THE THEOLOGY OF MODERN FICTION. By THOMAS G. SELBY. (Kelly. 8vo. pp. 192. 3s.) It cannot be said of the Fernley Lecture, as it is said of other lectureships of to-day, that the lecturers have no scope. Between the Person of Christ (to name an early and notable Fernley Lecture) and the Theology of Modern Fiction, there is room enough for most things. So it is with a pleasant prospect of surprise that the audience assembles yearly.

The 'Theology of Modern Fiction' is a modern subject. The very idea the words express is modern. And it cannot be many years since it would have been as impossible as absurd to deliver such a lecture on the Fernley foundation. Mr. Selby made choice of a modern subject. And he did well. To speak to the generation that is dead is apparently past our power; the generation that is to come will have speakers enough of their own. Mr. Selby speaks to his own day; and in that he surely does well. And when he speaks, he speaks to be listened to. No previous Fernley Lecture, we may guess, was found more pleasing to hear; none, we are sure, was ever more delightful to read.

And yet the choice is questionable. Was Mr. Selby able to tell his hearers anything they did not know? Was it worth their while to know it? Does it matter to any of Mr. Selby's audience what Mr. Thomas Hardy's views of evil and the Devil are? Was it worth their knowing what even George Eliot found to be good, and confusedly named it God? Of the theology of modern fiction, most of Mr. Selby's hearers and readers already know all that they need to know. Surely the Fernley Lectureship was not founded for the encouragement of studies that most men have to resist the temptation to indulge in.

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Dr. Mortimer is rector of St. Mark's, Philadelphia. He uses the title 'Catholic,' therefore, in a way we have come to understand. Whether he uses it as it ought to be used is another matter. But at least he uses it more legitimately than does the Church of Rome. For he would allow it to cover the Church of Rome, probably also the Greek Church, the Church Episcopal in America, and the Church of England—and that is more than the Church of Rome would do. Would that he could go a little farther, and let it cover all those who name the name of Christ and strive to depart from iniquity.

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