

Our Contributors.

THE WAY A GREAT OLD PREACHER CRITICIZES
A PROMISING YOUNG PREACHER.

BY KNOXIAN.

About a year ago one of our best known and most respected Toronto ministers was in Edinburgh. Some of the Presbyterian citizens of the modern Athens that he happened to meet were rather hard on Mr. McNeill, who was then making a stir in the city. They did not like the young preacher's style. The Toronto man told them that if they had no room and no work for Mr. McNeill in Edinburgh there was plenty of room and work for him in Canada. Mr. McNeill, unfortunately for the Dominion, has since found a place in London, or rather, we should say, the place found him, and the high opinion formed of him by our Toronto citizen is corroborated by Dr. Parker, of the City Temple. Parker—the City Temple preacher doesn't need any prefixes or affixes to his name—went to hear the young Scotch preacher one evening lately and the criticism given to an interviewer next morning, and published in the *British Weekly*, furnishes a fine illustration of the fair, generous, manly, hopeful way in which a really great preacher usually speaks of promising younger men. We all know how a small, snarling clerical or lay critic would be likely to speak of a man like Mr. McNeill. "He's sensational," "There's nothing in it," "He won't last," "He has no culture," "He's not dignified," "He should tarry at Jericho till his beard grows," "His English is not pure," are some of the choice, learned and highly charitable remarks one would be sure to hear. Parker is a great preacher himself, and men great in any line are usually fair and often generous critics.

Mr. McNeill evidently avoids what Dr. Willis used to call the "soporific," as the following question and answer from the interviewer will show:

"You were struck by his variety, then, I infer?"

"Very much. Mr. McNeill's variety is quite a characteristic of his preaching. Now he comes down out of the pulpit, sits besides us, and talks as if we had gathered around a fireside; for a sentence or two he runs on in a piquant way, using idioms which parochial cockneys can hardly be expected to understand; suddenly he rises to quite a high level of practical, earnest eloquence, and thrusts home upon the mind and the heart some divine truth. His voice is not made up of one strong noble tone; it has in it, as I have just hinted, many and very varied and contrastive tones; but from beginning to end the use of the voice is most strikingly and persuasively easy and natural."

Some people would call that kind of a delivery "theatrical." They like the "soporific" because it is conducive to slumber and is associated in their minds with many pleasant naps. "Theatrical" has as many terrors in it for preachers as the word "innovation" has for many hearers. Mr. McNeill doesn't care whether people say he is theatrical or not and that is one reason why he has such a good delivery. He is a master, not a slave, and being a master he does his work in a masterly way.

Dr. Parker liked the matter of the sermon as well as the manner, and is inclined to think that if the sinners of Regent Square are not converted the blame will be their own:

"Is it a kind of preaching that is likely to do good?"

"I can only reply that when I came out of the church I said to a friend, 'If they hear not preaching of that kind, and turn not to God at the bidding of such appeals, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' Mr. McNeill's preaching is pre-eminently calculated to do good. He pays no heed to doubts, speculations, fancies and theological nightmares; he has a simple, pathetic, divine message to deliver; and he delivers it fearlessly, tenderly, and most urgently."

He also thinks it will last:

"Do you think it is the kind of preaching that will last?"

"You make me smile when you put that inquiry, because I have become so familiar with it in the course of my own ministry. When I went to Banbury, people said, 'Will it last?' When I went to Manchester, people said, 'Will it last?' When I came to London, people said, 'Will it last?' Perhaps the inquiry is not unnatural. I am fully persuaded that Mr. McNeill's preaching is destined not only to last, but to improve, enlarge and ennoble itself by fuller experience of life. I will tell you why. There was nothing strained in Mr. McNeill's manner or matter. He was not like a man who was making a stupendous effort in which he utterly exhausted himself. He did not rise into any foaming periods called climaxes, after which one wondered if ever he would recover his natural level of thought and action, and settle down to common-sense. He never loudly he spoke, he was still master of himself and of his subject. He came back from his utmost vehemence as calmly as if he had never lifted his voice. As to the matter, there was nothing merely literary, affectedly profound, far fetched, or manufactured. Mr. McNeill had no manuscript, no elaborate periods, no literary construction that betokened pedantic attention to mechanical art. If Mr. McNeill had given us climaxes that conducted us into the clouds, I should have given him about eighteen months in which to finish his hysterics. As it was, he spoke like a man who could have talked on for ever."

He is not the least bit jealous:

"How does he rank with other preachers?"

"I look upon Mr. McNeill's coming to London as marking an era in the history of the metropolitan pulpit. What he was the Sunday before, and what he may be next Sunday, it is impossible for me to say; I simply confine my review to the one service which I personally attended, and making that one service the basis of my remarks, I have no hesitation in saying that I could not name a Non-conformist preacher in London who is Mr. McNeill's equal in the pulpit. I ought perhaps to tell you that my standard of criticism of preaching is perhaps different from that of most men."

I do not call readers of sermons preachers. They may be splendid readers of splendid compositions, but preachers they are not, from my point of view. Mr. Spurgeon is a preacher, Mr. Moody is a preacher, General Booth is a preacher, because these men have no literary composition over which they have pored and toiled, and which they have elaborated with a view to public effect. Their minds are well stored with Scripture, their experience of divine things is rich, their gift of language is large, and their fearlessness gives them complete mastery over public occasions. Speaking personally of Mr. McNeill I am bound to say that he struck me as a modest, earnest,

thoughtful and deeply devout man. His character is the guarantee of the durability of his ministry. He did not appear to me to say one word which did not come straight out of the centre of his faith. I wish Mr. McNeill long life, abounding prosperity, and in old age, 'honour, love, obedience and troops of friends.' If the Presbyterians will send to London such preachers as Mr. McNeill, the Congregationalists will have to look to their laurels. So much the better! I believe in emulation; I believe in honourable competition, so to say; My motto is—'Let us provoke one another to love and good works.' I joyfully hail the advent of every great preacher."

Dr. Parker closed the interview by sending the following brotherly message to Mr. McNeill:

"I should like to send a message to Mr. McNeill, if you can deliver it to him."

"Certainly," said I; "what is it?"

"Tell him to go on just as he has begun, and not for a moment to listen to anyone who would have him alter his style. Tell him to pay no attention to spiteful criticism. Tell him that prosperity always excites jealousy. Above all, tell him that God is the strength of his servants, and that God is never so near and so accessible as in the day of trouble."

Amidst so much criticism of the pulpit that is small, shallow, mean and sometimes spiteful it is decidedly refreshing to hear a really great and successful preacher speak in this generous, hopeful way of a comparative beginner.

THE JESUITS.

BY REV. R. F. BURNS, D.D., HALIFAX.

In the melancholy re-acton which succeeded the short-lived Revolution of 1848 we mark the effect. There is hardly one in the lengthened catalogue of black acts which since then have disgraced the Statute Books of Continental States which does not claim a Jesuit parentage. For a little it seemed as if the foundations of the Temple of Liberty were firmly laid, and its goodly walls were rising to heaven from the vale below. But suddenly the Jesuits, those sappers in the Papal army, sprung a secret mine, and we have now to mourn over its ruins. The Jesuits threw themselves into the van in the educational movement, and have ever evinced a deep interest in the training of the young.

We give them all due credit for the skill with which their efforts were conducted and the success which in many instances resulted from them, but this cannot blind us to the fact which all history proves, that selfishness was at the bottom of the entire movement; that it was commenced and carried out on the principle of self-defence, and not from any sincere desire to plant on the soil of the youthful mind either the Tree of Knowledge or the Tree of Life. As in 1848 there was a longing for liberty, so three centuries previously there was a longing for light, a longing—the natural consequence of the invention of printing and the labours of the Reformers, Mind, released from the leading strings wherewith for centuries it had been hemmed in, walked forth erect in its own native majesty, and scorned either priestly or regal dictation. After such a lengthened period of famine it craved nutritious aliment. This craving naturally produced alarm in those who had hitherto acted on the principle when it asked bread of giving it a stone.

They felt that as mind was now universally astir, the old system would not suit. Their ingenuity was therefore taxed in order to discover new tactics. They wished for a plan whereby this craving might be appeased, and at the same time their own interests not be endangered. In this emergency the Jesuits were found as serviceable, as after the lapse of 300 years they have proved themselves to be.

Standing in the capital of Spain, Loyola declared "The human mind is awakened. If its energy is not extinguished all eyes will be opened; and an alliance will be formed incompatible with the ancient subjection. Men will search for rights of which they are now ignorant." Then writing to his Holiness he adopts this arrogant and ambitious style. "Your ancient props no longer suffice. I offer you new support. You must have a fresh army, which shall cover you with the arms of heaven and earth. Adopt my well-instructed auxiliaries. Light makes war upon you. We will carry intelligence to some, darken knowledge in others and direct it in all." Hence by the Papal Bull of 1540, they are specially appointed to "instruct boys in Christianity." Hence, in one of their oaths of office, they are solemnly pledged to "peculiar care in the education of boys according to the manner expressed in the apostolic letters and in the constitution of said Society." In this respect they have been certainly faithful to their vow. Their zeal as teachers yields not to that we have already seen them displaying in the delicate post of confessors to the mighty and noble, or in the difficult one of missionaries to the heathen.

THEIR EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS.

As Spain was the spot in which the Order was cradled, it was but meet that it and the sister country of Portugal should receive the first attention. A university, known as the Complutensian, had been founded by the famous Cardinal Ximenes in 1499, and thence had issued in 1514 the splendid Biblical Polyglott. In 1541 the Jesuits became incorporated with it. Soon its twenty-four colleges became entirely subject to their sway. Four years afterwards similar institutions sprung up in Gardia and Valladolid and Burgos and Salamanca. The last soon became the most approved of all the Spanish Jesuit institutions. It still exists, and recently had no fewer than sixty professors, though the students bore a miserably small proportion. In both these countries the Jesuits had almost everything their own way. Their system, therefore, bore its legitimate fruits.

Melchior Cano, a distinguished Dominican friar, publicly charged them with practising the most abominable mysteries,

and with adopting a secular dress to conceal their villany. Writing in 1560 to the Confessor of Charles V., he exclaims in terms almost prophetic, "Would to God that it should not happen to me as the fable relates of Cassandra, whose predictions were not believed till after the capture and burning of Troy. If the members of the Society continue as they have begun, God grant that the time will not come when kings will wish to resist them and will find no means of doing so."

To silence the clamouring of this worthy man the Jesuits got him sent off as a bishop to the Canary Islands, while they for a time pursued their nefarious schemes unmolested. So obnoxious, however, did they become, that after the lapse of two centuries these countries, which were the first to open their arms to receive them, were the first to drive them out with the character of Ishmael cleaving to them, and the mark of Cain on their brow. The Spanish King in pronouncing sentence upon them, declared "that if he had any cause of self-reproach, it was for having been too lenient to so dangerous a body," and added, "I have learned to know them too well." If we be indifferent at the present crisis we are likely to do the same."

In 1542 Venice was visited by Lainy, the second general of the Order. A college rose at Padua. Soon, on points of jurisdiction, a collision took place between the Pope and the Venetian Republic. The Jesuits, as in duty bound, sided with the former. And now commenced a series of plots and counter-plots, which issued in their formal expulsion in 1606.

They were accused by the spirited Venetians of inciting the Holy Father against them—of causing breaches in families—and of screwing out, through means of the confessional, domestic and State secrets—a faithful narrative of which was regularly transmitted to Rome. While the Venetian dispute was pending, the Jesuits found a lodgment in Genoa. They made a strong effort to establish academies. The Genoese magistrates having discovered that they had been guilty of gross embezzlement, and that they were at the root of sundry conspiracies, unanimously petitioned the Pope to have them withdrawn. Paul V., irritated at what he counted an insolent demand, identified himself entirely with the Jesuit interests, and insisted on their being retained. The magistrates, afraid to face the fire of Papal anathema, consented, on condition that the Jesuits should not for the future interfere with politics.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

THE JESUIT QUESTION, — PRESBYTERIANS IN THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS, — DONALD MORRISON, — TORONTO PULPIT.

The Jesuit question is still a burning one in Eastern Canada, and although outside of Montreal many public meetings have not been held, still the under-current runs very strong, and the Protestant minority are only awaiting an opportunity to give vent to their pent-up feelings. They feel that for years past their rights have been denied them, and that such a thing as British fair-play in matters of religion is not now known.

Montreal has spoken again and again, and gives no uncertain sound. Such a man as the Rev. Dr. Wells, of the American Presbyterian Church, who has hitherto studiously avoided discussing matters of a political complexion, made a vigorous and telling speech. He was followed by Mr. Davidson, Q.C., whose withering sarcasm and eloquent denunciations had a visible effect on the audience. Already the politicians are trembling in their shoes, and have almost allowed the case against them to go by default, as it is only now and then that one of the accused attempts to justify his vote, and then the apology offered is that he was sent to Parliament to support his leader, which he took good care to do, and that, too, after the most slavish fashion.

Such is the state of matters throughout the Province that it is simply deplorable to hear the groanings of those who should be free people. Their condition, to put it mildly, is calculated to rouse the spirit of all British subjects, for "Briton's sons will ne'er be slaves," to demand that Protestants may not only live in Quebec Province, but that they will be protected to the very letter in the enjoyment of all their rights and privileges.

Just now it is a squeezing-out process all through. Protestant churches are being emptied, and whilst the Presbyterian congregations are holding their own as compared with the other evangelical Churches, still ministers are dispirited and down-hearted at the depleting process which goes on continually. It is to be hoped that a better day has dawned, and that if the Dominion Government is too weak-kneed to do justice, there is a House of Lords to appeal to. All things considered, our Church is enjoying such a measure of prosperity as may be reasonably expected. In a number of towns new churches have been erected, and others renovated and improved. In the town of Richmond a fine new brick edifice has taken the place of the old wooden church, which after it had served its generation, was carefully moved to a more elevated position, where it gives shelter to man and beast.

The new church is a handsome building, and has a fine lecture hall, well lighted and airy. The foundation-stone of the church was laid by Mrs. McLeod, wife of the esteemed pastor, under whose pastoral oversight the Melbourne and Richmond Churches continue to prosper.

Windsor Mills, about ten miles distant, has a live congregation, under the care of the Rev. J. D. Fergusson, who, since his coming to this field, has looked after the neglected Presbyterians in the district, and at present an interesting