

Some of these discourses were delivered on Sunday evenings to the young men of Dr. Guthrie's congregation; others were addresses on various occasions; one has appeared in the "Contemporary Review." The book is thus a miscellany; interesting as the utterances of a distinguished scholar on theology, metaphysics, politics and history. Its thought has the value of independence and freshness, for this professor has no fear of presbytery before his eyes. It is a noteworthy attempt at popular discussion of some simple and some very abstruse themes; and seems to have its best success in the fields of politics and history. The discourse on the "Scottish Covenanters" is interesting and forcible; that on the "Politics of Christianity" is clear, though not in substance new to Americans; that on "Landlords and Land Laws" is notably bold and earnest as well as wise; that on the "Realization of Evil" is practically instructive. We doubt whether an equal value attaches to the metaphysical theology in the work, since that department does not easily take its place in heterogeneous and popular discussion; yet many of the separate thoughts on this field are suggestive, and the author shows at times almost a genius for clear and exact definition. Parts of this professor's philosophy are more Greek than Christian: "Guilt certainly is fundamentally nothing more than a mistake"; "in its essential character of the nature of a blunder"; "sin is only an imperfection naturally cleaving to a finite creature so wonderfully constituted as man. Then 'every sin deserveth not God's wrath and curse both in this world and that which is to come.' Certainly so" (pp. 74-76). In the discourse on the Sabbath there is a fine perception and assertion of vital spiritual principles in deep harmony with Christ's teaching; but complicated with a decrying of the Ten Commandments as "savoring nothing of the spirit of the Gospel" (p. 90), which is not only needless in the argument but also injurious to it—being a mistake. So extreme is this discourse in its re-action from Scottish Sabbath-keeping that it proceeds to allow on the Lord's Day "music, and sketching in the country, healthy games, such as croquet, lawn-tennis, boating," insisting, however, that no such "Sabbath sports shall be allowed to commence before two o'clock in the afternoon; otherwise recreation might

¹ *Lay Sermons.* By John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)

run away with religion" (p. 109). Yet the concession is made shortly afterward that "strict Sabbatizing" has been a chief factor in forming the noble character of the Scottish people. It will be seen that such handling shows some liability to rashness of thought, to narrowness in scope, to inconsiderateness in words, which might easily work damage to a metaphysical discussion. Indeed, the style does not always stand at a level with the dignity of its theme; and some grammatical slips, some colloquialisms, and occasional mixing of rhetorical figures, compel us to rank our professor's English inferior to his Greek; while they surprise us, because, in contrast, through large masses of the work the diction is admirable for felicitous statement of poised and adjusted thought. The Appendix, on the Metaphysics of Gen. i., is interesting as containing a defense of Spinoza from common misunderstanding, on a line which to us seems, at least in part, well taken—one of the indications of a present recurrence of thought in the Church to the Christian pantheism of the apostles John and Paul, from the dreary mechanical theology which in its fear of confusing God with the universe has so separated him from the universe of matter, force and law, that by a century or two of such teaching by the church our latest science has been educated toward a conception of the universe as needing no God, being a sufficient God unto itself. Without accepting this author's metaphysics, we welcome this indication of tendency from a learned and eminent Scotch Presbyterian layman. This author's general spirit is devout and reverent; not bound by ecclesiastical creeds, he holds fully to Christ Jesus, and the glorious facts of God's grace in Christ for a lost race.