

A WORD TO MY CRITICS.

The poet, Burns, once prayed for the power "to see ourselves as others see us." That is a luxury which I am allowed to enjoy to the full. But I am bound to confess that I rarely recognise my natural self in the picture held up before me, and called by my name; for I have the good or ill fortune to be often credited with saying things I never uttered, and with doing things I never attempted. I am put down as being on terms of great intimacy with persons I have never known, and to spend my evenings in houses of gentlemen whom I have never visited. Let me give a sample of the whole.

An article has just appeared in *The Sentinel: and Orange and Protestant Advocate*—headed "Rev. Mr. Bray and Orangeism." The introduction bears on sensational preachers who will "draw," and get "a heavy stipend," and then it proceeds thus: "There was a time when the Gospel was preached in Zion Church; but the congregation was then neither very numerous nor very wealthy; it is both now."

The truth:—The congregation at the time to which reference is made was very nearly, if not quite so numerous, and about three or four times as wealthy.

Again from the *Sentinel*:—"A review of that part of Mr. Bray's preaching which, as he has given it to the press, he must himself have thought the best, or at any rate the most important, comprises several political discourses, a series of criticisms of all branches of the Christian Church, with the evident moral of the Pharisee's prayer, 'I thank Thee, O Lord, that I am not as other men,' and some lectures on modern public character, very well adapted for literary pastime, but in our humble judgment, scarcely what a soul 'thirsting after God' would require."

The truth:—In the course of two years' ministry I have preached but two political sermons on the Sabbath day, one only of which was noticed by the press, and that notice I did not seek—the "criticisms of all branches of the Christian Church" were lectures delivered on Tuesday evenings—the "lectures on modern public characters" were two in number—the one on David Livingstone, the missionary, delivered on a Sunday evening—the other on Robert Burns, given at the Caledonian Society's banquet. I have spoken on the Sabbath, with the one exception named, of no other characters but those given in the Bible.

Again from *The Sentinel: and Orange and Protestant Advocate*:—"We have not at hand the exact words which he may have used after the events of July, 1877, but many in Montreal will remember the simulated indignation of the rev. Gentleman at the refusal of churches for the 12th of July sermon. 'Had he been in town he would have been the first to offer the use of Zion Church.'"

Passing by the coarseness of this implication on my honesty—the truth is that I have never uttered these words which the *Sentinel* has put within inverted commas as if they were a quotation. I had no power to offer the use of Zion Church to any body of men.

Again from the *Sentinel*:—"It would not do for Rev. Mr. Bray to risk his popularity by remaining the champion of the right. Orangemen were but a small minority, anyhow, and the very few words he had said in their favour having been rewarded by a threatening letter or two, he found there was everything to lose and nothing to gain by remaining true to those who 'offered and afforded him protection in Montreal, and perhaps elsewhere,' as he says himself."

The truth:—That I had nothing to gain, but much to lose, by saying what I did on Orangeism. It gave me no friends among the Catholics, for I sought none, maintaining my Protestantism, but not in an Orange form. What could I lose by "remaining true" to the Orangemen? Catholic support? I never had it.

Further from the *Sentinel*:—"Mr. Bray confesses that when he spoke for the Protestant faith in days gone by he 'knew but little of the Orange Order.' Having since that time formed and improved an acquaintance with Captain Kirwan, of the *True Witness*, he has from that trustworthy source learned all about Orangemen; and having weighed them in the Irish Catholic balance, he has found them wanting."

The truth as to that:—I have met Captain Kirwan three or four times—put together they would make rather less than one hour spent in his company. For about ten minutes we talked of the Orange procession, and did not agree as to the method of dealing with it. That is the extent of my acquaintance with Captain Kirwan, and all I learnt from him about Orangeism was how he himself felt toward it.

I pass by a general remark—to the effect that if Orangeism "had done nothing more than keep open an impassable gulf between Popery and true Protestantism, it would have had abundant reasons for its existence," by simply saying I agree with the remark; it has "kept open an impassable gulf," but I come to a different conclusion, and say, therefore it ought not to exist; I want that gulf bridged over—to notice the next indictment in the *Sentinel*:—

"Mr. Bray counts the 'sticks and stones' used by Orangemen, as he says, but not a word about the batons of Mayor Beaudry's

'loafer specials,' nor a hint of the stones, pistols and knives with which 'Union men,' &c.

The fact about this "not a word":—Writing in the *SPECTATOR* on the 20th of July, on "A Day in Bedlam," I said:—

"The Mayor was not only allowing an illegal gathering in the streets, but was using that to coerce the Orangemen.

"But the Special Constables were the feature that attracted most attention in the whole affair. They were five hundred in all, and were taken from the lowest and worst ranks of the citizens. Some were Irish Catholic Union men, who yet swore roundly that they did not belong to a secret society; they say a few were Orangemen; and it is certain that some of them not long ago were unwilling servants of the State, dressing and eating at the public expense. But they were Special Constables, and made much of the office. As a band of volunteers was passing, a Special struck one of them over the head with his baton; he was arrested, and at once dismissed by the civil authorities.

"The Specials were stationed in front of the Orange Hall—not to keep the peace, but to break it. They understood that no Orangeman should be allowed on the streets wearing regalia, and if any should attempt to break that peculiar law, their duty was, not to restrain the mob from acts of violence, and not to arrest the offending wearers of yellow, but to beat those same with their batons until they gave up the yellow, or life. A youth was foolish enough to leave the hall and walk out into the street with his rosette on, and he was set upon at once and clubbed—by the mob? oh no! by the Special Constables, and this under the very eyes of the Mayor. They didn't arrest him—made no effort at that—only smashed him in a general and indiscriminating way."

And again:—

"The Orangemen were prevented from walking by sheer brute force. They were shut up in the hall and threatened—not with arrest, not with legal proceedings—but with maltreatment at the hands of a mob led by the Mayor and his rascally Specials."

All that the *Sentinel* calls "not a word."

I cannot afford space to follow the *Sentinel* to the end. Suffice it to say, that because I declared myself a practical man—looking at things and Societies from a utilitarian point of view—I am made to ask of everything, "Does it pay?" That is to say: This *Sentinel* accuses me of an utter want of principle—of a character and conduct that would not only unfit any man for the Christian ministry, but for the society of honourable men—and all this is based upon a wilful ignorance of myself and what I have said. And I am compelled to believe that the *Sentinel* has made no exception in my case, but may misrepresent others in the same way. The *Sentinel* whines about "principle," quotes the Sermon on the Mount, &c.; it had better learn ordinary honesty before saying a word of the higher virtues.

I commend the same advice to others who attempt to find fault. Be sure of the facts of the case before you assail a man's character. At least two-thirds of the newspaper criticism I have had is about as correct and charitable as that I have given from the *Sentinel*. Remember the Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Try to improve good *Sentinel*!

EDITOR.

THE CATHOLIC QUESTION.

SIR,—Your article in criticism on my last letter to you reminds me forcibly of controversies in years long since past. History repeats itself. I trust, however, that if you permit your columns to be used for the discussion of the various points on which you have criticized my former letter, it will be carried on in the spirit in which it has been commenced. While you agree with me "in the main in my reading and interpretation of the history of Ireland since the rupture between England and the Papacy," you think that I have mistaken "the nature of Orangeism in Ireland." You proceed to assign reasons, from which you draw the conclusion that Orangeism was "at one time a much-needed institution in Ireland," although you admit that "the need for it there has long passed away." Why, I would ask, has the need passed away? Simply because, to use the language of Macaulay, "the vanquished people found protection in a quarter from which they would once have had to expect nothing but implacable severity"; because "the philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism from that deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the Puritanism of the seventeenth century. Enlightened men had begun to feel that the arguments by which Milton and Locke, Tillotson and Burnet, had vindicated the rights of conscience might be urged with not less force in favour of the Roman Catholic than in favour of the Independent or the Baptist." The eloquent writer concluded his chapter with the expression of his hope that some future historian may be able to relate that "wisdom, justice and time did in Ireland what they had done in Scotland," and that all the races might be blended in one people. It is, however, in my opinion, worse than useless to discuss the Orange question as regards Ireland. That country was conquered by England, as Poland by Russia, and Italy by Austria. The descendants of the conquered people were, as has been the case invariably under similar circumstances, kept in a state of subjection; and were naturally in a chronic state of discontent. The *onus probandi* lies with you and those who think with you, that the "need for Orangeism" would not have passed away fifty years sooner had the measures, which you frankly admit have caused it to disappear, been adopted fifty years earlier. Let me give you another short quotation from Macaulay, which has always struck me as a most apt illustration of the state of feeling in Scotland and Ireland, in both which countries the Celtic and Saxon races are intermingled. In his notice of the battles of Killiecrankie and Newtown-Butler, both gained in the same week, by irregular troops over regular, one by Celts