

Our Contributors.

THE REIGN OF THE MANUSCRIPT.

BY KNOWNAN

The Knox College Jubilee showed that the American habit of using the manuscript in public speaking is on the increase in Canada. President Patton was the only speaker who seemed to be entirely independent of the paper. We did not hear Mayor Kennedy, but judging from the report published in full we should say his address was written in full and read either from memory or from manuscript. Neither in his sermon nor his address did the President of Princeton do or say anything that suggested the paper. He may have written both, but he delivered them in a style that defied detection. Principal Grant delivered about three-fourths of his splendid speech without looking at his notes, but he consulted his note-book quite frequently towards the end. His fine peroration was slightly weakened by an attempt to read and speak at the same time. Mr. Blake never looked at his notes, but he had them in his hand, presumably for use, if needed. Vice-Chancellor Mulock had a fully written manuscript and used it quite freely. President Loudon read and "made no bones about it." Dr. Burwash had a well-prepared manuscript and Principal Sheraton used his paper faithfully. Professor Newman kept his eye on his notes quite as much as on his audience. One of the best pieces of work done at the Jubilee was the address delivered by Prof. Thomson when unveiling the portrait of the late Professor George Paxton Young. Prof. Thomson did not read nor even once consult his manuscript, but the paper was within a reasonable distance of the worthy gentleman, and no doubt he would have used it if stress of weather had made the use necessary. In fact the whole Jubilee programme, except the informal addresses of the chairman, was largely a manuscript programme. It was hardly fair to say that Dr. Reid read an historical sketch of the college. Some men not more than half the age of the venerable Doctor read as closely as he did.

There are some manifest advantages in reading speeches. Reading speeches is a contradiction in terms, but let that pass. One of the advantages is brevity. Few men have time to write a long speech, word for word. And even if they do find time to write there is less time needed in delivery. A speech or sermon that would take thirty or thirty-five minutes in free delivery can be read in fifteen or twenty.

The matter of a written speech or sermon is likely to be better. Most men say things when speaking extemporaneously that they would never think of writing. Some of these things may be wise and some may be painfully otherwise. Some of them may be brilliant and some are pretty certain to be silly. It is the easiest thing in the world to say something in an extemporaneous speech that makes the speaker feel half ashamed next morning.

A manuscript keeps a man from wandering all over creation and from going into other worlds when he can find nothing more to say about this one. It prevents him from fleeing into other cities when he is persecuted in the one about which he is speaking. This alone is an immense advantage. Not long ago we heard of a preacher, and a good one he is too, who goes into his pulpit loaded for bear, but when he has fired a short time at bear he begins to fire at various other animals. That kind of hunting is done more or less by almost every speaker or preacher who does not use his pen. Brother Boanerges goes upon the platform loaded for bear, but when he has fired a shot or two at bear, begins firing at the lion and tiger and elephant and sometimes cannot be induced to cease firing until he has taken a shot at all the animal creation. Now the manuscript keeps a man from firing universally and hitting nothing in particular, and that is a good thing for the man who fires and not a bad thing for the human family.

Still there are, and always must be, drawbacks in the use of written matter for oral purposes. The written style and the best oral style are in some particulars essentially different. The more carefully and elaborately anything is written the harder and more unsatisfactory will be the work of the man who has to deliver it. It is impossible to speak an essay well. Donald Fraser tells us in his autobiography that he would not allow himself to write sermons in a finished, elaborate style because it is not well to "talk like a book."

Perhaps one first class man in a hundred can deliver carefully written matter without any suggestion of "a book." Dr. Munro Gibson can do it. His paper at the Presbyterian Council was no doubt carefully written, but he delivered it in the perfection of oratorical style. Not long ago we heard a young law student, who was in the gallery at the time, go over some of the "points" in that paper and he remembered them distinctly. Could he have remembered them if Dr. Gibson had talked "like a book."

There is reading and reading and reading. Professor Young one day gave his class some earnest advice against reading their sermons. "Did not Dr. Chalmers read his sermons," asked one of the students. "Yes," replied the professor, "and if you can read like Chalmers, read yours too."

There are some advantages in reading. There are some men who ought always to read their sermons and perhaps their speeches too. There are some occasions on which it may be best for most men to read. There are some audiences, though the number is few, that are more benefited by reading than by oral delivery. But when all these exceptions are noted, the fact remains that the most effective style of speaking or preaching discards the manuscript.

THE REV. DRS. JOHN LAING AND A. T. PIERSON ON "THE AGES OF THE KINGDOM."

BY REV. J. B. EDMONDSON, BELVIDERE, N. I.

II.

Near the close of page 622, we read, "The light of the gospel is to spread till all lands shall see it," Acts xiii. 47; "And all nations shall serve King Jesus," Dan. vii. 13, 14.

This quotation means in plain words that the world shall be converted to God by the spread of the gospel as it is now being carried abroad. That is the position of post-millennial brethren everywhere. Dr. Laing states his doctrine very timidly, but it is there all the same. The main points are found in the two words "see" and "serve." The two passages above are quoted in support of the dogma. Acts xiii. 47 reads, "for so hath the Lord commanded us saying, I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth." As a witness, this verse does not testify what Dr. Laing brought it forward to do. It teaches that Jesus Christ has been set as the light of all nations, which is a great truth, but it does not touch the point at issue. It does not say or even hint that the work is to be done exclusively by *preaching*. Then Dan. vii. 13-14, is too long to quote. The passage points on to millennial days, when "all nations and languages shall serve Him," but it says nothing as to how that happy state of things has come about. Let the reader turn up this passage and examine it as to whether it teaches that all nations are to be brought to serve God, by *preaching* under the influence of the Holy Ghost and he will see that it is silent on the subject. Pre-millennial brethren hold that no such teaching is anywhere to be found in the Word. Dr. Laing's quotations help to confirm them in what they hold.

Acts xv. 14 has a bearing on the matter in hand. It reads, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." That verse strikes the key-note of the work of grace during the present dispensation. There has never been more than an out-gathering as yet from among men into the fold of the Great Shepherd. The time is coming when they shall be brought in abreast, one and all. May God speed the day.

"That event (the fall of Jerusalem) took place A. D. 70, and with it came the end of place and nation, and of symbolic worship," Matt. xxiv. 3-14; Mark xiii. 30; John iv. 21-24. So teaches the Doctor, pages 622-3. Then the nationality of the old covenant people is gone forever. In so saying, the writer puts himself in conflict with the facts of Providence, and with explicit statements of the Word. The Jew has stood out separate from all other peoples through the ages. Balaam said, "Lo! the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations." But according to the words quoted, they are a nation no more, and hence there is no reason for their continued separate existence. In such case there can be no "receiving of them" back again. But wherein does this doctrine collide with the word? "I say then hath God cast away His people whom He foreknew?" He gives the reply himself and makes it emphatic, "God forbid." They are not cast away forever, "in a little wrath he smote them." Jer. xxx. 35-37 says, "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night . . . if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out, beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." These two quotations, the one from *Knox College Monthly*, written by Dr. Laing, and the other from the prophecies of Jeremiah, written by the prophet, are in battle array as fairly as ever two armies were. Dr. Laing says that the nation is gone and symbolic worship too. The symbolic worship is gone forever, and in the same sense the nationality is gone. Jeremiah teaches that you can no more obliterate the nationality of that chosen people, than you can bring day and night to an end. The Holy Ghost through Jeremiah taught that the seed of Israel cannot cease to be a nation. Surely Dr. Laing has not given the place to that promise that it ought to have.

It is in dealing with this same question that Paul pens the memorable words, "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." God called Abraham and said He would make of him a great nation. If He has blotted out the nationality of the descendants of the patriarch, no longer can it be said that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Paul says, Rom. xi. 15, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead!" The casting away of the Jews was a literal thing. The Romans, who were chosen of God to do it, performed the deed. The city and temple were burned and the people carried away. The casting away was terribly real and literal. And "the receiving of them" will be as real and as literal. Here is one point at which Dr. Laing errs, and on which Dr. Pierson is scriptural. Dr. Laing says there is no national literal "receiving of them" ever to take place. The old covenant people are no more to God now than the North American Indians are, in the judgment of the Doctor. When he holds the casting away to be literal and the receiving of them to be figurative, his conclusion is arbitrary and unscriptural. When he explains the threatenings they are all to be taken in their plain obvious sense. When the promises are under consideration, they are figures of speech, and all that is in them belongs to the church.

There is no national restoration for the Jew, says Dr. Laing. In the last verse of the prophecy of Amos these words occur, "And I will plant them upon their own land, and they shall NO MORE BE PULLED up out of their land which I shall give them, saith the Lord thy God." That promise implies a planting of the Jew in the land after which there shall be no pulling up. Dr. Laing says that people has been pulled up never to be planted again. The prophet says that they shall be planted never to be pulled up. Both positions cannot be true. The old one is the better.

"It has for him no fixed meaning," says Dr. Laing. That is *the kingdom of God* has assumed no definite shape in the mind of Dr. Pierson. To say the least, the position that Dr. Laing herein takes, is *extraordinary* when the facts of the case are all looked at. In the first place, the whole article is about that subject. If Dr. Pierson has "no fixed meaning" in all he writes, how does Dr. Laing spend so much time in exposing the mistakes made! Is he pounding the air all through the seventeen pages of the monthly? But let any reader turn to page 805 of the Review, and there he will find Dr. Pierson's views of the kingdom, clearly put. It is not very often that Dr. Pierson is charged with being muddy. Let me give one short quotation, "The peculiarities of this coming age are these: First of all, Christ's personal reign. . . the kingdom will then be marked by *visibility*; it will not be elective, but collective, comprehensive, extensive, and advance toward universal dominion. . . This coming age will be one of conquest. It is an age of completion." When we remember that Dr. Pierson undertook to write at length about only two ages of the kingdom, it is remarkable the amount of truth presented, and with such clearness. The fact is, that Dr. Laing himself has gone so far in spiritualizing the plain statements of the word made concerning the subject that the kingdom has no longer a definite being to anybody. To these two strong men, "the kingdom" means different things. Dr. Pierson accepts the language in its ordinary grammatical meaning, and holds that it implies a country, a king, laws, throne, subjects, and all good things that belong to a kingdom. Dr. Laing has assumed the liberty to say that all these things are figures, and then proceeds to tell us what they mean. A throne is not a throne; that interpretation is too carnal for him. A king is not a king—a city is not a city. If he had lived before Christ came, he would have said Christ would never *literally* enter Jerusalem riding on an ass—that is absurd. The passage means that He will be humble. That higher critic from Germany, lecturing in Edinburgh, a few months ago, said to the students, that Jesus never *literally* rose from the dead; His spirit rose in Peter and John and the others. That expounder knew how to take liberties with the word.

"Satan wrested the sceptre from the hand of the first Adam," says Dr. Pierson. To this statement Dr. Laing takes serious exception, and asks in astonishment was Adam a king? In Gen. i. 26 we read that God gave Adam *dominion* over the creatures, first made, and over the earth. It was that sceptre that the devil wrested from Adam. With that fact before us, all that Dr. Laing says about wresting the sceptre from the hand of God, falls to the ground.

Before leaving this matter, let us look at a manifest contradiction into which the Doctor falls. He admits that Satan usurped dominion, and became the god of this world. He is clear on this point—Satan has got hold of the world meantime. With that fact in his mind, Dr. Laing should not say that it was "an ingenious lie" on the part of Satan to offer those kingdoms to Christ. Satan was and is a great liar, but we have no proof that he was lying on that occasion. On Dr. Laing's showing, Satan had the kingdoms at his command, and may have stood ready to make Jesus his prime minister. Satan being in possession of the kingdoms, Dr. Laing has no right to say that he *lost* when he offered the glory of them to Jesus. We must not charge even Satan with falsehood unless we know our ground.

"Dr. Pierson errs greatly when he teaches that God's kingdom ceased when man fell," says Dr. Laing. When we look at facts it is clear that a mistake has been made. On the first page Dr. Pierson says: "The kingdom of God is therefore to be found wherever community or even an individual soul owe His sway." That sentence just answers the charge in full. The kingdom of God is on the earth now. It is here in mystery, but it is here. So Dr. Pierson teaches.

Dr. Laing says, page 626, "The kingdom was taken from the Jewish nation and given to all nations," Matt. xxi. 43. He means