the King and the Commons. We are approaching the centenary of a great English poet, Lord Byron, whose life and work demand an answer to the question which they suggest, and which we shall try to furnish in this paper. We are more familiar with his life than with the life of any other English poet, great or small, and are as familiar with his work as with that of Milton or Shakespeare. It is as vital to-day as the day when it was written—as beautiful, as melancholy, as human. He was eclipsed, when he had passed away, by Wordsworth, as Milton was eclipsed by Dryden and Pope, and Shakespeare by Beaumont and Fletcher and the dramatists of the Restoration, but the name of none of these poets shone with such lustre in the seventh decade after his death as the name of Byron to-day. We read his contemporaries, Wordsworth, Shelley, Scott, and admire them for what they were, but not as we admire Byron, who, lacking many of their gifts, was yet their master by the divine right of his

and the value of antithesis. The language does not contain a more pointed and powerful phrase than that which he threw off at an uncertain *Mr. M'Aulay*, when he called him "a bigot to laxness."

It is common to suppose that he did a great deal to oppress and overload our English tongue by introducing new and clumsy words. His opportunities undoubtedly were large, but he declared that he had not added above four or five. When we observe that one of these was *peregrinity* we find cause for gratitude that he refrained so much; but when we remember that another of them was *clubbable* we are thankful that he did not refrain altogether. For there is no quality more easy to recognize and more difficult to define than that which makes a man acceptable to the company of his fellows; and of this *Doctor Johnson* has given us a fine example in his life and an appropriate title in his word.

It has become clear to us that one source of *Doctor Johnson's* greatness lay in the fact that he was, in the highest sense, a man of sentiment. His affection was equivalent to his intellect, and he felt as deeply as he thought. This is not the general opinion, but it is true. And it is only another proof that no man can come to much, who is not often unreasoning in his loyalty, and whose emotions are not powerful enough to lead him sometimes into absurdity.

His life was an amazing victory over poverty, disease, and sin. He conquered almost all that he enjoyed. But greatness alone could not have insured, nor could perseverance alone have commanded, three of his good fortunes: that *Sir Joshua Reynolds* painted his portrait; that *Mr. James Boswell* wrote his biography; and that his WIFE said of him that "he was the most sensible man she had ever met."

HODGE'S THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.*

DOCTOR FAIRBAIRN has recently sharpened his pen to speak of the vogue into which Mr. Matthew Arnold and Professor Huxley have come as writers in the field of theology, wherein the one "has exercised his rare and excellent gifts, unencumbered by the responsibilities and insight of a too curious or too sympathetic knowledge," and the other "disports himself in a state not very remote from a state of nature." "Why," he asks, "will men not only tolerate, but even applaud and follow, practices in the theological that they would not for a moment allow in the physical sciences?" No wonder that, in such circumstances, men are more interested in religious controversy, which may at least be racy, than they are in theological science. When the masters of other sciences, on that ground alone, assume to teach

* *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes.* By the Rev. Archibald Alexander Hodge, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary. 8vo. pp. 472. Philadelphia, 1887: Presbyterian Board of Publication.

this science, of which they are profoundly ignorant, there may, indeed, be confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but there is little likelihood of the advancement of knowledge ; and it is inevitable that the queen of the sciences should be forgotten while we blindly follow the priests of her subjects. Nevertheless there is a theological science, if men would but listen to those who have knowledge in it. And that old saint within whose capacious mind was garnered all that the subordinate sciences, mental and physical, could teach in his day, was eternally right when he preferred it to all others : " Of course," says Augustine, " it is far more excellent to know that the flesh will rise again and will live forevermore, than anything that scientific men have been able to discover in it by careful examination. . . . It is also far better to know that the soul which has been born again and renewed in Christ will be blessed forever, than to discover all that we are ignorant of touching its memory, understanding, and will." Of course, we echo ; but who will show us any truth ?

The significance of this volume of lectures by the late Dr. A. A. Hodge (which comes to us, unhappily, as a posthumous work) is, that it is an attempt by a thoroughly competent hand to explain to the people the great subjects with which theological science deals. The reader perceives at once that he is in the hands of a master, whose " masterliness is penetrated and guided by full and accurate knowledge " ; to whom theology has not been the recreation of idle vacation hours, but the serious business of a very earnest life. Nor will he read far before he comes to understand that this writer speaks to us on these themes with the same kind of authority and the like skill with which Professor Huxley publishes a popular treatise on biology, or Mr. Geikie a geology for the people. In a word, Doctor Hodge's book is a scientific treatise, wrought by a master in his specialty, for the reading of the cultivated layman.

Probably no one was ever better fitted than Doctor Hodge, by nature, learning, and grace, to be the expounder of theology to the people. His powers of lucid explanation and brilliant illustration were marvellous. And the subjects which he treats were his own in a sense in which few men make any subject their own. In the quiet of his heart, he had, with loving incubation, brooded over all these problems until every shell had broken and the livings truths had issued forth, to be greeted by his admiring wonder and adoring love. When once perceived, they became not only the furniture of his mind, but the precious treasures of his heart : he apprehended them with a clearness of intellectual perception that illuminated them in every part ; and he embraced them with a warmth of personal faith that was ready to stake his soul upon them. Dean Church somewhere says that the need of our day is for men who will take high views of truth. If there is one quality which, above others, characterizes Doctor Hodge in these lectures, it is his apparent inability not to take his survey of each subject from a height far above that from which it is usually regarded. The first effect of this is a great breadth of view, which insures that all the elements of each problem

will be perceived ; and will be perceived in their due relations and proportions. This is finely illustrated in the treatment of the genesis of the Scriptures ; and even better in the remarkable lecture on the nature of God and his relation to the universe, which, just because of its great comprehensiveness, presents a conception of the Divine Being which is very noble : " God is at once the unfathomable Abyss, the transcendent Father, King, and Judge, the immanent and vital Spirit." It is clearly the immanence of God, which he called the " religious " side of the conception, that Doctor Hodge most lovingly dwell upon ; and it would be interesting to trace out the deep influence which a clear hold upon this conception exercised upon his whole theology, enlarging and everywhere perfecting his apprehension of the vital essence of things—of Providence, of miracles—and even determining his attitude toward the modern fanaticism of the " faith cure." But nothing can surpass the vividness of his realization of the infinite unknowableness of the Divine Essence : " The sphere of a creature's knowledge, be it that of an infant or of a man, or of a philosopher or of a prophet, or of saint or archangel in heaven, will float as a point of light athwart the bosom of that God who is the infinite Abyss forever." Doctor Holmes tells us of ideas which, when once they are conceived, expand the mind, by their inherent nobility, to a greater capacity, and leave it permanently enlarged. Surely, all who sympathetically read Doctor Hodge's effort to explain God's relation to the universe may expect to obtain an abiding expansion of mind from it.

The fine charity and tolerance of spirit which color the whole book is but another fruit of the breadth of view which was habitual with its author. Orthodoxy, with him, was not " my " doxy but rather " our " doxy, and its primary criterion, inclusiveness : " Orthodoxy is always Catholic truth, embracing and integrating all the possibly separate and apparently incongruous parts and aspects of truth." And as his doctrine, so was his practice. Witness his view over the heads of the combatant camps of Calvinists and Arminians : " Here, as everywhere else, there is essential truth on both sides of every controversy, and the real truth is the whole truth, its entire Catholic body. . . . The difference between the best of either class is one of emphasis rather than of essential principle. Each is the complement of the other. Each is necessary to restrain, correct, and supply the one-sided strain of the other. They together give origin to the blended strain from which issues the perfect music which utters the perfect truth." This is not indifferentism, it is not weak tolerance of error : he does not stint blame where condemnation is due. He does not shrink from saying plainly : " Arminianism, in the abstract, as an historical scheme, is a heresy, holding half the truth." And the book is brightened everywhere with incisive references to and refutations of the false beliefs, whether of fanaticism or rationalism, of the day. Not indifferentism ; but inclusive, because high and broad, views, constitute the key-note of the book. It is the heart that makes the theologian : and Doctor Hodge's eminence, as any reader of this

book will see, was due to the fact that he put his heart as well as his mind into his theology.

These are "popular lectures on theological themes," so the title informs us. They certainly ought to be. And if such books can only reach the thinking of the people, what an earnest of sound views and true faith will they be !

McCOSH'S RECENT WORKS.*

THE philosophic series which Doctor McCosh now presents in two handsome volumes has been before the public several years, and has met with a very favorable reception. The author is recognized as the foremost living champion of a thorough-going realism; and in the present volumes he ranges over a wide field of topics, on all of which he has reflected deeply and has something fresh and weighty to say. The first volume is expository, opening with an introductory chapter on "What an American Philosophy Should Be," in which various theories and schools are passed in review, and the conclusion is reached that realism is best adapted to the genius of the American people. The body of the volume is devoted to the discussion of such weighty and vital themes as "Criteria of Divers Kinds of Truth"; "Energy"; "Efficient and Final Cause"; "Development: What it Can Do, and What it Cannot Do"; and "Certitude, Providence, and Prayer." Throughout, the doctor takes a realistic view, and aims to establish positive truth. The second volume is historical and critical. It opens with a chapter on "Realism: Its Place in the Various Philosophies," in which the doctor aims to show that while a thread of realism runs through most philosophies, yet the majority of the errors into which philosophers have fallen have arisen from their failure to plant themselves squarely on a realistic foundation. The body of the volume is devoted to such historical topics as "Locke's Theory of Knowledge, with a Notice of Berkeley"; "The Agnosticism of Hume and Huxley, with a Notice of the Scottish School"; "A Criticism of the Critical Philosophy"; and "Herbert Spencer's Philosophy as Culminated in his Ethics." The historical criticisms are clear and incisive; and the two volumes, taken together, form not only a very important contribution to philosophy in general, but also a weighty plea for that realistic view to the exposition and defence of which the distinguished author has devoted the best years of his life.

The first volume of Doctor McCosh's treatise on psychology has already been noticed in this REVIEW.† The present volume, *The Motive Powers*,

* *Realistic Philosophy*. By James McCosh, D.D., LL.D. Vols. I. and II., pp. 252 and 325. New York, 1887: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Psychology: The Motive Powers. By James McCosh, D.D., LL.D. Pp. 267. New York, 1887: Charles Scribner's Sons.

† THE NEW PRINCETON REVIEW, July, 1886, pp. 137-139.