

Rev. A. D. MacKinnon, Ph.D.

An Appreciation by C. J. Spears.

[Note: Publication of the following contribution is timely. From the press we gather that Dr. MacKinnon in order to heal a division in Kitsilano Presbyterian Church has declined to accept a second "call" tendered to him by the congregation and signed by over five hundred persons of whom we understand considerably over four hundred are members.—Editor, B.C.M.]

"He seemed to be so much of a man." These words were spoken by a young man in describing how he had been first attracted by the ministry of Dr. MacKinnon. And undoubtedly they may be applied to him in their ordinary sense for, physically and mentally Dr. MacKinnon is at once recognized as an outstanding personality. Tall and well proportioned, his presence would dignify any pulpit in the land and on the testimony of a fellow-student of his who preached in Kitsilano some months ago, he towered above his fellows at college, intellectually as he did physically. Perhaps it was not in this sense, however, that the phrase was intended but rather that the human sympathy of the man was referred to. For in his preaching as well as in his general walk and conversation he shows himself one who understands human nature, in its joys and sorrows, its needs and difficulties. One notices this in some measure as he greets the people as they pass out from the morning or evening worship—here a welcome to a stranger—there a word for some member back after an illness or a journey—and ever some personal reference which shows that individual attention which all appreciate. But it has been by some special kindness or attention shown in time of trouble or distress so frequent in the trying years that are gone, that he has endeared himself to many friends in Kitsilano.

In considering Dr. MacKinnon as a preacher we must also consider the difficulties of his position during the past years. But it must be stated that many of the people of Kitsilano, including the present writer, had recognized in Dr. MacKinnon one of Canada's great preachers *before* knowing anything of the peculiar difficulties of his ministry. There is always something striking or original in his sermons that one can carry away and yet it is the old message that he brings. While he speaks of the mountain or the stream, or of the commoner things of the city or the home, one recognizes the Highland mysticism which uses these means to show forth the deep



REV. A. D. MacKINNON, Ph.D.

things of the spirit as did the Hebrew prophets of old. His occasional use of hyperbole may give the appearance of extravagance, but it serves to make the message remembered. He has the gift so essential in a great preacher of appealing just sufficiently to the emotion of his audience and then driving home his message. Perhaps the most striking instance of his mastery of the art of preaching was a recent sermon on "The Valley of Dead Bones" (Ezekiel Ch. 37.) How the horror of the subject was dwelt upon until one word more would have changed the feeling to disgust and the whole value of the study would have been lost. And then, just when the imagery became almost too lurid, the whole atmosphere was changed, as when the sun breaks through the thunder-cloud and the prophet's message of hope and courage was applied to our present day needs. At other times sentiment and pathos are used but never to the point of mere sentimentality.

To sum up, it may be said that the characteristic of Dr. MacKinnon's preaching is a simple, practical gospel message, delivered in an original, forceful and memorable manner.

THE NATIONAL

A New Daily Train to Eastern Canada via
Canadian National Railways and Grand Trunk Pacific

Leaves VANCOUVER 7.45 p.m.

OBSERVATION CARS, STANDARD and TOURIST SLEEPERS, DINING CARS

For full information apply

TOURIST AND TRAVEL BUREAU

527 Granville Street.

Canadian National Railways

TELEPHONES:

SEYMOUR 2482 and
SEYMOUR 8134.