

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION.

BY KNONONIAN.

Some one has said that "well begun is half done." That no doubt is the reason why orators of all kinds are so careful to begin their speeches with neat and appropriate introductions. The man with the true oratorical instinct feels that he must put himself on good terms with his audience before he begins to instruct or persuade them. This course is specially desirable if he is compelled to press some unpalatable truths upon their attention. The speaker who brings up his heavy artillery as soon as he assumes the perpendicular attitude and hurls unpleasant facts and arguments at Drumtochty heads is not wise. He is not an artist. Principal Grant never goes to work in that way when he wants money for Queen's. There is great room for skill in making the introduction to a speech, especially a speech about money, when business is dull and wheat fifty cents a bushel. We have a vivid recollection of a case in which two youthful ministers began their speeches about money in an unskillful way in a Scotch congregation, and they neither got money nor an invitation to visit the congregation again. Had they put skilful introductions to their juvenile, though not especially modest efforts, they might have got both.

The fundamental importance of the introduction in public speaking no doubt explains why the typical tea meeting orator displays so much originality and good taste when he begins his work in this way:

"Mr. Chairman and Christian friends, I am glad to be here. I like these meetings. They bring the ministers of the different denominations together on a common platform, and hasten on the happy time when we shall all be united. I like these meetings. I am glad to be here on this occasion. I am glad to see you in the chair on this occasion. I am glad to see representatives of all the churches here on this occasion. Denominational differences are buried on this occasion. And that reminds me of what I once heard about a man who was walking out on a misty day." (Tells the old story about the man who thought he saw a beast in the distance, and on coming nearer found it was his brother John.)

A speech introduced in such an original and brilliant way, must of course do execution. The orator went on in the same genial style for forty-five minutes. The most telling point of his speech was that some thing reminded him of something he heard about an Irishman.

THE EGOTISTIC INTRODUCTION

is not as uncommon as it should be. In this form of introduction the speaker discourses exclusively about himself. He tells the audience about his past achievements, the great work he has done, the big people he has associated with, and a lot of other weighty things. If he is speaking at a convention he always makes some reference to the other conventions he has attended "all of which were highly successful." If he has ever been near a Moody meeting he always drags in Moody. Himself and his work are the only features of his introduction, and the smaller the features the larger he tries to make them.

THE TAFFY INTRODUCTION

consists of a highly exaggerated eulogy on the chairman, the place, the people, the meeting, the choir, and everything connected with "this occasion." Some introductions are stupid, some clever, some silly, some tiresome, but the Taffy introduction is positively painful to anybody who is sensitive on the veracity line. Is it possible that that man means what he says and all he says? An hour before he may have described such meetings as a nuisance and half

an hour after ridiculed meeting, place, people and everything connected with the occasion.

THE GUSTATORY INTRODUCTION

is confined exclusively to tea meetings. In it the speaker eulogises the tea and the cakes, and the other good things provided. Not unfrequently the man who makes this introductory bow, alludes politely to the amount of provisions he has stowed away in his person and to the enormous amount some of his brother ministers have put out of sight. The Gustatory is one of the most elegant and refined modes of entering upon a speech.

THE BEFORE AND AFTER INTRODUCTION.

This form of bow consists generally in some more or less stupid references to what has been said and to the speakers that are yet to "address you on this occasion."

The Political introduction is nearly always a eulogy on the enterprise of the place and the intelligence of the people that the politician is trying sometimes to instruct and more frequently in this country to humbug.

Time is up and we must leave a lot unsaid about introductions.

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL*

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, B.D.

It is a very great mistake into which many good Christian people fall, to assume that the reverent critic who thinks he has discovered some mistake in, e.g., Chronicles as we have them is, in declaring the same undermining the Christian verities; or that maintaining the largely accepted view of a second and unknown Isaiah as the author of the closing chapters of the series of prophecies known by that name, affects the great truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We must distinguish between the Gospel's manifest teachings and our deductions therefrom; between traditional views or present applications, and the essential truths with their universal applicability. Should any timid friend, insisting that the yielding of one point traditionally held, involves the giving up of all, demand, Where, then, is your ground of certainty? I unhesitatingly reply in the words of the Westminster divines: "Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts"; or as our children's hymnology puts it:

"I love to tell the story because I know 'tis true,
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do."

All the intellectual assent in the universe without that spiritual consciousness would be but sounding brass or a clanging symbol; given that consciousness, and he possessing it,

"— in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
His title to a treasure in the skies."

For much of the thoughtful scepticism of to-day those good people must share the responsibility who insist that everything in their traditions must be held, or the whole abandoned. It may be as the venerable Dr. McLaren, of Manchester, said: "In a day like this truth must change its vesture."

These reflections have been penned with a small work lying open on the desk before us, "The Prophets of Israel," by Dr. Carl H. Cornill of Konigsberg University. This book of scarcely two hundred pages gives in plain unpretending sentences what may be considered the present view of the more advanced critics regarding the times and messages of Israel's prophets from Moses on to Daniel. The presentation is dogmatic rather than argumentative; supposed results are given without detailing the steps by means of which those results are arrived at, and this is rather an excellence than otherwise. You are not irritated

*The Prophets of Israel Carl Heinrich Cornill
The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago.

by opposition, but your standpoint is unconsciously, as it were, placed where you can view the scene as it was. The reader finds himself sympathetically in relation with the prophet and the times in which he lived. "The historical conditions and the contemporary environment of the various prophets are portrayed," and thus an intelligent opinion may be formed of their utterances, with their application to the needs of to-day, as well as of their direct meaning. No thoughtful reader can peruse these lectures without profit; nor will true devotion find itself offended by a cold irreverence—the style is one of faith, not of unbelief.

While thus freely commending the work for its suggestiveness, assured that truth is no sickly offspring that needs to be wrapped up in swaddling bands, or kept from the free air, we are far from saying that the positions assumed are all received, or that the subject is treated with completeness. You see the prophets in their environment, but not the Christology of the Old Testament; were these pages all, we should need to correct our Saviour's word when of these Scriptures he said, "They testify of me," to "they lead up to me." The evolution or development of religious truth is well noted, but the Spirit which works is ignored. Therefore the reader of this work must needs, if he would profit thereby, add to his reading this truth that "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." And this is for the Christian the radical defect of the school whose results our author so well represents. The testimony of Jesus is displaced by the cold science of evolution. We want a glimpse of the evolver.

The positions taken are for the most part those of Wellhausen's article, "Israel," in the last edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, some of which at least are being discredited by more than one recognized specialist in those very fields of research. When we are told, e.g., as Dr. Cornill tells us, that "we have not received a line—not even a word—from Moses himself, or from any of his contemporaries; even the celebrated Ten Commandments are not from him, but, as can be proved, were written between 700 and 650 B.C., we hesitate acceptance, and naturally ask for the proof. Nor can we allow Q.E.D. to be written when we are told that the manifest monotheism and opposition to idolatry in the Ten Commandments could not have been promulgated when Jehovah was a tribal God and when Moses himself made a serpent of brass; for the latter was not under Moses an object of worship, but as the sacrifices, a symbol; and no proof is forthcoming to show that Moses viewed God as a mere national Deity. Indeed, we hold the contrary. The *I Am* of the law-giver was the God that in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. That idolatry and henotheism prevailed among the Israelites with the law of Moses in their hands is no more inconsistent, in fact, than that in this land of Bibles and Churches the Christian world should be split into sects innumerable while its great apostle is teaching that the body of Christ is one, and that schism is sinful. Over and above all this we have Prof. A. H. Sayce, as recently as last October, writing in view of "fresh discoveries breaking in upon us year by year, almost month by month":—"I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses." Whilst then we thank Dr. Cornill for the clear manner in which he presents contemporary history in its relation to the prophets, we can but remember the incompleteness of view, and decline to accept his advanced views regarding the lateness of the Pentateuchal writings as at least "not proven."

The subject is a tempting one, but this article is already sufficiently long; with such provisos as here indicated, the work reviewed may be profitably read.

The programme for the Week of Prayer beginning Sabbath, January 5th, has been issued by the Evangelical Alliance.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.*

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, B.D.

This is a timely work, defining the Higher Criticism as "the discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form and value of literary productions upon the basis of their internal characteristics and contents;" the Lower Criticism concerning itself more especially with the question relating to the text. Thus understood the Evangelical school has more to gain from the right use of the Higher Criticism than rationalism. The author justly points out that in one important respect the Bible stands unique in literature, it has so incorporated itself into the very life of Christianity that it cannot be treated as, e.g., the legendary histories of Greece and Rome or the works of Herodotus. In view of results, its general acceptance as a divine revelation cannot be overlooked by any *apriori* assumption. The work is not designed to reach conclusions, it defines what criticism is, points out its limits and legitimate lines of research. A brief summary of the points touched by the Higher Criticism is given. We have seen no other book that so concisely states the true methods of enquiry and the view to be shunned. No student of theology should be without it; and every thoughtful reader of the Scripture in the light of present day research will find real guidance in these pages. On the other hand it as plainly indicates that the humble enquirer after God and His Christ need not err in searching searching the Scriptures, even though the Higher Criticism should never come within the sphere of his enquiry. "The Bible commends itself, apart from criticism or the authority of the Church, as a source of religious information and inspiration."

PUBLIC WORSHIP.—I.

This open letter, the first of three on a very important subject from the distinguished Chancellor of Queen's University, to Rev. Dr. Laing, Convener of the General Assembly's Committee on public worship, we gladly publish and commend the whole subject to the earnest, candid and prayerful consideration of all our readers.—[EDITOR.]

REV. DR. LAING,
Convener of Committee on Public Worship.

SIR,—With your leave I desire to submit the following remarks on the important subject now under the consideration of the Committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

A distinctive feature of public worship in our Church is the absence of participation by the congregation in the service. Exclusive of the musical portion, the whole service devolves upon or is performed by the minister alone. There are many persons, both laymen and ministers, who entertain the opinion that, whatever may have been the causes which determined the present usages, the time has arrived when, in the interests of the Church in Canada, it is desirable to consider the extent to which these usages may be modified, so that a larger participation may be accorded to the congregation in the service of divine worship.

As worship is now ordered, the people enter their pews, and, throughout the whole service, until the benediction is pronounced, no opportunity is vouchsafed to them, except to a very limited extent, to take part in the service. All present are at liberty to join in the psalms and hymns when they are sung, but if the music selected be unfamiliar, or if any present feel their own incapacity, or for any reason soever take no part in this portion of the service, such persons, from the moment they enter the building to the time they leave it, continue to be silent listeners to whatever may be said or sung. Except by their presence they take no other part in

*The Elements of the Higher Criticism By A. C. Zenos. Funk and Wagnalls Co., Toronto.