

## Our Contributors.

### CONCERNING SOME NATIONAL DANGERS.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Jesuits' Estates Bill? No. We are not going to say anything about the Jesuits or their Bill. There are quite enough of people blazing away about those people and that Bill. The Dual Language question? No. There is not half as much in that language question as many suppose. The Gaelic men of Glengarry, Thorah and Eldon, of Zorra, of Williams, of many townships in Huron and Bruce, scores of whom could not speak a word of English, were among the best citizens Canada ever possessed. The Germans of Waterloo are first-class citizens and many of them could not speak English for years after their settlement here. Are there any better citizens than these Germans? Unity of language is not essential to loyalty and patriotism. Are the Highlanders of Scotland, many of whom cannot speak a word of English, not as loyal and patriotic as Mr. O'Brien and other Parnellites who can speak nothing but English? English alone can do very little in the way of making men good citizens. We don't know the facts but we venture to say that every man in the Central prison and Penitentiary can speak English. So far as we recollect every man that has been hanged in Ontario for years spoke English. The trouble with many people is that they speak too much English.

There are dangers, however, which threaten the body politic that comparatively few people ever take any notice of. Some of these were admirably condensed in an article in the *Globe* the other day on the uses of universities. Among other dangers which assail society in Canada and the United States the writer puts

THE WORSHIP OF WEALTH  
THE LOVE OF NOTORIETY  
THE ADMIRATION FOR MERE BIGNESS  
THE GROWTH OF SELF-ASSERTION.\*

We don't hear much about the foregoing national dangers. Why? For several reasons. One is because comparatively few people see them. Anybody thinks he can see some of the dangers about which we have agitations but it takes a thoughtful man to look beneath the surface of society and see that the worship of wealth, the craving for notoriety, or open-mouthed admiration for mere bigness must speedily vulgarize and eventually demoralize any people. Another, and perhaps the principal reason why we hear so little from our own people of the dangers mentioned is because some of those who shout the loudest about other dangers may possibly worship wealth and love notoriety themselves. Between the worship of an image in Quebec or Rome and the worship of gold coined into a dollar in Ontario there is no difference that we can see.

THE WORSHIP OF WEALTH is alarmingly prevalent among our neighbours. One of the favourite ways of describing a marriage, or ball, or social gathering in some cities is to say so many millions were represented. We have seen comparisons made between the cabinets of Hayes, Garfield, Cleveland and Harrison on the basis of wealth,—so many millions being represented in each. Harrison's Government, if we rightly remember, comes out ahead, having more millions than any other ever had. It would go hard with some of our best public men if their worth were to be estimated by their millions. Congregations are not unfrequently described by the amount of wealth they possess and the almighty dollar is too often the measure of the man even in religious affairs.

How long can a nation last if the dollar is made the standard by which you measure everybody and everything. If a man's morals are of less importance than his money; if his soul is a trifling affair compared with his sovereigns; if culture, refinement, intelligence, moral worth and usefulness are of less importance than railroad and bank stock, morality and religion will soon go by the board. If, as wealth accumulates men decay, the nation must soon decay for nations are composed of men.

Heaven help clergymen and editors should money ever become the only standard by which men are judged.

Have we much worship of wealth in Canada? If we have any at all we have too much. There is a good deal, we believe, in a quiet sort of way but so far the worship is not particularly ostentatious in most places. Here and there you find a young man with a creeping spirit who is willing to feed on the crumbs that fall from any rich man's table, but he is usually in his proper place when among the puppies under the table. Now and then you do meet a girl willing to marry almost any kind of a man if he is rich, but to the everlasting honour of Canadian girls the number is small.

There are in most communities a few who creep and crawl before wealth but the number is always small.

Clergymen are more blamed than any other class for worshipping wealth and no doubt some of them are sorely given to tuft-hunting. The minister of Christ who makes money his standard is more than a sneak—he is a natural born idiot. The money test would press more heavily upon clergymen themselves than upon any other class in the community except perhaps editors.

The other sources of danger mentioned we must leave over for another time, gently reminding our readers that the worship of wealth may do our young nation quite as much harm as allowing small French boys to learn to read in their mother tongue. Eliminating morality, religion and every other good thing and making dollars the only or even the main standard in Church and State will ruin the country faster than printing by-laws in French for the half-breeds around Regina.

### THE CLERGY AND REVIVALISTS.

MR. EDITOR,—It is a matter for sincere regret when serious differences arise between promoters of any good work, who, thereby, lose incalculably, in being unable to present an unbroken front to the opposition. In temperance work this is aptly exemplified by the ever-widening breach between the "prohibition or nothing" and the "high liquor tax" parties, both professedly labouring for the suppression of the liquor traffic, but disagreeing as to the means to be employed.

In religious matters it has found endless illustrations, and one, very recently, in the unconcealed opposition of many ministers to the class of preachers known as revivalists. Some thoughtless persons have attributed this opposition to ordinary jealousy, averring that the reverend gentlemen are annoyed at seeing the crowds which flock to hear the revivalists. But I should certainly hesitate to base the opposition of a section of "the cloth" to these services on any feeling so utterly unworthy, believing rather that they entertain certain opinions which lead them to disapprove of the manner in which the work is conducted. At the same time, I think any one—clerical or lay—should think twice, yea, often, before he undertakes to denounce the holding of any service which consists of the reading of God's Word, the preaching of His Gospel, the singing of His praises, and the lifting up of heart and voice in prayer to Him.

There may be very reasonable objections entertained to sensationalism pure and simple, but I cannot help thinking that many people (either from ignorance or misconception) impute sensationalism to those who are actually only earnest and enthusiastic. I know that earnestness and enthusiasm are often frowned down or sneered down. The world discourages in effort what it applauds in success, and just as surely as no great work or needed reform was ever inaugurated and carried to a successful issue without earnestness and enthusiasm. So no originator or promoter of any great work or reform ever failed to meet with any number of people ready to "wet blanket" these indispensable factors to his success.

But surely no minister of the Gospel can object to the display of either enthusiasm or earnestness in the furtherance of the sacred work which he is pledged, heart and soul, to forward! What, then, is the point of difference? One clergyman, I believe, objects to any attempts to make what he calls "sudden conversions," believing rather that a man should be brought by the sure workings of the calm mind to renounce the old and turn to the new way. Well, I must confess, I hardly see the force of this objection.

Provided the conversion is genuine, does it matter much whether the process be "sudden" or slow? I thought we were all agreed long ago that justification is an act—sanctification a work. Can a man turn from evil—turn to God—too suddenly?

"But," urges the objector, "these revivals are attended by a great deal of unnatural excitement, which passes, for the time being, for religious fervour, but dies away, leaving the supposed converts in a worse condition than previously."

This is a plea very frequently urged, but comes with questionable fitness from a minister, for the same might be said of a stirring sermon by the most orthodox divine. Moreover, how much fact and how much mere supposition is it based upon? Are there any statistics to show that the mass of "revival conversions" are not genuine? At the least, I do not see how any harm can come of these religious services. Do any of their opponents really believe that it could be detrimental to a man's mind to turn, for however short a space, to the contemplation of Christ's life on earth, His love for men and His death on Calvary? Surely some good must ensue. Even though he may only "appreciate all this moral and spiritual beauty, and be yet unable to step inside the circle of its influence; the hand, so to speak, withered by his side, which should seize the beautiful reward."\*

There is no doubt that after a man has been partially aroused concerning religious matters, but not wholly convinced and converted, he does sometimes plunge deeper than ever into sinful excesses, but that is only a phase of the great world-wide struggle between right and wrong, and is by no means confined to results of revival services. The reformed drunkard will often slip back, and indulge in the worst "tear" he ever lived through, after a period of total abstinence, but no one will lay the blame for that at the doors of those who urged him to renounce the habit that was destroying him.

One clergyman recently dubbed certain of these lay preachers "strolling evangelists," concluding a denunciation of their methods by stating that their "conversion" is the greatest fraud of the nineteenth century. Where, oh where are all the deceptions of the day hiding! What about the elevation of the unworthy and immoral to positions of honour and influence, simply because though they may not be respectable themselves, their bank-accounts are extremely so—that "vile idolatry of material success which has characterized all times, but especially our own." Are bribery and corruption masquerading in saintly garments, that the greatest fraud of the day has to be looked for in the results of any evangelistic work?

"Strolling evangelists!" Doubtless the phrase was intended to be suggestive of strolling actors, acrobats or something of the kind, but it is also suggestive of something very different. Long ago, within the confines of an eastern village, a group of earnest, soulful men stood gathered around One who was their Master, and with that voice that had rung through all Judea, and whose words of agony in Gethsemane

and matchless prayer on Calvary were yet to sound to the uttermost parts of the earth, He commanded them to go about from place to place preaching "that men should repent."

The "strolling evangelist" holds his commission from One who Himself "went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom," and whose last word to the eleven was, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. . . . And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Of course all ministers are not opposed to revival services—far from it. Many of them recognize in the evangelists helpers and co-workers, and comport themselves accordingly.

It is hard to see how a fair and unprejudiced view could result otherwise.

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### THE CHOIR.

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It is our purpose in this paper to deal with the subject from an historical point of view. History is a record of facts, and those gleaned from writers of the first four centuries will be the most important, because they deal with a time when the Church was kept pure by persecution, and still carried with it the impress it had received at its inception.

It will also be necessary to consider two things in relation to the choir, that is, what they sang and how they sang it. In other words, the matter and manner.

The choir is, nowadays, a recognized aid in every well-constituted congregation. It had an important place in the house of God in ancient times, and the very fact of its antiquity gives it weight and influence in the church of the present day. Some have supposed the choir was only an essential part of the temple ritual, that it vanished when the shadows of good things to come were done away in Christ, and that its presence in churches at the present time is nothing short of an Israelitish innovation that must not be tolerated.

On the contrary, its history during this dispensation dates back to the post-apostolic age, if not further.

The description given by the apostle Paul leads us to believe that there was congregational singing—if not the employment of trained singers—in his time. In writing to the church at Corinth he says: "When ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation," showing that psalmody had a place in the service of Christian worship.

To the Church at Ephesus he says: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." In this he specifies both ways of offering praise, reciting and chanting.

To the Colossians he writes, exhorting them to be "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace your hearts unto God."

The apostle James asks and answers questions about matters of vital importance to the Church. Among those occurs the one, "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms."

Evidently these apostles looked upon praise as a means of admonition and instruction.

The three kinds here mentioned are important. The explanation of Augustine is generally accepted. The psalms of David were intended to be sung with musical accompaniments, just as in the days of the great composer himself. A spiritual song, on the other hand, was an original composition in stanzas, and was intended for the voice alone. A hymn, or more irregular combination, after the style of the chorus in the Greek plays, was composed because of some special circumstance, and was always sung as direct praise or thanksgiving to God.

In answer to the question why there was such a diversity so early in the apostolic Church, we answer that it was doubtless occasioned by the mixed nature of the Lord's people. We can easily believe that the Gentile Christians, breaking away from their idolatrous worship, and unable to enter into all the sentiments of the Jewish psalmody, or the canticles taken from the Hebrew prophets, would desire some further medium by which to express their praise to God. Hymns and spiritual songs were thus introduced.

The first mention of hymns in the annals of the Christian Church is that sung by our Lord and His apostles immediately after the institution of the Eucharist. There is good ground for believing that this was a series of psalms called Hallel [the 113th to the 118th], because it was used in the second temple in their day, at all great festivals, and of course at the Passover they were then observing. Thus at first a hymn was any act of praise to God, provided only that the rendering of it was entirely vocal.

In the time of the apostolic writers the term became restricted; as we have just seen, and the psalm as inspired were given the prior place in Christian praise.

Leaving now the sacred record, all information regarding this part of divine worship must be gleaned from the early Christian fathers, and those of the highest antiquity will be of the greater value in this case.

It must be remembered that the apostle John lived till about the year 100 A.D., the only remaining link between the apostolic and the primitive Christian Church. It is true he does not mention the subject of praise in detail, not even the sacramental hymn alluded to above, yet he doubtless gave direction about the forms of worship best suited to the use of the saints as long as he was spared to be with them.

\* A Layman's Views on Theological Questions. The Week, March 29, 1889

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 26. † Eph. v. 19. ‡ Col. iii. 16. § same v.