

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 4—No. 80.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1875.

[Whole No. 186]

Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST.

ANATHOTH, MICHMASH—FRASER OF PARIM IN JERUSALEM—JERICHO, JORDAN, AND THE DEAD SEA.

February 20th was a splendid day of clear bright sunshine, so, as I could not get my two companions for any long expedition, I decided to have a small one by myself, or, at least, with only a native lad for company. As he could not speak English, and I could not speak Arabic, there could not be much intercourse between us, but before starting he was fully informed by B. as to the places I wanted to visit. These were Anathoth and Michmah, where I was anxious to see the scene of Jonathan's remarkable conflict and victory over the Philistines. I rode B's white pony. My guide had a donkey of the very minutest size imaginable, without any saddle whatever; sometimes he rode it, and quite as often drove it before him. Going round the outside of the north wall of Jerusalem, we proceeded up the higher part of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and soon crossing it went over the slope of Scopus, north of Mount Olivet. I soon saw that my guide was not very well acquainted with the road, for after a talk with some men, he changed from one track to another. All I could do to help his decisions was to reiterate "Hizmah, Jeba, Mukmas, Anata, Hizmah, Jeba, Makmas, Anata," these being the Arabic names of the places we were to go to, and the order in which I wanted to see them. In this way we got on by rugged tracks up and down steep hills for an hour and a half or more. The way was enlivened by plenty of bright flowers, the scarlet anemones looking gorgeous in the glowing sunshine. We passed a good many trains of donkeys bringing in stones for building from the neighbourhood of Anathoth. The mode of carrying them is most primitive, a stone being slung by a rope at each side of a rude pack saddle, and if the donkey or mule is strong and the stone not too heavy, a third one will be placed on the saddle resting between the other two. The limestone near Anathoth is particularly white and good. We occasionally saw people engaged in ploughing the small plots of cultivated land in the valleys, and when we reached Hizmah there seemed to be scarcely any one in the village. This disconcerted my guide; evidently he had trusted to finding some one here to tell him the way. I rather suspect he had never been this road in his life before, therefore, directions were rather necessary for him. Hizmah stands on the top of a steep ridge, running east and west, the glens on each side carrying the rainfall down to the Jordan valley. The only thing it seemed to have to boast of is a small Wely—that is a tiny square building with a dome, covering the tomb of some Mahomedan saint. When a couple of children at last appeared, it was evident they thought that must be the object of my visit, and proceeded to guide us to it. My guide, Mahomet, held a long conversation with the boy, and I could hear Jeba and Mukmas named, so knew he was asking the way. The boy, of course, wanted a large Baksheesh, and named a Mejidah, which is a Turkish coin, valued about 8s. 6d. At that I shook my head, and said, "La la!" "No, no," most vigorously. I think it ended in his getting about 6d. for guiding us to Jeba, but he was a great bother, for he lingered and talked with Mahomet, so that when the track was at all plain I was the one to lead, in order to try and get them on a little faster. Down in the deep glen below Hizmah are some remains of a large building, which the natives call the Tombs of the Amalekites, though how it got that name no one seems to know. Climbing the hill on the other side, we soon came in sight of Jeba, the ancient Geba of Benjamin, perched like so many of the villages, on very high ground. There are few remains of antiquity in the village, and I did not linger long in it. There were a good many men about, and they seemed more curious about me and my movements than I altogether approved of, so that in returning I avoided the village altogether, crossing the ridge a little to the east of it. This ridge commands a splendid view of most interesting ground, as being connected with the history of Jonathan's wonderful victory. In this very place Saul and Jonathan abode. A small band of 600 men, for most of the people had hid themselves "in caves and in thickets, and in rocks," etc., while the Philistines had come up in force with "80,000 chariots, and 6,000 horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude." The rocks and the caves are still there, with many a rugged nook for hiding in, but the thickets and forests are all gone. Looking across the deep precipitous gorge to the north of Jeba, I could see a little cluster of dwellings, the ancient Michmah, still inhabited, and called Mukmas. There the mighty host of the Philistines had their headquarters, and their movements would be quite visible from Geba. Saul and Jonathan could watch them sending out their three bands to ravage the unhappy land, and trace the progress of the enemy. One band, we are

told, turned toward Ophrah. Then on a crest further to the north, the houses of Taiyiboh are visible against the horizon. That is Ophrah, and from Geba the Israelites could see the smoke and flame which probably told of the desolation caused by the Philistines. Another band went up the gorge westward towards Epthorn. The third went down eastward to the valley of Zebolim, by Jordan. This progress, too, could be traced from Geba. Through openings in the hill the green line that marks the course of the Jordan is quite visible, and does not look very far off in the clear atmosphere, though it is really eighteen or twenty miles distant. By and by the Philistines left the village of Michmah to occupy the pass between it and Geba. Probably they posted themselves on the lofty cliff which immediately overhangs the gorge. Saul seems then to have retreated from Geba to the neighbourhood of Gibeah, where he encamped "under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron." Then it was that Jonathan with his own armour bearer made the secret expedition which evidenced so strongly his entire faith in God's power to help his people, and in the truth of his promise that if Israel trusted in him, one of them "should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." I was anxious to go over the scene of this remarkable adventure, but I found my guide quite opposed to any advance beyond Jeba. He pointed up to the sun, and made me understand that he feared we should be benighted before we got home if we went over to Michmah. He certainly had wasted a great deal of time, and the day was much farther on than I had meant it should be when we reached Jeba, but I found out afterwards that we could have managed the going to Michmah quite well, had I not been foolish enough to yield to my guide. I believe he really wanted to avoid the exceedingly steep descent and ascent of the sides of the pass of Michmah, which would have been very fatiguing for him and his small donkey. But if I did not get absolutely to Michmah, I was determined I should at least have a good view of the pass, and went so far down the hill below Jeba till I found a jutting out point from which I could look down the pass and see how completely the whole scene of Jonathan's attack on the Philistines agrees with the description in 1st Samuel. There I sat on some soft green turf, gay with anemones, and read the history, and with my field-glass scanned the ground where "Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and his feet, and his armour-bearer after him." The only thing in the present state of the country that does not agree with the description in 1 Samuel iv. is, that there is no "wood" in all the neighbourhood. The hills are bare and black, the terraces broken down, and the rocks denuded of the soil which the violent rains washes down into the bottoms of the valleys. So rocky are the hills that at a little distance it is quite a matter of difficulty to distinguish the little cluster of gray flat-roofed houses that compose the villages, from the abundant rocks around them. After resting and sharing my lunch with Mahomet and the boy from Hizmah, I retraced my steps to that village. There we parted with our small guide, who, I have no doubt, felt himself quite a man of substance when he received his Baksheesh, though it was so much less than his first demands.

From Hizmah I took a different road homeward. Crossing a little brook in the glen to the south of the village, we went up a steep hillside to the village of Anata, the "poor Anathoth" of Scripture, the birth place of Jeremiah, and the city of the Levites.

It is now a miserable collection of some twenty ramshackle houses. There are considerable remains of antiquity, the principal being the ruins of a Christian church, in which a piece of mosaic pavement had lately been uncovered. One thing I greatly admired in Anata, it was almost the only place near Jerusalem where no one named Baksheesh to me, though plenty of its inhabitants turned out to look at me. There is a fine view from Anata of the Jordan valley with part of the Dead Sea, and the ever-beautiful mountains of Moab and Gilead.

From Anata the track to Jerusalem leads over the crest of Scopus. That was my favorite view of Jerusalem, especially when seen as I now saw it, in the slanting rays of the declining sun, which struck on the dome and minarets of the great mosque, and lighted up Mount Olivet, leaving the valley of Jehoshaphat with its memories of Gethsemane in the deep shade which seemed so well to suit it.

The season for travelling had now fairly begun in Palestine, and among these I had the pleasure of welcoming an old acquaintance, Rev W. Black, of Montreal. On March 2nd he and I joined a large party in exploring an extensive cave, the entrance of which is close to the Damascus Gate. From there the cavern stretches in below the town a long way. Its extent has not yet been fully explored, but what we saw of it was very interesting, for it has been an ancient quarry, and in many places we could see the huge half-cut stones still remaining attached to the sides of the cave, and little niches where the workmen must have placed the lamps by the light of which they worked. It was strange to see the traces of the half-finished work of men who must have left this earth some hundreds of years ago. The lime stone is of very various qualities, some hard and fine grained; in other places it was coarse and crumbling. After rambling about in the cave or succession of caves for some time, Mr Black and I went off to see the Tombs of the Kings, and from there returned to the St. Stephen's Gate at the east side of Jerusalem. From there the wall of the city can be mounted by steps. We proceeded on the wall round the whole eastern and part of the northern side of

Jerusalem, descending again at the Jaffa Gate. A very good idea of the present extent of the city is thus gained. Small as the spaces at present enclosed by the wall is in comparison with the ancient city, still it is not all built on. We passed several small fields of grain and plots of vegetables, besides the garden belonging to the convents, which are of considerable size.

The surface is very irregular; in some places the wall stands high above the houses and gardens, in other places the path along the wall is very little, if at all, higher than the ground inside, which rises in great leaps of rubbish composed of the ruins of former buildings.

(To be Continued.)

Regeneration.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR,—In your number for August 27, "A Layman" puzzles himself on the subject of Regeneration. He should leave to theologians such hair-splitting distinctions as whether it takes effect on the understanding or the will. On more careful consideration he may join me in thinking it affects neither. The difficulty arises from misunderstanding the word. What does it mean? Regeneration—the act of producing anew. In natural history, the reproduction of parts of living creatures that had been destroyed. Reconstruction. In national relations the act of renewing civil or ecclesiastical organizations. The word occurs only twice in the Bible, Mat. xix. 28, Titus iii. 5. In the first of these it has evidently the latter meaning. In answer to the question, "We have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" Jesus replies, "In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In the regeneration—this is, the reconstructed state of society about to be introduced. But it has no reference whatever to personal change of heart or character. In the other passage "the washing of regeneration" refers to baptism, the symbol of the washing to which the nurse subjects the newly born infant, but which, the apostle expressly declares, is meant not for the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience. Every one thus born or initiated into this regenerated state—called in Scripture the Kingdom of Heaven, will submit to this washing on the principle indicated by the example and words of Christ, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

"A Layman" says: "The question I would wish to have solved is, can this living act of faith which brings a man into union with Jesus be exercised by one who is spiritually dead?" Of course it can. When Jesus saw Peter and Andrew fishing, and said to them, "Follow me," there was nothing to indicate that they were in any other state than that of the natural man. Yet they left their nets and followed Him. As yet there was no change in either their understandings or their affections. But something was promised. "I will make you fishers of men." They were about to enter upon their spiritual training, and get initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom. When children are sent to school the first thing to be done is to get them into union with the teacher. The father or mother introduces the little ones, tells their names, which the teacher writes on her register, she then takes them on her knee, kisses them, and speaks kind words to them. Then the education begins. A B C to-day, A B to-morrow, and so on, bit by bit, till at last they stand on a level with the teacher. But from the first moment of enrollment they were as truly pupils of the school as those of the longest and highest standing. They come to school, not because they have education, but to get it. In like manner men come to Jesus, not because they are disciples, or can exercise faith, or any other spiritual function, but in order to become disciples and learn spiritual things, and the moment a man or a child says "I am for Christ," he enters the regenerate state, and is as truly a disciple as those of longer and higher standing. As yet, he knows nothing, believes nothing, has no conception of spiritual things; but he has come where he may learn them, and it is the business of the teachers in the school of Christ, to see to it that the babes are supplied with milk, and the more advanced with "food convenient for them."

To call a man a reconstructed member of the Canada Presbyterian Church would be nonsense, although he is a member of the reconstructed Church. It is, according to the definition, equally nonsense to say of any one, he is a regenerated man, he belongs to a regenerated or reconstructed society, into which he has been born or initiated by his own act or the act of his parent or guardian; and as in every civil community, there are all degrees of loyalty and devotion to the interests of the state, and from the Prime Minister down to theurchin who fires a squib on the Queen's birth-day and shouts hurrah in honor of her name, so the Kingdom of Heaven is constituted on the all embracing principle, "He that is not against us is for us."

"Faith in Christ" is another phrase about which a great deal of pavor has been said and written. It would be a great help to plain uneducated people if they could be made to understand that the word *faith*, translated *faith*, does not mean

belief in—but *fidelity to*—him. It is difficult to believe in him; nay it is impossible according to the formula of some of the churchmen; but fortunately this is of no importance. The one thing needed is *fidelity to him*—loyalty to his cause and kingdom, and this in one degree or another is within the reach and power of all, from the highest martyr to the child that waves its palm branch and shouts Hosannah to the son of David. Yours truly, LAYMAN.

P.S.—If "A Layman" has been in the habit of writing to you over the signature before me, I beg his pardon for assuming it, but it not—then he should have taken some other *nom de plume*, as confusion will arise from two or more writing in one name.

Apostolic Principles and Presbyterian Practice.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

SIR,—In the PRESBYTERIAN of Aug. 20, a correspondent mentions six principles which characterized the Apostolic Church, and which he says, being all recognized and practically carried out among Presbyterians, distinguish the Presbyterian from Prelatic and Independent Churches, as the only Apostolic Church. These principles are—1. Popular election of office-bearers. 2. Elder and Bishop identical. 3. A plurality of elders in each church. 4. Ordination the act of the Presbytery. 5. The privilege of appeal to the Assembly of elders, and the right of government exercised by them in their corporate capacity. 6. The sole Headship of Christ over the church.

Since perusing the aforesaid communication, I have been endeavoring to square our Presbyterian practice with the principles therein laid down, and will be thankful if the correspondent above mentioned, or some one else, can throw light on the following doubtful points: Are the elders referred to in the 3rd and 5th principles, identical with the elders and bishops spoken of in the 2nd? If not, I wish quotations from the Apostolic writings, giving the different qualifications and forms of commission for each class of office-bearers. If on the other hand, they are identical—wanted, Apostolic authority for the following peculiarities of practice which mark the Presbyterianism of the present day:

- 1st. Recognition of the Apostolic solemnity of imposition of hands at the ordination of ministers, but omitting the same in the case of ruling elders.
2. The appointment of the minister as a perpetual Moderator of the Session of which he is a member, and the disability under which ruling elders are placed, in being deprived by ecclesiastical enactment of the right of appointing a Moderator *pro tem* from the members present, and proceeding to the transaction of business in the absence of the stated Moderator. The distinctions here noted, gives the key to the caste character of the composition and business of the superior courts. Being declared incompetent to occupy the chair in the Kirk Session, ruling elders, as a matter of course, cannot preside at meetings of Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly. They are thus daily reminded of the inferiority of their standing, to that of the teaching elders, and even when called to the same work in committee are told off in safe minorities, lest a preponderance of such an element would swamp the clerical vote, and thus disturb the balance of power.

Neither are ruling elders admitted to the full exercise of church government, although professionally set apart to that office.

Ordinations I take to be an act of government (?) to be performed by the Presbytery, of which ruling elders form a constituent part; but having never been admitted to the exercise of their functions in the Apostolic way, they cannot, of course, join with their ecclesiastical superiors in the imposition of hands. Is there not in all this something that savours of what Dr. Chalmers styles "the figment of Apostolic Succession?" The truth is, the loss that is said about the Apostolic character of the Presbyterian Church as it exists, the better.

Your correspondent's batch of "Apostolic principles," together with his side-thrusts at prelacy and independency, when viewed alongside of the practice aforesaid, may provoke a smile at the incongruous spectacle presented, but cannot establish his claims for the Presbyterian as the only Apostolic Church. AN ELDER.

Probationer's Scheme Again.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

SIR,—Does it not seem a pity that such words as "Felloes," "Thuckhead," and "Kubbish," should be used in regard to men, who have after years of study, been solemnly licensed to preach the gospel!

Does not such language seriously implicate Professors of Theology? and, indeed, in some sense, the whole church?

Are we to understand that all preachers who are popular are of the right stamp? and that those who fail to secure a call from any church, are to be cast aside as "rubbish"?

Admitting that some make a mistake in entering the ministry, ought not church authorities to interfere at an early stage in their course of study, and advise a different life-work? Is not the evil complained of by "Ex Clericus," (if it be an evil, aggravated by having competing theological institutions?) there being an inducement in such case to beat up a little too much for theological recruits.

And is it not plain, that the letter of "Veritas Vincit" which appeared in a recent number of the PRESBYTERIAN, instead of being a defence of the Probationer's Scheme, is rather a clever satirical attack upon it? Yours, etc., H.

August 24th, 1875.

Knowing the Time.

This is a kind of knowledge which Paul enjoin upon believers to acquire and exercise, evidently of great importance. So he might well judge from the teachings of our Lord, for He speaks of a time of visitation, for communities as well as individuals, which it is of the utmost importance for them to recognize and receive. Thus of Jerusalem he said, "If thou hadst known even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." "And He beheld the city and wept over it."

Now, is it not our duty to consider whether the present day, so striking in many respects, is not just such a day of visitation from the presence of God. Certainly many of the most eminent Christians in different churches, men of careful study, large experience, and sound judgment, concur in declaring their belief that the revival now vouchsafed to the Church of God, is such as has not been seen for over a hundred years. And, judging from the past, we may add that none living may ever see the like again.

OUR DUTY

is most plainly and authoritatively laid down by one who was himself a master workman in the kingdom: "Knowing the time, that it is high time to awaken out of sleep . . . let us cast off the works of darkness, i.e., everything inconsistent with a walk in the full and clear light of Christ's teaching and example. Let us put on the armour of light, i.e., gird ourselves for special aggressive effort for the spread of the truth. Surety it would in future be a matter of interest mortification, that through cloth or carnal counsels we had lost irreparably an advantage of priceless value to our churches, our families, and ourselves. We would learn to our cost, amid the triumph of the adversary, the meaning of the wise man's words, "He that sleepeth in harvest time is a son that causeth shame." We all look forward to glorious times of reaping, but the timid and unbelieving disciple is ever ready to say, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest." Oh, that such would bear the Master's reproach and obey his injunction: "Lift up your eyes and look on the field, for they are white already to the harvest." What candid observer would dare to say that these words are not now peculiarly applicable. Was there ever a time of such inquiry after the truth, as well as such glaring and sorrowful need of it, such sympathy with the boldest exertions to make it known, and last, but not least, such expectations on the part of the world of just such exertions. Our inconsistency is very plain to them, if not to us. If we were more humble we might see our picture in the unfaithful prophet of old, and the very cries which awakened him, "What meanest thou, oh sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." May God deliver us from the curse of many "who went not to the help of the Lord, against the mighty." W. M. K.

Christians from Home.

As the warmth of Summer comes on, many of our readers will take themselves to the seaside or mountains, to quiet nooks in the country, or the noisy and fashionable scenes of Saratoga or Newport. It is to be hoped that religion will not be left behind as you go forth from your homes. Your duty to God is not a dress which you may put off or on, as suits time, place, or occasion. Obligation to God is always with us, and nothing can exempt us from its claims. And, indeed, if we are Christians at all, we will not wish to be freed from these claims. Love to Christ will constrain us to regard duty as an ever-present privilege. Let then the house of God, and the weekly meetings, and every gathering of good people for good things find you present, and an interested participant, as was your wont at home. Do not allow anything to interfere with your private devotion—prayer, reading the Scriptures, self-examinations and meditation. Have even more care and exercise, more watchfulness over your children than when at home. Your little ones will otherwise see and hear many bad things, which once seen or heard may never be forgotten. And your sons and daughters, just coming to maturity, may have their impressible hearts so affected by evil influences, that the character may be fixed for eternity. The rule then for Christians from home should be not less prayer but more, not less watchfulness and guardianship of self and family, but more care and caution.

Sources of Happiness.

Every condition of life has its advantages and its peculiar sources of happiness. It is not the houses and the streets which make the city, but those who frequent them; it is not the acres which make the country, but those who cultivate them. He is the wisest who best utilizes his circumstances, or, to translate it, our surroundings, and happiness, if we deserve it, will find us wherever our lot may be cast.

Low as the grave is, only Faith can climb high enough to see beyond it.

God accepts man's hearty desire, and the will instead of the deed, when they have not the power to fulfil it.

Nothing positively good has appeared since the fall in any human being, but as arising from union with Christ.

The removal of the damnable clauses from the Athanasian Creed has fully been ordered by the Irish Synod. The lay vote was overwhelming—171 in favor; the clerical vote was sixty-four, three more than the necessary two-thirds; the Episcopal vote was eight to four, just two-thirds. The debate was earnest, but good-tempered. An effort, it is said, will be made to restore the rejected sentence.