

that an English University should show, we seem to realize how in the Church of Christ God will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

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ART. IV.—PHILLIPS BROOKS: THE MAN AND THE PREACHER.

ALTHOUGH seven years have elapsed between the death of Bishop Phillips Brooks and the publication of his "Life and Letters,"¹ yet the delay was unavoidable and the result worth waiting for. Arthur Brooks, his brother (known to many in England through a striking volume of sermons on the Incarnation), had originally undertaken to write the Life, but his work was cut short by death, and Professor Allen necessarily required time to digest and arrange the material placed in his hands. Professor Allen is qualified, both by sympathy and long personal friendship with the Bishop, and by his previous literary work, to give to the world this worthy memoir of one of its greatest men. The author of "The Continuity of Christian Thought" (which has made Church history intelligible for the first time to many a student), of the "Life of Jonathan Edwards," and of "Christian Institutions" in the International Theological Library, had already made his mark in the fields of religious biography and of ecclesiastical history, and this, his longest book, will add to his fame. It is long, very long—some 1,500 pages; but it is not too long, and could very easily have been made much longer. It is beautifully got up, and enriched with many portraits of Phillips Brooks and of some of his friends, and illustrations of the churches with which he was associated. One portrait we miss, even among the many that are given, which belongs to a late period of his life, and was prefixed to a volume published by Cupples, of Boston, called "The Bishop and the Child." It ought to be added to the Life.

Professor Allen's work was doubtless written in view of two classes of persons, and its appeal is to them both, and we doubt not that this determined the form as well as the length

¹ "Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks," by Alexander V. G. Allen, Professor in the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Mass. With portraits and illustrations. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co.

of the book. It appeals to those who did and to those who did not know the Bishop. Those who knew him ever so slightly will not wish the book one page shorter; and for those who knew him not, there is material for making such acquaintance as is now possible with one of the most beautiful and helpful lives of the Victorian era. For though doubtless too long for the mere casual reader, who treats biography as almost a secondary kind of fiction, useful for killing time or getting through rainy days, or for the diner-out who wants some new stories (there are some good ones, by the way); yet for the friend who knew and loved the man, and for the student, either of human nature in general, or American nature in particular, or of comparative ecclesiastical history (and there is a good deal to be learned here concerning the working of an unestablished Episcopal Church both for good and for ill), or of the science and art of preaching, and the relation of preaching to the rest of the life of the preacher, the book will not be merely the minister to the ennui of an idle hour or so, but the constant companion, which will grow dearer as its friendship becomes closer. And this, we take it, is the purpose of all real biography.

Out of a body of material so vast and so varied it will only be possible now to touch upon a few salient points. The Life divides itself into six main parts: the ancestry, life as an undergraduate, the civil war, and the work at Philadelphia, Boston, and as Bishop. The sequence and development of these are very clearly marked by Professor Allen; and it is one of the merits of the work (as well as, we suspect, one of the causes of the long delay in publication) that it presents us with a philosophy of Phillips Brooks' life, shows its inner workings and growths, its rejection of earlier and lower ideals, and its final grasp of the "this one thing I do," which made the life ultimately so great. For that, and for the most part little beyond that, is the moral of the life of Phillips Brooks; all the rest stands in subordination, and is interesting only in relation to the central idea. It is not, of course, claimed that this method would do for every minister; but it would do for far more than is commonly imagined, and the world would be the better if more of its clergy and ministers followed Phillips Brooks' ideals and methods. With him their success was enormous. He changed the face of Boston and its centre of spiritual gravity, and did it by simple fidelity and singleness of purpose.

And he did it by preaching. To many in these days of elaborate parochial organization, diverting the attention and energies of the ministry into a hundred channels, this will sound incredible. But the fact is that it was done. He did

not so begin. He began with a keen interest and an active part in social and political work; this was the phase represented in his Philadelphia parish life. Then came the call to Holy Trinity, Boston, and with it a total change in his ideals and methods. Henceforward he lived for one thing, and one thing only—his pulpit. Other things were done, but they were slight in amount and subordinate in place. This is the first lesson of the Life. He determined to preach as the central and dominating work of his ministry, and he did it.

How? Here is the point at which the biography has come to all its readers as a complete surprise. Those of us who had heard Brooks preach and who had studied his sermons were amazed at the extraordinary fecundity of ideas, the singular absence of quotations of all kinds, the apparent independence of books, the seeming want of any philosophical or theological *scheme*, as well as at the phenomenal rapidity of the delivery. It all seemed so spontaneous, so natural, so easy, that men envied the preacher who could so write and so speak. It was not till the publication of the volume of "Essays and Addresses" in 1894 that we learned that he had books at all; and not till the later "Letters of Travel" that it was known that he bought books largely far and near; and not till now that the spontaneity and the ease were all on the surface. He had learned (though probably to his simple boyish nature the thought never occurred) that *ars artium celare artem*. He knew his limitations, his drawbacks, his necessities, and worked hard to overcome and master them. In the Life we read of his prolonged and deep study, not only of theology, but of most other things besides—regular, systematic, persevering. We read of the pains he took with those wonderful sermons. How many men write a sermon once, let alone twice? Yet most of Phillips Brooks' sermons were written twice, once in outline and then in full.

The facsimile given of the outline of his well-known sermon on "The Candle of the Lord" is one of the most interesting parts of the whole book. Let any student compare it with the finished sermon sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph, and further consider the pains required to map out each section proportionately to its importance and to the length of the whole, and he will have a most valuable object-lesson in the science of sermon-preparation. Brooks had only one secret, his faculty of infinite pains. He knew how hard it was to speak at all, and he would not speak unless he was prepared and had something to say. His preparation was continuous and incessant. Note-books, commonplace books, sermon sketch-books, were always at hand and constantly used. So, too, did he keep himself fresh and young. Old

sermons outgrown were discarded ; old methods of thought and expression that had ceased to be living realities to him were ruthlessly sacrificed. As he laboured hard over his pulpit work, so did he never allow past achievement, however brilliant, to supersede present endeavour and need. Of the 372 sermons preached in Philadelphia, he only published five as satisfying "his own judgment and discretion." As he grew older his style became less florid and more chastened, less abstract and more living, less temporal and more spiritual ; the things behind were forgotten or ignored in the earnest pressing forward of his strenuous and beating heart and brain.

It is good to study such a Life when we hear or read the iterated plaint of the decay of the pulpit. There need be no decay if men will only take pains ; if they will only have something to say worth the saying, and study the best method of saying it, both as to form and manner ; if they will ground themselves in vital principles and doctrines, and keep abreast of the best thought of their day, there will be no decay. But they must believe in their vocation, and live for it. Preaching must have the first, not the second or tenth, place in their lives. For such men there is room the world over.

He stands, therefore, as a model and example to all preachers in the high ideal he formed of his vocation, and in the consistent and persistent devotion of his whole life to attain to it. The same is true of his life as a student and thinker. He was called to preach the truth. He had, therefore, to find it and to learn it. And here, again, we are struck with the width and depth of his learning and research. The processes were not visible in his sermons, but the results were there. Many volumes sometimes lay behind a single utterance—volumes not only read but assimilated, so that, passing through the alembic of his own mind, the ideas he had pondered over had become his own. Hence the almost total absence of quotations. Hence, too, the absence of conventional forms of expression, both dogmatic and literary. It was this more than anything else that caused some to misunderstand him dogmatically. They missed the usual phrases, and jumped to the conclusion that the idea behind the phrase was missing also. And yet probably never a preacher lived to whom the faith was a more real thing, and all the more real because he had seen both sides, and knew them both sympathetically ; because, not content, when able to think and judge for himself, with simply accepting the results of the past, he lived over again in himself the processes by which those results had been attained, and so added a personal to his hereditary faith. This of course had its drawback, in that he looked at doctrine, as he looked at everything else, through his own eyes, and

prevented those from understanding him who could only accept without challenge, or possibility of revision or restatement, that which they had received.

We recall with pain the outcry raised against his election to the bishopric of Massachusetts on the ground of his being really a Unitarian. Those who knew him knew how utterly false the charge was—and the world knows it now. So far back as 1882 he had been clearing his mind of misconceptions and endeavouring to formulate his theological system, and had committed his thoughts to writing. These are given in vol. ii., pp. 346-356—ten of the most pregnant pages in two volumes full of suggestion. He writes thus about Christ: "The principle of Christianity is that God was in Christ—not a revelation by a *book*, but by a *being*. This is the point to which all disturbances of literal faith in the book are tending, and so in this there is no tendency to deny or to depreciate the true humanity of Jesus, but rather a necessity of exalting and emphasizing it. The possibility of such supreme manifestation of God in Jesus must lie in the essential nearness of humanity to Divinity. . . . Hence it is not strange that there should be much in the lives of the best men which seems to be identical with the life of Jesus. In them, too, God is endeavouring to manifest Himself. Here is the true key to the inspiration of thinkers, poets and saints. . . . This does not do away with the *separateness* of Jesus, but only shows the way in which His separate life becomes a possibility. His seemingly contradictory name, 'the only begotten of the Father,' seems to contain the double idea of the uniqueness of His life, and at the same time of its being the consummation of the life of man. The testimony to its uniqueness is in His own words, as historically recorded, and in the solitary strength of His influence." "Separateness," "uniqueness," "solitary strength," are quite enough to show where he really stood, because no Unitarian could use them. And there are many, many other passages to the same effect in his sermons and books and journals.

He was opposed to the sacerdotal spirit, and showed it in many ways—in his dress, modes of conducting service, and general life. And accordingly the sacerdotal spirit opposed him, as it always does the prophetic ministry, and ultimately it slew him. No one who saw him after those months of anxiety about the election but saw that it had left an indelible mark of suffering upon him. A study of the portraits in the two volumes shows it now. He said nothing all the time, but suffered silently and patiently, and then within a few months of his consecration died at the early age of fifty-seven, leaving behind him the memory of an ecclesiastical hero and of a

preacher whose words will live; for, as Bishop Creighton said in his Introduction to the "English Theological Library," "Pulpit oratory, after all, lasts longer than other forms of oratory, and the roll of English preachers has produced finer examples of eloquence than exist elsewhere."

We have said enough, we hope, to send students and preachers to these volumes for guidance and for inspiration. To the general reader the interest should be no less engrossing, though not of course so technical. He will read the record of a good man's life, growing from roots deeply fixed in the past, growing up amid congenial surroundings, growing taller and ampler with the advancing years, producing leaves and flowers and fruit and embracing shade, and becoming a source of light and life and comfort to all who came within its generous influence.

A few errata should be noted in view of a new edition, which is sure to be called for on the other, if not on this, side of the Atlantic. In the English diary (ii. 427), "Bishop of Litchfield" should be "Lichfield." Dr. Allon was not of the *North British Review*, but of the *British Quarterly Review*. "Blount" should be "Blunt." In ii. 567, "Harold Brown" should be "Harold Browne." And in ii. 903, it is not quite accurate to say that "other invitations, and they were many, he felt obliged to decline, with the exception of St. Peter's, Eaton Square." One other, at least, he did accept on the morning of the Sunday on which he preached at St. Peter's in the evening, and that was at St. Luke's, Chelsea (he mentions it in the "Letters of Travel"), when he preached a sermon on "The Shewbread," that lives in the memory of those who heard it, and afterwards lunched at the Rectory, delighting all present with his geniality and humanity. He was among friends, and he talked as he did not always. For his life in many ways was solitary. He was accessible, if people wanted him—very accessible, but outside a small circle, even in Boston, few knew him intimately. The solitariness of the prophet soul, the isolation of the pioneer and the seclusion of the student were his, and they formed the secret of his influence and his strength.

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