

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING PRACTICAL HERESIES.

BY KNOXIAN.

In the last issue of the *Presbyterian College Journal*, Principal MacVicar discusses what he properly calls a "great practical heresy." The particular heresy he has before his mind is acted rather than spoken or written. It is an open, plain, palpable kind of heresy. No heresy hunter is needed to bring it to light. No Church lawyer is required to put it in the form of a charge. No witness need go on the stand to prove it. The heresy is acted in this way:—

A number of Presbyterian people in Muskoka, Algoma, Manitoba or the North-West meet in a church or school-house for worship on Sabbath. The preacher is not there on time. They sit and sit and sit, but no preacher comes. They begin to mutter and look through windows. After waiting an hour or so one leaves and then another and another until they are all on their way home. No chapter is read, no psalm or hymn sung, no prayer offered. The service consisted in muttering uncomplimentary things about the Presbytery and the kind of supply the station has been getting. It is needless to say that the keynote of the service was not gratitude. The preacher did not come and there was nothing to be grateful for. Had the people been Episcopalians some one would have read the Church service. Had they been Methodists they would have had a season of singing and experience telling, but being Presbyterians all they could do or at all events did do was to sit a while in silence and go home grumbling about the Presbytery and the number of disappointments that had lately taken place.

Had this meeting been called to discuss some municipal or political question, it is more than likely that the Presbyterians would have done about three-fourths the business. Perhaps one would have been chairman, another secretary, and if there was just one man in the meeting able to draw up a resolution the chances are a million to one that man would be a Presbyterian. The meeting, however, was for purposes of worship, and nothing could be done without a minister or student. Assuming that the scriptural argument used by Principal MacVicar is sound, and no doubt it is, the good people who went home without worship did wrong. They committed a heretical act. If a professor or city minister spoke or wrote a little mild heresy, they would clamour for his trial. They would shout to put him out of the Church. But they act heresy themselves for a whole Sabbath afternoon and there is not a word about it.

There is not much use in asking why many Presbyterian people are so backward in taking part in religious services. The fact is a deplorable one let the causes be what they may. To see men foremost in politics, foremost in municipal affairs, often foremost in business, unwilling or unable to take any part in a religious meeting, is a spectacle that has many a time made Presbyterian people ashamed.

No doubt our system is in part responsible for this practical heresy. The people who have been supplied by thirty different students in a mission station are pretty certain to have a habit of criticizing students. Some of them go to Church to criticize as much as to worship. At best their worship rarely rises above man worship. The people in a vacant congregation that has been besieged by sixty or seventy candidates are very likely to go to church as judges rather than as worshippers. Men who might conduct a service very well know that a large number of those present are critics rather than worshippers, and they naturally decline to make themselves targets for snarling, impertinent criticism. They are painfully aware that any little slips made in the service will be ridiculed on the way home, perhaps laughed at in church, and the fear of laughter and ridicule prevents them from conducting the service. Many a worthy man who might have made very instructive remarks has sat in silence through fear of half a dozen simpering, giggling, half-grown girls whose mothers should either have kept the giglets at home or used the strap on them soundly when they returned.

The remedy for this state of things is to believe and to teach our young people that we should go to church to worship God and not to hear man. This may seem a mere truism, but it is a truism that has lost its power over many Presbyterians. We need a good many things, but need nothing more than to have driven out of us the idea that worship consists exclusively in hearing sermons and that there can be no worship unless there is a minister of some kind present to preach.

No doubt that peculiar quality known as Presbyterian reserve in regard to religious matters has something to do in producing the practical heresy complained of. Some people parade their religion and Presbyterians think they should go to the opposite extreme and be silent about theirs. The proper course lies between these extremes.

Then there is no use in denying the fact that many Presbyterians have a habit of depending far too much on the minister in all church matters. How they came to have this habit we need not now enquire. It exists and the Church will never know its power until Christians as such do their duty and stop depending so much on the minister. As Principal MacVicar well observes "multitudes of professed Christians are destitute of true peace and power, because they regard themselves as mere receptacles of the truth and do nothing to propagate the Gospel." In other words they are suffering from want of a little healthful exercise. They are

over-fed and under-worked and suffering from spiritual dyspepsia, they are ill-natured and irritable.

We intended discussing several other forms of practical heresy, but time is up. One of the most deadly practical heresies is hoarding or mis-spending the Lord's money. Many a stalwart Presbyterian who would fight for the Confession, who would even fight for hell and the eternal duration of future punishment, thinks nothing of walking around all year with the Lord's money in his pocket. Some day we may return to the discussion of a few practical heresies and ask why we never have a heresy trial on practical issues.

SERMON REVERIES.

NO. IV.

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all.—Mark x. 42, 43, 44.

This is the text of a sermon heard by me last Lord's Day, which set me, together with my reading of recent date, thinking of that almost forgotten Canadian worthy, William Lyon Mackenzie. I am not wrong in calling him a worthy Canadian, as no less a personage than Sir John Thompson stated from his place in the House of Commons, no longer ago than last session, his thorough belief in the righteousness, honesty of purpose and freedom from selfishness of the so-called rebels of '37. Time has long since rubbed down the differences of opinion which then led to such extreme measures as were taken, and we do not grudge to use freely to-day many of the rights and liberties fought for so stubbornly fifty years ago. Here is a little bill of five paragraphs, none of which are by any means exorbitant:—

- 1.—The entire control of the whole provincial revenues is required to be vested in the Legislature.
- 2.—The independence of the judges and their removal to take place only upon a joint address of the two Houses.
- 3.—Reform of the Legislative Council which is now an assembly chiefly composed of persons wholly or partly dependent upon the Executive Government for their support.
- 4.—An administration or Executive Government responsible to the province for its conduct.
- 5.—Equal rights to each religious denomination and an exclusion of every sect from participation in temporal power.

Such was the Bill of Rights put forward by Mackenzie from time to time. Surely nothing extraordinary about these demands, that is, so it seems to us fortunate mortals of the year '91, and yet the very publication and demand for this simple quintette raised such a paroxysm of rage in the pretty and nepotistic circle of the Family Compact as is quite beyond our poor understanding nowadays. We said at the onset of this reverie that we were forcibly reminded of Mackenzie by the treatment of the text by the preacher. It was famously done, and a better sermon has not been preached from any pulpit for some weeks at least. The right-minded minister, or servant of all, who, notwithstanding his evident superiority over the surrounding workers, is nevertheless the least of all. He was very fair towards his opponents, this "servant of the people," and all the vilification of scores of subsidized newspapers and petty office-seekers was of no avail in causing any deviation from his chosen path. Here is an extract regarding the election for the House in 1830, when he and three others contested York, which then included Toronto and much adjacent territory outside the present county. "Mr. Mackenzie publicly announced that he would abstain from using the press as a medium of injuring in the public estimation whoever might be opposed to him as candidates." If he were elected it must be the deliberate result of public opinion alone, "opposed as it would be to the powerful influence of the local Government, the dominant priesthood, the Provincial bank, and every human being who profits by the present irresponsible system." On this occasion he was elected as he deserved to be, his coadjutor for the country proper being Mr. Jesse Ketchum, a name held in much reverence by Presbyterians in particular and children in general.

A careful perusal of Mackenzie's doings and mis-doings leads to several reflections whenever his name is recalled. Surely nothing but odium can attach to the names of Francis Bond Head, Allan McNabb and Solicitor-General Hagarman, and it is impossible but to believe that they thought that they were in the right. If they did, many of their modes of enforcing the right were, to say the least, brutal, unfair and despotic. A more imbecile and unstatesmanlike attempt at governing than Head's never surely has been eclipsed, nor can be. A more ignorant Scotch boorishness, and contempt for his fellows, never, I am sure, animated any other such in Canadian history than that which was Allan McNabb's, and these were his only recommendations to preferment with the Family Compact. Of Mackenzie what shall we say in parting: surely not all praise. We have heard many a diatribe against the man by those who perhaps knew him and some of his faults of later days only too well. Alas, yes. "To err is human, to forgive Divine." The pitiful story of his latter-day poverty and consequent actual want is known only to a few, and yet it is just as well. Rather let us judge him for his good points. The good he did was not interred with his bones, nor did the evil he did die either; it lived as other evils, because it appears proper that evil should live.

Mackenzie failed in his onslaught on the Government of the day. The enterprise deserved to fail because of its awful

mismanagement; but never because of its want of reason for existence. One month of Head's system of government nowadays would wreck the State of a surety. Rebellion is wrong in principle, and we will not uphold it; yet we owe much to this misguided affair of '37, and only regret that Mackenzie did not continue his splendid constitutional, and, as subsequent events proved, succeeding fight against the unjust powers then holding office. He lived to see his error and bitterly repent it, and although his later years were, by means of the Royal Clemency, passed in old Toronto among his friends, there was such animosity and rancour in certain minds as forbade the peaceful enjoyment of the evening of his days. For a small man, and an insignificant-looking one withal, he raised more opposition than could be thought possible for one man to do. Deep-seated hatred was a mild name for the feelings of his opponents. It is, therefore, pleasing to find men of opposite views now extolling his virtues and forgetting his faults. This is as it should be, and we hope ere long that a graceful monument in Queen's Park will stand forth to remind our youths of one man's existence, and one man's successes and failures. At present all we can say is:—

Here lieth one who prized the public weal
Far above earthly honours, wealth or fame,
Whose life-long labours in his country's cause
Were pure from sordid end or selfish aim.

Oppressed, wronged, exiled, spurned from the land
He would have given his life to bless and save,
His country, on whose shrine his all was laid,
Bestowed upon the patriot—a grave.

CURLY TOPP.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

IRELAND—TRINITY COLLEGE.

This well-known seat of learning is one of the sights of Dublin; it would be an ornament to any of the greatest cities in Europe. Many of its graduates have been distinguished in every walk in life, and the visitor to the Capital, be he a member of the learned professions, or merchant, or manufacturer, he is anxious to see this great University.

Trinity College was founded in 1591, at which time the staff only consisted of a Provost and three Fellows, but such has been the growth of this great educational institution that at present there are seven senior and about twenty-five junior Fellows, besides a large number of Professors and Lecturers in almost every department. The Rev. George Salmon, D.D., F.R.S., a very distinguished man, is Provost, and would seem to be the right man in the right place. One of the senior Fellows is John K. Ingram, LL.D., whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for many years, and who, as a scholar and poet, has been well and widely known. Dr. Ingram is the author of that sweet and beautiful poem, "The Memory of the Dead," which appeared among a fine collection of Irish ballads. It was written with reference to the troubles of 1798.

Dr. Ingram is a native of Newry, County Down, and his father afterwards was a Rector in County Donegal, and if my native town had not the honour of his birth, it had the still greater honour of supplying him with a wife, who was one of the greatest favourites in Dublin society. Mrs. Ingram was the daughter of the late J. J. Clark, esq. M.P. for Derry County.

At the invitation of this correspondent Dr. Ingram came north and delivered a lecture on "Oliver Goldsmith," which, as was expected, drew one of the largest and most cultured audiences ever assembled in that classic town. He has relatives in Toronto and Montreal, as well as several former students. Dr. Ingram is Professor of English literature and librarian of the College. He has not written much, as his life has been rather an active one.

THE LIBRARY

contains an immense collection of books. Some of them are of great value, and there is a rare collection of Irish manuscripts kept in a fire-proof room. The Library, like that of Oxford, is entitled to a copy of every work published in the United Kingdom free of charge. Here, also, is to be seen a harp supposed to have belonged to the celebrated Brian Boroihme, King of Munster. The Library is open to visitors every day, but some of the more valuable manuscripts can only be seen on application to the Librarian.

I am indebted to my friend, Dr. Montgomery, of Dublin, for escorting me through this and other public buildings. The Doctor is a graduate of the College and naturally takes much pride in the institution.

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.

This very valuable institution was established about 1786 in Dawson Street, near the Mansion House, and the student of antiquities will find much here to interest him. We hear much about the present age and its progress. In its light it is interesting to look upon some of the weapons and ornaments of a people who inhabited this Island before Christianity had made its impress felt upon it. How would some of our modern mechanics like to handle stone axes, or our ladies like to wear necklaces of shell or bone for ornaments, or our boys wield a hammer made of stone? The many interesting articles exhibited in this department at once prove the great skill of the Irish in works of art, and that, too, long before civilization had made any progress. There is to be seen here a bell which belonged to St. Patrick, and also a cover, or "shine," which is a fine specimen of the exquisite work done by goldsmiths in the eleventh century. It cost the institution about \$2,500. There is a very valuable relic here, said to have been the possession of St. Patrick, and a copy of the Gospels which also belonged to the Saint. These and many