

Our Contributors.

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF LAURIER'S STRENGTH?

BY KNONONIAN.

Some writer on Homiletics advises his students to study carefully the methods of every preacher who obtains and keeps a strong hold upon the community. That is a good thing to do, not only with great preachers but with all influential men. Influence is a peculiarly subtle kind of a thing. What makes some men influential factors in the community, and other men of much the same wealth, intelligence, social position and general standing, mere ciphers? What makes some people magnetic and other people, their equals in morality, perhaps in spirituality, repulsive? Even grace does not make some people moderately attractive.

It goes unsaid that Wilfred Laurier is at the present time the most attractive political personality in the Dominion. Other public men excel him in certain lines, but taking him all round, Laurier is easily first in the matter of personal popularity. Many of his political opponents admire him as much as his political friends do, and probably more than some of them do. There is a type of Grit that never admires anybody. The bitter, jealous, fault-finding Grit, thinks that his duty to his party requires him to be continually proding and kicking his leaders. Grits of that kind do not admire Laurier for the simple reason that they never admire anybody but themselves. Nearly all the other people in the Dominion, however, do admire Laurier, and, for the time being at least, he is Canada's most magnetic man.

The causes of his popularity are hard to analyze. It is impossible to lay your finger on any one quality and say, Now, that is the secret of Laurier's popularity and strength. In the State he occupies much the same position as Dr. Donald Fraser occupied in the church. We never yet saw a man who could explain the secret of Donald Fraser's power in the pulpit. We have heard a number of very shrewd men try, but not one of them seemed to succeed even to his own satisfaction. Donald Fraser was not what is popularly called a "man of the people," yet the people rarely failed to follow him. If he preached three times on Assembly Sabbath in any Canadian city he drew the largest and most representative people every time, no matter who preached in the other churches. Laurier is not a "man of the people" in the sense in which vulgar demagogues use that term. He is a polished, refined, highly educated gentleman. Like Donald Fraser he has a good deal of style about him. He has tone, genuine tone without the slightest suspicion of shoddy or pinch-beck. The toughest old campaigner would not dare to slap him on the back and ask him to come in and "take something." He is as unlike the old line liquor-up, hail-fellow-well-met politician as possible, and yet he draws as large crowds as ever gathered around a public man in Canada.

It ought to be remembered, however, that so far, whether by accident or design, Laurier's largest meetings have been held in the most cultivated communities. York, Brant, Peel and Winnipeg has each a population that for taste and intelligence cannot be surpassed in any part of Canada, or for that matter in many parts of the world. It would be easy to name communities in which the Opposition leader might find his fine eloquence eclipsed by some orator whose stock in trade consisted of vulgar stories told in a vulgar way.

Laurier's success as an orator has been won in Ontario, in the face of some immense disadvantages. He is a Frenchman, and for years it has been the business of certain parties in Ontario to stir up feeling against their French fellow-citizens. He is a Roman Catholic, and since the autumn of 1886 the most persistent efforts have been made in Ontario to turn Protestants against Catholics. He represents a party that has been in a minority since 1878 and that perhaps never had

a larger majority against it in the Commons that it has now. He is not rich. So far as we know he has few, if any influential connections. He has no office to give. Nearly all his parliamentary life has been spent in opposition. And yet, Wilfred Laurier is easily the most popular man in Dominion politics.

We do not pretend to state, much less to analyze the causes that have given Mr. Laurier his high place at a comparatively early age. He is an honest man, but we hope honest men are not so scarce in Canadian public life that common honesty confers high distinction. He has a fine manner, but so has nearly every Frenchman in the House, and several who are not Frenchmen. His English has a peculiar charm because he learned it from books, while most of us learned part of ours on the street. He has no such humour as D'Arcy McGee had, or as Sir John Macdonald had. He has no such strength as George Brown had. Better voices than his could be counted by the dozen. He has a fine physique but so have many other men. His position as leader explains nothing, because if he had not been what he is, he never would have been leader. Besides, it is the business of a certain type of Grit to belittle their own leaders. The Grits who under various names tried to knife Sir Oliver, last June, as a reward for the twenty-years of faithful service would naturally think all the less of Laurier for being their leader. Very likely Laurier's success arises from a combination of qualities rather than from any one quality that mainly makes him what he is. There are men of that kind. We have always thought that Donald Fraser was one of them. It is hard to explain the power of a man of that kind. They are men of a fine strong combination, and because their strength arises from the combination you cannot name any one quality that makes them strong.

COMMON SENSE VERSUS HIGHER CRITICISM.—NO. II.

BY REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

In a former paper I referred to Dr. Driver's contention that the earlier and later parts of the Book of Isaiah must be of different authorship, because of the difference of *style*, and the difference of *thought*. In this paper I will deal briefly with his two other positions, namely, that there is a difference of *theology*, and a difference of *words*, that can be accounted for only by a difference of authorship.

The difference in the *theology* of the earlier and later parts of the Book that Dr. Driver thinks so conclusive might of course come under the head of a difference of *thought*; but it is worthy of being considered separately. Dr. Driver is very strong on the doctrine of distinctions. No matter what similarities he may find to run through the whole of Isaiah, these count for nothing in his argument; if he can only find distinctive ideas or phrases in different parts of the Book, he thinks there must be different authorship. He speaks contemptuously of the "lists of similarities" that have "been drawn up, and copied by one writer from another." He admits that "similarities of figure or metaphor" are found in different parts of the book, but he says they are "not distinctive similarities." What kind of similarities would satisfy Dr. Driver, or give him any suggestion of identity of authorship, is more than I can imagine.

I am not insisting here that the similarities in Isaiah prove anything. What I want to show is, that the differences in the thought, and especially in the theology of the Book, by no means prove, or even suggest, any change of author. In any similar case, but especially in this case, might we not expect a difference—perhaps a great difference—in the thought and the theology of the writer? Only glance at the striking features of the case. Here we have Isaiah; a man of no common order, an educated man, a man of ardent temperament; a man, evidently, of a strong, wide, progressive mind. Does such a man remain stagnant? Do not the processes of life and of his own mind develop him, until after a while his whole manner of thought is changed? That is what we expect and find in

our own case, and why not in Isaiah? Then this man had a long time to develop. From the record it seems that he was no less than sixty years in public life. Surely such a man might change a good deal in that space of time. But besides this, Isaiah was inspired. He was not wholly dependent on the usual processes of development. The Spirit was with him to lead him into higher and wider truth. Surely in such a case Isaiah might really have some "new theology" by-and-by; and if there seems a new departure at some points, ought we to be much surprised? Then in addition to all this, Isaiah lived in very stirring times; the nation passed through several crises during his life; and he was the commissioned ambassador of God, to deliver different messages to the nation, suited to the changing conditions of the time. What change of theology will not such conditions account for? Even if we discovered some radical changes,—not errors corrected, but changes and developments—that is only what we might reasonably look for. To seek for and sift out a few minor changes of theology in the later part of the Book, and to insist that these indicate a change of author, must strike any candid mind as a very weak effort to sustain a foregone conclusion.

This would appear still more evident if we had time to notice the instances in which Dr. Driver sees such changes in the theology of the Book. Take but one instance. He says that Isaiah—meaning the author of the first part of the Book—"depicts the majesty of Jehovah;" the author of chapters xl-lxvi His infinity." Is this an abrupt transition? Surely not, considering the long period involved. Dr. Driver contends, however, that this is a "real difference," that implies a different author. This is not one of the 'distinctive similarities.' No; this is a 'real difference.' Best even if it were a radical difference, what would it amount to? Why, it involves a change of authorship; there is no other way of accounting for it; that is Dr. Driver's position. So then, Isaiah might live a long life, but he could never rise from the conception of God's majesty to any conception or expression of His infinity. Isaiah might have the Spirit's continual inspiration, and he might attain thus to the idea of the divine majesty, but the Spirit could not teach him to say a word about the divine infinity. The circumstances of the time might require Isaiah to speak of God's majesty, but if any message were needed as to God's infinity, Isaiah could never deliver that; some other unknown person must do it. That is really what the 'higher criticism' in this case amounts to. Such trifling, applied to a sacred theme like this, seems to me no less than contemptible.

So far from a new conception in theology being unattainable by Isaiah, or by any of us, it is the very thing which every thoughtful mind experiences. I remember what Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, England, says on this point; for it coincides with my own experience. He says that preachers are liable to be taken, and held, and fascinated for a while by some particular truth, and that by-and-by that truth may cease to be the main attraction, and that some other may take its place. I suppose most preachers know more or less of this experience. I remember that when I began to preach I lingered for years in the scenes of our Lord's life, before ever I got a text from Paul; but when I went over to Paul I stayed with him a good while. But now I am told that no change or progress was possible to Isaiah, with all his superior advantages. Common sense and experience repudiate all such nonsense.

The argument for different authorship in Isaiah [founded on a difference in *words*] I shall not dwell upon at length. It will be sufficient, I think, to notice two examples that Dr. Driver cites to prove his point. He cites the phrase, "in that day," as being used thirty times in the earlier part of the Book, and only once in the later part. What a pity it is used at all in the later part. If the author—whatever he was—had been so obliging as to omit that phrase, what a victory it would have been for the higher critics. But because the phrase is used but once, Dr. Driver thinks he has a good case. If Isaiah had written those later chapters of the Book, he would surely have said "in that day" ever so

many times. It does not matter whether the sense required the phrase or not; nor does it matter whether Isaiah might change his phraseology slightly in sixty years. All that counts for nothing. Isaiah was once addicted to the use of a certain phrase, and he must never leave it off; if he does, he is not Isaiah but some other man. It is really amusing to see how this point is drawn out. Dr. Driver brings in St. Mark to help him, and Mark is a good man to have on your side. Dr. Driver's versatility is seen in that he has been studying Mark's phraseology, as well as Isaiah's. And what does he find? Why, he finds that Mark is addicted to the use of the word "straightway," just as Isaiah is addicted to the use of the phrase "in that day," and he tries to make Mark prove that Isaiah would surely have used his pet phrase if he had been the author of the latter part of the Book. Here is the way Mark is made to wipe out Isaiah: "It is as difficult to believe," Dr. Driver says, "that Isaiah had been the author of a prophecy as long as chapters xl-xlvi. . . . would have been content to use this expression but once . . . as it is to believe that, had St. Mark written, as St. Luke wrote, a sequel to his gospel, the word, straightway, would have been found in it but once only." That is to say, if Mark had written some further history of his times, and if the word straightway occurred but once in the later treatise, that would be enough to stamp it as spurious; it could not be Mark's; if it were Mark's it would have had the word "straightway" ever so many times. That it has the word once is of no avail; that this new treatise might be many years later, and that the author might have improved, or altered his style, a little, cuts no figure at all; the word "straightway" must be there ever so many times, else the treatise is not Mark's. Ah, literary criticism is a great thing, and woe to him who dares to gainsay it!

I will give an instance of a curious repetition of another word, which I think will set this matter in a very striking light. Some years ago I was reading Dr. Dale's book on "The Atonement." This is the same Dr. Dale to whom I referred a few moments ago. As I read I was struck with the frequent use of the word *unique*. When I came to about the middle of the book I was so amused at the frequent recurrence of that word that I made an estimate as to the number of times it would be used in the remainder of the book. So I counted, and sure enough the word was repeated as often as I had estimated, and a few times more. Well, that only showed me, that even a great man is not usually a great reader. Dr. Dale was the slave of a word, for the time. But now suppose Dr. Dale had not used the word at all, or had used it only once, in the last half of the book, would I have had any doubt about that part of the book being written by Dr. Dale? I don't think I should have had any doubt about it. But then, you see, I am not a higher critic. That makes a great difference. The higher critic has acute literary perceptions of his own. In such a case as I have supposed he would conclude that Dr. Dale was not the author of the entire book. Had Dr. Dale used the word "unique" in the first half of the book very often, but only once in the last half, or he could not be the author of the latter part of the book, just as Isaiah cannot be the author of the latter part of the Book that bears his name, because he does not use the phrase "in that day" often enough to establish his identity! Dr. Dale, however, does repeat the word all through the book, and often enough, I should think, to satisfy even Dr. Driver as to his identity; but then, what about Dr. Dale's later works? He has written many things since he wrote "The Atonement." Have these the same *unique* trade-mark by which they are to be identified as Dr. Dale's? If that word "unique" does not run through them all, they are none of his; and if Dr. Dale insists that they are his, that only shows the man's impertinence; he is not the author, for if he were he would have used that word "unique." Note, also, that Dale has not had nearly so much time to improve his style as Isaiah had. Yet, as a matter of fact, I doubt if the special word occurs once in all Dr. Dale's later writings. But even if he does use the