

sin. He lately remarked that he was a "converted decent man—a kind hard to convert." He was about nineteen when this occurred; and with the courage that is so marked a feature of his character, he at once stood up and testified to being on the Lord's side. Ever giving satisfaction to his employers, he was sent, in the year 1875, to take charge of the Company's town office at the east end of Princes-street. In a few weeks he saw reason to give up his post, but at once got a clerkship in the North British Railway Offices across the street.

Since his conversion he had been in the habit of addressing religious meetings, and now he threw himself heartily into the work of the Young Men's Christian Association. His capacity for public speaking soon became apparent, and many friends in the city urged him to study for the ministry. Following their advice he relinquished railway clerking, and, in the autumn of 1877, entered the University. It was a bold step, but if he had any doubts of its propriety they were dispelled by a conversation with his mother. When he told her what he had done, her lips quivered, and her countenance betrayed unusual emotion. Then came words he can never forget, "I have never told you, but I meant you for that before I saw your face." There are many Hannahs; but how few can let their sons await the Lord's call! With marked emphasis Mr. McNeill is wont to say that his mother and he were always "great friends."

Three years were spent at the Arts classes; and during all that time he supported himself by mission work in connection with Free St. Bernard's church—work which, of course, precluded all endeavour after academic distinction. Ever courageous, he entered into matrimony during the last year of his curriculum in Edinburgh. His next step was to remove to Glasgow, where he attended the University for one year and the Free Church College for four years, all the time supporting himself and his family by mission work. On receiving Presbyterian license to preach the Gospel, he was at once invited to become the minister of the Barony Free Church, Glasgow, a church with a thousand members. Thinking the charge too great for a young minister, he declined it, notwithstanding a tempting stipend. Soon afterwards he was called by the McCric-Roxburgh congregation in Edinburgh.

It was a small body made up of two decayed Free Church congregations in a poor district of the city. Accepting the call he was ordained in the summer of 1886.

His success has been phenomenal. Scotsmen dearly love a sermon, and when it was announced that a second Spurgeon had appeared in an Edinburgh pulpit there was a rush to hear him. Grave people, hearing of the odd sayings that made his audiences smile and of his extraordinary unconventionality in the pulpit, shook their heads, and wrote him anonymous letters. Others went to hear him for themselves, and came under the spell of an earnest preacher who believed he had a divine message to man and was not particular about the way of delivering it, provided he got it into their heads and hearts.

The church, which is seated for six hundred, soon became insufficient for the crowds that resorted to it; so the evening service has, during the past fifteen months, been held in a drill hall or circus, the audiences numbering from three to five thousand. The Wednesday evening congregations fill the church. Opinions differ as to the constitution of the circus gathering, but we think the non-churchgoing element is very considerable. All classes in the city are represented, but the majority are well-dressed people of its middle class, who attend the service pretty regularly. All that seems wanting to form a great congregation is a permanent building capable of holding about four thousand people. Some influential gentlemen, including two medical professors in the university, are at last about to issue an appeal to the Scottish public for subscriptions with which to erect a tabernacle. Many think the Free Church has been rather dilatory in the matter, and it is whispered that the United Presbyterians would soon roof him in if he would only join them.

Of what theological school is Mr. McNeill? Well, if the distinction may be allowed, he does not preach a system of theology, but the Gospel. Nevertheless, he holds a definite system; and if you were to ask him what it was he would probably hand you the Shorter Catechism. But his sermons are not "Shorter Catechism and water"; he deals with the whole length and breadth of Bible history, biography, and precept. While not abjuring text preaching, he likes to take up an Old Testament story or one of Christ's miracles,