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I.—LITERARY.

THE REV. ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY, D. D., LL. D.

Robert Lewis Dabney was born in Louisa county in Virginia, on the 5th of March, 1820, of good old Hanover lineage. In June, 1836, he entered the Sophomore class, half advanced, of Hampden-Sidney College. He completed the remaining part of the Sophomore, and the Junior course, and left the college in 1837. He then taught a country school for two years. In December, 1839, he entered the University of Virginia, from which he retired in July of 1842 with the degree of Master of Arts. He again taught a select private school for more than two years. In October, 1844, he entered Union Seminary in Virginia, took the full three years course in two years and was licensed to preach in May, 1846. He spent one year as a missionary in his native county, at the end of which time he was called to be the pastor of Tinkling Spring church in Augusta county. Here he performed for a considerable time the functions of the pastorate to a large church and those of the head teacher of a classical school. After a pastorate of over six years he was elected to the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Polity in his *alma mater*, Union Theological Seminary, which he filled until 1870. Meanwhile, in 1869, he had been appointed Adjunct Professor of Theology, and he was made full Professor in this department in 1870. He continued to dignify this important chair until 1883, when owing to bronchial troubles he was warned by his physicians to seek a milder climate. Accordingly he accepted an invitation to the chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the University of Texas, at Austin,

THE EFFECT OF ONE SERMON.

[A Seminary Reminiscence.]

In one respect the effect of a sermon must be transient. Its object is to move the soul of the hearer to action at that time. It cannot be held in memory for any length of time and it must therefore soon pass away. Yet in its influence on the heart and life it belongs to the permanent and even the eternal. Such Paul has made it when he declared, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The conditions surrounding its delivery are often very important elements in its effect. Part of the power of the memorable sermons of Whitfield, of Livingstone in Shott's churchyard in Scotland; of Jonathan Edwards on "Their feet shall slide;" and of Dr. Thornwell before the Assembly in Philadelphia—the richest and noblest sermon ever printed—was certainly due to the surroundings under which they were delivered.

There was nothing of this kind to give effect to this sermon, of which we now speak, yet in its effect at the time on the writer and in its influence on his preaching and life, it must ever be regarded by him as the greatest sermon he was ever privileged to hear.

It was delivered in the seminary chapel on Sunday night in 1872, while the writer was a student in the seminary, by Dr. Peck. There was nothing in the expectation or condition of the audience to draw forth a special sermon. Only the usual gathering of students and the Hill families were assembled before the preacher. I took no notes of the sermon, and can now only recall a bare outline, yet it made that night one of the most precious memories of my seminary life, as my heart burned within me under the thrilling truth that poured from a glowing heart.

This sermon was from the text—"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke 19:10.

Dr. Peck first clearly and scripturally showed man's ruin and misery as set forth by the Bible, when it declares he is "lost." This cleared the way for a proper understanding of what the Son of man must do for man when he "seeks and

saves" him. When that condition into which sin brings man is rightly understood then is it easy to show that no plan of saving him, short of the Bible plan, can meet man's need. He then took up the different theories of the atonement and proved with great power their insufficiency.

1. The "New Haven or Governmental" scheme, which makes the sufferings and death of Jesus a mere expedient of God to display his justice and thus uphold His moral government. By this dramatic exhibition of His hatred to sin and of its evils, and of His infinite tenderness and mercy, God would melt the hearts of transgressors. But more is needed than a drama, however terrible, to save those "dead in trespasses and sins."

2. The life and death of Jesus was to set before the world a perfect example of what a man could do and suffer and of how he could live in this evil world, conquering its temptations, and at last leave it an undefiled being. With a pathos that melted his audience to tears Dr. Peck declared that if all Christ came to do was to give us such an example, his life could only fill us with despair. Some sinning Peter, who fell under his temptations, would suit us far better than Jesus. He is our human model, but by His adorable grace He is far more, He is a divine Savior.

3. That he came to teach man more perfectly the law of God and the nature of eternal life. The Sermon on the Mount was meant by Him to speak very differently from the law on Mount Sinai. He came to make men see the spiritual law which has a more merciful voice than the law of Moses. In answer to all this Dr. Peck showed that as a matter of law the Sermon on the Mount speaks more terribly to us than Sinai, going as it does beneath the outward acts to the thoughts and desires. With tremendous earnestness he said in words something like these, "If all Jesus came to do was to reveal more law, better that He had never come; for I had more law before he came than I could keep. When He reveals more law to me, who am already a law-breaker, He is only doing for me what the devils said of Him, condemning me before my time. I do not want more law. I want someone to help me keep what I already am bound to obey or perish. I do not want a mere law-giver, but I want a *Savior*."

The sermon then reached its thrilling climax as he unfolded

the glorious truth that Jesus was just such a Savior as "lost" sinners needed.

Never have I seen an audience so deeply moved. Not only did they listen with breathless interest but also with emotion scarcely less than his own, as he gathered the lines of his argument and with logic set on fire and with voice and gesture in rich accord with his deep emotions, set forth the Son of man, seeking and saving the lost.

Dr. Vaughan has, in the introduction to the third volume of "Miscellanies of Rev. Thomas E. Peck," graphically pictured two scenes, when Dr. Peck preached at Buffalo and Farmville. This sermon in the seminary chapel must stand with these, as one in which he preached with the highest eloquence and power. I gratefully record my recollection of it and use it as an illustration of the far-reaching influence a Professor in the seminary may exert over the plastic minds and hearts of his students. He lives and preaches in them, not because they become feeble imitators, but because he has enriched their lives. It also deeply impressed the students with the glorious privilege they had in preaching the blessed gospel.

J. W. ROSEBRO.

