

TH
m 834

THE ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE PREACHING
OF
THOMAS CHALMERS

By

William A. Morrison
A. B., Greenville College
1937

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

May 1942

**BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY**
HATFIELD, PA.

18805

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Subject Stated and Justified.....	1
B. Problem Delimited and Procedure Indicated.....	2
I. THE TIMES IN WHICH CHALMERS PREACHED.....	4
A. The Social and Industrial Conditions....	5
1. Social Conditions and Attempts at Reform.....	6
a. Wages and Taxes.....	6
b. Criminal Laws and Punishments...	7
c. Education.....	7
d. Population Increase.....	8
e. Reform Efforts.....	9
f. Summary.....	10
2. Industrial Conditions and Their Effects.....	10
a. Inventions and Discoveries.....	10
b. Typical Growth of Glasgow.....	12
c. Working Conditions and Reform Efforts.....	13
d. Organized Labor.....	15
3. Summary of Social and Industrial Conditions.....	16
B. The Political and Religious Conditions And Trends.....	16
1. Description of Political Situation And Reforms.....	17
a. Problem of Representation.....	17
b. Early attempts at Reform.....	18
c. The Reform Bill.....	19
d. Significance of the Victory.....	20
2. The Relation of Church and Govern- ment in Scotland.....	21
a. Historical Background.....	21
b. The Moderates.....	23
c. The Evangelicals.....	24
d. The Conflict Between Them.....	25
e. The Disruption of 1843.....	27
f. Chalmers' Position.....	29
g. Summary.....	29

Gift of author.

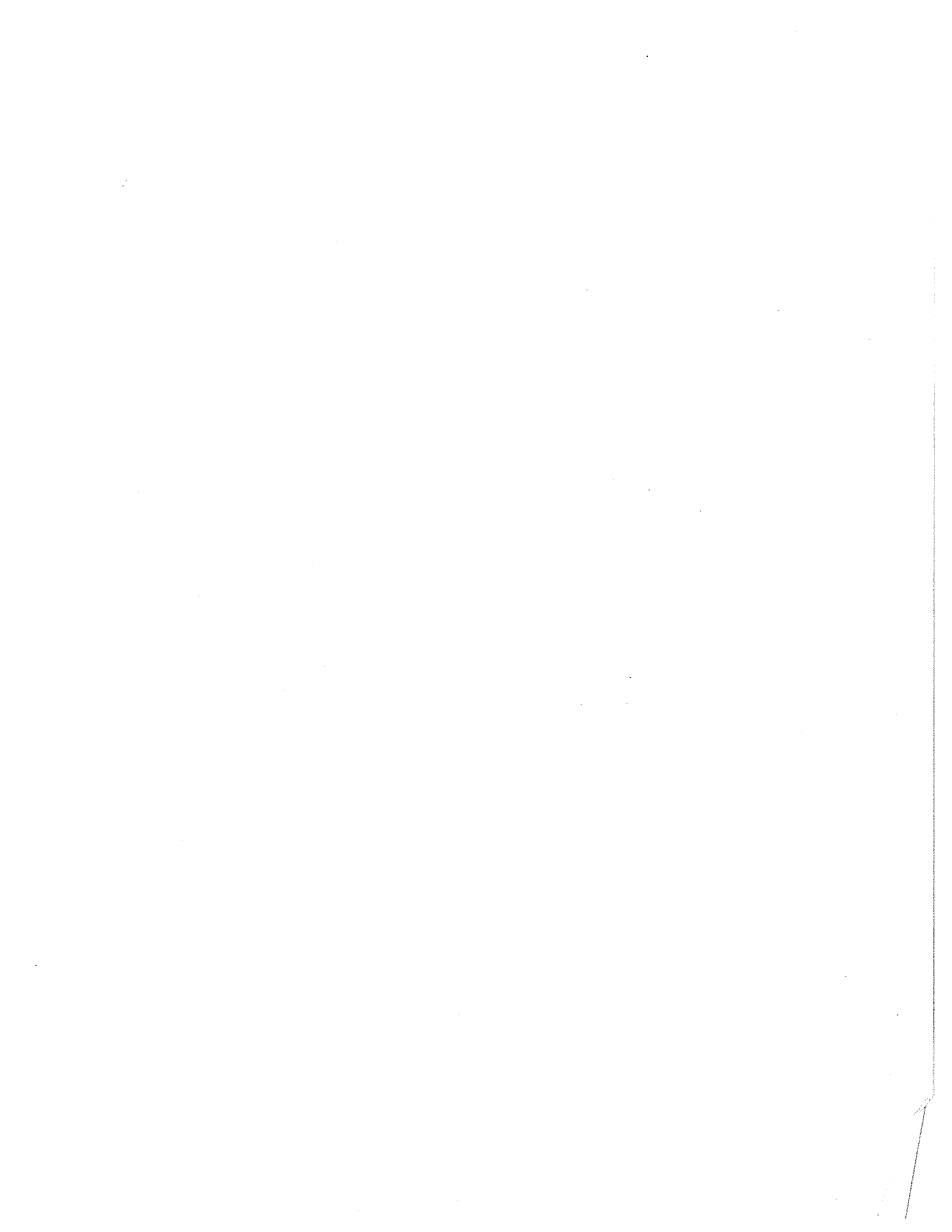
Jan. 2. 1943

22727

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
C. Summary of Times in Which Chalmers Preached.....	30
II. THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCES AFFECTING CHALMERS' PREACHING.....	32
A. His Family Background and Training.....	32
B. His Educational Background.....	33
1. His Early Schooling.....	33
2. His Years at the University.....	34
3. His Theological Training.....	35
4. Further Study and Teaching.....	37
C. His Religious Development.....	40
1. His Early Religious Training.....	41
2. The Influence of the University and Divinity Study.....	42
3. His Climactic Experience At Kilmany.....	45
a. Preparatory Influences.....	45
b. The Results in His Life and Preaching.....	47
D. His Personal Characteristics.....	49
1. His Physical Make-Up.....	50
2. His Mental Traits.....	51
a. Imagination.....	51
b. Insight.....	53
c. Powers of Concentration.....	55
d. Powers of Abstraction.....	57
e. Facility for Practical Application..	58
3. His Personality.....	59
a. The Largeness of his Sympathy.....	59
b. His Sense of Justice and Courtesy...	61
c. His Genuine Interest in People.....	63
E. Summary of Formative Influences.....	65
III. THE FORM OF CHALMERS' PREACHING.....	68
A. Literary Character of His Preaching.....	68
1. Tables of Titles, Texts and Types of Sermons.....	70
2. Examination of the Sermons.....	79
a. Length of Sermons.....	79
b. Types of Sermons.....	80
c. Chalmers' Style.....	81
(1) Length of Sentences.....	81
(2) Solidity of Sermons.....	82
(3) Singleness of Emphasis.....	83
(4) Topical Treatment.....	85
(5) Energy.....	85
d. Repetition of Sermons.....	86
e. Summary of Findings from the Analysis of Chalmers' Sermons.....	87

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
B. Oral Character of His Preaching.....	87
1. His Physical Qualifications.....	88
2. His Method of Delivery.....	90
3. His Eloquence.....	92
4. Summary of Chalmers' Preaching.....	95
IV. THE RANGE OF CHALMERS' PREACHING.....	96
A. His Consideration of Current Problems.....	96
1. Concerning the Application of Christ- ianity to Secular Business of Life.....	98
2. Concerning the Civil Government.....	100
3. Concerning Great Personalities.....	103
4. Concerning Events on the International Scene.....	104
5. Concerning the Various Strata of Society.....	106
6. Concerning Scientific Advances.....	107
7. Summary of Attention to Current Problems.....	109
B. His Emphasis Upon the Great Christian Doctrines.....	109
1. Attention to Theology.....	110
2. Attention to Anthropology.....	112
3. Attention to Christology.....	113
4. Attention to Soteriology.....	115
5. Attention to Ecclesiology and Means of Grace.....	117
6. Attention to Eschatology.....	119
7. Summary of References to Christian Doctrine.....	120
C. His Emphasis Upon Biblical References and Material.....	120
1. His Selection of Texts.....	122
2. His Use of Biblical Material in Development of his Argument.....	123
3. His Use of Biblical Language and Illustrations.....	124
4. His Evident Grasp of the Total Scope of Scripture.....	126
5. Summary of his Emphasis Upon Biblical References and Material.....	127
D. Summary of the Range of Chalmers' Preaching.	128
V. CHALMERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT... 130	
A. His Psychological Insight.....	130
1. The Basis of His Psychological Insight..	132
a. His Habit of Introspection.....	133
b. His Observation of His Fellows.....	135
c. His Study and Philosophy.....	137

<u>Chapter</u>	Page
2. The Use to Which he Put This Insight....	138
a. In Interpreting Scripture.....	138
b. In Presenting the Gospel.....	140
c. In Meeting Objections.....	143
3. Summary of His Psychological Insight....	145
B. His Spiritual Insight.....	146
1. As Shown in Chalmers' Own Life.....	147
a. His Keen Sense of the Reality of Spiritual Values.....	148
b. His Awareness of the Presence of God.....	150
c. His Keeness to His Own Failures....	152
d. His Prayer Life.....	153
2. As Demonstrated in His Sermons.....	154
a. By Great Earnestness.....	154
b. By Searching Personal Application...	156
c. By the Wide Range of His Application of Christianity.....	158
d. By His Emphasis Upon the Character of God and the Depravity of Man.....	159
3. Summary of Chalmers' Spiritual Insight..	160
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	163
APPENDIX.....	171
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	172
A. Primary Sources.....	172
B. Secondary Sources.....	172
C. General Sources.....	173



THE ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE PREACHING
OF
THOMAS CHALMERS

INTRODUCTION

THE ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE PREACHING
OF
THOMAS CHALMERS

INTRODUCTION

A. Subject Stated and Justified

The name of Thomas Chalmers has been a household expression in Scottish homes for many years. Among the common people he is given a position second only to that of the beloved John Knox, in the history of the church and pulpit. Not only do the common people honor him, but so also do the historians of pulpit eloquence and power. Dargan places Chalmers as one of the three greatest preachers in Britain during the early part of the nineteenth century;¹ and then calls him the "greatest Presbyterian preacher of the age."² Garvie sums up the importance of Chalmers as one "whom it is no exaggeration to regard as the greatest man next to John Knox in the religious thought and life of Scotland."³ Chalmers was outstanding as a philosopher, a teacher, a pioneer in emphasizing the responsibility of the church in social service, and as the leading character in the organization

.....

1. Dargan, E. C.: History of Preaching, Vol. II, p. 476
2. Ibid., p. 487
3. Garvie, A. E.: The Christian Preacher, p. 224

of the Free Church of Scotland; but his supreme achievement was in the work of preaching.

"Scotland has had a distinguished and mighty line of preachers. Next to Knox stands Chalmers, and, like Knox, he was especially great in the pulpit; but his easy pre-eminence there was upheld by abilities which would have commanded success in other fields, and by actual achievements in various associated lines of effort."¹

It is the purpose then, of this thesis, to discover the elements which were responsible for the peculiar effectiveness of the preaching of Thomas Chalmers, and to ascertain to what extent these elements can be utilized in modern preaching.

B. The Problem Delimited
and
Procedure Indicated

Since the published works of Thomas Chalmers² occupy some twenty-five volumes, it will be manifestly impossible in such a treatise as this to thoroughly investigate his works in their entirety. We are consequently limiting the field of our investigation to a volume of Sermons, some of which were published during Chalmers lifetime, and others of which have been selected and arranged by Dr. William Hanna, son-in-law to Chalmers, from the great body of compositions which Dr. Chalmers had

.....

1. Dargan: op. cit., p. 488
2. Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics, Vol. III, p. 340

not seen fit to publish before his death.¹ These sermons have been chosen as representative of the ministry Chalmers performed in the pulpits he occupied during his career of almost a half century, and thus able to afford the reader a view of the excellence of his style and treatment.

In addition to these selected sermons of Chalmers, we shall consult biographical material about him, and accounts of the social, political, industrial and religious conditions contemporary with the half century of his preaching, as well as a portion of the literature in the field of Homiletics and the history of preaching.

The procedure which we shall follow will be to examine the social, political, industrial and religious setting in which Chalmers preached; to observe also the formative influences which entered into the making of the man; to study the form of Chalmers' preaching, both with reference to the sermons we have examined, and as exhibited in his method of delivery; to survey the range of his preaching; and finally, to examine also, and on the basis of the same sermons, the psychological and spiritual insight displayed by Chalmers. To each of these divisions we shall devote a chapter; and then in the Conclusion we shall present a summary of findings, and the application of these to present day preaching.

.....

1. Cf. Chalmers, Thomas: Sermons and Discourses, pp. 383 ff.

CHAPTER I

THE TIMES IN WHICH CHALMERS PREACHED

CHAPTER I

THE TIMES IN WHICH CHALMERS PREACHED

However much inspiration and spiritual benefit we of this later age may derive from reading the pulpit utterances of so great a preacher as Chalmers, we cannot possibly measure their effect upon the audiences to which they were delivered, by their effect upon us today. This fact is easily understood when we consider the tremendous advancement in all fields of human learning and endeavor which the intervening years have seen. We must attempt to surround these sermons with their original context of social, political and religious conditions if we are to see them and be able to evaluate them as they were given originally.

That Thomas Chalmers was a part of the world which surrounded him is evident from the titles of many of his sermons. The series of sermons which probably did most to bring his remarkable abilities to the attention of Scotland, and indeed of all of Britain, was his *Astronomical Discourses*, delivered shortly after he settled in Glasgow. These sermons reflected the recent discoveries in Astronomy which some people had been using as arguments against Christianity's estimate of man as the crown

of God's creation.¹ Others of his sermons indicate his complete awareness of existing conditions in social, political and religious circles; and give evidence that he sought to relate the Christian faith to all of these spheres of human activity. Outstanding among these are the discourses on "The Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life." In all of his attention to current conditions, however, Chalmers kept central in his preaching

"God, and the revelations He has made of Himself to man; man, and his awful relationships with God and eternity."²

A. The Social and Industrial Conditions

Within the scope of Chalmers' lifetime, many and revolutionary developments were made in the social and industrial affairs of his world. Civilization was at a transition period; there was an atmosphere of change, of discarding the old and putting on the new in all parts of life. Two of the most potent influences in this transition period were the Industrial Revolution with its profound effect upon the people, and the War with France, which expanded the commercial interests and activities

.....

1. Cf. Dargan, op. cit., p. 493
2. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 384

of Great Britain enormously.

1. Social Conditions
and
Attempts at Reform

Social conditions at the opening of the 19th Century, when Chalmers was just entering into his ministerial career, were exceedingly crude and oppressive, viewed from our vantage point of almost one hundred and forty years of progress. The old cleavages between classes were strong, and while the nobility and land-owners enjoyed the comforts and luxuries of the times, the common people lived in virtual serfdom. One historian summarizes in these words:

"England, the most enlightened of civilized countries, was in so low a social condition, that her working people were little better than slaves, and her laws seemed made only for those who owned the land."¹

a. Wages and Taxes

What was true in England was likewise true in Scotland, and in some cases conditions were worse in the northern country. The wages of a working-man varied from unskilled to skilled labor from 11 to 18 shillings per week in Scotland, and from 13 to 25 shillings per

.....

1. Brooks, E. S.: The Story of the Nineteenth Century, p. 45

week in England.¹ To aggravate this condition, the government demanded taxes upon food, paper, clothing and even upon medicine to the extent that "it was estimated that a poor weaver in that hard time, paid nearly half his income to the government in direct or indirect taxation."²

b. Criminal Laws and Punishments

In order to maintain discipline in the country, "there were two hundred and twenty-three crimes or breaches of law which were punished with the death penalty."³ Hangings were a constant occurrence, and in 1816 it is said that there were at one time fifty-eight persons under the sentence of death, one of whom was a child ten years of age.⁴

c. Education

Education was still almost entirely in the hands of the church. The First Book of Discipline, 1560-61, had made it the duty of every parish to provide children with

.....

1. Cf. MacKenzie, R.: The Nineteenth Century, p. 45
2. Ibid., p. 77
3. Brooks, op. cit., p. 79
4. Cf. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 79

the means of education. Their parents were to pay a small fee for the privilege of having their children taught the rudiments of learning, but the upkeep of the school-building, the salary of the schoolmaster and his living quarters were to be provided by the local land-owner. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge which was founded in 1707 did a great work in providing schools and schoolmasters for the poorer parishes, with the help of the churches. Finally in 1839 the civil government began to give grants of money to the schools to supplement the support of the parents and land-owners. This form of support increased only very slowly, however, because in 1845 only one hundred and twenty-four out of a thousand parish schools were being helped by grants. Attendance was voluntary and upon the demand of the parents; and compulsory education did not come into effect in Scotland until after 1872.¹

d. Population Increase

The population of Scotland had increased by 1821 to almost double what it had been a century earlier, due to some degree at least to a higher birth rate, and lowered infant mortality from improved living conditions

.....

1. Cf. Grant, E. F.: Every Day Life in Old Scotland, part 3, pp. 402 ff.

and medical knowledge.¹ By 1810 the population was about evenly divided between towns and rural areas; but within a few years the proportion was changed, and the larger part of the people were living and working in the town.² Some indication of the rapidity with which the towns in the 'industrial belt' between the Firth of Forth and Firth of Clyde grew in the last of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth centuries may be seen from these figures: Glasgow in 1755 had a population of about 23,000; by 1801 this had increased to 77,000, and by 1821, to 147,000. Similarly, Paisley, one of the industrial suburbs of Glasgow grew from 4,000 to 24,000 to 38,500 in the same period; and Edinburgh increased in the first forty years of the new century, from 80,000 to 140,000.³

e. Reform Efforts

Efforts at reform began to gain momentum by the opening of the century. The severity with which the poor laws had been administered, and the attitude in which the poor had been regarded as necessarily criminal, were modified, and much of the former strictness was relaxed.⁴

.....

1. Ibid., p. 381
2. Ibid., p. 385
3. Ibid., p. 388
4. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 82

John Howard in 1773 had begun to appeal for a change in prison conditions and criminal punishments, and although for many years there was little response, gradually such appeals gained a hearing.¹ The rise of the age of machinery threw many people out of their former occupations, and temporarily caused an enormous amount of suffering; but as the mills and factories developed, employment was provided and generally the level of living conditions was raised.

f. Summary

Thus we see that the social conditions at the opening of the nineteenth century were sad, measured by our standards; but there was a stirring among the masses, and movements were beginning which were to profoundly affect social structure and conditions in later years.

2. Industrial Conditions and their Effect

a. Inventions and Discoveries

Most of the labor in England and Scotland had been done by hand or by very primitive machines until the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century, when there were

.....

1. Ibid., p. 79

developed several more complicated machines which proved to be the basis for a complete re-organization of industry in Britain and ultimately throughout the whole world. Arkwright's spinning frame appeared in 1769; Crompton's spinning mule in 1775; Cartwright's power loom in 1787; Eli Whitney's cotton-gin (in America) in 1793. With the improvements which James Watt made on the steam engine in 1769, there was an abundance of convenient and cheap power¹ made available to set the new machines in motion. Some of the great names in the rapid development of industry in Scotland include John Rennie (1761-1821) famous for building bridges, dredging machines, and light-houses; Thomas Telford (1757-1834) who developed the design and construction of iron bridges, and with MacAdam was responsible for the building of hundreds of miles of roads of the type which we today call 'macadam'; David Mushet, who in 1801 discovered that the 'wild coals' of Scotland were a rich source of iron ore; James B. Neilson, who in 1828 invented the hot-blast method of iron-making; and James Nasmyth, who in 1838 invented the labor saving steam-²hammer. All of these inventions, and other similar or improved ones, opened the door to the immense industrial expansion which has since characterized Scotland and the

.....

1. Ibid., pp. 201-202
2. Cf. Sterling, A. H.: Scottish Industrial and Social History, pp. 150-156

rest of Britain. Because of these, the great 'Industrial Belt' between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde, came into being; and large towns sprang up at places suitable for industry and commerce.

b. Typical Growth of Glasgow

The city of Glasgow is typical, in the effects which industrial growth brought about. In the earlier days, it had been a small place, trading in herring, plaids and cattle, with the Highlands and Ireland. The expansion of Colonial trade in the Eighteenth Century, and the dredging and deepening of the Clyde, brought a great inrush of commerce. Sugar and tobacco were the main imports, and linen the chief export. The War with the Colonies in 1775 cut off the tobacco supply, caused the collapse of the great Tobacco Lords, and the recently developed commercial interests, and turned the attention of the people to industry. The cotton industry was one of the first to develop; but with the invention of the steam-driven, iron built ships, the rich deposits of iron and coal in the surrounding country, and the natural inventiveness and intelligence of the people, combined to make Glasgow the virtual original home of the ship-building industry. Toward the close of the century there had been a small steamer sailing on a loch in Dumfriesshire.

In 1807, in America, Fulton had successfully constructed a steamer. By 1811 there was a steamer forty feet long, and of four horsepower, operating between Glasgow and Helensburgh for passenger traffic. Within seven years there were fifty steamers in Great Britain, and eighteen of these operated on or from the Clyde, and Glasgow. Thus within a comparatively short period of years, the town of Glasgow grew from a small fishing and trading center to a port for world commerce, and one of the greatest ship-building and industrial cities in all Britain.¹

c. Working Conditions
and
Reform Efforts

With the tremendous growth of industry there was a consequent demand for skilled and unskilled labor. Thousands of people left the rural districts and settled in the towns, nearer to the factories. Since there were no laws as yet governing child labor or the employment of women, many industries exploited these sources of cheaper labor. In describing the working conditions in the textile mills, in 1783, one historian writes:

"Mr. Dale of the New Lanark Mills was considered a model employer, but he worked 500 children 13 hours a day with no Saturday

.....

1. Cf. Grant, op. cit., pp. 371-372
Cf. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 206

half-holiday, and provided them with two hours schooling in addition at his own expense. In the bad mills, the foremen used to beat the children cruelly when they flagged, and in such mills the poor law children were shockingly housed and fed."¹

Reform of such social evils was slow in coming, but eventually they were outlawed. The first Factory Act, passed in 1802, was chiefly meant to help the poor law children in cotton factories. It provided that the children were not to work more than twelve hours a day, nor to be made to do night work; and that the owner was to have them taught the three "R's." Factories were to be whitewashed twice yearly. These rules were to be enforced by the Justices of the Peace, who were already overburdened with responsibility. Members of a Commission which reported in 1833, testified that it was not harmful for children six or seven years of age to work seven hours a day in factories; and that older children should be made to work twelve hours a day. One man declared that "there is no training for the volatile minds of youth equal to that which is maintained at the factories."² Parliament passed an Act in the same year which restricted the working day of children under thirteen to nine hours; and allowed no night work for

.....

1. Grant, op. cit., p. 400
2. Ibid., p. 402

those under eighteen. Inspectors were appointed to enforce these acts. In 1840 another law was enacted which forbade women, girls, and boys under thirteen years to work underground in mines.¹

d. Organized Labor

Organized labor came into being in 1796, when the first trade union, known as the 'Institution' was formed in Halifax, Yorkshire, in order to prevent the employment of those who had not served a regular apprenticeship. Three years later there was a union of shoemakers formed in Scotland for the purpose of raising wages. The leaders of this union were arrested, tried and the union was pronounced illegal. The next year Parliament passed a law forbidding all 'combinations' of workmen for raising wages or decreasing hours of work. This led to the organization of secret unions which called effective strikes and dealt with great severity with any worker who disobeyed union orders. Finally, after much disturbance and debate, the Law of 1800 and all other 'combination' laws were repealed in 1842 by Parliament, and labor was given the opportunity to organize for its own benefit.²

.....

1. Cf. Grant, op. cit., 402
2. Cf. Sterling, op. cit., p. 170

3. Summary of Social and Industrial Conditions

The world into which Thomas Chalmers came as a young minister was just awakening from the crude and oppressive social and industrial conditions of the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries, and was beginning to feel the surge of life and energy that was destined to carry Scotland and all of Britain and the whole world into what we have called the Modern Age. Reform movements were growing, new industries were developing, living and working conditions were being examined critically and improved, and man was becoming emancipated from old bonds into new freedoms.

B. The Political and Religious Conditions and Trends

The political and the religious aspects of the life and history of Scotland have been closely intertwined since the time of John Knox and the Scottish Reformation. This very close relationship was the cause of many bitter struggles, and even bloodshed, as the authority of the civil government, represented by the King, and the authority of the Kingdom of God, as found in the Bible and represented by the leaders of the Church were respectively asserted. The anomaly was very clearly

expressed by Andrew Melville, in his statement to King James in Falkland Palace:

"Sir, as diverse times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James the head of this commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a King, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member."¹

We shall examine these two aspects of Scottish life in this same section, attempting to determine the nature and extent of their interrelationship, and their importance in the background of Chalmers' preaching.

1. Description of the Political Situation and Reforms

- a. Problem of Representation

Since 1603 when James VI of Scotland became James I of England, these two countries have owed allegiance to a single sovereign. However, the Parliaments of the two countries did not unite into a single Parliament in London until 1707. In this single Parliament, there was little representation for either England or Scotland until 1832, when the Reform Bill was passed. Prior to that time, many of the English M. P.'s were elected by a single land-owner, and in some cases the vote

.....

1. MacLean, D.: M'Cries' Life of Andrew Melville, p. 181

was actually purchased. From many of the cities - such as Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham - there were no representatives at all. Scotland was even less represented than this. Since the Union of 1707 there had been forty-five Scottish members seated in Parliament: Thirty representing the Scottish counties, and only fifteen representing the towns. Edinburgh was the only town with its own representative, all of the other towns sharing the remaining fourteen members. Actually, only two thousand people in Scotland had the franchise; and these were county members. In the towns the members were chosen¹ by the self-appointed town councils.

b. Early Efforts at Reform

Gradually the desire to be represented in the Government, grew among the people; and they started making this desire known through popular protest. At first all efforts at reform were looked upon with distrust and alarm, and were sometimes opposed by force. The fear that reform movements among the people might duplicate the events of the recent French Revolution moved the authorities to such opposition. In 1793 one, Thomas Muir, and other young men who had advocated by speech and press, the reform of the Government, were tried in

.....

1. Cf. Sterling, op. cit. p. 164 ff.

Edinburgh for "sedition," and sentenced to transportation¹ for many years. When the threat of invasion by Napoleon was strong, and while the country was in the war with France, the cry for Parliamentary Reform was drowned, but only temporarily. After the war, the efforts were revived; nothing much was accomplished, however, until after George IV was replaced by his brother William IV in 1830.

c. The Reform Bill

Reform Bills were introduced for both England and Scotland - Lord John Russell speaking for the English, and Francis Jeffrey, then Lord Advocate for Scotland, and Lord Cockburn speaking for the Scottish people. The object of these Reform Bills was to prevent any member of Parliament being the nominee of a single man, to obtain the franchise for a larger number of people, and to provide representatives for towns and communities which were not represented formerly, or who were inadequately represented under the old system. Cities such as Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock and Leith were each to have a member for the first time. Such demands seem most reasonable to us, but so revolutionary was this proposal considered, that Parliament turned it down in 1831. Great

.....

1. Cf. Sterling, op. cit., p. 165

mass meetings were held in all parts of the country; bands of armed men were assembled for undisclosed purposes; popular excitement was at a high pitch. Finally, the House of Commons of the new Parliament passed the Bill. Next, the House of Lords, under the leadership of the Duke of Wellington, refused to pass the measure. At this, the indignation throughout the country became so great that in fear of a revolution the House reconsidered, and passed the Bill in June 1832. Great rejoicing followed this victory of the government 'of the people, by the people,¹ and for the people.'

d. Significance of the Victory

The victory won in the battle for the Reform Bill was of equal importance and had as long lived consequences as the victory at Waterloo in 1815, where the armies of Napoleon were defeated, and the little dictator was taken prisoner and banished. This war with France had affected Scotland much as it did England because of the close connection between the two countries. Sons, fathers and brothers were mourned, heavier taxes were paid, ministers held special services of prayer and fasting, and some, like Chalmers, became Chaplains in

.....

1. Cf. Sterling, op. cit., pp. 167 ff.
MacKenzie, op. cit., pp. 111-113

the Volunteers, and earnestly exhorted their parishoners as to their patriotic duty. Whereas the victory at Waterloo gave external peace, prestige and commercial expansion to Britain, the victory of 1832 gave an internal peace, and a democratic solidarity which was the basis of the later greatness of the nation.

2. The Relation of the Church
and
Government in Scotland

a. Historical Background

Catholicism had been abolished in Scotland by Parliament in 1560; and in 1581 the General Assembly at Glasgow, under the leadership of Andrew Melville, decided that Presbytery and not Episcopacy should be the polity of the national Church. After James became King of England, he had a series of "Black Acts" passed by Parliament, which made him absolute master of the bodies and souls of his subjects, the head of the Church as well as the State, and therefore able to appoint Bishops, and to give and withhold permission to hold public assemblies. His efforts, and the efforts of his son, Charles I, to enforce these, led to the first Bishop's War, in which the Covenanters triumphed, and Charles submitted temporarily. His son, Charles II, annulled all of the Covenanted legislation, and set out by fair means or

foul to rid Scotland of the anti-Episcopists. To make matters worse, the next king, James VII, was a convinced Roman Catholic, and he prosecuted the bloody purge of the Presbyterians with fanatic zeal. It was a happy day for the persecuted Christians when William and Mary were chosen to be the rulers in 1689, for now they were given the liberty to live and worship as they believed right. However, the settlement which William made with the General Assembly was not unmixed with occasions for difficulty. There was effected a sort of compromise between Church and State, which allowed the Presbyterian form of government and doctrine and gave the Church courts a limited autonomy, thus preserving the authority of the King even in Church matters. Some of the leaders of the Scottish Church, thankful for the respite from their oppressed condition under the Stuarts, accepted this eagerly; but others saw that while the Church was made free to worship, there was still a measure of encroachment by the Crown upon that which they regarded as solely the province of the Church. This approximate division in the ranks of the leaders of the Scottish Church continued for a century and a half under the labels, Moderates and Evangelicals.¹

.....

1. Cf. Maclean, op. cit., pp. 35-65

b. The Moderates

The name 'Moderate' was derived from the specification which William made regarding the filling of the vacancies in Scotland, that 'moderate men' be put in them. The Moderate party was to some extent related to the Tories, and tried to maintain the authority of class and custom against the rising Whig influence for larger representation of the people and inclusion of more progressive ideas. The Moderates always leaned heavily upon their relation with the Government, and favored the ascendance of the civil over the religious courts. They also advocated the maintenance of the Patronage system, in which the land-owners appointed the ministers to their 'livings.' They opposed on principle, then, all such movements as those which advocated the starting of Sabbath Schools for the children, those which would send missionaries to foreign countries, and those which worked for the establishment of chapels for the rapidly growing population of the cities. There were two groups of these Moderates, and the dividing line was approximately 1750, although both existed simultaneously before and after this date for several years. The older Moderates, who had no liking for the stern Calvinism which was the doctrinal basis of the Church, held theological views deeply tinged with Deism, and were generally rather cool toward the

Evangel. "Yet they were cultured, urbane, and serious-minded men of high intellectual attainments, and were generally correct in their morals." ¹ The younger Moderates differed somewhat from their fathers, and have been described by one historian in these words:

"These latter, combining in their persons the frivolity, levity, easy living, and religious irresponsibility of men of the world, with theological beliefs reduced to the narrowest limits, were the product of a system of thought that harmonized self-regard and disinterestedness, and identified virtue with beauty, and morality with aesthetics. The effect, according to an apologist of Moderatism, in the region of faith was 'absolute dogmatic atheism,' and in the sphere of conduct 'paganized Christian divines'." ²

These were the men who had control of the General Assembly, and who to that extent determined the policies and attitudes of the Church during the Eighteenth Century. ³

c. The Evangelicals

However, these Moderates did not run the Church without opposition from that group which has been called the Evangelicals. These Evangelicals were characterized by attitudes and allegiances quite opposed to those of the Moderates. They felt strongly about the matter of the

.....

1. Maclean, op. cit., p. 76
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 65-89

autonomy of Church courts, and would have none of that Erastian tendency which would give the state authority over the government and doctrine of the Church. They also maintained emphasis upon purity of life and doctrine as necessary for both minister and people. What little advantage was gained for the movement for evangelizing the world in fulfillment of the Commission of Christ, was to the credit of the Evangelical group. They also advocated the establishment of Sabbath Schools for the city children, and the erection and maintenance of 'chapels of ease' in the underchurched areas of the cities. In short, the Evangelicals were filled more with the fervor than with the ballast of the faith, emphasizing the power and spirituality of religion by means of "dependence upon divine grace which exhaled an aroma of real piety and awoke feelings of deep devotion."¹

d. The Conflict Between Them

The conflict between these two groups was the most important religious fact of the Eighteenth Century, and the results of this conflict were manifest in many ways. One of the most evident results was the establishment of independent Evangelical Churches through secession from the main Established Church. The first such break in the ranks came in 1740 when Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine were finally expelled after a disagreement which started in 1732

.....

1. Maclean, op. cit., p. 69

over a sermon which Ebenezer Erskine preached before the Synod of Perth in which he championed the rights of the people to choose their own ministers.¹ Another division came in 1761 when the Relief Church was formed by Reverends Gillespie, Boston and Collier. Again, the right of the congregation to choose or refuse ministers caused a division.² Another evidence of the conflict between the two conceptions of Christianity was the memorable debate which took place in the General Assembly of 1896 over the question of preaching the Gospel among the heathen. It was described by Hugh Miller, the famous geologist and writer, as "the most extraordinary, perhaps, and the richest in character, that ever originated in the Courts of a Protestant Church."³ The terrors of the French Revolution were just then shocking the whole of Scottish society, and societies of the people, for whatever purpose, were regarded with suspicion and distrust. The Moderates, led by Principal Hill, Hamilton of Gladsmuir, and Carlyle argued against any such effort, which, in the words of Hamilton, they regarded as "highly preposterous."⁴ Speaking for the Evangelicals was Dr. John Erskine, who enforced his support of missionary endeavors by citing the express

.....

1. Cf. Maclean, op. cit., p.74
2. Ibid., p. 82
3. Miller, H.: Church of Scotland, Missionary and Anti-Missionary, p. 3 as cited in Maclean, op. cit., p. 85
4. Cf. Heron's Account as cited in Maclean, op. cit., p. 86

"commission and promise of the Church's Head."¹ The Moderates triumphed in this contest, but from that time on their influence began to wane, and the Evangelicals came to the fore.

e. The Disruption of 1843

The greatest struggle between these two parties came to a head in the Assembly of 1843, with the result that the Free Church of Scotland separated from the Established Church with Thomas Chalmers as leader and first Moderator. While the immediate occasion for the Disruption was found in the problem of Patronage, and the right of the congregation to veto the nominees of the patron, the real issue was a deeper one involving the whole question of the relation of Church and State, and their respective spheres of authority. The patrons claimed that they had a civil right to appoint ministers; the congregations and the Evangelical leaders claimed that they had a religious right to refuse nominees who were not suitable. In 1833 Dr. Chalmers introduced the principle of Veto, but it was rejected by a small majority. The next year the Veto passed into an Act, and the ministers of the 'chapel of ease or church extension charges were admitted to the same

.....

1. Maclean, op. cit., p. 89

status as the ministers of the old endowed parishes. Trial cases involving the congregational right to Veto were sent through the civil courts to the House of Lords, where the Parliament was declared to be "the temporal head of the Church, from whose acts alone it exists as the national Church, and from which alone it derives all its powers."¹ In opposition to this, the Evangelicals or Non-Intrusionists,

"...while fully recognizing the absolute jurisdiction of the Law Courts in all civil matters and in relation to the temporalities conferred by the State on the Church, claimed for the latter as an historic heritage the power to regulate her own spiritual affairs and to perform all spiritual acts under the Headship of Christ alone."²

The Non-Intrusionist dominated Assembly of 1842 intimated to the Parliament that unless some alteration was made in the attitudes, the Church would separate from the State. No relief came, although several attempts at compromise were made, and at the Assembly of 1843, on May 18, after making a written protest, a group of two hundred and three members of the Assembly, headed by the retiring Moderator Welsh and Dr. Chalmers, marched from the Assembly Hall to Tanfield Hall. There, the number having been swelled by sympathizers enroute, four hundred and seventy-four ministers of the twelve hundred and three in the Church signed

.....

1. Fleming, T. R.: Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 21
2. Ibid

the deed of demission, and so became the Free Church of
Scotland.¹

f. Chalmers' Place in the Disruption

Chalmers had begun his ministry leaning strongly toward the Moderate party; but after his spiritual awakening experience at Kilmany in 1810, he became the most zealous and eloquent supporter of the Evangelical cause. As the contest developed and the issues became clearer, he took a place of leadership; and although there were other men of ability outstanding in support of the cause, such as "the subtle Candlish, the massive Cunningham, and the statesmanlike Robert Buchanan,"² yet "Thomas Chalmers towered 'facile princeps' above his fellow-churchmen."³

g. Summary

Thus we see that the old principle voiced by Andrew Melville of the "two Kings and the two Kingdoms"⁴ finally worked itself out into an actual break between the Church and State in the Disruption of 1843 and the organization of the Free Church of Scotland. In the same

.....

1. Cf. Fleming, op. cit., pp. 19-25
2. Ibid., p. 114
3. Ibid
4. Ante p. 17

year, 1832, when the right to vote and larger representation in the Parliament was attained by the common people of Scotland, the control of the old autocratic Moderate party in the affairs of the Church had reached its limit. Democracy had come into its own in the civil government after a struggle; and the original Presbyterian and democratic right of the people to call or refuse a minister was reestablished after a struggle that broke the Church in twain.

C. Summary of the Times in which
Chalmers Preached

We have seen in this chapter some of the tremendously revolutionary developments which took place in man's thinking and living during the times in which Chalmers preached. The French Revolution had shaken not only France, but the other countries of Europe, and Britain in particular, with the rise of popular feeling and the fear among the nobility that their positions and even their lives might be taken from them. The War with Napoleon had drained the resources of Europe and Britain. The Industrial Revolution had compelled great changes in manufacturing methods and machines, had upset the structure of society, and provided speedier means of transportation on land and sea. Reforms in social conditions and political conditions were the fashion. In the Church the long feud between the

Moderates and Evangelicals had reached a crisis over the relationship of Church and State that resulted in the Disruption and the birth of the Free Church in Scotland. Thomas Chalmers, as the leader of the Evangelicals, became the first Moderator of the Free Church. The atmosphere of the time was one of awakening to new and larger privileges and opportunities; old customs and bonds were giving way to new liberties, and the challenge of the dawn of a new day was recognized and accepted. A contemporary of the latter part of the period described it thus in a well known hymn:

"We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful
time,
In an age on ages telling; to be living is sublime.
Hark, the waking up of nations, Hosts advancing to
to the fray;
Hark, what soundeth is creation's groaning for the 1
latter day."

.....

1. Bishop Arthur Cleveland Coxe, 1840; Presbyterian Hymnal No. 374

CHAPTER II

"THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCES AFFECTING
CHALMERS' PREACHING"

CHAPTER II

"THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCES AFFECTING CHALMERS' PREACHING"

A. His Family Background and Training

Thomas Chalmers was born March 17, 1780 in the town of Anstruther, in Fifeshire, Scotland, the sixth of fourteen children. His parents, John and Elizabeth Chalmers, have been described as "of more than common force¹ of character, and of exemplary piety." His father, John Chalmers was a respectable merchant in the East coast town of Anstruther, and rose to be provost of the town.

His parents were too busy to give much attention to teaching or caring for young Thomas, and he was entrusted to the uncertain mercies of a nurse whose cruelty haunted him throughout his life. One effect of this treatment was that he was sent off to the parish school at the tender age of three, at his own request so that he could escape the domestic tyrant.² Even before he could read, young Chalmers was introduced to the Bible narratives through family worship, and through the pictures which³ illustrated the family Bible. His father's family had a

.....

1. Moffatt: Life of Chalmers, p. 11
2. Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 4,5
3. Ibid, p. 8

strong bent toward the ministry, his great-grandfather having been ordained into the ministry in 1701, and his grandfather's older brother having distinguished himself as an eloquent preacher and as an able Church leader. Several of his more distant relatives were also in the ministry;¹ and it was not to be wondered at that Thomas from a very early age had the ambition to become a² minister.

B. His Educational Background

1. His Early Schooling

At the age of three, Thomas entered the parish school in Anstruther, which was under the direction of a "superannuated school tyrant³ who retained little but the cruelty of his former days." Here Thomas was not distinguished by his intellectual abilities, but rather by his physical activity and strength, by his merry, generous-hearted and honest behavior.⁴ In process of time he advanced from class to class in the parish school, and at the age of twelve entered the United College of St. Andrew's.⁵

.....

1. Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 8
2. Ibid., pp. 2,3
3. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 11
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 12

2. His Years at the University

Because of his insufficient knowledge of Latin, and his natural youthful lack of appreciation for the opportunities offered in the University classes, and his undeveloped powers of application, Chalmers received little from the first two sessions at St. Andrew's. He spent much time in playing golf, football and other games which gave him opportunity to express the energy and strength of his young body, but gave little attention to the lectures and the books.

A great change came over the fourteen year old boy in the third session at St. Andrew's. Under the influence of the famous teacher, Dr. James Brown, Thomas became greatly interested in the study of mathematics, and entered with great enthusiasm into the subject. This constituted what has been called his intellectual rebirth, and the forces which affected his newly awakened mind at this time left a life-long impression upon him. He continued his study of mathematics for many years, and for sometime occupied the same position which Dr. Brown held at St. Andrew's on the teaching staff in Mathematics. In his association with Dr. Brown he frequently met Sir John Leslie, James Mylne, and other leaders of thought and masters of conversation who also left their mark upon his eager young mind.¹

.....

1. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 13-14

At this time also he began to attempt English composition. Until his third year in St. Andrew's his writing had been full of glaring errors, and had been conspicuous for the lack of even the simplest elements of correct writing. Within two years, however, by diligent labor and self discipline, along with observation of the masters of style, he achieved a style that was clear, logical and unembellished by rhetorical but irrelevant flights of imagination. That which many men have for years struggled to attain, Chalmers achieved in these two years -
1
a beautiful and expressive prose style.

3. His Theological Training

In November 1795, Chalmers enrolled as a student of Divinity, although not yet sixteen years of age. It was his childhood ambition to become a minister rather than any supreme interest in either theology or religion which impelled him to choose this profession. His interests were still overwhelmingly mathematical, and his conception of religion was largely colored by the prevailing Moderatism of the university. There was a growing interest in oratory, however, which evidenced itself in his conduct of daily prayer in the public hall of the Divinity School. It was the custom for the Divinity students to rotate in

.....

1. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 14-15

taking charge of the daily prayer service, and it is said that when the townspeople knew that young Chalmers was to preside, they flocked in to hear his oratorical prayers, which were expansions of the Lord's Prayer with emphasis upon the grandeur and majesty of the attributes of God and the horrors and sufferings of war. Late in his first year of theological study he became intensely interested in Jonathan Edwards' 'Treatise of the Free Will,' and for days he could think or speak of nothing else. Here his enthusiasm for mathematics was beginning to be transferred to the realm of metaphysics.¹

During his last year, the required residence period was only three months instead of six, so in order to relieve the strain upon his father for his support, he obtained a position with a family as a tutor to the children. However, this proved to be an unpleasant experience, for the family treated him like a servant, much to the injury of his young pride. Soon after this, he applied for licensure to the Presbytery of St. Andrew's, and was licensed July 31, 1799. Although under the required age licentiates, one of his friends helped him through the process by appealing to an ancient provision which permitted candidates of unusual abilities to be admitted.²

.....

1. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 15-18
2. Ibid.

In summary of his student days, let me quote from one of his many biographers, who says:

"Thus already, in his student days, that great outline of character had begun to shape itself, which modified afterwards by new and powerful forces, made him the great man he was. The intensity of his nature, the redundant energy that hardly knew fatigue, the largeness of his view, the warmth of his affection, the independence of his judgement, and the gushing impetuosity of his style were manifest from these college days."¹

4. Further Study and Teaching Experience

After a short trip to England, on which he preached his first sermon at Scots' Church, Wigan, Chalmers made Edinburgh his place of residence, and for two years studied in the University. He went further in Mathematics under Dr. Playfair, studied Chemistry under Professor Stewart, and Moral Philosophy under Dr. Robinson. The last of these men was the one, who, by Chalmers' own admission, exerted the greatest influence on him of all his teachers, and whose methods he himself followed in his teaching career.²

In the summer of 1801, Chalmers was recommended for a vacancy as assistant to Reverend Elliott at Cavers, in Roxboroughshire. He obtained this place and occupied it until his appointment to the parish of Kilmany, in the fall of the next year. It was while he was serving at Cavers

.....

1. Blaikie, W. G.: Thomas Chalmers, pp. 15-16
2. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 18-19

that Chalmers became assistant to Professor Vilant of the chair of Mathematics at St. Andrew's University. There he taught classes with great success during the winter and spring.¹ There was some difference between the brilliant assistant and the invalid Professor over the matter of the amount of material that should be covered in a session of teaching, and the method by which the material should be taught. Chalmers had lightened the dull subject with human interest and oratory, to the delight of the pupils, but to the displeasure of his superior. At examination time there was an open break between them over Vilant's recommendations of pupils without consulting Chalmers, and the result was that Chalmers was not recommended for the position another year. Some of the reasons given by Vilant for not reappointing the young man reflected upon Chalmers' ability as a teacher, and in order to vindicate himself, he determined to open rival classes the next term. These outlaw classes prospered in spite of opposition from the University faculty, and in December he started another class in Chemistry, which also proved popular and successful.² This young man of only twenty-three years was teaching three Mathematics classes and a Chemistry class in defiance of the University faculty, besides filling the pulpit and

.....

1. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 21-24
2. Ibid., pp. 25-27; Cf. Memoirs, op. cit., pp. 48-67

pastoral functions in the parish of Kilmany. Of this life he wrote,

"...just the life for which I was formed - a life of constant and unremitting activity."¹

His literary and professional ambitions were stronger than his zeal for the ministry to which he had been called and in which he had been ordained. Twice, but unsuccessfully, he applied for professorships in nearby Universities; once, for the chair of Natural Philosophy at St. Andrew's, and again, for the chair of Mathematics at the University of Edinburgh. In a discussion which arose at this time over the propriety of a minister with a parish accepting a professorship in a University, Chalmers entered with characteristic zeal and eloquence. He wrote a pamphlet answering the charge that the "successful pursuit of science was incompatible with clerical duties and habits,"² citing his own experiences; that after the satisfactory discharge of his ministerial and pastoral duties, he had five whole days of "uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage."³

In the winter of 1805, he delivered a series of chemical lectures to his parishoners in Kilmany, and some time later gave a similar series in the town of Kirkaldy.

.....

1. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 26
2. Ibid., p. 28
3. Ibid.

The receipts from this latter series he contributed toward the support of the poor but worthy family of a friend of his.¹

Thus the young giant sought opportunity for the use of his growing powers in various fields outside the one to which he had been called, and in which he was later to make such an outstanding contribution. These labors and experiences did, however, contribute to the expansion and development of his powers, and thus prepared him for his future greatness. His teaching experience gave him opportunity for putting into clear, understandable words the intricate abstractions of mathematics, philosophy and chemistry, an appropriate preparation for the preacher who must present Eternal Spiritual truths in simple, lucid ways. This also gave opportunity for exercise of his growing oratorical abilities and well articulated style which later characterized his sermons.

C. His Religious Development

The son-in-law of Chalmers whose four volume "Memoirs" is the classic source of material about his life and writings, remarked in his introduction to the first volume on the anomolous growth of Chalmers' intellectual

.....

1. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 28-29

and spiritual life.

"Although enjoying the benefit of University instruction, intellectually he was self-educated; although brought up in the bosom of a religious family, he came at length to derive his Christianity purely and solely from the Sacred Oracles."¹

We shall trace here the course of his religious development from childhood through that experience which fitted him to become the prince of preachers, the one man who with John Knox did most to affect the religious thought and life of Scotland.²

1. His Early Religious Training

We have already noted that Thomas Chalmers was born into a devout Scottish home, and that he had the example of piety set before his young eyes in the persons of his father and mother. We have also noted that he was at a very early age acquainted with the Biblical narratives. One incident told of his younger days shows how deeply he had been impressed by a passage of the Scripture. One evening "he was found alone in the nursery, pacing up and down, excited and absorbed, repeating to himself as he walked to and fro the words of David, - 'O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!'"³ As soon as he was able to

.....

1. Memoirs, Vol. I, p. viii
2. Cf. Dargan, op. cit., p. 488
3. Memoirs, op. cit., p. 8

read he gave attention to the Bible and to such other books as "Pilgrims Progress" and "Guadentia di Lucca." From earliest childhood the desire to become a minister held his attention. One of his neighbors reports having found "the future great pulpit orator (then a little boy) standing upon a chair, and preaching most vigorously"¹ to one of his playmates below. Already there is evident in the boy some of the greatness of the man.

2. The Influence of the University and Divinity Study

The prevailing religious atmosphere of his home was that of the stern Calvinistic theology coupled with devout piety. From this atmosphere Thomas naturally revolted, and the influence of Moderatism, which was then in sway in the University, soon reached him. Its philosophical emphasis captivated his young mind.² At the close of his university career, he chose Divinity as the field for further study, and ultimately, for his life work. This choice, as we have noted, was probably due to his long cherished ambition to be a minister, and to the influence of friends and family, rather than to an immediate sense of calling, or an overpowering interest in theology and religion.³

.....

1. Memoirs, op. cit., p. 9
2. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 11
3. Ibid., p. 12; Cf. Dargan, op. cit., p. 489

All through his University and Divinity course, Chalmers had a sincere respect for truth, and an abhorrence of all insincerity or double-dealing. This went so far that at one time he explained his inattentiveness to a certain professor on the grounds that he felt that the man was insincere. At the same time, he had a strong dislike for the Evangelical group in the Church. This may have been, in part at least, a reaction against the strict and pious religion of his parents, although it was probably due in a larger degree to the reaction of his own intellectual honesty against what he could not as yet understand and therefore considered unfair and unjustified. In one of his sermons on Micah 6:8 entitled "The Divine Summary of Human Duty" written during his last session in Divinity school, he speaks thus concerning the Evangelicals:

"The corrupters of evangelical purity, in accordance with their zeal for the particular doctrines they have espoused, maintain the absolute necessity of believing in them. Thus in their systems of theological truth, they have had the audacity to heap article on article, and to crown all with this thundering assertion - that eternal misery awaits those who should dare to dissent. What a lamentable deviation from the spirit of the text!"¹

In contrast to what he considered the narrow dogmatism of the Evangelicals, he argued for an appeal to the 'moral sentiment' in man to accomplish his acceptance of Divine

.....

1. Chalmers: Sermons, p. 388-389

truth, and his commendation to the Almighty. He utters his own belief in these words:

"Let us tremble to think that anything but virtue can recommend us to the Almighty ... the acknowledgement of our Savior, that faith in Him, which is essential to our happiness, is brought about by the impulse of moral sentiment, and unless it were so we cannot see how it could insure to us the favour of heaven."¹

For some time in his University career he was bothered by a cloud of skepticism, but after reading Butler's "Analogy," and Beattie's "Essay on Truth," his faith in God was restored. In fact, as one of his biographers observed, Chalmers admitted that it was Butler's "Analogy" that "made him a Christian."²

A little later he became intensely interested in Jonathan Edward's treatise on the "Freedom of the Will." His interest in this, one critic has said was "the only permanent profit he had in Divinity at this time,"³ and it possessed him so that he could think or speak of little else. The thing that impressed him so was "the idea of the whole series of events in the spiritual as well as the material world being bound together by unalterable links, and thus forming one vast scheme - a wonderful tribute to the wisdom, power and glory of God."⁴

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 389
2. Howard, H. C.: Princes of Christian Pulpit and Pastorate, p. 128
3. Ibid., p. 121
4. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 13

In all of his years at the University and Divinity Hall his religious development was not rapid, nor was it in the direction of that intense personal piety and evangelical zeal which later characterized his ministry. Rather, it was a movement alongside his growing mathematical and philosophical interest, as yet subordinate to these and still nourished the while by them, toward the metaphysical and the ethical aspects of religion.

3. His Climactic Experience at Kilmany

Just as Chalmers experienced a strange and rather sudden intellectual awakening while in his third session at St. Andrew's, which was the basis and preparation for the distinction which he achieved as a student and teacher, so he went through a similar awakening spiritually in Kilmany about the year 1810. The difference between the Chalmers before and the Chalmers after that experience was as great as the difference between the inattentive, disinterested lad of the first sessions at St. Andrew's and the eagerly earnest and studious young man of his later school years.

a. Preparatory Influences

This experience did not come as an isolated fact, unrelated to the remainder of his experiences. On the

contrary we may trace the influences which, coming to bear upon his life and thoughts, led up to the awakening, and precipitated the change in his life. One of the first of these was an illness through which he went in 1809, from which it was doubtful that he would recover. At this time he had been reading Pascal's "Thoughts," and there seemed a parallel between his own experience and that of Pascal, who before an illness had been intense in his interest in Mathematics, but who after that illness entered into an experience which made spiritual affairs of more importance than intellectual.¹ This did not mark his becoming aware of God, for he had been possessed by a sense of His greatness and power while at St. Andrew's, but it did dawn upon him that he belonged to God, and that he owed Him his unremitting obedience. There followed a year of the closest kind of self-observation and self-criticism of every defect from the standard of righteousness which he set for himself; but at the close he found "little satisfaction and felt no repose."² After reading Wilburforce's "Practical View of Christianity" he came to see that "the Savior had already and completely done for him what, with so much strenuousness, but with so little success, he had been striving to do for himself,"³ and found "peace and joy in

.....

1. Cf. Hastings: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. III, pp. 338-349
2. Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 186 as cited in Hastings, loco. cit.
3. Ibid., p. 275

believing."¹

In addition to these influences, there was also the study and effort which he put forth in connection with his writing of an article on Christianity for the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia. His examination of the characters, lives and manner of dying of the early Christians profoundly affected him. Add to this the fact that death had three times entered the circle of his near relatives to bring to him great sorrow and a sense of the shortness of life.² All of these together combined to bring about the revolution which "altered the whole spirit, course, and object of his ministry."³

b. The Results in his Life and Preaching

The effects of this change of religious attitude and spiritual condition began to be seen immediately in the life and work of Chalmers. One of the first uses to which he put his slowly returning strength, was in the visitation of the sick, dying and aged of the parish. Whereas he had maintained contact with his people from a sense of duty and with little pleasure or profit to either himself or them, he now entered with new ardour and enthusiasm

.....

1. Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 257 as cited in Hastings, loco. cit. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit, pp. 25-33; Memoirs, vol 1, pp. 404-432
2. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 149
3. Ibid., p. 384

into this part of his work. He also became very diligent in his examination of the young of the parish in the cate-¹chism and the general content of the Christian faith. He started a monthly class for young people, but as the interest increased, he changed it to every fortnight, and finally to a weekly exercise, meeting with them in his home. His preaching partook of a new and different emphasis as a result of his increased attention to the preparation for pulpit utterances, and of his more earnest study of the Bible. Strangers flocked to his church, not so much for the pleasurable experience of hearing his eloquent and impassioned sermons, as to derive spiritual light and guidance. He became, henceforth, associated with the Evangelical Party in the Church. Converts to living² Christianity began to appear among his parishoners. For his own spiritual benefit, Chalmers instituted family worship morning and evening in the manse; and monthly he held a private spiritual exercise in which he reviewed before God the work of the month, praying with confession³ and thanksgiving for the blessing of God upon his work. The difference which there was in his attitude toward his work is well illustrated by the oft-quoted incident which

.....

1. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 34-37
2. Ibid.; Cf. Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 404-432
3. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

took place soon after the spiritual experience. One of his friends commented thus:

"I never came in before, but I found you busy; yet never at your studies for the Sabbath. You said, 'O, an hour or two Saturday evening is quite enough for that.'; but now I never come in but you are at your Bible."¹

Through his years of schooling and teaching, the materials for the great fire of his power and influence as a preacher and religious leader had been well laid and prepared; but it needed the spark of the Spirit of God working in his life to set the man ablaze. That spark came in this experience at Kilmany.

D. His Personal Characteristics

All of the formative influence which worked upon Thomas Chalmers to affect his preaching were not, like these, from without - in the form of education, experience and other forces coming to bear upon his development. Many of the characteristics which were part of his original endowment from God and from his parents very definitely affected him with reference to his preaching. Let us examine some of these and see how and to what extent they contributed to his greatness in the pulpit.

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 129

1. His Physical Make-up

Some great men have labored under the handicap and limitation of a weak body, and yet have in spite of that achieved tremendous success in life. St. Paul was one of these; the "thorn in the flesh"¹ was bothersome, and for its removal Paul prayed earnestly, but in God's providence it was not removed. On the contrary it was used to teach the lesson of dependence upon God. Thomas Chalmers was not one of these who had the discipline of a weak body. What he would have been had he been so handicapped is pure conjecture; just as is any opinion as to what Paul might have been if the thorn had been removed. From childhood Chalmers was blessed with a robust, healthy body. One of his biographers quotes another as describing him among his playmates at the age of twelve:

"...the leader in their sports - strong, active, merry, and boisterous, with a big head, matted dark hair, large plain features, broad shoulders, well-proportioned but brawney limbs, his laugh always loudest, and his figure always foremost at football and the other games in which they are contending."²

Thus he remained all throughout his life, with only occasional illnesses - such as the one just before his experience at Kilmany. During the eight most strenuous years in Glasgow

.....

1. II Corinthians 12:7
2. Dodds, J.: Thomas Chalmers: a biographical study; as cited in Blaikie, op. cit., p. 11

he did not suffer from any illness, and by exercise, moderation, and reasonable precautions maintained his health and strength amid the unhealthy conditions and hard labor of the city parishes. His death was a quiet and unannounced passing while he slept, with no struggle and no visible preliminary illness. This heritage of a strong body stood him well in the sixty-seven years of strenuous activity and unremitting toil as a preacher, pastor, teacher and Church leader.

2. His Mental Traits

Not only did Chalmers have the blessing of a robust and healthy body, but he enjoyed the blessing of a towering intellect as well - not only enjoyed it, but used it to the glory of the God who gave it. Some of the traits and abilities which he had and used are imagination, insight, concentration, abstraction, and facility for practical application.

a. Imagination

In one of the descriptions of the head of Chalmers, written by a man who heard him preach his first sermon in Glasgow, there is mention of the "arch of imagination, carrying out the summit boldly and roundly, in a style to which the heads of very few poets present anything

comparable."¹ Another tribute to his imaginative powers is made by one of his biographers who says that he was possessed "with a gift of imagination worthy of a poet."² This gift finds abundant expression in Chalmers sermons; but one example of its particularly vivid use is found in his famous sermon on the "Expulsive Power of a New Affec-tion." As a conclusion to the sermon, Chalmers leaps out in imagination in these words:

"Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world; and that when he looked to-wards it, he saw abundance smiling upon every field, and all the blessings which earth can af-ford, scattered in profusion throughout every family, and the light of the sun sweetly rest-ing upon all the pleasant habitations, and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society...Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it?...But if during the time of his contem-plation, some happy island of the blest had floated by; and there had burst upon his senses the light of its surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody; and he clearly saw that there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heart-felt joy spread itself among all the families;...perceive you not, that what was be-fore the wilderness, would become the land of invitation; and that now the world would be the wilderness?"³

The value of such use of the imaginative faculty is frequently stressed by homileticians. Pattison, in

.....

1. Lockhart: Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk as cited in Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 46-47
2. Howard, op. cit., p. 154
3. Chalmers, op. cit., pp. 277-278

speaking of the imagination quotes from Thomas Fuller, who calls this "the most boundless and restless faculty of the soul;"¹ and again from Coleridge, who affirms that imagination is "that power of the finite mind which as far as possible corresponds to the creative power in the infinite mind."² Pattison himself calls it "the faculty which can be most readily reached in the mind of the ordinary hearer."³ Similar to this is the statement made by Garvie, that

"...the sermons will not be complete unless the imagination is satisfied, and the emotions are stimulated; and the way of the imagination leads more quickly to the emotions than the way of the intellect."⁴

The innate power of imagination, then, is one of the factors which largely contributed to the effectiveness of the preaching of Thomas Chalmers.

b. Insight

The quality of insight is manifested in Chalmers in several ways. His ability to apprehend the inner nature of things spiritual constituted one of the reasons for his great effectiveness as a preacher. One of his biographers, speaking of the deeper sources of his strength, says:

.....

1. Pattison, T. H.: The Making of the Sermon, p. 255
2. Ibid., p. 256
3. Ibid.
4. Garvie, A. E.: The Christian Preacher, p. 455

"He had a native consciousness of God which indicated in him the potency of extraordinary achievement. He was consumed with a consciousness of the God who, as he came to know, had always been conscious of him, and was ever seeking to take deeper hold on his consciousness."¹

Not only was he aware of the claims of God; His inescapable presence and freely proffered mercies; he also knew full well the intricacies of the human heart in its native alienation from God and its natural tendencies away from His will. Chalmers preached often and powerfully on the subject of Human Depravity; and in one series of seventeen sermons on this subject he gave attention to such aspects as these: "The Necessity of the Spirit to Give Effect to the Preaching of the Gospel;" "The Mysterious Aspect of the Gospel to the Men of the World;" "The Preparation Necessary for Understanding the Mysteries of the Gospel," and others similar to these. One passage from the preface to this series of sermons will suffice to illustrate from the words of Chalmers himself, his insight into the spiritual nature of man. In describing a Christian, Chalmers says:

"He feels the instigations of sin, and in this respect he differs from an angel. But he follows not the instigations of sin, and in this respect he differs from a natural or unconverted man. He may experience the motions of the flesh - but he walks not after the flesh. So that in him we may view the picture of a man, struggling with effect against his earth-born propensities, and yet hateful to himself for the very existence of them - holier than any of the people around him, and yet humbler than them all - realizing, from time to

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 152

time, a positive increase to the grace and excellency of his character and yet becoming more tenderly conscious every day of its remaining deformities - gradually expanding in attainment as well as in desire, towards the light and liberty of heaven, and yet groaning under a yoke from which death alone will fully emancipate him."¹

Another direction in which his insight, or apprehension of the inner nature of things is manifested is in his early and continued interest in philosophy and metaphysics.² Still another is evident in his intense interest in social betterment, which he recognized could only permanently come about through the bringing of the people to an adequate understanding of and faith in God and the Christian religion.³ Further notice of Chalmers' spiritual and psychological insight will be given in a later chapter; but let us recognize it here as one of the contributing factors to his success as a preacher.

c. Powers of Concentration

Still another of the mental traits of Chalmers which contributed to his effectiveness in the pulpit was his power of concentration. This power he had developed in connection with his practise of English Composition and his studies of higher mathematics and philosophy in the

.....

1. Chalmers: Sermons, Vol. II, p. 11
2. Cf. Howard, op. cit., p. 154; *ibid.*, p. 124; Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 18-19
3. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 98-99

Universities; and this was one of the ways in which his education in these extra-theological fields contributed to his later career. One historian of the "Princes of the Christian Pulpit and Pastorate"¹ speaks of study as being of two types: assimilative and accumulative; one method feeds the mind and exercises its powers and develops its resources; while the other method fills the mind with a host of facts, weighs it down under the mass of undigested and organically foreign bits of knowledge. Chalmers's education was of the former type; his power of concentration, although part of his original mental endowment, was developed and exercised through these disciplines and made ready for the higher use.

His son-in-law, William Hanna, speaks of Chalmers' method of sermon construction in these words:

"He never began to write till, in its subjects, and the order and proportion of its parts, the map or outline of the future composition was laid down; and this was done so distinctly, and as it were, authoritatively, that it was seldom violated."²

Through much of his ministry Chalmers sought to preserve his mornings for the work of composing; in these hours he wrote with great tenseness and close application, in the manner indicated above. This was one of the secrets of his tremendously powerful sermons.

.....

1. Cf. Howard, op. cit., p. 123
2. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 418

d. Power of Abstraction

Closely connected with his ability for concentration and close application was his ability for mental abstraction. This also was a by-product of his work in higher abstract mathematics and philosophy. One of his admirers says of him:

"He had a remarkable power of mental abstraction, of withdrawing a subject, even though it were itself a subject of the most abstruse kind, from all other subjects and setting it apart in absorbed contemplation."¹

So accustomed did he become to this type of preparation for sermons and addresses that he explained his lack of participation in the ordinary debates of General Assembly on the ground

"...that he had not the faculty which some men seemed to him to possess, of thinking extempore; nor could he be so sure of any judgment as to have comfort in bringing it before the public, till he had leisurely weighed and measured it."²

One advantage to such preparation, however, as his biographer remarks, was that when once an opinion or judgment had been reached, it was seldom if ever changed or retracted later on the reason that it had been hasty or fractional in its scope.³

These two elements, combined, added the weight of

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 154
2. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 417-418
3. Cf. Ibid.

the authority of considered judgement, and mature thinking to Chalmers' pulpit utterances. Howard, speaking of the relation of these two faculties, speaks first of his power of abstraction, and then adds,

"There was in his mind at the same time a rare power of concentration. These two, abstraction and concentration, made the mental act complete. None of this did he withhold from the humblest task."¹

e. Facility for Practical Application

For all of Dr. Chalmers ability for concentration and abstraction, there was still about him an ability for bringing down to the level of the man-on-the-street the particular subject about which he was expatiating. This appears in many of his greatest sermons, especially in that series which deals with the "Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life."² Such phrases as "We must now conclude with a short practical application"³ and "This is not an aerial speculation"⁴ are the more evident indicators of this trait, although in many places the application is not put in such obvious terms. This quality is also demonstrated in Dr. Chalmers'

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., pp. 154-155
2. Chalmers, op. cit., pp. 119-175
3. Ibid., vol. I., p. 28
4. Ibid., p. 39

intense interest in the people of so poor and undesirable a section as West Port in Glasgow, where he met the lowly but needy people and preached to them in an old tannery loft.¹ As one has said, "Nowhere does his greatness appear greater nor the benignity of his soul more benignant, than in that tanner's loft where men came in their common attire as in an interval of evil or sorrow or toil they harkened to his voice."²

3. His Personality

Not only did Chalmers' physical make-up and mental traits fit him to be a great preacher; the combination of these and the results of them working together which we call 'personality,' also exhibit characteristics which added to his fitness and efficiency as a preacher.

a. The Largeness of his Sympathy

Chalmers' greatness is measured as much by his attitudes toward other people and their needs, as it is by his oratory. He had a broadness of sympathy which responded to the call of human need. One of his old teachers, who had been assistant at the parish school when young Thomas attended, spoke thus concerning his old pupil:

.....

1. Cf. Howard, op. cit., p. 155

2. Ibid

"No man knows the amount of kindness which I have received from him. He has often done me good both as respects my soul and my body; many a pithy sentence he uttered where he threw himself in my way; many a pound note has he given me; and he always did the thing as if he were afraid that any person should see him."¹

One time, having found an old friend of his destitute and in need of medical care in the town of Kirkaldy, he approached the parish minister about the use of the Church for some public lectures, the receipts from which he was to use in helping the ill friend. The minister, prejudiced on account of some story he had heard of the young minister, refused the use of his Church. Chalmers found a hall which he could rent, gave a series of lectures on Chemistry and turned the receipts from the admission fee over to the friend who was thereby made secure for some time beyond his present need.² Later in his life, although most actively engaged in teaching and promotional work for the Free Church, he heard of the impending potato famine in the Highlands, Islands and Ireland. At the cost of time and effort, he organized a Relief fund which did much to relieve the suffering of the country people.³ These are but isolated instances which might be multiplied many times; but the fact of Chalmers' broad interests and sympathetic sensitiveness to need would thereby be made no more certain.

.....

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 10
2. Cf. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 28-29
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 414

This attribute shone with others in his character, and contributed to the effectiveness of his ministry.

b. His Sense of Justice and Courtesy

From his childhood Chalmers had exhibited a strong dislike for all dishonesty and double-dealing. This came out most plainly in the University when a professor spoke to the divinity students advising them to avoid certain aspects of Calvinistic Theology in their sermons, as being offensive to some people. Chalmers retorted characteristically, "Why not, if they be true?"¹ This sense of strict honesty and justice exhibited itself in his later years as well. When the Catholic Emancipation Act was being discussed, he sincerely approved the measure. It seemed an injustice in his mind that any group of people should be excluded from a voice in the Government because of their religious view. He had hoped that by taking away this injustice, the opportunity for evangelizing the Irish people would be increased. Yet it was his keen sense of justice that impelled him to support the measure.² In his years at St. Andrew's as professor of Moral Philosophy, he refused to accept his share of the supplementary salary fund which the University Senatus took from the income of

.....

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 13
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 98

the university after the general expenses had been provided for. He was not clear that this was a legitimate thing to do, and so left unclaimed his share which amounted to seven hundred pounds. After he left St. Andrew's, the university commissioners declared that there was no reason why he should not accept it; so, with their approval he did. Later when a report was made, in which this practise was criticised as being 'without authority', Chalmers protested to the group, which had first approved and then disapproved of the practice, about their fluctuating standard of values.¹

His strong sense of courtesy was well illustrated in connection with an incident which took place soon after he settled at Kilmany.

"Walking on one of the public roads in Kilmany, he had come in sight of a family, the members of which were thus distributed. A few paces in advance - unburdened, his hands thrust lazily into his pockets, in his slouching gait having all the air of a man very much at his ease, - strode the husband. Behind - bent down, 'a bairn in one hand and a bundle in the other' - the wearied wife and mother was struggling to keep pace with him. A perfect hurricane of indignation was awakened in the breast of Dr. Chalmers, when, on overtaking the group, he heard the man vehemently curse back at the wife as he ordered her to 'come along'."²

Just how that hurricane expressed itself at the moment we are not told, but one result of the incident was the composition of a sermon on "Courteousness" which he preached

.....

1. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 81-82
2. Chalmers, op. cit., vol. I. p. 409

shortly thereafter and several times later.

In all of his sermons, Chalmers exhibits this sense of justice and courteousness. He does not ridicule, nor hold up another to withering scorn; rather he respects the opinions of those who differ from him and seeks by earnest argument and comparison of values to show the superiority of what he holds to be true.¹

c. His Genuine Interest in People

Another characteristic of Chalmers' personality which contributed to his excellence as a preacher, was his genuine interest in people, whether of high or low social estate. At the height of his fame and public acclaim he was as simple, unsophisticated and kindly as he had been before. One friend said this of him,

"Of all men he is the most modest and speaks with undisguised gentleness and liberality of those who differ from him in opinion. Every word that he says has the stamp of genius; yet the calmness, ease and simplicity of his conversation is such that to ordinary minds he might appear an ordinary man....He is always powerful, always gentle, and always seemed quite unconscious of his own superiority."²

The people of his first parish, Kilmany, held a high place in his affections throughout his life. In his farewell sermon to them he speaks thus:

.....

1. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 86-87
2. Ibid.

"Be assured, my brethren, that after the dear and much loved scenery of this peaceful vale has disappeared from my eye, the people who live in it shall retain a warm and ever-enduring place in my memory..."¹

Many times afterwards he spoke with endearing terms of these people who had seen him before and after that life-changing experience. In one of his letters, after inquiring about various villagers by name, especially those ill or recently bereaved, he concludes:

"Speak of me to Effie Nicholson, and though I do not name all the villagers, I love them all and often think of them all."²

Perhaps the finest tribute to Chalmers' interest in people, especially in their spiritual welfare, comes from the author of "Rab and His Friends," John Brown, who describes a service which he with other "irrepressible youngsters" attended, in which this famous preacher spoke.

"The minister comes in, homely in his dress and gait, but having a great look about him, 'like a mountain among hills'...He looks vaguely around upon his audience, as if he saw in it one great object, not many...He read a few verses... gave out his text; we forgot it, but its subject was 'Death reigns'...He told us how death reigns - everywhere, at all times, in all places...The tide set in; everything added to its power;...How astonished and impressed we all were! He was at the full thunder of his power; the whole man was in an agony of earnestness...We had all insensibly been drawn out of our seats, and were converging toward the wonderful speaker; and when he sat down, after warning each one of us to remember who...and what..

.....

1. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 39-40
2. Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 12-14

followed Death on the pale horse, and how alone we could escape, we all sunk back into our seats. ...We went home quieter than we came...."¹

During his years at Glasgow, he maintained a weekly correspondence of at least fifty letters.² At this time and throughout his life he enjoyed the friendship and association of many great people of his day, as well as of the humble folk of West Port and Cow Gate.³ His home was always open to guests, and he frequently had a number of visitors in for breakfast. He had a great ability to put young people at ease in his presence, and his knowledge of the topography of Scotland helped him in making the lads from the out-of-the-way glens feel as though he had been their close neighbor.

This quality of self-extension through interest in other people, gave Chalmers an understanding of the needs of his congregations, a greater ability to enter into their problems and sorrows, and to perform the work of a true pastor and preacher.

E. Summary of Formative Influences Affecting Chalmers' Preaching

We have considered in this chapter, the formative

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 158
2. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 70
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 60-70, 80-84

influences which affected Chalmers' preaching, under the headings of his family background and training, his educational preparation, his religious development, and his personal characteristics. We have seen that he was born into a devout home, where from earliest childhood he was acquainted with the Bible and religion; from this home we have seen him go off to the parish school, and then to the University of St. Andrew's where he became interested in mathematics and philosophy. Having seen him in the Divinity Hall at sixteen, we traced his progress intellectually and religiously through these years, and on through his experience as tutor and teacher. The main event in his spiritual pilgrimage took place at his first parish, Kilmany, in 1810, when he experienced a spiritual rebirth, which drastically affected his preaching and living, turning him to the Evangelical group in the Church. We then saw how he had been endowed with physical strength, mental traits, and a personality which contributed strongly to his effective preaching. His imagination, insight, powers of concentration and abstraction, and facility for practical application we have seen at work in his sermons. His large sympathies, sense of justice and courtesy, and genuine interest in people made him able to understand and reach them in his preaching.

These, then, have been some of the forces which, working together upon the man Thomas Chalmers, have under

the guidance of the Spirit of God, made him such a preacher as could be honestly called, "the primate of a preaching ministry which has maintained the highest average in the world."¹

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., pp. 156-157 quoted by Cadman.

CHAPTER III

THE FORM OF CHALMERS' PREACHING

CHAPTER III

THE FORM OF CHALMERS' PREACHING

This study of the form of Chalmers' preaching we shall divide into two parts; taking up in the first part the published sermons which appear in the volume, "Sermons and Discourses of Thomas Chalmers, D. D., LL. D. now complete by the introduction of his Posthumous Sermons." Two volumes in one; probably edited by Chalmers' son-in-law, William Hanna; published by Robert Carter and Brothers, New York, 1873. These we shall classify and make general observations upon. In the second part of the study, we shall examine the method of delivery and the peculiar qualifications which he had as a preacher.

A. Literary Character of His Preaching

As we have noted above, the book is divided into what had been in previous editions two volumes. The first of these volumes contains a group of forty-four Selected Sermons which were published first during Chalmers' lifetime; and a group of thirty-three sermons selected by his son-in-law, William Hanna, from the unpublished sermons remaining after his death in 1847, which sermons are chronologically arranged to represent the development of

Chalmers' preaching from 1798 when he was still a student in Divinity, until just a month before he died in 1847. The second volume is made up of six groups of sermons and addresses: a series of seventeen sermons on the doctrine of the Depravity of Human Nature; a series of eight sermons dealing with the "Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life"; a selection of fifteen preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow; his famous series of seven "Astronomical Discourses," entitled, "Discourses on the Christian Revelation, Viewed in Connection with Modern Astronomy"; a miscellaneous group of eight "Occasional Sermons and Addresses"; and the substance of Chalmers' article on "Christianity" prepared for the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, divided into ten addresses on "Evidences of Christianity."

This group manifestly does not constitute the whole body of Chalmers' published works, for these have appeared in a total of twenty-five volumes.¹ The detailed examination and analysis of all of Chalmers' works is a task too large for our present study and resources; nor would we need to go to that length to satisfy the object of this study; viz. - to discover the elements which contributed to the peculiar effectiveness of his preaching.

.....

1. Cf. Hastings: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. III, p. 340

1. Table of Titles, Texts,
and
Types of Sermons

Volume I

Selected Sermons

1. ON THE PATERNAL CHARACTER
OF GOD.....Matt. 7:11....Doctrinal
2. THE STATE OF THE UNCONVERTED..Eph. 2:12....Doctrinal
3. THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY
OF GOD.....Rom. 11:22....Doctrinal
4. SALVATION SCARCELY OBTAINED
BY THE RIGHTEOUS.....I Pet. 4:18...Doctrinal
5. ON THE SPIRIT'S STRIVING
WITH MAN.....Gen. 6:3.....Doctrinal
6. ON THE NATURE OF THE SIN
UNTO DEATH.....I Jn. 5:16....Doctrinal
7. THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE
SABBATH.....Isa. 58:13....Ethical
8. THE ADVANTAGES OF A FIXED
SABBATH.....Gal. 4:10....Ethical
9. THE ACCOMMODATING SPIRIT OF
CHRISTIAN CHARITY TO THE
SCRUPLES OF THE WEAK.....I Cor. 8:13...Ethical
10. ON THE AMUSEMENTS AND COM- IICor. 6:
PANIES OF THE WORLD..... 14-16.....Ethical
11. ON CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION.....Col. 4:5-6....Ethical
12. ON CHRISTIAN CASUISTRY.....Rom. 14:5....Ethical
13. OF THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT...Gal. 6:8.....Doctrinal
14. OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST
AND HIM CRUCIFIED.....I Cor. 2:2....Doctrinal
15. DANGER OF NEGLECTING THE
GOSPEL.....Heb. 2:3.....Doctrinal
16. THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO
THE GOSPEL.....I Tim. 1:5....Doctrinal
17. ON FAITH AND REPENTANCE.....Acts. 20:21...Doctrinal
18. THE IMMEDIATE REWARD OF OBE-
DIENCE.....Ps. 19:11....Doctrinal
19. THE NECESSITY OF A PERSONAL
MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN.....Col. 1:12....Experimental
20. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN
SINGLENESS OF AIM AND
SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.....Matt. 6:22....Experimental
21. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST...Acts 1:11....Doctrinal

22. GOD IS LOVE.....Jn. 4:16.....Doctrinal
23. FEAR OF TERROR AND FEAR OF REVERENCE.....I Pet. 1:17.....Experimental
24. IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT BY THE GOSPEL.....II. Tim. 1:10...Doctrinal
25. THE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE....I Cor. 7:29.....Doctrinal
26. THE FAITH OF THE PATRIARCHS..Heb. 11:14.....Doct.-Exp.
27. ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN INCIPIENT DUTIES AND THE SUBSEQUENT EXPERIENCES OF A CHRISTIAN.....Lk. 24:49.....Experimental
28. CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND PEACE.....Rom. 5:1.....Doct.-Exp.
29. ON THE ANALOGIES WHICH OBTAIN BETWEEN THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL HUSBANDRY.....Mk. 4:26-29.....Doctrinal
30. ON THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL OFFER.....Lk. 2:14.....Doctrinal
31. ON THE RESPECT DUE TO ANTIQUITY.....Jer. 6:16.....Ethical
32. ON THE EFFECT OF MAN'S WRATH IN THE AGITATION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES.....James 1:20.....Ethical
33. ON THE DEATH OF REVEREND ANDREW THOMPSON.....Heb. 11:4.....Occasional
34. THE BLESSEDNESS OF CONSIDERING THE CASE OF THE POOR....Ps. 41:1.....Ethical
35. ON PREACHING TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.....Mk. 12:37.....Experimental
36. ON THE SUPERIOR BLESSEDNESS OF THE GIVER TO THAT OF THE RECEIVER.....Acts 20:35.....Ethical
37. ON THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.....II Tim. 2:2.....Occasional
38. ON THE HONOUR DUE TO ALL MEN.....I Pet. 2:17.....Ethical
39. ON THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF FIDELITY.....Titus 2:10.....Ethical
40. THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT TO SOCIETY.....Rom. 3:9-19.....Occasional
41. ON THE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER, AND THE UNIFORMITY OF NATURE.....II Pet. 3:3-4...Doctrinal
42. HEAVEN A CHARACTER AND NOT A LOCALITY.....Rev. 22:11.....Doctrinal
43. LIGHT IN DARKNESS.....Ps. 112:4.....Occasional
44. THE OUTWARD BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.....Neh. 11:16.....Occasional

Posthumous Sermons

1. DIVINE SUMMARY OF HUMAN DUTY..... Micah 6:8.....Doctrinal
2. THE GUILT OF CULUMNY..... Jms. 4:11.....Ethical
3. THE TROUBLED HEART COMFORTED Jn. 14:1.....Experimental
4. FAREWELL DISCOURSE AT CAVERS..... Titus 1:1.....Occasional
5. FAST DAY SERMON..... Ps. 27:3.....Occasional
6. COURTEOUSNESS..... I Pet. 3:8.....Ethical
7. FAST DAY DISCOURSE..... Prov. 21:1.....Occasional
8. SENTIMENTS SUITABLE TO A COMMUNION SABBATH..... Lev. 26:34.....Doct.-Exp.
9. ZION REMEMBERED BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON..... Ps. 137:1-6...Experimental
10. THE LIVING WATER..... Jn. 4:10.....Experimental
11. THE DUTY REQUIRED AND THE STRENGTH IMPARTED..... Phil. 4:13.....Experimental
12. THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY..... Rom. 3:10.....Doctrinal
13. DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS..... Jn. 14:21.....Doctrinal
14. DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM..... Acts 26:25.....Experimental
15. FAREWELL DISCOURSE AT KILMANY..... Heb. 3:7-8
Isa. 51:1-2...Occasional
17. THE RIGHT FEAR AND THE RIGHT FAITH..... Lk. 1:74.....Doctrinal
18. SPIRITUAL IDOLATRY..... II Cor. 6:17-
18 Doctrinal
19. SACRAMENTAL SERMON..... II Cor.6:17-18Experimental
20. THE TEMPTATION..... Lk. 4:1-13.....Experimental
21. THE TEMPTATION..... Lk. 4:1-13.....Experimental
22. THE EMBASSY OF RECONCILIATION..... II Cor. 5:20..Doct.-Exp.
23. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY SECULARIZED..... Acts 6:2.....Occasional
24. CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS..... Matt. 5:38-48.Experimental
25. THE SILVER SHRINES..... Acts 19:24-25.Experimental
26. THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD WISER THAN MAN..... I Cor. 1:25...Doctrinal
27. DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS..... Col. 4:1.....Ethical
28. SERMON TO THE YOUNG..... Zech. 7:13.....Occasional
29. FAREWELL DISCOURSE AT GLASGOW..... Ps. 137:5-6...Occasional
30. FURY NOT IN GOD..... Isa. 7:3-5.....Doctrinal
31. ADDRESS TO DR. DUFF..... Ps. 48:8.....Occasional
32. SERMON AT OPENING OF FREE ST. JOHN'S, GLASGOW..... Mk. 4:24
Lk. 8:18.....Occasional
33. THE ARTICLES OF THE COVENANT..... Isa. 56:4-5...Doctrinal

Volume II

Sermons on the Depravity
of
Human Nature

1. THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL..... I Cor. 2:4-5....Doctrinal
2. THE MYSTERIOUS ASPECT OF THE GOSPEL TO THE MEN OF THE WORLD..... Ezek. 20:49....Doctrinal
3. THE PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE MYSTERIES OF THE GOSPEL..... Matt. 13:11-12..Doctrinal
4. AN ESTIMATE OF THE MORALITY THAT IS WITHOUT GODLINESS.... Job. 9:30-33....Doctrinal
5. THE JUDGMENT OF MEN, COMPARED WITH THE JUDGMENT OF GOD..... I Cor. 4:3-4....Doctrinal
6. THE NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN..... Job 9:33.....Doctrinal
7. THE FOLLY OF MEN MEASURING THEMSELVES BY THEMSELVES..... II Cor. 10:12...Doctrinal
8. CHRIST THE WISDOM OF GOD..... I Cor. 1:24.....Doctrinal
9. THE PRINCIPLES OF LOVE TO GOD..... Jude 1:21.....Doctrinal
10. GRATITUDE NOT A SORDID AFFECTION..... I Jn. 4:19.....Doctrinal
11. THE AFFECTION OF MORAL ESTEEM TOWARD GOD..... Ps. 27:4.....Doctrinal
12. THE EMPTINESS OF NATURAL VIRTUE..... Jn. 5:42.....Doctrinal
13. THE NATURAL ENMITY OF THE MIND AGAINST GOD..... Rom. 8:7.....Doctrinal
14. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO DISSOLVE THE ENMITY OF THE HUMAN HEART AGAINST GOD..... Eph. 2:16.....Doctrinal
15. THE EVILS OF FALSE SECURITY.. Jer. 6:14.....Doctrinal
16. THE UNION OF TRUTH AND MERCY IN THE GOSPEL..... Ps. 85:10.....Doctrinal
17. THE PURIFYING INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH..... Acts 26:18.....Doctrinal

Discourses on the Application of Christianity
to the
Commercial and Ordinary Affairs
of Life

1. ON THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES WHICH MAY EXIST WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY... Phil. 4:8.....Ethical
2. THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AIDING AND AUGMENTING THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES..... Rom. 14:18.....Ethical
3. THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS IN PROMOTING THE HONESTIES OF MERCANTILE INTERCOURSE..... Lk. 6:33.....Ethical
4. THE GUILT OF DISHONESTY NOT TO BE ESTIMATED BY THE GAIN OF IT..... Lk. 16:10.....Ethical
5. ON THE GREAT CHRISTIAN LAW OF RECIPROCITY BETWEEN MAN AND MAN..... Matt. 7:12.....Ethical
6. ON THE DISSIPATION OF LARGE CITIES..... Eph. 5:6.....Ethical
7. ON THE VITIATING INFLUENCE OF THE HIGHER UPON THE LOWER ORDERS OF SOCIETY..... Lk. 17:1-2.....Ethical
8. ON THE LOVE OF MONEY..... Job 21:24-28....Ethical

Sermons Preached in St. John's Church
Glasgow

1. THE CONSTANCY OF GOD IN HIS WORKS: AN ARGUMENT FO THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IN HIS WORD..... Ps. 119:89-91.Doctrinal
2. THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION..... I Jn. 6:15....Doctrinal
3. THE SURE WARRANT OF A BELIEVER'S HOPE..... Rom. 5:10.....Doctrinal
4. THE RESTLESSNESS OF HUMAN AMBITION..... Ps. 11:1, 40:6Experiment.
5. THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF VISIBLE THINGS..... II Cor. 4:18..Doctrinal
6. ON THE UNIVERSALITY OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS..... Isa. 29:9-12..Doct.-Exp.
7. ON THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH..... II Pet. 3:13..Doctrinal
8. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD..... I Cor. 4:20...Doctrinal
9. ON THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH..... Gal. 3:23.....Doctrinal

10. ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH..... Mk. 2:27.....Ethical
11. ON THE DOCTRINE OF
PREDESTINATION..... Acts 27:22,31..Doctrinal
12. ON THE NATURE OF THE SIN
AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST..... Matt. 12:31-32.Doctrinal
13. ON THE ADVANTAGES OF
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE TO THE
LOWER ORDERS OF SOCIETY..... Ecc. 4:13.....Experiment.
14. ON THE DUTY AND THE MEANS
OF CHRISTIANIZING OUR HOME
POPULATION..... Mk. 16:15.....Experiment.
15. ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
KNOWLEDGE AND CONSIDERATION.. Isa. 1:3.....Doctrinal

Occasional Sermons

1. PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY
FOR RELIEF OF THE DESTITUTE
SICK..... Ps. 11:1.....Occasional
2. THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL
PEACE..... Isa. 11:4.....Occasional
3. THE DUTY OF GIVING
IMMEDIATE DILIGENCE TO THE
BUSINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE.....Occasional
4. THE INFLUENCE OF BIBLE
SOCIETIES ON THE TEMPORAL
NECESSITIES OF THE POOR.....Occasional
5. PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY
IN SCOTLAND FOR PROPOGATING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE..... Jn. 1:46.....Occasional
6. DELIVERED ON THE DAY OF
THE FUNERAL OF THE
PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.. Isa. 26:9.....Occasional
7. THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN
CHARITY APPLIED TO THE
CASE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES Matt. 7:3-5....Occasional
8. ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS..... Prov. 12:10....Occasional

Discourses on the Christian Revelation Viewed in Connection with Modern Astronomy

1. A SKETCH OF THE MODERN
ASTRONOMY..... Ps. 8:3-4.....Doctrinal
2. THE MODESTY OF TRUE SCIENCE.. I Cor. 8:2.....Doctrinal

3. ON THE EXTENT OF THE
DIVINE CONDESCENSION..... Ps. 113:5-6....Doctrinal
4. ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S
MORAL HISTORY IN THE DISTANT
PLACES OF CREATION..... I Pet. 1:12....Doctrinal
5. ON THE SYMPATHY THAT IS
FELT FOR MAN IN THE DISTANT
PLACES OF CREATION..... Lk. 15:7.....Doctrinal
6. ON THE CONTEST FOR AN
ASCENDENCY OVER MAN AMONG
THE HIGHER ORDER OF
INTELLIGENCE..... Col. 2:15.....Doctrinal
7. ON THE SLENDER INFLUENCE
OF MERE TASTE AND SENSI-
BILITY IN MATTERS OF
RELIGION..... Ezek. 33:32....Doctrinal

Evidences of Christianity

1. ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL
EVIDENCE AND THEIR APPLICATION
TO THE QUESTION OF THE TRUTH IN
CHRISTIANITY..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
2. ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE
DIFFERENT BOOKS OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
3. ON THE INTERNAL MARKS OF TRUTH
AND HONESTY TO BE FOUND IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
4. ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE
ORIGINAL WITNESSES TO THE
TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE.... Doctrinal-Philosophical
5. ON THE TESTIMONY OF SUBSEQUENT
WITNESSES..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
6. REMARKS ON THE ARGUMENT FROM
PROPHECY..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
7. REMARKS ON THE SKEPTICISM OF
GEOLOGISTS..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
8. ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE AND
THE OBJECTIONS OF DEISTICAL
INFIDELS..... Doctrinal-Philosophical
9. ON THE WAY OF PROPOSING THE
ARGUMENT TO ATHEISTICAL INFIDELS. Doctrinal-Philosophical
10. ON THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF
REVELATION..... Doctrinal-Philosophical

Summary of Information Regarding
 "Sermons and Discourses of Thomas Chalmers now
 Completed by the Introduction of his Posthumous
 Sermons"

Two Volumes in One New York
 Robert Carter & Brothers, 1873

Total Sermons.....	132
Volume I	
Selected Sermons.....	44
Posthumous Sermons.....	33
	(Chronologically arranged 1798-1847)
Volume II	
Sermons on the Depravity of Human Nature.....	17
Discourses on the Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life.....	8
Sermons Preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow.....	15
Discourses on the Christian Revelation, Viewed in Connection with Modern Astronomy.....	7
Occasional Sermons and Addresses.....	8
Evidences of Christianity.....	10
	(Substances of Chalmers' article on Christianity for Edinburgh Encyclopaedia)

Classification of Sermons

	<u>Doct</u>	<u>Eth</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Occ</u>	<u>Doct-Exp</u>
Volume I					
Selected Sermons.....	20	12	5	5	2
Posthumous Sermons.....	7	4	10	10	2
Volume II					
Depravity of Human Nature.	17	..	..	..	..
Commercial and Ordinary Affairs.....	..	8	..	..	..
Sermons preached in St. John's.....	10	1	3	..	1
Astronomical Discourses...	7	..	..	..	..
Occasional Sermons and Addresses.....	..	..	1	7	..
Evidences of Christianity.	10	..	..	..	..
	<u>71</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>5</u>

Classification of Texts

Old Testament - 37 texts from 11 of 39 books

Genesis 6:3		Proverbs 21:1
		12:10
Lev. 26:34		
		Eccles. 4:13
Job 9:30-33		
9:33		Isaiah 1:3
3:24		7:3-5
		11:4
Psalms 8:3-4		26:9
11:1		29:9-12
19:11		51:1-2
27:4		56:4-5
41:1		58:13-15
48:8		
60:6		Jeremiah 6:16
85:10		6:14
91:1		
112:4		Ezekiel 20:49
113:5-6		33:32
137:1-6		
137:5-6		Micah 6:8
27:3		
		Zech. 7:13

New Testament - 95 texts from 22 of 27 books

Matt. 5:38-48	John 1:46	I Cor. 1:24
6:22	4:10	1:25
7:3-5	4:16	2:2
7:11	5:42	2:45
7:12	14:1	4:3-4
12:31-32	14:21	4:20
13:11-12		7:29
	Acts 1:11	8:2
Mark 2:27	6:2	8:13
4:24	19:24-25	
4:26-29	20:21	II Cor. 4:18
12:37	20:35	5:20
16:15	26:18	6:14-16
	26:25	6:17-18
Luke 1:74	27:22-31	6:17-18
2:14		10:12
4:1-13	Rom. 3:10	
4:1-13	3:9-19	Gal. 3:23
6:33	5:1	4:10
8:18	5:10	6:8
15:7	8:7	
16:10	11:22	Ephesians 2:12
17:1-2	14:5	2:16
24:49	14:18	5:6

Philip.	4:8 4:13	Titus	1:1 2:10	I Pet.	3:8 4:18
Col.	1:12 2:6 2:15 4:1 4:5-6	Heb	2:3 3:7-8 11:4 11:14	II Pet.	3:3-4 3:13
I Tim.	1:5	James	1:20 4:11	I Jn.	4:19 5:16 11:15
II Tim.	1:10 2:2	I Pet	1:12 1:17 2:17	Jude	1:21
				Rev.	22:11

2. Examination of the Sermons

a. Length of Sermons

In examining these sermons, we have noticed that the average length is eight pages, of ten point type, two columns to a page, making approximately seven thousand three hundred words in the average sermon. The shortest sermon in the first section of Volume I covered four pages - about three thousand six hundred words; and the longest extended over nineteen pages, consisting of approximately seventeen thousand three hundred words. In contrast with this, the average sermon by a modern preacher seldom goes beyond the shortest of Chalmers' sermons - three thousand six hundred words.¹ Longer sermons were more the order of

.....

1. Based on estimate made of sermons by representative modern preachers as compiled by T. B. Mather, in his "Voices of Living Prophets", Cokesbury, 1933

the day when Chalmers preached, judging from the tremendous¹ crowds which attended his preaching.

b. Type of Sermons

We have classified the sermons according to the following grouping: Doctrinal - those which treat of the great doctrines of the Christian Faith in a didactic and philosophical yet Biblical and practical manner.² Ethical - those which enforce personal and relative duties by the claims of religion and morality.³ Experimental - those which appeal to the promises and injunctions of Scripture to stimulate the believer in the Christian life, to comfort him in sorrow or trial, to correct mistaken ideas or habits, and to instruct as to higher responsibilities or privileges.⁴ Occasional - those which deal with special Church or National occasions, or philanthropic and missionary subjects.⁵ We have also invented a further classification, Doctrinal-Experimental, to cover a few sermons which partake of the features of both of those classes, and yet do not fit well in either.

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 156
2. Pattison, op. cit., pp. 125-132
3. Cf. Ibid., 133-136
4. Cf. Ibid., 137-139
5. Cf. Ibid., 139-140

From our examination of these sermons, we have found that the largest proportion would come under the classification of Doctrinal Sermons; and these have a strong philosophical flavor. Of the hundred and thirty-two sermons classified, seventy-one were found to belong to this group. Next in quantity were the Ethical sermons, with twenty-five; and slightly fewer were the Occasional Sermons, with twenty-two. Under the group labeled Experimental, we found nineteen sermons; and in the composite group, Doctrinal-Experimental, five others.

c. Chalmers' Style

(1) Length of Sentences

Perhpas the most obvious characteristic of Chalmers' style is the length of his sentences. One sentence, picked at random from his sermon on the "Brevity¹ of Life", has in it two hundred and fifty-one words. The first sentence in his famous sermon, "The Expulsive Power² of a New Affection" contains just about one hundred words - three times the length of the opening sentence of a modern³ sermon. Such length sentences are undoubtedly the result of his practice of writing out and reading word for word

.....

1. Chalmers: Sermons, Vol I, pp. 184-185
2. Cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 271
3. Based upon a survey of sermons by representative modern preachers: Mather, op. cit.

all of his sermons, as well as the influence of the contemporary stylists which he studied and among whom he wrote.

(2) Solidity of the Sermons

Ozora Davis, commenting on the sermon, "Expulsive Power of a New Affection," asserts,

"The solidity of this sermon is its outstanding characteristic."¹

This characteristic is common to all of Chalmers' sermons. He is a preacher tremendously in earnest, and he deals with topics which are weighty and important. Pattison says that he

"excelled in the art of rousing and engaging the intellect by the announcement of a theme worthy of its concentrated attention."²

We may wonder at the reception which such sermons received from the common people of the day when we consider the efforts which modern ministers make to simplify, beautify and make alluring their discourses, but in this connection Davis counsels us:

"It will be well to remember that he preached to congregations of Scotch people, who are probably the world's best 'sermon tasters,' and who demand a high standard of reasoning wedded to dignified oratorical fervor in their preachers."³

.....

1. Davis: Princes of Preaching, p. 118
2. Pattison: The Making of the Sermon, p. 58
3. Davis, op. cit., p. 97

(3) His Singleness of Emphasis

Robert Hall, who has been called the leading figure of the Baptist pulpit during the same period as Chalmers' outshone other Presbyterians, once commented upon this peculiarity of Chalmers' preaching in these words:

"Did you ever know any man who had that singular faculty of repetition possessed by Chalmers? Why, sir, he often reiterates the same things ten or twelve times in the course of a few pages. Even Burke himself had not so much of that peculiarity. His mind resembles.. a kaleidoscope. Every turn presents the object in a new and beautiful form, but the object presented is the same....His mind seems to move on hinges, not on wheels. There is incessant motion, but no progress."¹

This very descriptive characterization of Chalmers' style has been generally conceded to be somewhat exaggerated;² nevertheless it indicates well the way in which he treated a subject. Pattison has called this one of the sources of his power.

"The power of Chalmers lay here. He held that one point up to his congregation, as a lapidary holds up the diamond, until every facet of it caught the light."³

This facility for presenting the one truth or idea in a multitude of ways, with slightly differing emphasis, yet the same dominant recurring theme is observable in the

.....

1. Dargan, op. cit., p. 492
2. Cf. Ibid., cf. Pattison, pp. 62, 207
3. Pattison, op. cit., p. 207

first sermon we have from his latter months in Divinity Hall. This sermon, on the topic, "Divine Summary of Human Duty," includes this brief sample of style which was later developed and extended into one of his peculiar abilities:

"Think not then, that piety casts a gloom over the face of nature. Think not that sullen and dejected it retires from the world to dwell on nothing but subjects of melancholy. Think not that the sigh of sadness or the tears of penitential sorrow are its whole employments."

This method of expanding and elaborating upon a single theme Chalmers progressively developed from this simple start, and applied it not only to subordinate emphasis in the sermon, or to divisions of the main thought, but applied it also to the whole sermon until it all became the extended elaboration of a single theme or idea. Concerning the sermon which is perhaps best known of all of his many sermons, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection," to which we have referred already, it has been observed that,

"...The only thought of the sermon which, after Chalmers' peculiar manner, is restated and variously illustrated, is thus presented in the opening paragraph of the discourse: 'There are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world - either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as the more worthy of its attachment; so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon, not to

.....

1. Chalmers, Sermons, Vol I p. 386

resign an old affection which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one'.¹

(4) Topical Sermons

Another characteristic of the style of Chalmers' sermons, is that they are largely topical in construction. This undoubtedly is due to some degree to the peculiarity of elaborating upon a single theme which we have just noticed. Pattison attributes his concentration upon this particular style of preaching to inherent oratorical ability and nature, to which this type was more appealing.² Chalmers himself called these sermons his "long-hand sermons" - those in which he discussed some doctrine or duty with attention to all of the implications and details.³ Some of the titles of his sermons give an idea of the kind of topics he used.⁴

(5) Energy

Still another characteristic of Chalmers' style appears in his intense energy. There is an atmosphere of eager earnestness and consuming concern in his sermons which

.....

1. Dargan, op. cit., p. 495
2. Cf. Pattison, op. cit., p. 57
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 60
4. Cf. Ante, pp. 44-49

is indicated by the frequent final appeals for decisions, by the way in which he piles up phrase after phrase for emphasis, in his frequent use of rhetorical questions, and in the type of words he uses. Davis says about him,

"Chalmers has a message. He is dead-in-earnest in delivering it."¹

d. Repetition of his Sermons

Compared with other great preachers, Chalmers' sermons were relatively few; for this reason he repeated some of them five or six times. One of his sermons, "The Duty Required and the Strength Imparted,"² he preached seven times that we have record of; another one "The Living Water"³ we know was preached five times within one year. Pattison has commented upon Chalmers' repetition of his sermons in these words:

"He was a master of that rare art which can throw into a discourse, even when preached for the fortieth time, a passion born at the moment of its first delivery."⁴

On at least one occasion Chalmers deliberately and with previous announcement repeated his morning sermon in the afternoon in order to prevent the annoyance of a crowd.

.....

1. Davis, op. cit., p. 118
2. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II p. 456
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 437
4. Pattison, op. cit., pp. 60-61

The effect was the opposite, for the crowd was so great that the doors were crashed in.¹

e. Summary of Findings from the Analysis
of
Chalmers' Sermons

We have found from our analysis of Chalmers' sermons that he preached more doctrinal sermons than any other type; these doctrinal sermons usually have a philosophical emphasis. Ethical, occasional, experimental, and doctrinal-experimental sermons followed in that order according to frequency. The sermons were generally longer than any which modern preachers use, varying from three thousand six hundred words to seventeen thousand words in length. Chalmers' peculiar style we found to consist in very lengthy sentences, extremely weighty and solid sermons, a singleness of emphasis made more effective through expansion and elaboration, an almost exclusively topical treatment, and intense energy. We found, moreover, that Chalmers repeated several of his sermons a number of times, and yet was able to put into each occasion the fervor and energy of the original moment of composition.

B. Oral Character of his Preaching

The relationship between a sermon read in

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 156

private and a sermon heard in a great crowd from the preacher himself, has been well described in the following paragraph:

"Of all human compositions there is none surely which loses so much as a sermon does when it is made to address itself to the eye of a solitary student in his closet, and not to the thrilling ears of a mightily mingled congregation, through the very voice which nature has enriched with notes more expressive than words can ever be of the meanings and feelings of its author."¹

Since this very statement was called forth by the experience of hearing a sermon preached by Chalmers after having read his printed sermons, we may expect that there are records of his manner of preaching which will aid us in our search for those elements which contributed to the peculiar power which he exerted in the pulpit.

1. His Physical Qualifications

Chalmers was not favored with a particularly effective public speaking voice. One of his contemporaries describes him and his voice in this manner:

"His voice is neither strong nor melodious...; his pronunciation is not only broadly national but broadly provincial, distorting almost every word he utters into some barbarous novelty, which had his hearers leisure to think of such things, might be productive of an effect at once ludicrous and offensive in a singular degree."²

.....

1. "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk" 2nd ed., Vol. III, pp. 267-273, quoted in Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 3-4
2. Ibid.

But, this critic hastens to add, "But of a truth these are things which no listener can attend to while this great preacher stands before him...."

Not only was his voice not an important asset; his gestures as well lacked much of the grace and appropriateness which they might have had. The same contemporary critic remarks that ...¹"his gestures are neither easy nor graceful; but on the contrary extremely rude and awkward;..." Another of his contemporaries has described his manner as "a continuous sawing of the air with one hand whilst the other followed the lines of a closely read manuscript."² And yet in spite of these awkward gestures, he was able to make "that manuscript somehow a marvelous conductor of his own earnestness and energy to his audience."³ A later writer, speaking of his manner in the pulpit and the effectiveness of his reading, describes him as delivering his sermons,

"....in tones of enthusiasm that made the rafters roar, hanging over his audience, menacing them with his shaking fist or standing erect, manacled and staring...."⁴

Thus we see that in spite of the lack of an unusually fine voice for public speaking, and his awkwardness and lack of

.....

1. Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, 2nd ed. Vol III, pp. 267-273, quoted in Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 3,4.
2. Howard, op. cit., p. 155
3. Ibid.
4. Pattison, op. cit., pp. 305-306

grace in gesture, Chalmers was able to convey his message to the people with an intense enthusiasm and power that everyone in the congregation was made to share in.

2. His Method of Delivery

Although Chalmers followed that practice which is not recommended by most teachers of homilectics today - that of reading his sermon from a full manuscript,¹ he achieved his notable success in the pulpit by this method of delivery. Shortly after he had begun to be noticed as a powerful Evangelical preacher, and while he was still at Kilmany, Andrew Fuller came to hear him. Fuller was greatly impressed by Chalmers' eloquence and effectiveness as a preacher, but advised him to stop reading his sermons and use a free delivery. Chalmers attempted this for a few times, but soon gave it up; he found that instead of a new freedom he was greatly handicapped, and liable to the evil of wandering from his material and wasting the effects of his arguments and carefully worked out sentences. Thereafter he gave up all attempts at extemporaneous delivery of sermons or addresses.² At the laying of the foundation of the Free Church College, less than a year before he died, he is

.....

1. Cf. Pattison, op. cit., pp. 301 ff; Cf. Garvie, op. cit., p. 463
2. Cf. Blaikie, op. cit., pp. 37, 38

described as,

"...producing a scrap of paper covered with shorthand heiroglyphics, he apologized with a broad smile for taking to 'the paper,' seeing it was but a scrap, whereas if he were to speak extempore his remarks might become and 'interminable rigamarole'."1

The reason for this method of delivery is indicated in the reason he gave one time for his not taking part in the ordinary debates in General Assembly. One of his biographers records,

"...that he had not the faculty which some men seemed to him to possess, of thinking extempore; nor could he be so sure of any judgment as to have comfort in bringing it before the public till he had leisurely weighed and measured it.....He fancied himself 'that in one respect I resemble Rousseau, who says of himself that his processes of thought were slow but ardent'."2

The same biographer goes on to describe his method of composition of sermons and lectures:

"He never began to write till, in its subjects, and the order and proportion of its parts, the map or outline of the future composition was laid down; and this was done so distinctly and as it were authoritatively that it was seldom violated."3

Thus this 'slow but ardent' thinker, having mentally mapped out the sermon, wrote it down with the full fire and fury of his soul, into a form which most fully and eloquently conveyed the earnestness of the message; this then, he did

.....

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 146
2. Moffatt, op. cit., pp. 417-418
3. Ibid.

not trust to his memory nor to scanty outline notes, but with the full manuscript before him, he poured out that message "not from but through that manuscript."¹

3. His Eloquence

"To whatever else Chalmers may have owed the influence he exerted over his contemporaries, much of it was due to his unquestioned supremacy as a public speaker."²

Perhaps the most striking thing about Chalmers' preaching was his great eloquence. He seemed able through the medium of his ever present manuscript to sweep his audiences along through pathos and ecstasy, from the rapt contemplation of the majestic splendors of the Godhead to an analytical depiction of the intricate deceits and sinfulness of the human heart, and then into an inspired description of the glories of the redemption freely offered in Christ. The spell which he cast over the audience was so powerful that, in the words of one who heard him,

"We had all insensibly been drawn out of our seats, and were converging toward the wonderful speaker; and when he sat down,....we all sunk back into our seats."³

Another contemporary describes the effect which Chalmers had upon a great audience in Glasgow during the Astronomical Discourses:

.....

1. Pattison, op. cit., p. 315
- 2.
3. Howard, op. cit., p. 159

"Every countenance is up, every eye bent with fixed intentness on the speaker. As he kindles, the interest grows. Every breath is held, every cough is suppressed...; every one, riveted himself by the spell of the impassioned and entrancing eloquence, knows how sensitively his neighbor will resent the very slightest disturbance. Then, by and by there is a pause. The speaker stops to gather breathe, to wipe his forehead, to adjust his gown, and purposely too, and wisely to give the audience as well as himself a moment or two of relaxation. The moment is embraced; there is free breathing, suppressed coughs get vent, postures are changed, there is a universal stir, as of persons who could not have endured the constraint much longer. The preacher bends forward, his hand is raised, all is hushed again. The same stillness and strain of unrelaxed attention is repeated, more intent still, it may be, than before, as the interest of the subject and the speaker advance. And so for perhaps four or five times in the course of a sermon there is the relaxation and the 'at it again', till the final winding up."¹

Lord Jeffrey, after hearing the famous preacher, said of his eloquence,

"I know not what it is, but there is something altogether remarkable about that man. It reminds me more of what one reads of as the effect of the eloquence of Demosthenes than anything I ever heard."²

One further testimonial to his eloquence will suffice to make our point here. This comes from Mr. J. G. Lockhart, from whose pseudonymous book, "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk" we have already quoted. He describes Chalmers and his eloquence; having mentioned some of the features of Chalmers' speech and manner which might under ordinary

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 135
2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 47

circumstances seem laughable, he says,

"...these are things which no listener can attend to while this great preacher stands before him, armed with all the weapons of most outstanding eloquence, and swaying all around him with its imperial rule. At first, indeed, there is nothing to make one suspect what riches are in store. He commences in a low, drawling key, which has not even the merit of being solemn, and advances from sentence to sentence, and from paragraph to paragraph, while you seek in vain to catch a single echo that gives promise of what is to come.....But then, with what tenfold richness does this dim preliminary curtain, make the glories of his eloquence to shine forth, when the heated spirit at length flings from it its chill conginging fetters, and bursts out elate and rejoicing in the full splendor of its disimprisoned wings... I have heard many men deliver sermons far better arranged in regard to argument, and have heard very many deliver sermons far more uniform in elegance both of composition and of style; but most unquestionably I have never heard whether in England or in Scotland, or in any other country, any preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect so strong and irresistable as his."¹

Notice of Chalmers' eloquence began shortly after his great spiritual experience at Kilmany in 1812; but the height of his fame and popularity came during his eight years at Glasgow, between 1815 and 1823. ² During his trip to London in 1817, his popularity almost surpassed that of Glasgow; his publisher, Mr. Smith, wrote back to Glasgow:

"...The carrying forward of minds was never so visible to me; a constant assent of the head of the whole people accompanied all his paragraphs; and the breathlessness of expectation permitted not

.....

1. Elaikie, op. cit., pp. 46-47
2. Cf. Howard, op. cit., pp. 134-136; cf. Dargan, op. cit Vol. II, p. 490

the beating of a heart to agitate the stillness."¹

Thus we see that his marvellous eloquence contributed largely to the effectiveness of his preaching.

4. Summary of Chalmers' Preaching

We have considered in the latter part of this chapter, some of the features of Chalmers' preaching. We found that although he was not gifted with an unusually fine speaking voice, nor with grace of gesture, he did command the attention and respect of his audiences. His method of delivery was reading from a full manuscript; an early attempt at extemporaneous delivery was unsuccessful, and this method was abandoned. The distinguishing feature of his preaching was his eloquence. This, we found frequently remarked upon by his contemporaries, was the outstanding reason for his fame, and the secret of his power over the hearts and minds of his hearers.

.....

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 44

CHAPTER IV

THE RANGE OF CHALMERS' PREACHING

CHAPTER IV

THE RANGE OF CHALMERS' PREACHING

We have already intimated something of the range of Chalmers' preaching in our analysis of the types of sermons contained in the volume which we are considering. By far the largest group came under the heading of Doctrinal sermons; but this group covers a wide range of Christian doctrines, from Theology to Eschatology. Another large group of sermons were found under the classification of Ethical Sermons; and in this group there are a variety of human relationships and duties considered. The third largest group was that of Occasional Sermons, in which title itself is suggested a host of assorted 'occasions' which called him forth. The next two groups, Experimental and Doctrinal-Experimental have to do with the progress in the Christian life, and the warnings, instructions, and comforts which aid and encourage that progress. We shall now give closer attention to the question of the range of his preaching, noting especially his consideration of current problems, his emphasis upon the great Christian Doctrines, and his use of Biblical material and reference.

A. His Consideration of Current Problems

That Thomas Chalmers was keenly sensitive to

the problems and interests of his particular age is clearly evident from the record of his life and his accomplishments. His overpowering interest in the welfare of the lower classes and the underprivileged of Glasgow eloquently attests this.¹ His position of leadership, in the controversy that led up to, and in the Disruption itself is a further indication of this fact.² His participation in the battle over the Catholic Disabilities Act,³ in the St. Andrew's Volunteers at the time of the War with France,⁴ and his championing of the then unpopular Bible Societies and Missionary Agencies,⁵ stamp him as anything but a narrow-minded, disinterested spectator of the activities in the arena of life of his day. This same interestedness is made apparent in his sermons. He speaks often concerning the application of Christianity to the secular business of life, concerning the civil governments and the duties owed them, concerning great personalities of his day, concerning events of international significance, and concerning the problems arising from the various strata of society and their relationships.

.....

1. Cf. Howard, op. cit., pp. 136-138
2. Cf. Ante, Chapter II
3. Ibid.
4. Cf. Mathieson, op. cit., p. 268
5. Cf. Ante, Chapter II

1. Concerning the Application of Christianity
to the
Secular Business of Life

In many of his sermons there are references to the necessity and duty of applying the doctrines and ethics of Christianity to all of the various and varied areas of human activity. In one of his sermons Chalmers packs a world of meaning into the brief statement:

"Christianity overlooks no part of human conduct...."¹

He has a series of eight sermons dealing exclusively with "The Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life." One of his strongest and most eloquent statements of this inescapable consideration is found in his sermon, "The Silver Shrines," preached in Glasgow in February, 1817, where in opposition to the argument that religion should be divorced from the secular pursuits of life, he says,

"I assert with the most unqualified earnestness that Christianity is the religion of life, and will bear to be carried in the whole extent of her spirit and of her laws throughout all the haunts and varieties of human intercourse - that her high pretension is to subordinate the every doing and the every interest of man to the regimen of her own unbending authority - that in her strictest and most essential character she may be introduced into the busiest walks of society, and there uphold her disciples in the exercise of that simplicity and godly sincerity which she lays upon them; and in opposition to all the alleged impracticability

.....

1. Chalmers: Sermons, Vol. II, p. 153

which are conceived to lie in the way of her full establishment over the acts and the consciences of our species, do I aver, that if she cannot be practical neither ought she to be preached - that if there be some invincible necessity why she should be banished from any one of your employments during the week, then she ought to be banished from every one of our pulpits upon the Sabbath - that she is either everything or nothing - that she knows of no compromise between her own laws and the maxims of the world by some expedient of time acomodating conformity - that she disclaims all these midway adjustments entirely - and if she is deposed from her right of paramount control over all the conceivable cases of human conduct then let her also be deposed from the ostensible place she now holds in the eye of the country - let her very name be given up to public scorn - let her forthwith be abandoned to the utter contempt and negligence of mankind."¹

In his preface to the series of sermons on the "Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life," Chalmers mentions several other lines of thought and argument which he considers worthy of treatment in some future series of discourses. Among these is the objection which has been raised that if Christianity were to be universally practiced in commerce and trade, the prosperity of the people engaged in these pursuits would greatly decline, and the end result would be greater hardship and poverty than exists in the present admittedly un-Christian business system. In answer to this, Chalmers briefly states his attitude:

"Without offering any demonstration at

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 569-570

present upon this matter, we simply state it as our opinion, that, though the whole business of the world were in the hands of men thoroughly Christianized, and who, rating wealth according to its real dimensions on the high scale of eternity, were chastened out of all their idolatrous regards to it - yet would trade in these circumstances, be carried to the extreme limit of its being really productive or desirable. An affection for riches beyond what Christianity prescribes, is not essential to any extension of commerce that is at all valuable or legitimate; and in opposition to the maxim, that the spirit of enterprise is the soul of commercial prosperity, do we hold, that it is the excess of this spirit beyond the moderation of the New Testament, which pressing on the natural boundaries of trade, is sure, at length, to visit every shape of beggared capitalism, and unemployed operatives, and dreary intervals of bankruptcy and alarm, are observed to follow a season of overdue speculation."¹

2. Concerning the Civil Government

When we know of Chalmers' opposition to the Government authority in connection with the Disruption of 1843, we may well wonder what his attitude toward civil government in general was. From several of his sermons we may find statements which will indicate this to us. On October 20, 1803, after the renewal of hostilities following the Peace of Amiens, there was appointed a national Fast-Day; upon this occasion Chalmers preached a sermon to his people at Kilmany church. In the midst of his discourse, he made the following defense of ministerial participation in occasions of national significance:

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 118

"Let it not be said that discussions like these are a prostitution of the dignity of the pulpit, or an impertinent deviation from our official character, to lend the authority of our profession to the aid of party or to employ it in strengthening the yoke of despotism over an enslaved and persecuted people. I hope in God there is not a man among us who would not willingly renounce the smiles of the great and the patronage of power, rather than concur in supporting the measures of an arbitrary and oppressive government. We come forward not in the spirit of an accomodating policy. We come forward because it is the dictate of our own hearts, and the dictate of our own opinions. We come forward because we conceive it to be the duty of every good man in the present critical and alarming circumstances of the country. We come forward because it is the cause of patriotism. It is the cause of civil and religious liberty."¹

There was another appointed Fast-day in 1809, after the defeat at Corunna, in which we find other indications of Chalmers' recognition of and interest in the civil government.

"I do not speak in the tone of disaffection - I speak in the tone of patriotism. I do not mean to pursue the errors of my Government in the spirit of hostility - it is in that spirit of regret that proceeds from the sincerity of my attachment - from my conviction that the Government of England is worth contending for - that every lover of his country should stand by it to maintain its purity, as well as to defend its existence - that he should not only risk his life in fighting the battles of his country against the enemies of its independence, but that he should risk all the advantages of patronage and preferment in fighting the battles of the Constitution against the enemies of its purity and vigour."²

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 407
2. Ibid., p. 417

He then goes on to indicate what his hope is concerning the present state of affairs, and its influence upon the future of his country:

"Let us hope that the present state of affairs will operate as an effectual lesson to the rulers of the country - that the sense of danger will animate the public mind to all the enthusiasm of virtue - that the ardour of patriotism will chase away all the obliquities of a selfish and interested politics - that our legislation will turn with shame from the low game of party dissension, and lend their unanimity to that noble struggle that is to decide the liberty of the future age, and give a lasting complexion to the history of future times. But let us not forget our dependence upon God - that mighty Being Who reigns supreme over the will of man, and exerts an absolute control over all hearts and all purposes."¹

One further illustration will suffice to show to us that Chalmers was concerned about the civil government of his day, but that he subordinated this concern to a more imperial concern about the religious government of not only the country, but the entire universe. In his sermon on the "Importance of the Civil Government," preached shortly after the suppression of a rebellious movement in Scotland in 1820, he speaks thus concerning the authority and limitations of civil rule:

"An enlightened pilgrim recognizes the hand of God in all the shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the natural elements; and he equally recognizes in it all the shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the moral elements by which he is surrounded. Had he a more favourable view of our nature, he might not look on government as so indispensable; but, with the view that he actually has, he cannot miss the conclusion of its being the ordinance of Heaven for the church's good upon earth; and that thus

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 417

a canopy of defense is drawn over the heads of Zion's travellers; and they rejoice in the authority of human laws as an instrument in the hand of God to the peace of their Sabbaths, and the peace of their sacraments; and they deprecate the anarchy that would ensue from the suspension of them with as much honest principle, as they would deprecate the earthquake that might engulf, or the hurricane that might sweep away their habitations; and, aware of what humanity is, when left to itself, they accept as a boon from heaven, the mechanism which checks the effervescence of all those fires that would else go forth to burn up and to destroy."¹

For Chalmers, then, we see that the civil government was a necessary thing because of the natural propensities toward anarchy, plundering, and consequent slaughter of human life, which are part of the depravity of human nature; it was an un-ideal but providentially provided institution to safeguard life and liberty and worship; and it was a subject to which he gave attention in his preaching.

3. Concerning Great Personalities

The significance of any age is largely measured by the lives of the men and women who live in that age. It would be a mark, then, of the attentiveness of a great preacher to the dominant currents of affairs of his age, if he were to give attention to some of the great personalities of his time. Measured by this standard, Chalmers was alert to his times; for we find several of his sermons

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 343

devoted to great contemporary names. One of these is Dr. Andrew Thompson, who was one of the leaders of the Church of Scotland, and at whose death in 1831, Chalmers preached.¹ Another name which has received great notice, not only in Chalmers' day, but also to the present, is Dr. Alexander Duff, the first missionary from the Church of Scotland to India. Dr. Chalmers presided at his ordination, and when he was about to return to India for the second time, in 1839, Dr. Chalmers preached a sermon addressed to him, in which he commended the work already accomplished and encouraged him to further success.² On November 19, 1817, Her Royal Highness Princess Charlotte of Wales was buried by a nation that mourned the loss of a beloved ruler. On this occasion Chalmers preached a sermon in Tron Church which attracted nation-wide attention. In this sermon, he emphasized the fact that the true greatness of any nation is in the people who make up that nation; and that the greatest memorial which they could erect to the beloved memory of the Princess would be in the hearts of a people who had learned righteousness.³

4. Concerning Events on
the
International Scene

.....

1. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol I, p 265
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 608
3. Cf. Ibid., Vol II, pp. 229-239

While Chalmers did not give a great deal of attention to current political and military events, yet we may sense from his sermons that he was alert to what was going on in the world. We have already mentioned the two Fast-day sermons in connection with his views on the civil government; the occasions for these sermons were incidents of international importance; the first, in 1803, was inspired by the renewal of hostilities and the threat of invasion after the temporary peace following the Treaty of Amiens;¹ the second was after the honorable but disastrous battle at Corunna, in 1809.² In this latter sermon there is a paragraph which reveals to us Chalmers' alertness to the events which were transpiring in the world.

"A dark and tremendous uncertainty hangs over the future history of the world. Events succeed each other with a rapidity that absolutely benumbs the faculties, and annihilates the sensation of wonder. As much happens in the space of a single year, as would formerly have been enough to signalize a whole century .. All the interest and wonder and novelty of ... (a)...great occurrence evaporates in the course of a single month. The attention of the public is hurried away to the other objects - new scenery is presented to engross every eye and eclipse the memory of the old. The mind is fatigued with the rapidity of the succession - it seeks for repose in indifference - and the same public that was once so feelingly alive to the fate of a ruined kingdom or the interests of a trifling principality, would now slumber in apathy though all Europe were in commotion, and its oldest empires fell in this

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 404
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 415

wild war of turbulence and disorder."¹

Although thus sensitive to the clamor and change of the international scene, he nevertheless maintained his emphasis upon the imperial sovereignty of God, as Lord of all the universe; and upon the necessity of man's coming into proper relationship with Him, as the event of compelling importance.

5. Concerning the Various Strata of Society

We have seen (Chapter I) that Chalmers lived in a day when the old tight divisions between classes were beginning to waver, and the spirit of democratic ambition was rising among the common people. We also noted that the advance of industry had caused many cities to multiply their population at a very rapid rate, with the result that living conditions and social conditions were in a sad shape. Chalmers was alert to the various strata of society, and their needs and responsibilities. We have abundant indication of this in his sermons. An examination of a few of the titles will attest this fact. He has a sermon on "The Blessedness of Considering the Case of the Poor;" another on "Preaching to the Common People;" and still another on "Honour Due to all Men" from the text I Peter 2:17, in which honour is shown to be the

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 419

due of both royalty and commoner. One other which further indicates this phase of emphasis in Chalmers' preaching is "Duties of Masters and Servants." In this latter sermon Chalmers gives his attitude toward the external differences between men and classes, in the light of Christianity:

"It is very observable of Christianity, that while at one time it equalizes all the various ranks and orders of life, at another it presses the performance of such duties, and the practice of such submissions upon the lower orders as would seem to recognize a wider distinction between one man and his fellow than was ever contended for by the most groveling minions of despotism. It tells us of the essential equality of all men. It is ever coming into contact with the most striking and important points of this equality. It, with an intrepid disregard of all the power and of all grandeur of this world, delivers such doctrines as are most humiliating to the pride of the wealthy, and as are most elevating to the hopes and most sustaining to the dignity of the poor... whether it adverts to the infirmities of our present condition, or to our capacities for the bliss and immortality of another - in all these cases does it overlook the varieties of rank and of fortune, and viewing the whole brotherhood of mankind as the members of one common family, does it speak the same language to all and hold out to all the same offers and the same invitations and the same injunctions."¹

6. Concerning Scientific Advances

Chalmers' training gave him a vision and somewhat of a mastery of the accomplishments of the rapidly developing sciences. It would be strange indeed to find that after devoting so much time and study to such subjects,

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 580-581

he gave them no consideration whatever, in his later ministry. But Chalmers maintained an interest in scientific accomplishment even after he became aware that the work of the Christian ministry was large enough to demand his whole time and attention; and he used his already developed powers of scientific discrimination in the support of his Evangelical faith. The most evident illustration of this is found in that series of discourses which spread his name and fame throughout the whole of the nation. These "Discourses on The Christian Revelation Viewed in Connection with the Modern Astronomy," or as they were more commonly known, the "Astronomical Discourses" were composed to meet the "astronomical objection against the truth of the Gospel" and were preached in the Tron Church, Glasgow in 1815. In explaining his purpose for presenting them in published form, Chalmers wrote in the preface,

"There is an imposing splendour in the science of astronomy; and it is not to be wondered at, if the light it throws, or appears to throw, over other tracks of speculation than those which are properly its own, should at times dazzle and mislead an inquirer. On this account we think it were a service to what we deem a true and righteous cause, could we succeed in dissipating this illusion; and in stripping Infidelity of those pretensions to enlargement, and to a certain air of philosophical greatness, by which it has often become so destructively alluring to the young, and the ardent, and the ambitious."¹

So, for this reason, Chalmers goes on to deal with a sketch

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 360

of modern astronomy, an estimation of the modesty of true science, and a discussion of the place of man in the whole of God's plan and God's universe.

7. Summary of Attention to Current Problems

We have seen that Dr. Chalmers was not insensible to the great movements and interests of secular life; but that he gave attention to these in his preaching, although always as subordinate to and dependent upon his main message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was outspoken in his application of the authority of Christianity to all of the areas of human intercourse; he recognized the need of civil government and at the same time saw its limitations under God's authority; he was attentive to the great personalities of his day; he was aware of movements in international affairs; he considered the needs and responsibilities of the various strata of society; and he kept abreast of the scientific advances of his day, measuring them always by the eternal truth of God's word. We see here a man who gave attention to the world around him, yet ever saw that world in the light of the Eternal God and His purposes for man.

B. His Emphasis Upon the Great Christian Doctrines

We have already seen from our analysis of Chalmers'

sermons that he devoted most of his time to doctrinal preaching. In this type of sermons, he gave attention to all of the various departments of Christian Doctrine: Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology.

1. Attention to Theology

That high respect for the character and sovereignty of Almighty God which has characterized Calvinism from its inception, is evidently a most important part of the religious attitude of Thomas Chalmers. A sense of the Almightyness and Majestic Holiness of God pervades all of his sermons, whether he may be preaching directly about some aspect of His Nature or Purpose, or upon one of the more distantly related phases of Christian Thought. A number of his sermons deal directly with the doctrine of God. The first sermon in the volume is entitled, "The Paternal Character of God,"¹ based upon the text Matthew 7:11. In this sermon Chalmers illumines the parallel between the earthly parent and the Great Divine Parent, the ingratitude which grieves the heart of both, and then presents the way in which the Divine Parent has provided reconciliation for all of His erring and alienated

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 7

children. Another sermon, upon the text, Romans 11:22, entitled, "The Goodness and Severity of God," is introduced by the following statement which gives us a preview of the preachers' treatment:

"In the prosecution of this discourse, we shall first endeavour to expose the partiality, and therefore the mischief of two different views that might be taken of the Godhead - and secondly point your attention to the way in which these views are so united in our text, as to form a more full and consistent presentation of Him. We shall then conclude with a ¹ practical application of the whole argument."

The two partial views of the Godhead, which are the source of the mischief, are first, that which "is incidental to those who bear a single respect to His one attribute of Goodness. They look to Him as a God of tenderness, and nothing else."² The second partial view is that which gives forth

"....such a dread and despotic sovereignty as to impress the conception of a fatalism that is inexcusable, a hopeless necessity against which all prayer and all performance of man are unavailing."³

Other sermons which deal particularly with the doctrine of God are, "God is Love,"⁴ "Divine Manifestations,"⁵ "The Foolishness of God Wiser than Men,"⁶ "Fury not in God,"⁷

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 23
4. Ibid., p. 159
5. Ibid., p. 476
6. Ibid., p. 575
7. Ibid., p. 599

and "The Constancy of God in his Works - an argument for the Faithfulness of God in His Word."¹

2. Attention to Anthropology

Chalmers gives a great deal of attention to the doctrines of the nature of man, and especially to what he calls, "...that undoubted doctrine, as true in the eye of sound philosophy as it is in the eye of sound faith - the depravity of our nature."² In all of his sermons dealing with the method and blessings of Salvation, this doctrine receives attention; even in his sermon on the "Importance of Civil Government to Society," in describing those who deem civil government a necessary thing, he says:

"...such is their opinion of the heart, that they believe, unless its native inclinations be repressed by human government, there can be no calm or protected passage along the track of conveyance in this world."³

Thus even his justification of human government is based upon his doctrine of human depravity. Not only does Chalmers build this doctrine indirectly into many of his sermons dealing with other phases of doctrine; he also has a whole section of seventeen sermons entirely devoted to the depravity of human nature. Some estimate of the

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 261
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 10
3. Ibid., p. 344

importance which he attached to the full understanding of this part of Christian belief may be made from this statement which appears in the preface to these seventeen sermons:

"And, if there be one truth which, more than another, should be habitually presented to the notice and proposed to the conviction of fallen creatures, it is the humbling truth of their own depravity. This is a truth which may be recognized and read in every exhibition of unrenewed nature; but it often lurks under a specious disguise, and it is surely of the utmost practical importance to unveil and elicit a principle which, when admitted into the heart, may be considered as the great basis of a sinner's religion."¹

3. Attention to Christology

The estimate which Chalmers makes of the importance of Christ and his work in the whole field of Christian truth is clearly shown in his introduction to his sermon on I Corinthians 2:2, entitled, "On the Knowledge of Christ and Him Crucified."

"You are aware that Christian truth consists, not of one article, but of many articles; that in the treasury of sacred wisdom, there are things both new and old, and all of which ought to be brought forth and unfolded to the view of those who are attending the lessons of preparation for eternity;...There is not one object in the whole field of revelation, which should so fasten and concentrate our observation upon it, as to detach us from all the others that stand out there in the visible exhibition;...But,...among all the

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 12
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 109

diversities which the Bible places before the spiritual eye, may there be one truth of such eclipsing superiority over all the others, as that ever present or at least of constant recurrence to the thoughts, it may be the one on which a Christian heart shall dwell with perpetual fondness, and be oftenest absorbed in the contemplation of it. Paul in the text points to such a truth;...when he say, I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."¹

This truth of 'eclipsing superiority' finds frequent use in Chalmers' sermons, for he never tires of extolling the glories of Christ his Saviour. In the last sermon ever written by Dr. Chalmers, written only a month before his death, and preached at the "dispensation of the first sacrament administered in the Church of the West Port, Edinburgh - the last sacrament at which he was ever to preside,"² the name of Christ and the work of Christ form the substance of the discussion on "The Articles of the Covenant." Speaking of a Surety who will step forward and pay the debt, Chalmers says,

"Now such a surety in our case is Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for a ransom, poured out His blood - His precious and peace-speaking blood - as the cost of our redemption, and hence termed the blood of the everlasting covenant. This, then, is the footing on which God holds out forgiveness to³ all who will but understand well the articles."

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 109
2. Ibid., p. 624
3. Ibid., p. 627

4. Attention to Soteriology

In the introduction to a section of Posthumous Sermons of Thomas Chalmers, the editor (presumably Dr. William Hanna) gives this estimation of Chalmers:

"...when all his theological writings shall have been given to the world, I can scarcely doubt that he will be generally acknowledged to have been - the ablest and most judicious, as well as the most eloquent expounder within the whole range of British authorship, of the two great cardinal doctrines of our faith - the doctrine of the radical and entire depravity of our nature, and the doctrine of the sinner's free gratuitous justification before God through faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ."¹

We have already noticed his attention to the doctrine of human depravity; and we shall see that he gave equal attention to this corollary or complimentary doctrine of how that depravity may be remedied. According to Berkhof's "Manual of Reformed Doctrine," under this division of doctrine called Soteriology, there falls such subjects as: the operation of the Holy Spirit, calling and regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification² and the perseverance of the saints. All of these details of man's salvation receive notice from Chalmers' sermons. He has a sermon on "The Spirit's Striving with Man," in

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 384
2. Berkhof, L.: Manual of Reformed Doctrine, pp. 10-11

which he urges immediate repentance on the basis of the hardening influence of often resisting the influence of the Spirit. He has other sermons on "Salvation Scarcely Obtained by the Righteous;"¹ on "The Relation of the Law to the Gospel;"² on "The Necessity of a Personal Meetness for Heaven;"³ "On Faith and Repentance;"⁴ and on the "Connection between Faith and Peace."⁵ Not only does he have whole sermons on these topics; he also has interwoven into his sermons on whatever topic they may be centered, the crimson thread of salvation through faith in Christ. One example of this, is found in the conclusion of the sermon on "God's Paternal Character," which begins thus:

"This brings us to the sacrifice which has been made for the sins of the world - to the decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem - and by which the mighty, the mysterious problem was resolved, that was unfathomable to the wisdom of Nature, and that angels desired to look into."⁶

Another example of his ever present emphasis upon this matter of burning concern with him is found in the conclusion of the last of his Astronomical Discourses:

"Above all, forget not that while you only hear and are delighted, you are still under nature's powerlessness, and nature's

.....,

1. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 29
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 120
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 140
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 126
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 209
6. Ibid., p. 13

condemnation - and that the foundation is not laid, the mighty and essential change is not accomplished, the transition from death unto life is not undergone, the saving faith is not formed, nor the passage taken from darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel till you are both hearers of the word and doers also."¹

5. Attention to Ecclesiology
and the
Means of Grace

The next department of Theology or Christian Doctrine, according to Berkhof, is that concerned with² the Doctrine of the Church and the Means of Grace. Chalmers gave attention to these aspects of Christian truth as well as to the ones already mentioned. In a number of his sermons, mention is made of the Church and its function and importance; and a few sermons seem to deal with this particularly. One of these latter type of³ sermons is that on "The Outward Business of the Church," which was preached in Glasgow in 1843, shortly after the Free Church of Scotland was established. In it Chalmers calls for a revival of the system of deacons mentioned in the New Testament, for the acceptance of greater responsibility by elders, and the support of the churches through voluntary giving by the people. Fourteen years

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 409-410
2. Cf. Berkhof, op. cit., pp. 9-10
3. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 376

earlier Chalmers preached a sermon in St. George's Church, Edinburgh, "On Religious Establishments,"¹ in which he maintained that the Church is the final authority in all ecclesiastical affairs, and that the law of Patronage is in force, "not by the power of the state, but by the permission of the Church."² In a number of his sermons on Communion occasions he speaks of the significance and implications of that Sacrament, for those who are about to partake.³ His references to the means of Grace are frequent, especially in his sermons dealing with the Sabbath and its observance. In one of these, "The Advantages of a Fixed Sabbath," we find this eloquent paragraph on the means of Grace:

"If it be true of man, that he can attain a loftier communion with his God, at those hours when the din and urgency of the world are away from him; and that a season of reading and contemplation and prayer acts as a restorative to the embers of his decaying sacredness; and that the voice of a minister, when prompted by the Spirit from on high, and aided by the sympathies of all who are around him, can often send the elevation of heaven into his soul; and that it is on those evenings of deep and lengthened tranquility which the footstep of intruding companionship does not violate, when the nurture and admonition of the Lord can descend more abundantly on the hearts of his children, and when the calm

.....

1. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 309
2. Ibid., p. 317
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 419, 520, 624

and the unction of a holy influence may be most felt in his dwelling place - then Sabbath, which, from one end to the other of it, teems with these very opportunities, instead of ranking with the holidays of idle superstition, will be dear as piety itself to every enlightened Christian; and to it, in the most emphatic sense of the term, will he award the obeisance of a divine and spiritual festival."¹

6. Attention to Eschatology

The doctrine of the last things, of death, life after death, the Judgement and the condition of the righteous and wicked after that Judgement, received attention in Chalmers sermons, although usually in connection with the general theme of salvation. He does have a sermon on "Heaven a Character and not a Locality,"² in which he uses Revelation 22:11 to show that the "moral rather than the material is the main ingredient" in the post-Judgement condition of men; and, therefore, urges upon his hearers the duty of living in the present that type of life which will be perpetuated beyond death as fellowship with God. A sermon on the topic, "The Second Coming of Christ,"³ is intensely practical and timely in its emphasis upon living in the perspective of the return of our Lord. In many of his sermons there is implicit

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 63
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 362
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 150

an awareness of the final reckoning in which the Great Judge will deal with all men, and in which day only that righteousness which is from Christ will avail.

7. Summary of References
to
Christian Doctrine

We have examined Chalmers' sermons and found the largest number of them fall under the classification of Doctrinal sermons; we have seen that of these there are selected sermons which fall under each of the various divisions of Theology, which deal with God, Man, Christ, Salvation, the Church and the Means of Grace, and the Last Things - Death, Resurrection and Judgement; we have also seen that the greatest emphasis has been made upon the doctrine of human depravity, and the doctrine of justification by faith; finally, we have recognized that all of these various departments of Christian doctrine have been intermingled in many of his sermons, some explicitly mentioned, and others constituting the constant background of consideration of whatever topic Dr. Chalmers may have been treating at the time.

C. His Use of Biblical Material and References

The very high regard in which Dr. Chalmers held the Bible is obvious from his constant reference to it,

and his full dependence upon it as the word of authority. One passage from his sermon on "Defense of Religious Enthusiasm," which is a frank defense of the much criticized Methodists, clearly illustrates this high opinion for the Word of God.

"Surely, if this be the message of God, all taste and imagination and science must vanish and give way before its overbearing authority! This is the great light which puts out all the lesser ones. It shines in many a conventicle, while it leaves halls and colleges in the shadow of darkness - the men whom the world call mad are walking in it, while the men whom the world call wise walk in the sparks of their own kindling."¹

Another illustration of the relative consideration Chalmers gave to the findings of science and the authority of the Bible comes from the last of his *Astronomical Discourses*, where he says:

"But let this modesty of science be carried, as in consistency it ought, to the question of revelation, and let all the antipathies of nature be schooled to acquiescence in the authentic testimonies of the Bible."²

As to the importance of giving the Bible to the poor of the land, Chalmers makes this startling statement:

"...and, at the hazard of being execrated by many, we do not hesitate to affirm, that it is better for the poor to be worse fed and worse clothed than that they should be left ignorant of those Scriptures, which are able to made them wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus."³

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 494
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 409
3. Ibid., p. 210

Let us now examine Dr. Chalmers' use of Biblical material in the development of his arguments, his use of Biblical language and illustrations, and his evident grasp of the total scope of the Scripture.

1. His Selection of Texts

We have already seen from our analysis of the sermons of this volume, that Chalmers has chosen texts from both the Old and the New Testaments, with by far the largest number coming from the New Testament. He used thirty-seven texts from eleven of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament; and ninety-five texts from twenty-two of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. While he chose texts from Genesis, Leviticus, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah and Zechariah, five of these books (Genesis, Leviticus, Ecclesiastes, Micah and Zechariah) were used for only one text. Three of the books, (Proverbs, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) were used for two texts each; Job for three texts; and Isaiah and Psalms for the largest number: eight from the former and fifteen from the latter. In the New Testament, we find texts chosen from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I John, Jude and Revelation. The largest number of texts came from Luke,

I Corinthians, Acts and Romans, which had eight or more each. In general, Dr. Chalmers is not rigidly expository in his treatment of his texts; his text seems to suggest to him a particular problem, topic, or doctrine, and in the further discussion of that problem or doctrine, he does not limit himself to his text, nor to the immediate context, but goes far afield in other parts of Scripture, philosophy, and theology in order to present that topic of consideration in its various ramifications and implications. He frequently returns to the text, however, and draws a practical application from it, on the basis of the development he has made of it.

2. His Use of Biblical Material in the Development of his Argument

Chalmers uses Biblical material in the development of his argument in various ways. One of these is a rather indirect way, but nevertheless a proper use of Scripture. He has assimilated much of the content and spirit of the Bible, and because of this there is a strong Biblical cast to all of his opinions, as well as in his choice of words and figures of speech. Then there is a second way in which he uses Scripture in the development of his arguments, which is a bit more direct. It is in the appropriation of Scripture sentiments and statements by the preacher, so that they become his medium of expression

without the formality of quotation. One example of this may be found in the sermon on "The Effect of Man's Wrath on Religious Controversies," where in a description of the manner in which a preacher should present the Gospel, he says:

"...it is when standing in the character of an ambassador from Him who so loved the world, he accompanies the delivery of his message with the looks and the language of his own manifest tenderness...."¹

A third way in which Chalmers uses Scripture in the development of his argument, is by direct quotation; as in the sermon quoted, he says:

"The apostle says 'covet earnestly the best gifts,' and then adds, 'but yet I show you a more excellent way' - even the way of charity."²

3. His Use of Biblical Language and Illustrations

We have in the last section mentioned briefly the strong tinge of Scriptural vocabulary in Chalmers' sermons. Some of the more frequent expressions which immediately recall to us passages of Scripture are these: "children of light" and "children of the world;" "blessed be God;" "house not made with hands;" "enmity with God;" "manifest

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 259
2. Ibid.

in the flesh;" "earthly tabernacle;" "the mercy seat;" "the everlasting covenant;" "nurture and admonition of the Lord;" "inner man;" "natural state;" and others. He frequently uses illustrations from the Bible to enforce a point under consideration; but since his preaching was so largely doctrinal, we find that these illustrations are far more frequently citations of what was said or done in the Gospel story than narratives or dramatic illustrative material. For instance, in his sermon on "The Doctrine of Human Depravity," when speaking about articles of faith which fall some without and some within the realm of human experience, he speaks thus:

"But we meet with other assertions in the Bible which come within the familiar experience of human beings, and which can therefore be tried by that experience. A very simple example of this is when our Saviour says to his countrymen - 'When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say there cometh a shower...'"¹

Another similar example of this type of illustration is found in his sermon on "Christian Meekness," where in speaking of the plainness and understandability of the commands of Scripture, he asks the question,

"..and is it possible for him to miss the sense of precepts so clearly and prosaically laid down, as - Resist not evil, and Give to him that asketh thee, and Love thine enemies, and Do good to them that hate you, and Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you?"²

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 468
2. Ibid., 563

4. His Evident Grasp of the Total
Scope of Scripture

That Dr. Chalmers was accomplished in his grasp of the total scope of the Scripture message is clearly indicated in many of his sermons. He makes frequent reference to "the Bible" and "the Scriptures," to the "Old Testament" and to the "New Testament." He speaks of "becoming wise unto salvation through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments;"¹ and of "the doctrine of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments."² In one of his sermons he says that "the general tone of society is at antipodes with the tone of the New Testament."³ But more convincing even than these scattered direct references to the Bible and its two divisions, in indicating the understanding Dr. Chalmers had of the whole sweep of the Scripture content is the fact already mentioned, viz. - his emphasis upon the whole range of Christian truth, from the glorious holiness of God, to the iniquitous depravity of human nature and the provision made by Christ for the redemption of that human nature. This view of the whole of the Christian revelation comes from a full acquaintance with the source-book of that

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 453
2. Ibid., p. 617
3. Ibid., p. 494

revelation. But there is another and more important - though more subtle - indication that Chalmers has steeped himself in the Word of God; and this is found in his possession of the spirit of God's Word as well as his mastery of the letter. In his sermon on "The Effect of Man's Wrath in Religious Controversies," he calls attention to the fact that the Apostle has used the great description of the nature of Christ in Philippians 2, not in a theological polemic to convince the unbelieving; but as a motive for Christian conduct. He says,

"In these verses there is a collateral lesson for our faith; but the chief, the direct lesson, is a lesson of charity, which is greater than faith."¹

A statement such as this, and the sentiment of a sermon such as "The Doctrine of Christian Charity Applied to the Case of Religious Differences"² serve to illustrate the fact that Chalmers had absorbed the spirit of the Word as well as examined the letter - an accomplishment which more evidently attests his grasp of the total scope of the Bible.

5. Summary of His Attention to the Scripture

We have seen in what high regard Dr. Chalmers

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 261
2. Cf. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 240

held the Bible and its inspired authority, not only from his own statements concerning it, but also in his selection of texts from all parts of both the Old and New Testaments; in his frequent use of Biblical material in the development of his argument, either in direct quotation or in assimilated into his own sentiments; in his use of Biblical language and illustrations; and in his evident grasp of the whole scope of Scripture as manifested in direct statements and in the display of the spirit implicit in God's Word.

D. Summary of the Range
of
Chalmers' Preaching

We have considered in this chapter the range of Chalmers' preaching in three main directions: in his consideration of current problems; in his emphasis upon the great Christian doctrines; and in his emphasis upon Biblical material and references. In the first of these directions we noted his attention to the practical application of Christianity to all areas of human intercourse; his consideration of national and international affairs; his recognition of the social problems of his day; and his awareness of great personalities and scientific advances. In the second direction we found that he had given attention to all of the divisions of Christian doctrine - Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology; but that he gave the strongest

emphasis to the doctrines of the depravity of human nature, and the provision of salvation through faith in Christ. In the third direction we found a strong dependence upon the Bible as the inspired Word of God and therefore authoritative for all matters of religion and life; this is evident in his selection of texts from all parts of the Bible - but with a larger proportion from the New Testament, which is the full revelation of God and His truth; this dependence upon the Bible is also evident from his use of Biblical language, quotations and illustrations in the development of his arguments. We also found that Chalmers had a profound grasp of the total scope of Scripture, as indicated in his use of material, his references to dominant thought patterns and doctrines, and in his manifestation of the spirit of the Scripture. Thus we have found that the range of Chalmers' preaching is comprehensive and varied; he considers man and his affairs and needs in the light of God's character and revelation in Christ.

CHAPTER V

CHALMERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

CHAPTER V

CHALMERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

St. Paul describes the work of the ministry as that of an embassy from God to man;¹ it is evident, then, that a minister, to be effective, must be acquainted with both God and man. He must be a man with both spiritual and psychological insight, that he may be able to understand the will and the working of God, and the characters and behavior of men. This dual preparation is spoken of by William Taylor, in his Beecher lectures on preaching, in these words:

"Get such a knowledge, my young brethren, on the one hand, of the book of God, and on the other of the characters and surroundings of men, as will enable you thus to be of service to them, just where they are..."²

We have already spoken briefly concerning Chalmers' insight, as one of the formative influences in his preaching; but we shall now examine more closely his psychological and spiritual insight with reference to their contribution to the power he manifested as a preacher.

A. His Psychological Insight

.....

1. Cf. II Corinthians 5
2. Taylor, William: The Ministry of the Word, p. 50

The ability to look into the heart of man, to analyze its infirmities with a view to meeting them with the power of the Gospel, and to interpret them to the man himself so that he is able to see his need and the remedy, is admittedly one of the greatest assets a minister can have. In order properly and effectively to apply the truths of our religion, the minister must present them in terms of life as his hearers are experiencing it. One writer on the subject expresses this aspect of the minister's work in these words:

"It is evident, I think, that this interpretation of life is a large office of the pulpit. We must get beneath the surface of life, behind the conventions of society, back of the maxims and standards of popular thought. We must understand and reveal man the individual, and man as a part of humanity."¹

The same writer continues to describe the inner recesses and subtle workings of the souls of men, unrevealed in the surface acts and words: the brooding passions, the wild thoughts, the varied imaginations, remorse, fears, and trampled aspirations. And yet, this "groaning in immortal thirst" but reveals the nature of the soul which demands Divine treatment.

"Oh, this great and mighty soul, were it something else you might find what to do with it; - charm it with the jingles of a golden toy, house it in a safe with ledgers and stocks, take it about on journeys to see and to be seen. Anything would please it and

.....

1. Hoyt, A. S.: Vital Elements of Preaching" pp. 74-75

bring it content. But it is the godlike soul, capable of rest in nothing but God, able to be filled and satisfied with nothing but his fullness and the confidence of his friendship."¹

Thus, the minister has the only solution for its troubled tumult; and in order to apply that solution he must understand its inner constitution and behavior. The fact that Chalmers preached with such spellbinding effect, as we have already noticed, testifies to his knowledge of the human heart, and his ability to reach that heart with the God-given Gospel. The acclaim, which he has received, both in his own time and in the decades since his death, is a tribute to his many qualifications both innate and acquired; and among the greatest of these must be placed his psychological insight.

1. The Basis of his Psychological Insight

While it is true that certain men - and Chalmers may be classed as one of them - have been given as a natural endowment, a superior sensitiveness to the working of the human mind and heart, and seem to be able naturally to understand and follow the caprice and the circuitous routes of thought, there are various habits and disciplines which sharpen this insight and make it more practical and efficient. We may trace in Chalmers' life some of these

.....

1. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 76

habits which served as the basis for that insight which contributed to his peculiar power in the pulpit.

a. His Habit of Introspection

A. S. Hoyt speaks of the importance of self-knowledge to the work of the minister, thus:

"...the Gospel is radical in its demands, and cleansing in its life; and we shall not rightly interpret it and be able to adapt it to the human heart without that self-knowledge that comes from an honest look within and the convincing light of the Spirit of God. We must know ourselves. We must take time to salute our souls and learn what sort of men we areAll vital teaching is personal. It comes from self-knowledge and experience of the truth. And this deep self-knowledge will be the key to unlock other lives."¹

Thomas Chalmers practiced the habit of severe introspection and self-examination during most of his life. Early in his ministry he established the discipline of a monthly spiritual exercise, to which he devoted an entire day; and in this exercise he examined his heart, his motives, and his work, with a view to discovering flaws and failures, that he might in the future avoid them. His journal is full of such spiritual examination, as is also the record of his "Sabbath Exercises" which he started in 1835. In the entry for August 7, 1836 in these "Sabbath Exercises," we find this frank statement:

.....

1. Hoyt, op. cit., pp. 83-84. However, he warns against too morbid and self-centered introspection as being unwholesome and ascetic.

"Better; but a constant sense of deficiency, which is well if it could find place and adjustment along with a confidence in the objective sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Why not more firm and frequent in the exercise of faith?"¹

Again in October of the same year, he writes revealingly of the tie between body and soul:

"When in a state of physical exhaustion or discomfort, I am the more apt to give way under the power of any wrong or wayward instigations. On all hands I stand greatly in need both of prayer and watchfulness."²

His sensitiveness to wrong action is seen in this entry for September 13 of the previous year, 1835:

"What a damper to spirituality - what a rude extinguisher on all its feelings and contemplations is sin! An unforeseen gust of anger will put them all to flight; and the objective truth is lost in that disturbed and so darkened medium by which the subjective mind is encompassed."³

Such discipline as these entries reveal, and the knowledge of the workings and self-excusings of the mind which this discipline brings, made Chalmers able to penetrate the crust of appearances behind which some in his congregations were hiding. An example of this is found in his sermon on "The Duty Required and the Strength Imparted," where he emphasizes the point he has been making concerning the heinousness of willfully committing sin, by these words:

"I trust that what I have said may serve

.....

1. Chalmers, as edited by Wm. Hanna: Daily Scripture Readings, Vol. I, p. xi
2. Ibid., p. xli
3. Ibid., p. xix

to undeceive the consciences of those who are building the hope of a future security on a partial obedience - who are cherishing some allowed reservation - who are prosecuting some unhallowed walk of indulgence which they have not yet had the fortitude to abandon - who think that they will eke out for themselves a place in heaven, because along with some suffered habit of licentiousness they have integrity, or they have good nature, or they have a feeling heart, or they do an occasional act of generosity, or they are attentive to parents, or they take a share in the ordinances of religion."¹

The man who has examined his own heart so thoroughly as to have discovered the common excuses, compensations and allowances for wrong actions, may speak with greater force and authority; for his own introspection has contributed to his insight into the mind-habits of others.

b. His Observation of his Fellows

Self-examination alone, detached from social intercourse and observation of one's fellow-men, may become morbid, depressing, and destructive both to one's mental health and one's usefulness. There must be that compensating balance of genuine interest in others, and observation of their behavior and habits.² This second basis of psychological insight, Chalmers possessed also. From his youth he had been gregarious, and although in

.....

1. Chalmers, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 461
2. Cf. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 84

the height of his popularity he had objected to the pressure and animal heat of intense crowds, yet he maintained throughout his life a genuine interest in people, and a delight in observing them act and react. One indication of this observation of his fellow-men and the contribution it made to his understanding of their natures and needs is given us in his sermon on the "Doctrine of Human Depravity:"

"If we look abroad on the face of society we must be struck with the diversity of character in the individuals who compose it - some, it is allowed, in the estimation of the world are execrable for their crimes, but others, in the same estimation are illustrious for their virtues.....Men may be led to precisely the same conduct upon the impulse of very different principles. A man may be gentle because it is a prescription of the divine law; or he may be gentle because he is naturally of a peaceful and indolent constitution; or he may be gentle because he sees it to be an amiable gracefulness with which he wishes to adorn his character; or he may be gentle because it is the ready way of propitiating the friendship of those around him; or he may be gentle because he is taught to observe it as a part of courtly and fashionable deportment; and what was implanted by education may come in time to be confirmed by habit and experience."¹

Chalmers balanced his introspection with a healthy and genuine interest in his fellow-men, and from observing their habits and behavior added to his store of knowledge about the working of the human mind and heart. His skill at unfolding the motives and excuses which lie behind the outward actions made his preaching more powerful in attracting the interest and affecting the behavior of those who

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 471-472

listened to him.

c. His Study of Philosophy

In his chapter on the "Psychology of Preaching," Dr. J. H. Snowden speaks of the need for study of nature, study of great literature, and the study of philosophy in the training and the maintaining of the ministry as efficient and effective. The benefits from the latter field of study are said to be: helpful mental discipline, alertness to illustrations of particular truths, and the ability to bring every truth into relation with God, nature, and man. Another benefit might be added to this catalogue, in the form of familiarity with the patterns of thought and attitudes which characterize the man on the street, or that are indicative of the spirit and temper of the age. This sense of the unity of truth - the vision of the interrelationships which exist between man, God and nature - and the awareness of the areas of interest and patterns of thought which are engrossing the attention of his fellowmen would obviously give to the preacher great power of analysis of the mental habits of his hearers, and great facility for application of truth to their specific and current needs.

Thomas Chalmers had been interested in philosophy from his earliest years in St. Andrew's United College; and he continued to give his attention to this

field of thought and study throughout his ministry. When he left his beloved St. John's Church in Glasgow, he went back to St. Andrew's to occupy the Chair of Moral Philosophy. Later, in his teaching years at both Edinburgh and the Free Church College he maintained the close relationship between philosophy and theology, and drew material for illustration and ramification from the one field in service of the other.¹ His lifelong study of, and association with philosophy unquestionably served as another of the foundations for his insight into the hearts and thoughts of his fellow-men, making him the more skillful in leading them to the light of the Gospel.

2. The Use to Which He put this Insight

a. In Interpreting Scripture

We notice Chalmers' use of this psychological insight first of all, in his interpretation of Scripture. Having entered into his own heart, and having observed the workings of the hearts and minds of his fellow-men, and having become acquainted with the patterns of thought and spirit of his age, he was prepared to use this resultant deeper understanding and penetrating vision upon the record of the words and works of the early church that his own

.....

1. Cf. Ante, pp. 34-36
Cf. Howard, op. cit., pp. 139-140

people might profit therefrom. One clear example of such use is found in the opening paragraph of his sermon on "Spiritual Idolatry," based upon II Corinthians 6:17, 18.

"You will observe that Paul in these verses is addressing a number of professed Christians, who were surrounded with the allurements of idolatry. There was a power of temptation in these allurements greater than they have ever thought of to whom the profligacies of the pagan worship are unknown; but the apostle, whose converts lived in the midst of them, was aware of the constant vigilance they would have to maintain among the constant opportunities and solicitations which beset them in every quarter. He watched over them with a godly jealousy. He feared for them ever to painfulness. His apprehension was that he would again lose them; and aware of the danger that lay even in their most distant approaches to the objects of that enticing ritual, he insists on a clean and total separation. It is under a feeling of the hazard to which they were exposed that he calls upon them in a former epistle to beware of security; 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' It is with a reference to the very same subject that he calls upon them to beware also of a despairing sense of the helplessness under the force of those surrounding temptations. He commits them to the faithfulness of God. 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men; but God is faithful...'... he makes the whole to bear on the great practical object that he had in his eye, and proves the deep impression of his mind on the subject of idolatry and of its dangers, when, after furnishing them with the right answer and putting them into the right attitude of resistance, he winds up the whole argument by saying, 'Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.'"¹

In the introductory remarks which preface the exposition

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 512-513

of Psalm 137:1-6, Chalmers makes some very interesting, and from our point of view, illuminating statements regarding the legitimate and illegitimate ways of interpreting the Bible. He opens with a statement concerning the innate, literary merit of the Bible which carries even over prejudice and adverse opinion regarding the inspiration of the contents. He then goes on to speak of the excess in spiritualizing which some Christians delight to indulge in; this, he maintains, is not necessary because the Bible speaks in the language of life to life as it is.

"The Bible stands in no need of any such commentator. Take it according to its nature and obvious interpretation. Enough for it the direct simplicity of its language and the strength of its unquestionable evidences."¹

Here is revealed the fact that Chalmers has seen the unity between the truth presented in the Bible, and the need in the hearts of men around him; with this vision he recognized no necessity for beclouding this truth in mystical, typological interpretations.

b. In Presenting the Gospel

One of the most obvious ways in which Chalmers used this psychological insight was in presenting the message of the Gospel directly to his people. Perhaps his most famous sermon is that on "The Expulsive Power of a

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 430

New Affection," delivered in St. John's Church, Glasgow. In his peculiar style of development, one theme is treated in its various ramifications and elaborations - viewed first from one standpoint and then from another and reiterated repeatedly, until it becomes the haunting companion of the hearer, inescapable and unmistakeable. This theme is introduced in the opening sentences of the sermon, thus:

"There are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world - either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of its attachment, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon not to resign an old affection, which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one. My purpose is to show, that from the constitution of our nature, the former method is altogether incompetent and ineffectual - and, that the latter method will alone suffice for the rescue and recovery of the heart from the wrong affection that domineers over it. After having accomplished this purpose, I shall attempt a few practical observations."¹

Although we are told by one of his biographers that the immediate occasion which suggested the idea of the sermon was,

"....Dr. Chalmers seeing a stage-coach driver whip one of his horses without apparent reason, and on inquiry the man said the horse had a habit of bolting at that place and he desired to give the animal something else to occupy his mind...."²

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 271
2. Dargan, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 495

Yet, we cannot but believe that his application of this incident to the spiritual and moral advancement of an individual was determined by his acquaintance with the working of the human heart, or, in other words, by his psychological insight.

Another example of the use of this insight in the presentation of the Gospel is found in the introduction to his sermon "On the Spirit's Striving with Man," in which the motives back of a man's acceptance of the Gospel are described:

"When man is prevailed on to follow the call of the Gospel, he does it on the impulse of certain considerations. Interest, for example, may have some share in moving him to this step; but this he could not have unless he saw his interest to be involved in it - or, in other words, unless he believed in the unseen matters of a judgement and an eternity. Duty may have some share in moving him; but this it could not have, unless he was visited with a relenting sense of this obligation to that God, whose will he had so often forgotten, and whose requirements he had so often trampled upon..."¹

In these two examples we see the application of Chalmers' knowledge of the inner workings of the human mind and heart, upon his presentation of the Gospel message to his hearers. In the first illustration, his awareness of the necessity of substituting something better in the place of that which was undesirable in the heart of man, led him to present the love of God as the new affection,

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 35-36

powerful enough to exclude all other sentiments. In the second illustration, Chalmers has analyzed the motives which prompt men to accept the Gospel, and then has affirmed that even in these motives the Spirit of God must be working if they are to eventuate in action. Thus his understanding of the ways of the human heart enabled him to adapt and enforce the message of the Gospel, so that his people might be able to accept and appreciate its benefits.

c. His Use in Meeting Objections

A third use of this power of understanding and analysis of mental processes, which Chalmers makes, is observable in his manner of meeting the objections of those who would refuse or refute the Gospel. In his sermon on "Divine Manifestations," he addresses himself to two types of hearers who are characterized by two different attitudes toward manifestations of Spiritual reality.

"The first are those who cannot believe that there is any reality in those manifestations, and who think that there is mysticism in the very term. These are they who associate all that is unreal with all that is invisible; and yet God is invisible and they who live in fellowship with God must live in the constant enjoyment of a spiritual manifestation....But there is another set of hearers....who do believe that there is a reality in those manifestations but feel how miserable short they are in the experience of them...There is a general dimness hanging over all their conceptions of those invisible realities with which a spiritual man is conversant."¹

.....
1. Chalmers, op. cit., pp. 479-480

In this illustration we see that Chalmers has been able to perceive the distinction between the two types of people; and then he proceeded to meet the objections of the second type, first analyzing for them the state of their own minds, and then leading them on into a keener awareness of this spiritual reality through an exposition of his text, John 14:21.

Many of his sermons are built upon this insight, and incorporate its advantages into their entire structure instead of being evident in some short quotable statement. For instance, in his sermon on "Immortality Brought to Light by the Gospel," he introduces his subject with the recognition that man naturally aspires to an existence beyond the limits of this earthy life, even in the face of the ever present testimony of seemingly unconquerable Death. He then proceeds to consider the various extra-Biblical arguments for immortality, based upon the physics of the mind or the moral state of the mind, and shows their ineffectiveness in comparison with the testimony of his text, II Timothy 1:10, to the work of Christ. He penetrates the subtleties of the human mind and by comparison with the Gospel, shows up the weakness and insufficiency of any other foundation than that which is laid, even Christ Jesus. All of his sermons of the

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 174 ff.

1
Depravity of Human Nature and the method of the working of the Grace of God would also fall under this classification, for they too are founded implicitly upon such insight and derive their effectiveness, in part at least, from it.

3. Summary of his Psychological Insight

It has been recognized in this section that there is need for a certain amount of psychological insight in the personality of a minister, because of the nature of the office, and the necessity of dealing with the hearts and minds of men. This insight finds its basis in personal self-knowledge, social interest and observation, and the study of philosophy. Thomas Chalmers engaged in all of these disciplines and habits, and in his journal and sermons are found examples which indicated the presence of this understanding of the habits and functions of the human mind. This insight Dr. Chalmers put into effect with success in his interpretation of Scripture, in his presentation of the Gospel appeal, and in his dealing with the objections of those who would either refuse or refute the Gospel. Through his profound understanding of the ways in which the human mind works, and of the excuses and apologies it makes about that which it does not desire to

.....

1. Cf. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 12-117

accept, Dr. Chalmers was made skillful, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in penetrating into and illuminating the minds and hearts of those who needed the love of God and the life of Christ.

B. His Spiritual Insight

In the general atmosphere of his life, and his bearing in the midst of trying and tiring work, Dr. Chalmers carried about with him the grace and goodness of the presence of God. One of his contemporaries, Lord Rosebery, said of him,

"Here is a man, bustling, striving, organizing, speaking, and preaching with the dust and fire of the world on his clothes, but carrying his shrine with him everywhere."¹

This spiritual quality of his life is directly traceable to that conversion experience which he underwent at Kilmany in 1810. The impression which this experience made upon him already has been alluded to, especially as it became evident in his preaching and in his estimate of the work of the ministry. It was following a visit with Chalmers, after this experience had made a new man of him, that Andrew Fuller said in a letter,

"After parting with you, I was struck with the importance which may attach to a single mind receiving an evangelical impression."²

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 153
2. Ibid.

A more modern critic has added to this, the following:

"The sagacity of the remark has an admirable illustration in the whole life and ministry of Chalmers. This evangelical impression he lavishly poured out in his preaching. The fervor with which he thrust forth the call of the gospel had its springs in those deep centers of his being where his conversion first of all so finely registered its effect."¹

This spiritual quality of his life was finely expressed in his sensitivity to the reality of spiritual values and to the presence of God; and, as well, in his understanding of the ways in which God works in the hearts of men, and of the laws of spiritual growth operative in the lives of Christians. Such sensitivity and understanding has been called, for convenience, 'spiritual insight,' and in this section the evidences for this in his life and in his preaching will be examined.

1. As Shown in Chalmers' Own Life

This spiritual insight is displayed in Chalmers' own manner of living, and in the attitudes and habits which characterized his thinking. It could not help being expressed, then, in his public utterances; but on the other hand, it could not have been so expressed, and expressed so effectively had it not existed first of all in his own life.

,.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 153.

a. His Keen Sense of the Reality
of
Spiritual Values

One of the most profound effects which the conversion experience at Kilmany had upon Chalmers was in this realm of the recognition of spiritual values above temporal, physical, or even intellectual and moral ones. In his farewell address to his beloved friends at Kilmany he speaks of having discovered the way to bring about moral reformations; in his early ministry with them he had attempted through ethical and moralizing preaching to effect these changes, but with no success; however, during the latter years of his stay in that parish, and when he gave attention to the spiritual forces at war for the heart of man, he found different results and learned an impressive lesson. He speaks of the difference thus:

"...in one word, it was not till the contemplations of my people were turned to these great and essential elements in the business of a soul providing for its interests with God, and the concerns of eternity, that I ever heard of any of these subordinate reformations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but I am afraid, at the same time ultimate objects of my earlier ministrations....You have at least taught me that to preach Christ is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches, and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson which I pray God I may be able to carry in all its simplicity into a wider theater, and to bring with all the power of its subduing efficacy upon the vices of a more crowded population."¹

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 205

He had discovered that reformations in the behavior of man must be based in his spiritual nature, for the simple reason that in the spiritual realm lies the motivation which controls the moral and physical.

Another illustration of the sense of spiritual values which had been developed to great keenness in Chalmers' nature is evident in the incident which took place in a General Assembly when the question of pluralities - the acceptance by a minister of a teaching position in addition to his pastorate - was being hotly debated. Someone who favored the dual positions, in his search for material for argument, had discovered a tract written by Chalmers early in his ministry, when he was teaching mathematics in addition to caring for the parish of Kilmany. In this tract Chalmers had strongly championed the cause of pluralities, citing his own experience for evidence of the practicality of the cause. When this tract was brought to the attention of the Assembly, and of Chalmers himself, he rose in defense of his present opinion, concluding with these words:

"...Alas! sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have now no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and that, in the utterance of it, I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But then, sir, I had forgotten two magnitudes - I thought not of the littleness of time - I recklessly thought not of the

greatness of eternity."¹

In the light of those two magnitudes, values in the temporal and human scale dimmed and vanished, while the values of the spirit and of Divine Truth increased in importance, and urgency.

b. His Awareness of the Presence of God.

Chalmers' sense of the presence of God has been many times recognized as one of the deepest sources of his strength. He was a man of action and accomplishment; but back of that action and accomplishment will be found an inescapable and intimate companionship with God. From this sense of nearness to the Eternal God, he derived courage, strength, wisdom and grace. The very nearness of God in his thinking is well demonstrated in his Sabbath Exercises and in other journals which he kept at various times during his life. These aforementioned Exercises were, in the words of his son-in-law, "the Sabbath diary of the last six years of his life."² In them there is an imperceptible blending of statements concerning his own state of mind and observations regarding the Christian life, prayers of adoration, confession, and petition for grace and spiritual strength. An entry for December 13, 1835 starts out in this vein:

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 141
2. Chalmers: Daily Scripture Readings, p. xiii

"A high earthly hope has been damped and depressed, and I am not aware of a better occasion for the exercise of those virtues which are related to the habit and life of faith. Let me not set my mind on any earthly object - and though the object should be lost the mind will remain unaffected...1

But before he closes the entry he has turned his thoughts to God in prayer:

"O my Father in heaven, take the direction of me. Enable me wisely to improve the discipline of all thy visitations. Save me from ambition, and the 'merimne' of a mind doubtful and suspended and hinging its happiness on the security of its earthly gratifications. Be thou the strength of my heart - my portion for evermore."2

This same characteristic has been noted by Howard in his estimate of Chalmers for he says,

"His journals and private letters abound with the conviction that he had to deal with God. 'The very sense of being made by another,' he says, 'how it should annihilate the sovereignty of self.'"3

In his actions as well as in his journal there may be perceived the constraint of the sense of the presence of God; and when he was found to have passed to the other world in his sleep, there was a look of calm at-home-ness upon his face - as if his Divine Companion had but beckoned him closer to Himself.

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., p. xxviii
2. Ibid.
3. Howard, op. cit., pp. 152-153

c. His Keeness to His Own Failures

Another way in which we may observe the spiritual insight of Dr. Chalmers is in his keen awareness of his own failures and deficiencies. "The leonine Chalmers was lamblike in his humility before God."¹ Early in his ministry, he established a day for monthly 'spiritual exercises,' after the pattern of the saintly Thomas Boston; in these exercises he ruthlessly probed into his heart examining motives, desires, and accomplishments. At the height of his power in the pulpit he often prayed that he might be delivered from undue desire for personal distinction and love of applause. In the closing days of his life he still maintained a close watch upon his heart, and in 1835 wrote thus in his Sabbath journal:

"Make me, O God, to experience the sanctifying and enlivening power of the truth as it is in Jesus. Rouse me from nature's apathy, and nature's lethargic indifference to the things of faith. Bring the high interests of the unseen and eternal world to bear upon me; and with a realizing sense of these may I go forth on the work of diligent preparation for the life that is to come. Thou knowest my infirmities. Thou knowest the carnality, and the constant, the cleaving ungodliness of my heart. Turn this ungodliness away from it."²

However, Chalmers may have appeared to the throngs which sat spellbound in his services, and to the many who have since his death given him such a place of pre-eminence

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 139
2. Chalmers, op. cit., pp. xxv-xxvi

in the ranks of religious leaders, Thomas Chalmers knew himself for what he actually was in the sight of God, and was accordingly humbled by the vision of his failures and faults. For him, success was not due to his own personal effort nor was it measured by the applause of the delighted populace; rather, it consisted in obedience to the will of God, and conformity to the character of God.

d. His Prayer Life

Reference has already been made to Chalmers' habits of prayer, as they became apparent at different times in his career; but it is our purpose at this time to notice more particularly that this prayer life is an evidence of his spiritual insight. Spiritual insight has been defined as the combination of sensitivity to spiritual values, and the understanding of the laws of the spiritual realm. Both of these qualities, it is easily seen, are directly related to prayer. His experience at Kilmany did much to determine his later habits and appreciations; and it was from this time on that he gave more attention to prayer, both private and public. Before Chalmers could preach so powerfully upon the glories and difficulties of the Christian life, and before he could describe so vividly the working of the Spirit of God and of the natural, depraved heart of man, he had to enter into this knowledge through examination of himself and fellowship

with God. Thus through prayer, he exercised and developed his spiritual insight.

2. As Demonstrated in His Sermons

The spiritual insight which Thomas Chalmers possessed was demonstrated in his life and habits. It is only natural, then, that this same insight should be found demonstrated in his sermons, which were intimately connected with his own life and experiences.

a. By Great Earnestness

One of the most evident ways in which this spiritual insight is revealed in his sermons is in the intense earnestness with which he presented the Gospel to his hearers. This, also, is traceable to the life-changing experience through which he went at Kilmany. Speaking of his manner of preaching directly after this experience, one of those who heard him said,

"...he would bend over the pulpit, and press us to take the gift, as if he held it that moment in his hand."¹

His farewell discourse to the people at Kilmany concluded with these eloquent and earnest words:

"Choose Him, then, my brethren, choose Him as the Captain of your salvation. Let

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 129

him enter into your hearts by faith, and let him dwell continually there. Cultivate a daily intercourse and a growing acquaintance with Him. O, you are in safe company, indeed when your fellowship is with Him! The shield of His protecting mediatorship is ever between you and the justice of God; and out of His fulness there goeth a constant stream to nourish, and to animate, and to strengthen every believer."¹

In his sermon on the "Embassy of Reconciliation," after he had drawn a parallel between a man trying with all the persuasion of words and of actions to prevent his friend from following a road which leads to danger or destruction, and the Christian minister warning his friends from continuing in the direction of spiritual danger and destruction; and having described briefly some of the characteristics of such a set of the soul; Chalmer then gives this moving appeal:

"If this be the situation of any who now hears me, then has your minister a right to say that you are walking in a miserably wrong way, and to beg that you will no longer walk in it. Turn ye, turn ye to the direction of safety; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved. This is the only name given under heaven. If this name be not cordially embraced - if you do not rest for salvation upon him - if you do not build your hope of forgiveness upon His sacrifice - if the faith that is in you do not work a good evidence to the operation of that Spirit which is promised to all who believe, to turn them from all sin, and lead them to the love and the practice of all righteousness;;; you are still in the dangerous situation of being unreconciled to God."²

.....

1. Chalmers, Sermons, p. 505
2. Ibid., p. 547

Such impassioned appeals as these are frequently found in the sermons of this great preacher; and there is an atmosphere of urgent earnestness which runs through the whole of his ministry. The secret of such earnestness and power is given by Taylor, who said, that his qualities "so finely balanced, were all sublimed by genius, and heated to a constant incandescence by the consecrating influence of the Holy Spirit."¹

b. By searching Personal Application

Not only was Chalmers in earnest about the message which had been entrusted to him; he also gave keen point to that earnestness by searching personal applications. His consciousness of the presence of God, and of the tremendous importance of the message which God was bringing through him to the people, made his preaching assume the character of a transaction between himself and God, and the receiving of that message a transaction between the individual hearer and God.² A fine example of this individual emphasis is found in Chalmers' "Sermon to the Young," where he introduces the main body of his discourse by these words:

"Let me bring this whole lesson more specifically to bear upon you by urging upon

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 157
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 129

you three leading particulars of the divine testimony, of which God is now making frequent and open proclamation in your hearing but which if you do not hear, He will shut His ear and His tenderness against you when the day of your necessity arrives;..and the first particular is...that we have sinned against Him and are now under rightful sentence of condemnation...But lastly, God calleth unto all to forsake the evil of their ways...unless we repent we perish."¹

In another place, Chalmers uses the method of questioning his hearers upon specific aspects of their own experiences, in order to bring the message home to the individuals:

"Do you live under an affecting sense of these plain but all important realities? Do you ever once think of Christ's eye being upon you? Do you ever once think of His judgement awaiting you? Do these enter at all as elements into your deliberations?"²

Here his spiritual insight becomes more apparent; for it was out of his own experience and consciousness that he spoke about the sense of spiritual realities that is "affective," and the awareness of the eye of Christ upon one's actions, and the discipline of the knowledge of the final reckoning that must be made to Divine Justice.

In his day as in every age, some men tried to detach theology from religion - to make the work of Christ of only forensic significance. Chalmers saw the danger in this emphasis, and vigorously preached a gospel which would affect the nature and behavior of man, as well as

.....

1. Chalmers: Sermons, Vol. II p. 588-590
2. Ibid., p. 157

his status with God. In his sermon on "The Necessity of a Personal Meetness for Heaven," he speaks at length upon the subject of the sanctification of the believer, and closes with these words:

"We must be delivered from all that is opposite either to the first or to the second commandment of the law. God, in fact, must make that new covenant with us, by which He gives us clean hearts, and creates within us right spirits. In other words, it is not enough that there be a forensic deed of justification. There must be a personal transformation of character; and faith cannot save us from that which forms the mighty burden of a sinner's curse - but through the sinner being sanctified by faith."¹

It was because of his spiritual insight, that Chalmers was able to so personalize the gospel message, that his hearers felt that they were transacting business with God Himself, when they heard the message from God's messenger.

c. By the Wide Range of his Application
of
Christianity

Notice has been taken already, in connection with the study of the range of Chalmers' preaching, of the fact that he allowed no area of human life or activity to escape the claims of the Gospel. This fact may be taken also as an evidence of his spiritual insight. In preaching about these applications, however,

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 144

and especially in connection with the condemnation of certain external practices and amusements, he is keen to the danger which lies at the heart of identifying Christianity with such obedience to external authority. In one of a group of sermons dealing with this very problem, Chalmers speaks of the danger of giving to the young people "an utter misconception of the design and nature of Christianity" from making "so many distinct and categorical impositions." He advocates rather, "to go at once to the very essence of the controversy between him and God, even that he idolizes the creature, ...and has cast the love and homage of the Creator away from him."¹ Chalmers recognizes that Christ claims authority over every area of life, but he also recognizes that this authority must be applied from within - by the Christ who enters into the heart - if it is to become effective. Therein he manifests his spiritual insight.

d. By His Emphasis Upon the Character of
God and the Depravity of Man

A final evidence for the Chalmers' spiritual insight is in the great emphasis he makes upon the character and grace of God, and the needy, helplessness of man in his natural state. Mention was made in an

.....

1. Chalmers, op. cit., p. 92

earlier chapter, that the largest proportion of the sermons in the volume which has been the basis of our study has dealt with the problems of salvation, and the depravity of human nature.¹ He has devoted a great deal of time and attention to the native inability of man to save himself; to his utter alienation from God; to the futility of human virtues in attaining salvation; and, on the other hand, to the free grace of God, exhibited in the salvation provided for all men through Jesus Christ; to the necessity for the Spirit of God working in the heart before the sinner could believe; and to the confidence and assurance which the acceptance of this salvation brings to the believer. In giving so much attention to these subjects, he has demonstrated clearly his sensitiveness to the Spirit of God and His working in the lives of men; and he has demonstrated, as well, his understanding of the ways in which both the Holy Spirit and the human heart work. Thus in his emphasis upon these doctrines, there is evidence of his spiritual insight.

3. Summary of Chalmers' Spiritual Insight

In the second half of this chapter, evidences for Chalmers' spiritual insight, as found in his life

.....

1. Cf. Ante, Chapters III and IV

and in his sermons, have been examined. The foundation of this spiritual insight lay in the experience which took place at Kilmany in 1810, but it developed and was expressed in all of his life and his preaching. The first expression of this in his life was in his keen sense of the reality of spiritual values, and their superior importance to those of the intellectual or physical level. Another expression existed in his continuing awareness of the presence of God - an awareness which gave strength for his labor, and which continued even to the crossing of the threshold of the new and larger life beyond the gate called death. Further expressions are notable in the keen sense of his own failures, and the humility with which he approached God, and in the habits of prayer which he continued throughout his life. This same insight was demonstrated in his sermons by the great earnestness with which he presented the claims of the Gospel to his hearers, and pressed upon them the acceptance of the gift. It was noticed again in the searching way in which he made personal applications of the truth that he was presenting, and the close connection which he stressed between doctrine and life. Still another evidence was found in the wide range of application of the truths of Christianity to the various areas of life - applications, however, which were founded upon the necessary basis of a right relationship with God, rather than being mere external impositions.

Finally, evidence for this insight was discovered in the extensive stress which was laid upon such topics as the depravity of man's nature, and the character and grace of God. In summary, it may be stated, then, that Chalmers possessed a rare spiritual insight which controlled his life, and rendered his preaching powerful and effective.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to discover the elements which were responsible for the peculiar effectiveness of the preaching of Thomas Chalmers, and to ascertain to what extent these elements can be utilized in modern preaching. We have gone about this study by examining the times in which Chalmers preached, and the formative influences which affected his preaching; and by analyzing a volume of his sermons for the literary and oral form of his preaching, the range of his preaching, and his psychological and spiritual insight. We shall now gather together a summary of findings from this study, in an attempt to bring out into clearer focus the elements of power in the preaching of Thomas Chalmers.

In the first chapter, it was discovered that the social conditions in the times that Chalmers preached were exceedingly crude as measured by our advanced standards today. Wages were low, taxes were high, punishments were terribly severe, living conditions were becoming critical as a result of the tremendous influx of people to the cities; but there was the encouraging promise in reform movements which were gradually gaining support and recognition. It was also found that the industrial conditions were rapidly changing with the invention of new machines and methods; the growth of Glasgow was seen to be typical of the effect of the improved industrial techniques and newly discovered resources. Working

conditions were sad, especially for the children, and early attempts at organizing labor were repressed as revolutionary. However, there was a growing concern among the people over these unhealthy conditions, and efforts at reform gradually increased. Thus Chalmers' preaching is seen in a context of social and industrial awakening; a time when the old was being examined critically and improved; a time when man was becoming emancipated from old bonds and emerging into new liberties.

It was also discovered that the involved relationship between the political and the religious authorities in Scotland reached a crisis during Chalmers' life - a crisis in which he played a major role. At the same time that the people finally achieved a more representative form of civil government through the passage of the Reform Bills of 1832, there arose a stronger plea for voice in the selection or rejection of ministerial candidates in the individual churches. This resolved itself into an attack upon the practice of patronage, and a heated discussion of the question of the authority of the State in the Established Church. The opposing groups roughly followed the division between Moderates and Evangelicals which has existed from the time of King William; and in 1843 the Evangelicals or Non-Intrusionists seceded from the Established Church and formed the Free Church of Scotland, with Chalmers as the first Moderator. In the political and religious, as well as the social and

industrial aspects of these times, there was discovered the movement of newly awakened minds and hearts, conscious of the bondage of the past and eager for the new liberties and opportunities of the future. Into such a world Chalmers came preaching.

In the second chapter we sought to find the formative influences which affected Chalmers' preaching, and so looked into his family background, his educational background, his religious development, and his personal characteristics. From this study we discovered that he had been born into a devout home, had been acquainted with the Bible from childhood, and had been sent off to school at a very early age. In his University years he was greatly interested in mathematics and philosophy and public speaking, and, following his theological course, taught mathematics for some time. His religious development was rather quiet and unsensational until the year 1810 when he underwent a life-changing experience at Kilmany. This experience altered his outlook upon the ministry, made his preaching soul-searching and effective, and made him become associated with, and later the outstanding leader of the Evangelical group in the church. His personal characteristics were also seen to have contributed largely to his success as a preacher. His strong, robust body made him able to carry on the strenuous work of his ministry; his mental abilities and skills fitted him for the task of interpreting and proclaiming the truth of the Gospel;

and the qualities of his personality - sympathy, interest, sense of justice and courtesy - made him able to reach the people and understand them. Yet, all of these influences were in subjection to and directed by the Spirit of God, who was the One Great Formative Influence.

The third chapter was taken up with a study of a volume of representative sermons by Chalmers for their literary features, and accounts of his preaching for the oral features. We discovered that he preached more doctrinal than any other type of sermons, although he also used ethical, experimental and occasional sermons. These sermons we found to be generally longer than most modern sermons, exceedingly solid in substance, and with a single emphasis expanded and elaborated exhaustively and with intense energy. He repeated several of his sermons a number of times, but with the energy and enthusiasm of the original delivery. In spite of not having an unusually fine voice or facility of gesture, he was able to effectively command the attention of his audience, and to put into the reading of the manuscript such eloquence as was outstanding in his day, and powerful to the influencing of minds and hearts.

In the fourth chapter we studied the range of Chalmers' preaching. We found that he gave attention to current problems in the application of Christianity to the activities of life in the social, national, and international affairs, as well as to great personalities and scientific

advances. He also treated the various divisions of Christian doctrine, giving special attention to the depravity of the human nature and the grace of God manifested in salvation through Christ. He emphasized Biblical material in all of his sermons, and demonstrated a comprehensive grasp of both the spirit and content of the Scripture. Thus, we found that his range was wide and varied, so that he treated all those subjects which concerned man in his relationships with both God and his fellow-men.

The fifth and last chapter we devoted to an examination of the psychological and spiritual insight which Chalmers manifested in his preaching. We discovered that he exhibited an understanding of the ways in which men's hearts and minds work because of his knowledge of himself, his interest in observing the actions of his fellows, and his study of philosophy. This understanding he used in interpreting Scripture, in presenting the Gospel appeal, and in meeting the objections or excuses of his hearers, and was thus able to make his sermons understandable and effective. His understanding of spiritual truths and laws, and his sensitiveness to these spiritual values also contributed to his effectiveness as a preacher. He was keenly aware of the spiritual universe, of God and His character, and of his own failures. He revealed this spiritual insight in his intense earnestness, in the way in which he made searching personal applications of the truth, in his wide range of application of Christianity to life, and in his emphasis upon the need of man and

the sufficiency of the Savior to meet that need.

In conclusion, then, we may assemble these elements of power into four groups for closer inspection: those which were hereditary; those which were environment; those which were personal; and, finally, those which were religious or spiritual.

1. Hereditary.....Strong body
Keen mind
Natural aptitudes
2. Environmental.....Home influences, parental example
The Spirit of the times (demo-
cratic awakening)
Educational opportunities; in-
fluence of instructors, specific
studies, influence of religious
leaders, books
3. Personal.....Frankness, honesty, truthfulness,
ambition, application, thorough-
ness, psychological insight
Genuine interest in people, breadth
of sympathy and understanding,
Public speaking ability, eloquence
4. Religious.....Influence of early training, ac-
quaintance with the Bible
Preparatory influences preceding
Kilmany experience
Kilmany experience
Consequent disciplines of study of
Bible and prayer and personal
religious living
Continuous control and operation
of God through the Holy Spirit

These, then, are the elements of power in the preaching of Thomas Chalmers. All of them were necessary for the moulding of the character and abilities of this great man;

and without one of them could he have been what he was.

We may well ask to what extent these elements may be utilized in our modern preaching. In answering this question, however, we must recognize that some of these elements are beyond our power of imitation or reproduction, for they were the gift of God and his parents to him. In the list of those which may be reproduced, and thus appropriated to our present day use, we would include as fundamental, a religious experience such as Chalmers had at Kilmany. We do not mean by this an exact imitation of all of the emotional and physical preparations for and expressions of that experience; but rather, an experience, however achieved or expressed, in which the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ becomes real, meaningful and intensely personal; so that life is no longer a toy, but a trust; and the Gospel not so much an interesting religious concept, as the power of God unto salvation which I have a personal commission to proclaim to a world that is dead or dying for want of just that. Add to this, personal qualifications similar to those Chalmers had, and a reasonably helpful environment; and, under the guidance of the Spirit of God such a man will be successful as a minister today.

This study has been of benefit to me in several ways: first of all, it has given me an understanding of the various characteristics of this very interesting period of Scottish Church history; then, it has brought into my life the

inspiration and challenge of the spirit and life of a great Christian leader and preacher; it has also, and to my advantage, acquainted me with some of the finest sermons of the Scottish Church in the early nineteenth century; but the greatest benefit which I have derived from this study has been in the vision I have received of the possibilities in the Christian ministry for using all of the various and peculiar abilities which a person may have been gifted with, under the direction of the Spirit of God, for the proclamation of the good news of reconciliation. It is not so much a question of how much a person has, as it is a question of how he uses that which he does have, that makes the difference in the ministry - as it does in all of life. Chalmers was gifted; but those gifts would have passed with only casual notice, had he not used them well in the service and under the compulsion of the Spirit of God. So every man who hears and follows the call to the ministry will be either effective or ineffective as he obeys with the wholehearted employment of the totality of his being, or grudgingly surrenders as little as possible.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Chronological Summary of Chalmers' Life

1780...	March 17	Born at Anstruther, Fifeshire, Scotland
1791...	November	Matriculated in United College of St. Andrew's
1795...		Enrolled in Divinity
1799...	July 31	Licensed by Presbytery of St. Andrew's
1799...	August 25	Preached first sermon in Scotch Church, Wigan, England
1801...	December	Became assistant to Mr. Elliot at Cavers, on the banks of the Teviot
1802...	September	Left Cavers
1803...	May 12	Ordained as minister of parish of Kilmany, Fifeshire
1809...		Maiden speech before General Assembly
1810...		Crisis experience at Kilmany
1812...	August 4	Married to Miss Grace Pratt
1815...	July 21	Installed in Tron Church, Glasgow
1815...	Nov. 23	First of Astronomical Discourses
1816...		Given D. D. by University of Glasgow
1817...		Astronomical Discourses published
1819...		Trasferred to St. John's Parish, Glasgow
1820...		Commercial Discourses published
1823...	November	Resigned pulpit for professorship at St. Andrew's
1827...		Declined offer of Chair of Moral Philosophy in London University
1828...		Became Professor of Theology in Edinburgh University
1830...		Appointed one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland
1834...		Elected corresponding member of Royal Institute of France
1835...		Oxford University conferred degree D.C.L.
1835...		Elected Fellow of Royal Society, Edinburgh
1843...		Seceded from Established Church
		Became first Moderator of Free Church of Scotland
		Became first Professor of Theology in Free Church College, Glasgow
1847...	May 30	Died.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

Chalmers, Thomas: Sermons and Discourses, now completed by the introduction of his Posthumous Sermons. Two Volumes in one. Robert Carter & Brothers, New York, 1873

Lectures on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans. Four Volumes. William Collins, Glasgow, 1842

The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation. Treatise I: On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. Two Volumes. William Pickering, London, 1833

Hanna, William: Posthumous Works of the Reverend Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D., edited by the Reverend William Hanna, LL. D. Volumes i, ii, iii Daily Scripture Readings, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1855. Sabbath Scripture Readings, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1856, 1860

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers. Four Volumes. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1850-1852

B. Secondary Sources

Anderson, John: Reminiscences of Thomas Chalmers. James Nichol, Edinburgh, 1851

Elaikie, W. G.: Thomas Chalmers, Famous Scots Series. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896

Dodds, James: Thomas Chalmers, a Biographical Study. William Oliphant & Company, Edinburgh, 1879

Frazer, Donald: Thomas Chalmers, D. D., LL. D. A. C. Armstrong & Company, New York, 1882

- Moffatt, James C.: Life of Thomas Chalmers. Moore, Anderson, Wilstach & Keys, Cincinnati, 1853
- Oliphant, M.: Thomas Chalmers, Preacher, Philosopher, Statesman. Houghton Mifflin & Company, Boston & New York, 1893

C. General Sources

- Berkhof, Louis: Manual of Reformed Doctrines. W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Reformed Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1933
- Brastow, Lewis: The Modern Pulpit; A Study of Homiletic Sources and Characteristics. Macmillan & Company, New York, 1906
- Broadus, John A.: Lectures on the History of Preaching. New Edition, A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York, 1896
- Brooks, Elbridge Streeter: The Story of the Nineteenth Century of the Christian Era. Lothrop Publishing Company, Boston, 1900
- Dargan, Edwin C.: A History of Preaching, Volume II. Hodder & Stoughton, New York, 1912
- Davis, Ozora S.: Principles of Preaching. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924
- Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1925
- Fleming, J. R.: A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1927
- Garvie, A. E.: The Christian Preacher, Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, 1921
- Grant, Isabel Frances: Everyday Life in Old Scotland, Part Three. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1932
- Hetherington, W. M.: History of the Church of Scotland. Robert Carter & Brothers, New York, 1851
- Horn, George Garrison: The Elements of Power in the Preaching of John Henry Newman; Thesis for Doctor of Theology Degree, Biblical Seminary in New York, April, 1935

- Howard, H. C.: Princes of the Christian Pulpit and Pastorate. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1928
- Hoyt, Arthur S: Vital Elements of Preaching. Macmillan Co., New York, 1914
- MacKenzie, Robert: The Nineteenth Century, 15th Edition, Thomas Nelson & Sons, London, 1909
- MacLeah, Donald: Aspects of Scottish Church History. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1927
- Mather, Thomas Bradley: Voices of Living Prophets; a Symposium of Present-day Preaching, Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1933
- Mathieson, William Law: Church and Reform in Scotland, a History from 1797-1843. James MacLehose & Sons, Glasgow, 1916
- Pattison, T. Harwood: The Making of the Sermon. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1902
- Snowden, James Henry: The Psychology of Religion and its Application in Preaching and Teaching. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1914
- Sterling, Amelia Hutchison: A Sketch of Scottish Industrial and Social History in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Blackie & Sons, Ltd., London, 1906
- Taylor, William M.: The Ministry of the Word. Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, New York, 1876
- Tulloch, John: Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1901
- The Hymnal Published by authority of The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1933. Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Philadelphia, 1937