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JOHN À LASCO.

THE name of John à Lasco is not so familiar to the readers of Church History, as are the names of many others who took prominent parts in the Great Reformation. There must be reasons for this, arising probably out of the nature of the places and circumstances in which he labored. He was not put by Providence so prominently before the Christendom of his day as were some others who were placed at the political and religious centres of the great nations of Europe. But not one of them was more deservedly honored and beloved by the people for whom he labored, than à Lasco was by the Reformed of East Friesland, the Refugees from Holland and France in London, or by the true Christians of Poland, whom he served in the evening of his life. If we simply look at the man, and compare him with those with whom he was associated in work for Christ's Church, whose names are familiar to, and held in grateful remembrance by, the Protestant world to-day, we shall say that he was the peer of the best of them. We need only to look candidly at the man and his work to be convinced of the monstrous injustice of assigning him to a very inferior place, or of allowing that he is forgotten because he was unworthy of remembrance. À Lasco's name and work ought not to be forgotten. He was richly furnished by nature, education, and grace with most excellent gifts. The result was a well-

is full of striking thoughts on the great mysteries of faith. It is divided into four parts, viz., Creation, the Incarnation, Redemption through the Precious Blood, and Sanctification. Each of these subjects is discussed in a practical way and with singular earnestness and power. The book is pervaded by a very devout spirit; and, while a certain tone of asceticism, and even extravagance, marks some portions, others are redolent of the sweetest evangelical tenderness, humility, and love.

Frederick William Faber was a very gifted man. The writer formed his acquaintance at Rydal Mount in 1842. He was then young, fascinating, a spirited talker, and full of enthusiasm for High Church theories. Not long after, he joined the secession to Rome and became one of her most devoted servants. But there was in him a manly and Christian element which no ecclesiastical system could repress; an element in full harmony with Protestant ideas.

G. L. PRENTISS.

SCOTCH SERMONS. 8vo. \$3.00. London: Macmillan & Co. 1880.

"This volume has originated in the wish to gather together a few specimens of a style of teaching which increasingly prevails among the clergy of the Scottish Church. It does not claim to represent either the full extent of that teaching, or the range of subjects on which, in their public ministrations, its authors are in the habit of discoursing. It may, however, serve to indicate a growing tendency, and to show the direction in which thought is moving."

The collection consists of twenty-three sermons on various subjects, by thirteen different writers. They are of very various intellectual and literary qualities, of all degrees of doctrinal latitudinarianism, collected and published, without any general concurrence upon the part of the several authors, by Rev. William Knight, LL.D., who left the Free Church under conditions reflecting upon him no credit, and was admitted to the Established Church without the approbation of its wisest and soundest members. The writers are chiefly young men, and only three of them are men of reputation or influence. The appearance of the book has naturally occasioned shame and apprehension on the part of the orthodox and spiritual members of the Scotch Establishment. And I have been creditably informed that as liberal men as Principal Tulloch are disgusted with it, and wish to be understood as having no responsibility for, and no sympathy with its publication; and even that some of the authors of these sermons themselves—noticeably Principal Caird, of the University of Glasgow, who has a reputation to lose—are ashamed of some of their associates, and disclaim any intention of appearing in such company. Some of the sermons exhibit fair ability, others are trivial enough. But the collection, as a whole, is utterly valueless, except as "specimens of a style of teaching which" is said to "increasingly prevail amongst the clergy of the Scottish Church." Neither the learning nor the logic of these sermons avail to throw light upon any other subject of human interest under the sun. And neither the hearing nor the reading of such discourses could ever avail to promote any other valuable practical quality than that of patience.

Some of these sermons do not contain any statements absolutely opposed to the essential truths of Christianity, but not one sets forth any doctrine or duty which can be in any special sense classed as Christian. The common character of the whole collection is what is known as Broad-Church, in poor imitation of the leaders of that powerful party in the richer and more lordly sister Church of England. The theory is that an Established Church is not the representative of any specific form of religious doctrine or order, but the organ of the religious thinking and feeling of the whole nation, and of all classes of believers or disbelievers embraced in it. But some of these writers, ordained ministers of a Christian Church, sworn to maintain the Westminster Confession though they may be, teach an infidelity as thorough-going, if not as honestly expressed, as that of Strauss or Renan.

Rev. William Mackintosh, D.D., Buchanan, discourses concerning "the renovating power of Christianity." He asks:

"What the Gospel is good for? What title has it to that designation? What service does it render?" (p. 162).

This he answers thus:

"The problem of human life—the task appointed to us—is our deliverance from the sway of our lower nature, our surrender to the control of our higher nature. The powers by which we are enabled to accomplish this task are three. *First*. Our own higher nature itself. *Secondly*. The beneficent constitution of things in general, their tendency in favor of what is good. *Thirdly*. These two factors are brought into full operation by the revelation to our consciousness, of that which was implicitly contained in them of the Divine good-will, or paternal relation towards us" given us by Christ (pp. 171-173).

That is, all that Christ does for us is to assure us of God's good-will. With this encouragement we save ourselves, by the use of natural powers acting under natural conditions.

The Rev. Thomas Rain, of Hutton, treating of "the Pharisee and the Publican," says that "our Lord's hatred of Pharisaism is about the notablest fact in his history" (p. 310).

The editor, Rev. William Knight, LL.D., teaches us under the caption "The continuity and development of religion" (p. 133), that we are descended from "animal" ancestors:

"That in the evolution of the race inspiration has been continuous and universal; that in religious knowledge and experience, 'the interval between our purely animal ancestors and the savage who was first subdued by the glory of the sky and the mystery of life, is as great as that which separates the later from ourselves,' and that 'there was a spiritual significance in the earliest gropings of the world's remotest childhood, as well as those of the maturest worshippers of Christendom.'"

The Rev. W. L. McFarlan Lenzie, in expounding the text "Prove all things," tells us that

"Enlightened Christians of the present day," for whom he is qualified to speak, "are persuaded that nothing has done so much to retard the development of the Christian consciousness in the Protestant sections of Christendom as the superstitious reverence for the Bible prevalent among Protestants." That "THEY hold that such portions of it (the Bible) only are revelations to THEM, which awaken a response in the conscience and higher reason" (pp. 211, 212).

Under the caption "That the things which cannot be shaken may remain," Mr. McFarlan tells us "that the old theologies are being shaken by the new sciences." The doctrines of evangelical theology as to sin, redemption, grace, eternal punishment, etc., must all pass away. Already "they no longer press on the minds and spirits of men like an incubus" (pp. 219-220). The residuum which cannot be shaken, and will remain, he tells us is just the following: 1st. "That righteousness is blessedness." Hence 2d. "That there is a Divine being who is striving to make His creatures sharers in His blessedness, by making them sharers in His righteousness." And hence, "The modern theologian cleaves to the belief of Christendom in the personal immortality of each human spirit." While a belief of the resurrection of the body, and a material heaven or hell has become impossible. These three remain, and only these, that righteousness is blessedness, that there is a God who wishes us well, that the spirit of man will survive death. Christianity is to survive by being supplanted by a very vague and hesitating deism.

These facts are appalling, as an indication of the direction in which thought is moving, especially among the younger ministry of the Established Church of Scotland, and in view of the probable impotency of that Church to limit the contagion and to deliver herself from responsibility for the heresy. This cannot be excused on any rational theory of liberty, for it involves a suicidal abandonment of the very differentia of Christianity, its whole reason of being, and a cutting away the foundation on which all churches rest.

The most encouraging fact in this connection is that the Glasgow Presbytery of the Established Church of Scotland has held three long and excited sessions consid-

ering the two sermons of the Rev. W. L. McFarlan, printed in this volume. The Rev. Dr. Jamieson, who opened the matter, and Mr. Cochrane, who seconded him, charged that the two sermons not only denied the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, but also nearly all the cardinal doctrines of revealed religion specifying the descent of man from Adam, the fall of Adam, the historical Christ of the Gospels, and His vicarious death. Several resolutions were offered, most of which were designed to stave off the matter, and finally the resolution offered by Dr. Jamieson to refer the two sermons of Mr. McFarlan to a committee for examination, with instructions to confer with their author and report at an early date, was passed by a vote of 25 to 21, with eight abstentions.

All who love Christ should now pray earnestly that He would keep His Church loyal to His Son, and guide her officers and members in the painful and laborious work of her defence.

A. A. HODGE.

EPHPTHATHA ; OR, THE AMELIORATION OF THE WORLD. By F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

Canon Farrar has established an enviable name as a writer and speaker. Probably no religious writings have greater popularity to-day than his. His "Life of Christ," "Life and Work of St. Paul," and "Eternal Hope" must have had an unusual sale. To an attractive and picturesque style he adds the pungent rhetoric of an orator and the earnest zeal of a reformer. It is not strange that he finds so many admirers on both sides the Atlantic. He is a man to be admired, not only for his brilliant powers, but also for his ardent sympathies, which, together, must accomplish great good. His "Ephphatha" has the full merits of his other productions. The sermons (for the book is a series of ten sermons preached in Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church) are lively and forceful, and carry throughout one strain, the amelioration of society. He paints the excesses and miseries of London life (it will do for the life of any great city) in strong colors, and urges his hearers and readers to seek their remedy. Such faithful dealing with the great practical question of the day ought to stir up the rich and noble auditors of Canon Farrar to understand the wretchedness that lies around them and the sinful practices that are rotting society on every side, and to put forth such effort as they are specially able to make to stay the frightful evil.

We have one issue with the worthy Canon. He does not appear to exalt personal faith in Christ and the personal walk with Christ as the real remedy of mundane evils. He says, at the close of the sixth sermon, "the laws of health, the laws of temperance, the laws of purity, the laws of contentment will lead us straight back upon the road to the Paradise of God." Yes, but how are these laws to be made effective but by the soul that hides itself with Christ in God? There is too little of this deeper life in the book. Is there not an incorrect exegesis at the bottom of this defect? Does not Canon Farrar lose sight of the expiatory work of Christ and only see His sympathy, thus failing to grasp the great teaching of oneness with Christ, which the doctrine of an expiatory atonement alone supplies? How can he suppose the *αἰτὸς ἀνίτηκεν* of 1 Pet. ii. 24, means *sympathy*? (p. 14). They who see only sympathy in Christ are apt to exalt human power in mending the ills of life. Dr. Farrar is not a Greek scholar, and hence his erroneous exegesis. His translation (p. 66) of *ἐπαναπαύη* as "madest thy pillow on" and *δοκιμάσεις τὰ διαφέροντα* as "dost discriminate the transcendent" will not bear examination.

HOWARD CROSBY.

JOHN PLOUGHMAN'S PICTURES; OR, MORE OF HIS PLAIN TALK FOR PLAIN PEOPLE. By CHARLES SPURGEON. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott. 1881.

"John Ploughman's Talk; or, Plain Advice for Plain People," is well known to the Christian public in England and America. In it the great evangelical preacher for the common people addresses lessons of practical virtue, thrift, and industry with