

Our Contributors.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

MR. EDITOR.—I knew a Mr. William Houston, some years ago who held, and I believe still holds, positions of influence and responsibility in the educational and literary world, a man of much information and intelligence, I therefore regret to see, by your issue of November 19th, that some one, apparently destitute of both these qualifications, has been using his name to give currency to fallacious reasonings and unchristian principles in connection with the subject of French Evangelization.

This writer displays the deficiency of his information by conveying the impression that the Church, out of some common fund, makes unequal provision for two schemes, Home Mission proper and French Evangelization. The real Mr. Houston probably knows and certainly ought to know, that the Church has two funds, entirely distinct, for these separate schemes, and carries on its operations in the individual mission fields according to the extent to which the membership of the Church responds to the appeals made on their behalf. The only way to meet the writer's views would be to abolish the Board of French Canadian Evangelization, or to confiscate its funds for the benefit of other schemes, in opposition to the will of the contributors.

Your correspondent exhibits lamentable inconsistency and most faulty logic in assuming a large-hearted catholicity towards the Church of Rome, so large as to leave its field of conquest and aggression untouched, and, at the same time, in making this attitude the reason for diverting the funds, hitherto employed for combatting its pernicious errors, to the purpose of saving Presbyterians from falling into other Protestant Churches. He is so far consistent, however, that he sees no reason why Baptists, Methodists and Anglicans should differ from Roman Catholics as the objects of missionary effort.

The writer's cardinal error, for which he is probably indebted to Archbishop Lynch and the political parties that bow respectively before the Catholic vote, is that the Church of Rome is, equally with the Protestant bodies, a section of the Christian Church. The fair inference from such a statement is that the author of it never read the history of the Reformation and is ignorant of the principles of his own Church. He certainly cannot know, what Mr. Houston, as one conversant with public opinion, must have known, the attitude which united Protestantism holds towards the Church of Rome as an apostate Church. And of that church's doctrines and practice, its superstitions and soul-destroying errors, his letter would lead one to believe he had never so much as dreamed.

What a noble argument is this: "The French people do not want our aid." What people living in darkness does want it or ever did? The man of Macedonia called over to the Apostle Paul, it is true, but it was a phantom man in a dream of the night. Did the people of Formosa call Dr. MacKay, or those of the New Hebrides send for Dr. Geddie? When will the world be evangelized if the Church waits till its missionaries are wanted? Or again, take this: "We can get no recruits from amongst them except at the expense of social ostracism." This is unhappily too true. But what is the inference? therefore, out of compassion for them, leave them in error and in comfort! Let the poor souls who have abandoned friends and suffered persecution for the Gospel's sake make peace with Rome and regain their social status! If this be not high treason against the throne of truth, it will be hard to find that crime. The converts count the cost before they leave their errors, for they know the Church of Rome better than your correspondent, and yet they are willing to come forth, in some cases to leave all, at any rate to become outcasts and even exiles for the truth. It seems to my prejudiced mind a worthy mission for any Church to be the means under God of developing such character. If there are men in the world for whom prayers and pains and means are well expended, surely these are the very men. When the workers in God's vineyard receive their crowns for saved souls, one such, plucked from the slough of Romanism, will far outweigh a hundred saved from Baptist, Methodist or Anglican communions.

The writer is utilitarian; he views everything from the standpoint of political or ecclesiastical economy. It is nothing that the French Canadian converts are

gained to the Church at large; by exile they are lost to us. Now if the aim and end of the Church be to show a large membership and to fill its treasuries, the writer has some reason on his side. It is necessary, however, to inform him that the work of the Church is *the conversion of the world*. Yet, viewed in the light of political economy, the work of French Evangelization needs no apology. It is a patriotic work. Every Romanist detached from his creed is so much gained for liberty, intelligence and progress. It is true that much of the prosperity of the Dominion depends upon the newer settlements, and every lover of French Missions wishes abundant success to the Church in these fields. But the Province of Quebec on account of its religion is the incubus of the Dominion. It is not only the most heartless selfishness, but at the same time the most short sighted and unpatriotic policy to renounce, for the sake of a little money, a little present power, and an ignoble peace, the Church's warfare with its superstition and ignorance.

The stirring events of the past week in Montreal, the crowded French meetings, the mortal attacks of the Catholic mob, the devotion of French missionaries and converts, the manly attitude of the Protestant minority, and, last but not least, the meeting of more than thirty Protestant ministers of all denominations to assert Reformation principles and the right of preaching the Gospel; these stand forth in strange contrast to the cold-blooded surrender proposed by your correspondent, far from the dir of war.

"It is about time this question was discussed on its merits" he says. I agree with him there. On its merits and not on the ground of any fancied relation to other schemes of the Church, let it be discussed. The scheme of French Evangelization has injured no other scheme. Its advocates have never breathed a complaint against any other mission. No work of the Church has ever lost a penny through its Board. The members of the Church, and of other Churches, too, give towards the support of French Missions, because they love the work and know its great importance.

In conclusion, your correspondent seems to think that the unmanly attacks upon French work and the arduous and self-denying labours of the Secretary Treasurer, which are known to me as they are to few, have been met by recent letters. I believe so too, but I believe also that they were met and condemned in every honest heart long before these letters were penned. As for the writer's boast that his objections must be differently disposed of, if they are disposed of at all, I answer that for any Christian man, for any Protestant and lover of the truth, to read his objections and understand them is to dispose of them once and for ever. The statement of such errors is their refutation.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

Presbyterian College, November 21st, 1884.

MR. EDITOR—I was much surprised to see in THE PRESBYTERIAN of the 19th inst., a letter from Mr. Houston, in which he endeavours to show that our Church is acting unwisely in spending on French Evangelization money which ought to be spent on Home Mission work in the North-West; and also to show that we are inconsistent in prosecuting French Evangelization at all.

Mr. Houston does not seem to be aware that our Church is quite competent to carry on both. Our resources are very great, and, instead of being exhausted, they are still far from being fully developed. The two great enterprises do not at all conflict with one another. There are many in the Church who take a very deep interest in French Evangelization, and there are many who, like Mr. Houston, consider the North-West our grand field of Home Mission work. It is well that both parties should have an opportunity of contributing to the mission in which they take the deepest interest. In this way the missionary spirit of the Church will have fuller scope for exercise, and much more will be accomplished than would be if we had only one Home Mission scheme. All will contribute for both, whereas were French Evangelization discontinued many would be offended and would either not contribute at all or they would send their contributions to other churches. The large amount raised for French work shows how deeply interested our Church is in it. Mr. Houston makes a mistake similar to that of those who think that to be able to prosecute our Home Mission work successfully we should discontinue entirely our costly Foreign Missions. But the truth is, the two enterprises do not

interfere with one another, indeed, they are materially helpful, as they afford fuller scope for the development of a missionary spirit. I feel sure that the more we do for the North-West and for Foreign Missions the more will we be enabled to do for French Evangelization, especially if this last is a work which the Lord has assigned to us and placed at our very door.

In reference to the propriety of carrying on French Evangelization, I have a few remarks to make. Mr. Houston seems to consider the work hopeless, as it leads to "social ostracism," which compels converts to leave the country, so that they are lost to us. But in this case they are not lost to the Church of Christ. Having suffered persecution for the sake of liberty of conscience, their principles are strengthened, and they go forth to propagate them in the large French communities in the United States, where toleration is enjoyed, which, it appears, can not be obtained in the Province of Quebec. Mr. Chiniquy's mission churches at St. Anne, in Kankakee, and other places, are illustrations of this. Besides, these expatriated converts correspond with, and visit, their friends in Quebec, and thus make known to them the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. Moreover, the existence and the severity of the "social ostracism" referred to, show how wide and deep is the gulf fixed between Romanism and Protestantism.

Mr. Houston accuses us of inconsistency in recognizing Romish ordination while we seek to evangelize Romanists. There would be force in his contention were it a fact that Romish ordination is generally recognized in the Presbyterian Church, and were our views of the nature of ordination similar to those of Romanists and Anglicans. I admit that Romish ordination has in some cases been recognized, but this has not been done generally or heartily, and no act of any Presbyterian General Assembly, so far as I know, has ever authoritatively sanctioned it. The reason why it has been done in any case is not because there is little difference between Presbyterianism and Romanism, but because ordination has not been considered a matter of vital importance. Presbyterians do not believe in "the grace of orders" at all. They believe that the call of Christ to the ministry and the possession of suitable gifts and qualifications are the main things, and that ordination is merely the authoritative, scriptural and expedient recognition of the call of Christ. Now this is substantially gained when a person who was once a Romish priest becomes a Presbyterian pastor. He has to satisfy a Presbytery, and indeed the General Assembly, in reference to his views in renouncing Romanism, and in reference to his views of the Christian ministry. The loss and also the "social ostracism" to which he has been subjected are tolerable guarantees of his sincerity. Besides, when inducted into a pastoral charge, he has to answer the very questions which are put to a minister at his ordination, and he is inducted by an act of Presbytery accompanied with prayer similar to that offered up at ordination. In fact, the distinction between ordination and designation to pastoral work is so slender that Christians are not yet certain whether the service recorded in Acts xiii. 1-4, was the one or the other.

Hence it is easy to see that such a partial recognition of Romish ordination, as has occurred, has not been understood to include even a qualified approval of Romish errors in doctrine, polity and casuistry, especially as it has taken place only when a priest has expressly renounced these errors and left the Church. Thus there is no inconsistency between such a partial recognition of Romish ordination and prosecuting with all our might French Evangelization. But there would be a real, vital and flagrant inconsistency were we, while holding the Confession of Faith as our standard of doctrine, to relax our efforts to evangelize our Romish fellow-citizens. A few references to the Confession of Faith will make this manifest. Chapter xxv. 5: "The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." 6th. "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that anti-Christ, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God." Chapter xx. 2: "God alone is Lord of the conscience and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship." Chapter xxix. 2. "In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real