

pang of parting with them. But in parting with the things that can be shaken, one may be confirmed all the more in the things that abide."

We can, after careful examination, say that all through the volume Professor McFadyen has been true to the spirit that manifests itself in this passage. He faces squarely each difficult question as it arises, he reproves levity and irreverence. Wherever he finds them he boldly states his own conclusion and deals as tenderly as possible with those who cling to the ancient tradition. The chapter on "The Present Distress" shows that there is real trouble in the Church that must be faced and dealt with thoroughly; those on "The Discourtesies of Criticism" and "The Confusions of Criticism" intensify the impression thus created of discord and controversy. In the following chapters the author gives a discussion on "The Function of Criticism," "The Methods of Criticism" and "The Historical Method" which may well serve, for many, as an introduction to and an apology for legitimate Bible Criticism.

The chapter on "The Essence of Protestantism" is refreshing and stimulating. It contains the kind of teaching that is much needed at the present day when so many seem to think that Protestants should be content to repeat in a mechanical fashion the formulas that have come down from the past. Professor McFadyen shows that we still need not merely the words but the spirit of Luther. In examining such questions as "Christ and Criticism," "Criticism and the Supernatural," "Criticism and Inspiration", one another faces the supreme difficulties of the situation. We are not prepared to say that he has solved all the great problems that are found in this region, for that would be to give a full and final philosophy of the Christian religion. But he has attacked the problems vigorously, he has stated the conclusions to which he has been led after much painful thought, and does so in such a way as to be helpful to those who are grappling with similar difficulties.

In a short book-review we have not space to pursue in detail any of these discussions; but because we believe that, in the intellectual sphere, there is a considerable "gulf" between the old and the new positions we are glad to see men of high culture and catholic spirit devoting themselves to the work of mediation and reconciliation. If there are a large number connected with our Church who take no interest in matters of such vital importance, that is to their shame, and not to their credit. The men who gave the Presbyterian Church its character and in early days shaped its destiny, were keen in intellect as well as devout in heart.

Man's illusions are an exhaustless source of happiness. When he does not find the desire of his soul in the things around him or in the products of his labor his illusions are equal to the occasion. Said Louisa May Alcott, "Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I cannot reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them and try to follow where they lead."

### INTERFERENCE IN POLITICS.

The misfortune of taking part in politics for their purification is no misfortune, not even to such a paper as the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN. A minister of the Church of England has lately issued a pamphlet on the question of "Extreme Unction," in which he worries the Ancient Fathers and the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, to see if he can happily find in them some warrant for the ceremony of anointing the sick and the dying and of installing it in the Anglican Communion as an additional sacrament. A minister of the Methodist Church lately delivered himself of the statement that a man to be a man had always to be better than the clothes he wears, so a church to be a true church had always to rise superior to its theology, in its efforts to bring man to the very first step of angelhood. No church can dare to run away from the function of reform. Ceremony and conduct, as its articles of reform, must not engross the attention of any church, the one as opposed to the other; though in these days, with so little of the medieval about them, a running away from the practical towards the medieval, begins to look more or less like a waste of time and energy.

Nor need there be any quarrel with credulity and doctrinal anatomizing, while our ministers grow more and more anxious every day about the waywardnesses of men. In some of our denominations there have been organized special reform agencies, which cannot but recommend themselves through their practical functions of checking open vice, and making of no effect the unwritten law, that what the many do ought to be allowed to justify itself by a vote. Now what the many do in the political world on either side of partyism is in many cases what should exist neither as a written or unwritten law; and hence if minister of the gospel or editor of a religious journal, while undertaking the exposure of the obliquities of conduct in party politics is to be called "interfering in politics," then there can be no misfortune in the undertaking. Hence I trust that you will not become faint-hearted but assist in the work of purification.

We all know that no subject is of more public interest at the present moment than the shaky condition of the standards of morality as they are to be met with in many of our political circles of to-day. The ethical fact of the awful retrogression needs no emphasizing in view of what has lately been happening in Ontario, and what is likely to continue to happen in every province of the Dominion, in imitation of what is going on every day at Ottawa and elsewhere. The clergy have been warned again and again that it is little short of a public indiscretion for them to take part in politics, though they have the right of citizenship to resent this with. But no one is surely so audacious as to forbid our clergy and our church courts from taking part in a campaign against the spirit and habit of corruption that is making havoc of our politics, and at the same time is eating into the lives and practises of the every

day life, as well as undermining the fundamental principles of church and state. The Toronto Globe has been lately telling our clergy, not without some degree of clerical unction, that they should put their own house in order before entering on any crusade against the politician and his special methods of self-seeking. But the fact that some of these very special methods of the politician have found their way into some of our church courts, with their clerical caucuses and canvassings for preferment, is a proof that if Christian morality is to avoid entering the lists with the politician's methods, these same methods are soon going to be masters of the situation with society in a pretty bad way to follow them in every direction. The clergy, it is true, are not the keepers of the conscience of the individual man, but they ought to be, along with others, the purifiers of the public conscience. The honest man, cleric or layman, cannot afford at any time or under any circumstances to coquette with evil in any shape or form, and if any clergyman, from the fear of his parishioners, is made to stand in awe of the politician, the indiscretions of the politician are never likely to stand in awe of him or his example. It is my intention, with your permission, to present in further articles some practical suggestions as to how the church in taking part in their crusade against all evil might help out, without bringing the priesthood out of line with its main function, the crusade that is needed against certain evil tendencies that have the open sanction of our politicians at election times, and which are committing more of a havoc in our constituencies and communities than intemperance or similar vices. Indeed, with Ontario specially in view just for the moment, everybody is beginning to ask why it is that a man may continue to be grouped among the respectables of our towns and villages, after buying or selling a vote or making undue profit out of public undertakings, and yet be driven from the same class if he be found to be a thief or rowdy. There is a discrimination in such a state of affairs that surely any clergyman may busy himself with, without staining his clerical function with anything like an indiscretion.

In a word, the warrant for a closer examination of our politics in Canada is to be had in the higher function of the prophet of the parish, and to quicken these functions is surely of more moment to a church than the formulating of a new sacrament.

MARCUS MANSFIELD.

Commenting on a sentence in these columns a couple of weeks ago, the Presbyterian Witness says: "Partizan feeling runs high in Ontario. Two gentlemen's names have become familiar with the public—not without reason, Hon. Mr. Stratton and R. R. Gamey. Both have friends and admirers: each has keen foes. The DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN does not approve of either of these gentleman figuring at Church Socials. We agree with our Contemporary that the affair between these gentlemen was not well wound up! Ontario is our Premier province, and she ought to set before the other provinces an example that shall teach the infinite worth of righteousness and truth."