

PREFACE.

Along with my late brother, Dr. W. P. Mackay, author of "Grace and Truth," I have always been deeply interested in evangelistic work, and have been able to work with evangelists from whom brother ministers stood aloof. It was, therefore, a very painful experience for me to discover that the Rev. B. Fay Mills was preaching what I considered false doctrine to the crowds who came to hear him. Though, before he came, I could not commit myself to his way of working, all that I had heard of him prejudiced me in his favour, and I went to his meetings hoping to get good for myself, and to do good as I had opportunity. I was driven away by his unscriptural teaching. I did not go hurriedly. I tried to explain away his words. I tried to put the blame on myself, for our hearts are very deceitful. I wondered if I had lost all relish for the old Gospel, when I found Mr. Mills' teachings so distasteful. I was reassured by a visit made to a meeting of the Salvation army, where, though the accompaniments were of a kind to me naturally objectionable, I was refreshed and strengthened by the Gospel preached by these women. Though I understand French imperfectly, I heard more saving Gospel truth in that meeting than in all the addresses I had heard from Mr. Mills.

It was a still more painful experience when I found his false teaching beginning to leaven my own people, and when I was compelled, therefore, to draw public attention to it. My object in doing so was not only to point out the error, but also to proclaim the truth. To those who think it would have been better to have left this matter alone, I commend the words of the Rev. Dr. E. H. Perowne, in his admirable notes on the epistle to the Galatians. Speaking on Gal. v. 9—"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"—he says: "This verse, which occurs again (1 Cor. v. 6), seems to have passed into a proverb. There the apostle is condemning the toleration of a single act of open immorality in a member of the Church of Christ. It was the concession of a principle, and whether it be followed by similar acts or not, the standard of Christian morality will be lowered and a laxity of tone will gradually pervade the spirit and degrade the practice, of those who are called, 'not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Here the warning is against the insidious nature of the false teachings of the Judaizing leaders. The difference between that teaching and 'the truth of the Gospel' may appear inconsiderable, and the teachers themselves may be insignificant in numbers or in authority. But error, once admitted, is a virus which will gradually spread and poison the whole system of doctrine, or the whole spiritual life of the individual or of the Church."

A. B. MACKAY.

Since writing the above I have received the following letter from the Rev. D. H. MacVicar, D.D., LL.D., Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, Montreal, April 9th, 1894.

MY DEAR DR. MACKAY,—Having learned that you are about to publish the sermon you preached on the 25th of March last, allow me to express the hope that it may be as widely distributed and read as the views which it forcibly brings to the test of Scripture.

Your position regarding the silence of Mr. Mills upon essential elements of the Gospel, and the nature of certain dogmas directly propounded by him, finds endorsement in a timely article in the April issue of "The Presbyterian and Reformed Review," by the Rev. Dr. David R. Breed, of Chicago.

Yours very truly,

D. H. MACVICAR.