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THE PASTOR AND APOLOGETICS.

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APOLOGETICS is that theological science which treats of the rational proofs that Christianity is the supernatural, and so the exclusive, the final—in a word, the absolute religion.

I. It is repeatedly said that, whatever may be the case with the professional theologian, the practical pastor has no need of, because no use for, this science.

Various grounds are urged for this objection. It is maintained, for example, that the truth of God does not require any defence; that if it did, its simple proclamation would be more effective than any argument; that apologetic preaching has often raised doubts which it has not resolved; and that on the preacher himself its influence has frequently been baneful, tending to make him critical rather than aggressive.

II. That there is much force in these allegations cannot be denied. The truth of God is eternal and immutable. How could human unbelief prevail against it? It is also self-evidencing. How could any human argument be so convincing as its own evidence? The preacher who discusses the scientific or the philosophical objections to Christianity may not answer them to the satisfaction of all or of any, and he will be sure to suggest them to many who otherwise would never have thought of them. The minister whose studies are wholly or mainly apologetic is likely to lose zeal and energy. Interest in the progress of a building will be sustained with difficulty if one is continually engaged in testing the foundations. It must be granted, therefore, that as spiritual illumination is more important for every Christian

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Editorial.

THE REV. J. GORDON GRAY, D. D., PASTOR OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT ROME.

ON the 20th of September, 1870, the Italian army entered Rome, after a slight resistance. This event, which marked the downfall of the temporal power of the papacy, the unification of Italy, and the establishment of religious liberty under the enlightened and progressive government of Victor Emanuel, is properly commemorated in the name of a handsome street which extends from the Porta Pia, where the army entered, to the Quirinal Palace, where the King resides. Appropriately placed on a street which thus commemorates the establishment of civil and religious freedom in Italy are several of the Protestant churches, which for the last thirty years have caused a pure river of water of life to flow once more through Rome, as in the days when the great Apostle of the Gentiles preached there the kingdom of God, and taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him. At No. 7 on this high and pleasant street we find a tall, clean, handsome building, standing well back from the street, with a spacious green yard in front, the whole occupying a portion of what were

once the gardens of the Barberini Palace. A neat notice-board on the high iron picket fence informs us that this attractive building is the Presbyterian Church, and that the pastor is the Rev. J. Gordon Gray, D. D. When you enter the church on Sunday morning, a few minutes before eleven o'clock, you find it filled with a congregation of exceptionally intelligent people, mostly English-speaking residents in Rome and visitors from every part of the English-speaking world, including many Christians of other denominations besides our own, for it does not take visitors in Rome long to find out how strong and wholesome is the spiritual nourishment here furnished, how broad-minded and large-hearted the pastor is, how richly furnished for his ministry, and how surely he declares the whole counsel of God, without ever a syllable that can offend any of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. If you return in the afternoon, as you will do if you are wise, and as everybody does, in fact, after hearing him once, you will find the house full again, and while you will see no splendid pageant, no rows of bishops and archbishops in purple and lace and furs, no robing and disrobing, no intoned service in Latin, no choral responses from high and gilded choir loft, no clouds of incense filling the air—you will hear the old, sweet gospel in all its pristine purity; you will see the great Apostle and his friends before you, instinct with life and love and zeal, as the minister lectures on Roman Sites which can be identified with St. Paul's Sojourn Here, The Saints of Cæsar's Household in the Light of the Columbaria, The Site and Probable Incidents of Paul's Roman Trial, The First Martyrdoms and the Probable Site of Nero's Circus, Paul's Two Years in his Hired House, Paul's Travels and Labors Between his First and Second Roman Imprisonments, The Closing Years of Paul's Ministry, The Jews in Rome in Paul's Time; and you will hear things that make for the peace of your soul and for your upbuilding on your most holy faith as he expounds The Chief Elements of Paul's Teaching; Christ in Early Christian Art as Found in the Roman Catacombs; The State After Death, Prayers to the Dead, and Prayers for the Dead, in the Light of the Testimony of the Roman Catacombs; The Place and Efficacy of the Sacraments in the Light of the Testimony of the Roman Catacombs; and The Ministry in the Early Church of the Catacombs. Surely never was Christian workman

better adapted to his work than Dr. Gray. The sturdy frame, the massive head, the clear eye, the kindly voice, the genial manner, the transparent sincerity, and the ready sympathy of the man invite one's confidence from the first, and the longer you know him the more you value him for his wisdom, piety and learning. We had the good fortune to hear his sermon on the eighteenth anniversary of the formation of his pastorate in Rome, in which he reviewed the history of his church during those eighteen years, and the years immediately preceding, and the growth of Protestantism in Rome since the downfall of the papacy, and a deeply interesting discourse it was. It lifts one's hopes for the future of Italy. Undoubtedly the day is breaking over the darkness which has so long lain like a pall over that lovely land.

A good man is known by his prayers. There is a fulness, propriety and fervor about Dr. Gray's public prayers that are seldom equalled. The home-sick stranger, with the wide ocean between him and his native land; the professional man, wavering in health and doubtful as to the future; the stricken widow, who has lost her husband by the sudden stroke of death, as well as those who bear the usual burdens of the human heart, find themselves strangely comforted and cheered, strangely relieved of their toils and cares and anxieties and fears, strangely upborne and strengthened, as this man of God pours from a sympathetic heart the needs of his people into the ear of him who careth for us. Among the usual petitions on Sunday morning there is invariably one for the King of England and the Royal Family, the President of the United States, and the King and Queen of Italy. We had two reminders on the 22nd of February that it was Washington's birthday: one was the flags hanging out at the American Embassy, and the other was Dr. Gray's prayer of thanksgiving for the character and services of Washington. He never forgets anything. Yet his activities are multifarious. His resourcefulness, adequacy and strength have long since made him the real dean of the fine force of Protestant ministers in Rome. His advice is sought by them, and by all manner of visitors to Rome on all manner of subjects. He is deeply interested in the matter of excavating the house of Priscilla and Aquilla, the Apostle Paul's friends, on the Aventine, and hopes to raise the necessary funds and have that done—

a valuable service to archæological and biblical learning. He ought by all means to be allowed to find time to publish a volume on the Apostle Paul in Rome.

Dr. Gray is another of the many good gifts of Scotland to the world, and, like Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, and other eminent Scotchmen, is an Aberdeen man. They are some of the Aberdonians who almost tempt us at times to agree with the Aberdeen man of whom our good Scotch physician in Rome told me, who said, "Tak' awa' Aberdeen, and sax miles around it, and what would you have left?"

W. W. M.

January 26, 1904.

"ROMAN HOUSES IN WHICH ST. PAUL PREACHED."

THIS is the title of an article that will appear in the next issue of the MAGAZINE, from the pen of the Rev. J. Gordon Gray, D. D., pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Rome, who has made Paul's residence in Rome a matter of special investigation. Elsewhere in this issue is to be found a sketch of the history of Dr. Gray's church.

J. I. A.

"THE BIOGRAPHY HABIT."

"HERE is something fresh from the bat—a thing which, if it has the effect upon the readers that it had upon me writing it, will give them a thrill never to be forgotten. Hope it will help the young theologues to get into the biography habit, which I trust will be as great a benefit to them as it has been to me." So writes Dr. Berle in a letter which accompanied his article, "The Gladstone Biography as a Devotional Book," printed elsewhere in this issue.

A man can't read that article without feeling that Dr. Berle is writing out of his heart. It is good to have these warm words from one competent to speak on a subject that has long been near the editor's heart. Some one has said, in substance, that no greater good fortune can come to a child than to be born into a home where the best books are read, the best conversation engaged in, and the best music interpreted; and every one who has lived and thought on the meaning of life and the manner of its living says a hearty amen.