

THE
LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
Robert Lewis Dabney.

BY
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Fraternally Yours,
R. L. Dalney.

"But wouldn't this honest, common-sense plan reduce the *numbers* in our theological seminaries? Whereat the good directors and professors would squirm! Ah! yes; and there is the pinch. They call us Calvinists; but instead of really holding John Calvin's motto, '*Esse quam videri*,' we are too much tinctured with the Yankee gospel, '*Vive la humbug*.' Yes, there is the pinch." . . .

During these years, Dr. Dabney did a good deal of preaching. He was a man whom the very thoughtful and intelligent liked to hear. So not only at Austin, in the chapel and lecture-room, once it was built, did he preach, but on his trips over the country. For example, in 1886, he was in Baltimore to have his eyes examined. He preached. A very intelligent listener has written of his impressions of the preacher and his sermon:

"In the early part of 1886 I went on a Sabbath morning to the Franklin Square Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, as I was accustomed to do, being then a student in the Johns Hopkins University. For some cause I was quite late, and was disappointed at seeing a stranger in the pulpit with Dr. Lefebvre, whom I had expected to hear. There was no introduction of the stranger after my entrance, and there was no one near me to tell me his name. His appearance did not much impress me, and my first conjecture was that some elderly brother had come in on Dr. Lefebvre, and courtesy had been constrained into putting him up to preach. Then when announcement was made, or when I recalled that on next Sabbath the Lord's Supper was to be administered, I conjectured that the pastor had invited some fellow-Presbyter, personally liked by him, to preach during the week preceding, the pastor of some small country charge.

"The stranger read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and his subject was 'The Vicarious Atonement.' The method was to state and refute the false or incomplete theories of the atonement, and then to establish the true theory. The discourse lasted an hour or more. I was soon listening with profound interest. I abandoned my previous conjecture concerning the identity of the speaker. When he had been speaking perhaps half an hour, stating with the clearness of light false theories, and crushing them to powder under resistless logic, I came to the conclusion that he must be Dr. Dabney. I had never seen him or his picture, but had heard his students talk of his teaching, and was familiar with his writings; and I saw in the giant reasoner, aflame with scorn of error and of subterfuge, yet bowing with meekness at the cross, one so like our great Dabney, that Dabney it must be. And so it turned out to be.

"Since that day I have understood his great influence upon his pupils. Such a teacher is a rare gift to any church.

"Oxford, Ala., March 9, 1901."

"F. P. RAMSAY.