

Yet the prophetic promise still lives in all its first force, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house, and his hands shall finish it." The presence of the great Master-builder of the Church is still in His living temple, and will abide in it for ever. The walls of Jerusalem will yet be built again in all their first strength, and the zeal and watchfulness of the builders will be crowned with the success which they had in that earlier day, and will have to the very end, if we are but true to the cause of Christ, and to the ministry which He has called upon us to fulfil, through His Spirit and to His glory.

ROBERT C. JENKINS.

ART. II.—ARCHBISHOP MAGEE:
HIS SERMONS AND SPEECHES.

IT was a day much to be remembered in the city of Norwich when, within the walls of her ancient cathedral, crowds were gathered to hear the great preacher of the Church of England plead the cause of the Christian faith.

For in 1871 the truth and authority of the Christian revelation was boldly and even coarsely denied. Nor was Christianity alone the object of attack. All faith in God, all belief in the soul, all conception of the power of prayer—in a word, all that stood between the soul and a bare materialism was attacked with a vehemence which had not yet subsided into the comparative dulness of Agnosticism. It is to the sermons delivered on this occasion that we shall in the first place call attention, not only on account of their intrinsic excellence, but because they are in so marked a degree characteristic of the preacher and of his style.

Those who knew the Bishop would understand how such a subject and such a scene would move him. He was called to a great effort, and a mighty cause seemed to hang upon his lips. That most sensitive frame would be strung up to the keenest anxiety as the moment of trial drew near. He would feel all this with a nervousness singularly characteristic of himself as he mounted the pulpit steps, and as the last strain of the organ ceased. But on this occasion his eye met a sight well calculated to arouse the combatant within him, for just in front sat Bradlaugh, the arch-sceptic of his own diocese, cynically cracking nuts. "Ah," said the Bishop to himself, "is Saul also among the prophets?"

How wonderfully calculated was all this to stir to the utmost his marvellous gifts! That trenchant logic which seldom perpetrated and never spared a fallacy, that brilliant

humour not untinged with pathos, nor indeed with sarcasm, which gave such sparkling clearness to his train of thought, were never more conspicuous, nor were an entranced audience more delighted and astonished.

Yet not entirely so : for later years, which but little blunted the edge of his weapons, added somewhat to the charm of his oratory, investing his style with a new tenderness, and giving a deeper spirituality to his thought, which some who loved him attributed to that terrible year in which he thrice stood face to face with death, which in him was to stand face to face with God.

In Norwich Cathedral the Bishop preached three sermons at that time upon Christianity in connection with Free Thought, with Scepticism and with Faith ; and in the close of the same year a fourth upon the Demonstration of the Spirit, which has often struck the writer of this review as the very perfection of logical irony. Eminently suited as were these sermons for that day, they are no less adapted to our own. The pride of human intellect is not lowered, nor is its claim to be the solé arbiter of all truth abandoned, though the sceptic may have made a somewhat cowardly retreat under the modest cover of Agnosticism. "Thought," said the sceptic, then as now, "thought is free as air. Who shall impose a limit upon its flight or dictate the regions into which alone it is to soar?" Yet the very air is limited by its own conditions. Unseen forces control its direction, secret attractions determine its speed, an invisible boundary defines its extent. And so with thought, for which men would maintain an equal freedom. It is not, it cannot be, absolutely free. It is strictly limited by the intellectual powers ; it is tinged, and that deeply, by the moral character ; it is affected, and that more powerfully than aught beside, by its environment. It cannot embrace the finite : how, then, shall it exhaust the infinite ?

It is upon the relation of Christianity to this supposed freedom that the Bishop dwells in the first of his Norwich sermons. With an irony peculiarly his own he shows that Christianity, so far from contracting within narrower limits the fetters upon thought, actually maintains its freedom by asserting its responsibility. It is they who deny a man's responsibility for his faith, "who say that he is no more answerable for his creed than for the colour of his hair or the height of his stature," who imperil his freedom, for liberty and responsibility, says the preacher, are convertible terms, and when there is no responsibility there is no freedom.

We conclude our notice of this sermon with an extract, in which the Bishop shows the absurdity of demanding a religion free from dogma and from theology : how theology, which is

indeed the science of man's relation to God, is essential to man's safety and happiness, as are the natural sciences which reveal his relations to the physical world:

Is there really room, then, for this free thought about God? And can we afford to dispense with any knowledge concerning this God, if there be one? Can anything show you more clearly the utter folly and absurdity of those words which I dare say many of you heard in the last year, "Let us have religion without dogma, without theology. By all means let us have religion, but no theology." Is that one whit more sensible than let us have sun, moon and stars, but no astronomy; let us have plants but no botany; let us have chemicals but no chemistry; let us have the earth but no geology? What is theology? It is the science of God. And if God be a fact—mark you, I say *if*—there must as certainly come a theology out of that fact, as there comes a geology out of the fact that there is an earth. . . . You may tell me that these (the statements of the Creed) are not facts—that is another question; but all we say is, if they be facts, you are just as much bound to think rightly concerning these facts as you are about any other facts; and you think respecting *them* under penalties just as much and no more than you think under penalties concerning other facts. . . . If you be doubtful, remember that while you are doubting time is passing; if these be facts, then you are imperilled if you think wrongly about them. There is danger in darkness as well as in light; if you tell us you are groping in the dark, then we say, Take heed how you grope, take heed lest these facts prove hurtful and dangerous to you if you come into collision with them. We cannot alter these facts. If they are facts, then they have a bearing upon your happiness just as much as facts in the natural world have.

From this topic he passes in the second sermon to the Relation between Christianity and Scepticism, and scepticism he defines as that temper of mind which demands proof of which the subject matter is not capable; and a sceptic as "a man who will not believe the truths of Christianity because they cannot be demonstrated as he would have them demonstrated." It is upon this definition that he proceeds to argue. But we are disposed to think that the definition might have been with some advantage enlarged; that there is a view of scepticism which has been unduly overlooked, and a sceptical habit of mind which deserves some tenderness at our hands, and which does discharge an office of no inconsiderable importance to truth. There is in most minds of strong intellectual calibre what may be described as a transition from an implicit to an explicit faith, a time in which the mind is forced to examine the meaning of much which hitherto it has accepted simply, and rightly, upon authority, as upon the authority of its parents or natural guides. And examining the meaning of these truths it is led to examine their evidence as well. To many minds such a process is inevitable, to some it is exquisitely painful, doubtless in all its innocence and its result are alike dependent upon the humility, candour and honesty with which its inquiries are made. But much also depends upon the patience and sympathy of those with whom the soul thus

tried is thrown, and with whose authority its convictions have hitherto been associated. To confound such inquirers as these with sceptics of another school, with men inflated with the pride of intellect—bold, arrogant and irreligious—is cruel as mistaken. We do not for a moment charge the Bishop with lack of sympathy or tenderness for souls so tried. The condition of mind to which we now refer did not directly come within his scope at the time, and to have diverged from his strict argument might have weakened its force; but it is an interesting fact that, at the time that these sermons were much in men's minds, a man meeting the Bishop in the street said to him, "My lord, I think you have forgotten one cause of scepticism in your discourse. There is the weariness and exhaustion of a mind overwrought, and which in its very faintness has no longer grasp of transcendental truth. Surely the medicine for that mind is rest." However, the Bishop deals with the subject with conspicuous power and sympathy elsewhere, quoting the cry of the afflicted father, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." It may be observed that these critical periods occur not only in the lives of individuals, but in that of the Church itself. We are passing through just such a season of trial at this moment. May God give His Church light and guidance, and add that other gift, of which we spake but now—Rest!

From Free Thought the preacher passed on to Scepticism, from Scepticism to Faith. He presented faith as a high and noble quality of the soul—as necessary to enable it to realize any truth whatever; as elevating it to the acceptance of the very highest truth. That faith which the sceptic held up to contempt as a puny, effeminate and childish quality he portrayed as above all things ennobling the man and raising him to his loftiest, brightest and happiest conceptions. For all this we refer the reader to the sermons themselves, but we would specially direct his notice to the more subtle argument in which is shown the dependence of all morality, of all propriety and decorum, upon this same principle of faith. It is not perhaps sufficiently observed that all moral obligations rest not upon any reasoning process, but upon instinct or upon authority, which itself rests upon faith. Did a man ever succeed in the attempt to prove, by force of syllogism, the obligation to decency, to veracity, to honesty? The nearest approach to such demonstrative proof would be that of the utilitarian—the tendency of such and such action of happiness. Yet who does not see how vague and unsubstantial is such proof? Who shall define happiness, and what standard shall we adopt? That the first elementary rules of life, without which society or civilization would be impossible, should thus rest,

not upon reason, but upon intuition or on faith, has always seemed to us to convey the most remarkable rebuke to those who would make human intellect the judge and arbiter of all truth.

We have discussed the Norwich sermons thus at length, not only on account of the importance of their subject, but also because they were so characteristic of the man and of his style. Bishop Magee positively revelled in moral dialectics. His eye brightened and a ring of triumph sounded through his voice as he exposed a fallacy or tore into shreds a specious piece of cant.

It has been said of the Archbishop, that he was a very clever, but not a very learned man. This is true; but it is also true, and that without any great paradox, that he was in a certain sense the more able for not being a more learned man. His weapons were encumbered with no learned *dust*. He was very little given to dry disquisitions, or to anything remote from the actual life and the enormous interests into which he was thrown. His capacity for disentangling the complexities of a subject, and for picking out at a glance the master thread which commanded the whole was unrivalled. The practical bearing of a subject upon the faith and life was that which gave it its interest with him; but for all this, though he dealt but little in subtleties, he was by nature formed for moral philosophy, and men perhaps did not recognise his statements as philosophical because of their perspicuity. The stream was so clear that men did not perceive its depth.

We have already referred to a fourth sermon preached at Norwich, that on the Demonstration of the Spirit. In this sermon he gave free rein to a quality of his mind in which he certainly had no English rival. One or two there are among his Irish brethren who may rank as his competitors. Dr. Salmon is not less humorous, Bishop Reichel not less scathing; but we have never heard from English lips the like keen and polished irony in combination with a strict and merciless logic. To this the Celt contributed his logic and the Hibernian his peculiar humour. Indeed, the Bishop was fond of claiming for his countrymen the quality of logic, in which he was pleased to associate with them the Frenchman and the Welsh in right of their Celtic blood; and if perchance his hearer smiled at finding this orderly arrangement of thought attributed to his countrymen, he would answer, "Paddy is always logical, but the major premise of his syllogism is too often wrong." Certainly we never heard logic so clear combined with wit so pungent from an English preacher. In the pulpit

it had all the force of ridicule with none of its offence. Dr. South's humour, though frequently not less caustic, was almost always less refined, though distinguished by the same keenness and quickness of perception. The witty Canon was often coarse, sometimes scurrilous; the Bishop was never this. In the pulpit his almost irrepressible humour never transgressed the bounds of reverence nor indulged in personalities; but for all this its effect upon an opponent was most formidable. The logic crushed, whilst the wit transfixed him, and the clear sparkle of the humour made the victory transparent to all beholders.

The question arises, and that a very interesting one, How far is irony, and that irony at times not untinged with sarcasm, permissible in the pulpit? We believe that, under the limitations here indicated, it is a weapon as legitimate as effective. Until lately the sermons of the greater English scholars, and especially those of episcopal rank, had degenerated into essays, and when argumentative had almost invariably become dull; and as a rule the greater the scholar and the more dignified the ecclesiastic the duller they became. The ironical humour of the Bishop of Peterborough at least prevented this, whilst it added immensely to the perspicuity of the argument, and enabled very ordinary minds to follow the most elaborate reasoning.¹

It was characteristic of the Bishop, for to that more familiar title we involuntarily recur, that in his mind were certain leading truths, which exercised a dominant influence, and which were constantly recurring, as they do in the sermons in these volumes. They were not the truths or opinions which occur in other minds, borrowed or accepted by them upon authority, or as parts of the system into which their theology has been cast; but they appeared, if we might so conjecture, to be original and independent thoughts, which had almost spontaneously occurred to him, as corrective or explanatory of the theological system in which he had been bred. Doubtless he had early imbibed the great Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith—a doctrine carrying with it undoubted truth, but, as some of us can remember, somewhat dryly and arbitrarily stated in our youth. Faith was proposed, and rightly proposed, as the primary and necessary condition of worship, of salvation. But it was not so frequently shown as

¹ Of course we except Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who, but that he had begun to fail as Bishop Magee rose to his zenith, would have been his distinguished rival. Surely they were the two most brilliant preachers of the century. They were in most points markedly contrasted. As orators, it may be said of the former that he was the most persuasive, of the latter that he was the most convincing.

it should have been how great was the moral and spiritual value of faith, how great its transforming power, how unique and, so to say, how essential an element it was in the ennobling and elevation of the man. Hence, as preached in the days we speak of, there appeared something arbitrary and unreal in the place assigned to it in the popular system. "Only believe" became too often a formula as dry and arbitrary as the doctrine of good works or of ceremonialism, against which it was supposed to protest. The Bishop saw—and that no doubt long before he became a Bishop—that the lower nature could never be raised but by faith in a nature higher than itself, by faith in that which is true and noble in other men, and so by faith in the perfection of the noble and true, as existing in God and as revealed in Jesus Christ. Nay, he added that it was essential that the man should believe in that which was higher and better in his own self, higher and better than he was willing to believe of himself. This was a great and a pregnant thought. It appears and reappears more than once in these volumes; but seldom did the preacher speak with greater feeling or with truer eloquence than in the sermon upon Christianity and Faith. Mere extracts will give but little idea of the value of this sermon, and one perusal will not suggest the depth nor the wide and varied bearing of the truths which it propounds. Amongst other things is shown how inevitable are the difficulties which a lower nature must experience when it comes in contact with one much higher than itself; how inadequate must be its conceptions, how imperfect its judgments. It is no small merit of the Bishop's sermons that, whilst so clear and exhaustive upon a particular point, they are so suggestive upon others which lie beyond. In the present instance, a thoughtful mind on laying down the book may find matter for many and important suggestions. It is a great achievement thus to have elucidated the nature of faith, and to have shown not only its excellence, but its moral power, and so to have vindicated the position which it holds in the Gospel scheme.

There were, of course, other subjects besides the evidential ones upon which the Bishop preached. A sermon upon Fore-telling and Forth-telling, which does not seem to us very happily named, provoked considerable criticism at the time. It was not open to the objection which we once heard seriously brought to one of his really great discourses, "that it lasted thirty minutes, and was all upon one subject." For in this case the Bishop dealt, and with great earnestness, upon three topics—one the nature of the prophetic office, the second the characters of the optimist and the pessimist, the third the distinction between morality as enforced by the State and

the moral code of the Church as inculcated by the Gospel. In the last division the sermon provoked considerable criticism, and there are those who are still disposed to differ strongly from his views. It is clear that the Bishop was in no way daunted nor convinced by his critics; for he repeated the sermon verbatim fifteen years later, on the occasion of the reopening of one of the most important churches of his diocese, and before a very large and distinguished assembly both of clergy and laity. Our own disagreement is with some expressions in the first part of the discourse; the more general disagreement was with the last. All must have admired the skilful portraiture of the optimist and the pessimist which came between these, and we are of opinion that not a few writers and speakers on this subject are indebted to this source for some of their most salient points. Upon the other two we will proceed to say a few words in their order.

In the first, then, we perceive some reaction from the feeble treatment of the subject of prophecy popular in the preacher's youth. Davidson was but little read, and the Dean of Canterbury and the late Archdeacon of London (Dr. Gifford) had not written; Keith and books of his calibre were in vogue. As the Bishop tersely puts it:

The idea which too many devout and believing students had, and still have, of the prophets of the Old Testament, was this—that a prophet was a man divinely inspired to foresee, and foretell to his countrymen, coming events, and that afterwards his predictions, with their fulfilment, should remain to us as proofs of his inspiration, and as reasons why we should believe the Bible in which they appear. To furnish predictions for the Jews and evidences for the Christian are the two chief, if not the only, functions with which most persons used, and many people still continue, to credit the great institution of Jewish prophecy."

No doubt this is a true, if a somewhat caustic, description of the once popular view of prophecy and of the prophetic office; and it is followed by a magnificent description of the office of the Jewish prophet as an instructor in righteousness, as upholding in the Jewish nation the sense of their relation to their Divine Governor, and to His worship and His law:

He was God's messenger to tell the Jews that they were God's people; that the land which they called theirs was, therefore, not their land, but His—that they held it upon strictest covenant of obedience; that Jehovah was their Lord, and not theirs only, but Lord of all the earth. He was to proclaim to Israel that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He was to tell it out among the heathen that the Lord was King.

All this is eminently true. The prophets were a very numerous body distributed in "schools" and colleges throughout the land, and their office mainly was the religious instruction of the people. In this respect they resembled the parochial clergy of our own day. But it does not seem right to restrict

the prophetic office entirely to this duty, and to eliminate altogether its predictive function. There were among them men of great eminence, in whom dwelt the Holy Spirit in very large measure. These men were the direct organs of communication between Jehovah and His people—the advisers or the strong rebukers of their rulers. They lived and taught in the most critical periods of their nation's history, and shall it be said that men like these, filled, as we have said, with the Spirit of God, and endowed with the higher degrees of inspiration, should not from time to time be gifted with visions of God's future purposes? Or shall it be said that in them the gift of foresight was "but a poor gift, which they might share with the witch or the wizard; that it is not always divine—it may be devilish, and its possession may turn men into devils"?

(To be continued.)

ART. III.—MODERN PREACHING.

THE universal extension of the art of printing has universally modified the influence of the pulpit. Much of what was formerly wont to come to man by hearing, now comes to him by reading. The journal and the book have, in the modern age, largely covered the space of public attention previously occupied by the harangue and the sermon. The newspaper has a daily congregation of tens of thousands; the preacher has a weekly audience rarely exceeding a few hundreds. For every thirty persons who habitually read journals and books, probably less than five habitually listen to speeches or sermons—so completely, in the modern age, has the written word usurped the throne once occupied by the spoken utterance.

It is, moreover, very noteworthy that this usurpation affects not sermons alone, but all spoken dissertations in general. In several towns rough calculations have been made of the numbers of persons attending the places of worship in those towns, and the aggregate of these numbers seldom amounts to one-third of the entire population. But if, in those self-same towns, a calculation were made, during a municipal or parliamentary election, of the number of persons attending the places of political meeting, the aggregate of these numbers would be still less imposing. Of course, upon great occasions, when the Prime Minister or some important political personage is announced to address a meeting, the concourse of listeners is multitudinous; but so is it also at Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral when any famous divine is announced to