

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 6—No. 18.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1877

[Whole No. 273]

Contributors and Correspondents

For the Presbyterian

THE LATE REV. ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, M.A.

BY REV. D. PATTERSON, M.A.

No. IV.

When the Missionary Presbytery of Eastern Canada was formed it was naturally to be expected that Mr. H. would become a member of it. He had been in the habit of meeting with the brethren for mutual counsel and fellowship, but had not been formally connected with any Presbytery since he left England. When, therefore, Messrs. Kennedy and Lowden sent their application, in 1842, to the Synod in Scotland, for authority to form themselves into a Presbytery, Mr. Henderson sent a letter asking the Synod if they would allow him to become a member of that Presbytery, with the condition that he should be allowed to retain his annual grant from Government. When the matter of the Presbytery came before the Synod it "remitted this case to the Foreign Mission Committee, with instructions that Mr. Henderson should not be received into this church on the condition specified." (*Vide*, United Secession Mag., 1842, page 819.) The Presbytery accordingly was formed in the following year, but he was excluded. His cause had been advocated by his old friends, Drs. Brown and Balmer, for ardent volunteers though they were, they did not wish to deprive those ministers of their salaries, who had bona fide entered into possession of them.

Mr. H. sent a memorial to the committee in which he stated, in his own clear and forcible manner, the circumstances connected with his coming to Canada, and that as the recipient of a Government grant, with the full concurrence of the Synod, and with permission also to have a Presbytery formed, of which, of course, he was to be a member, and of which Mr. Bell, another "stipendiary of the Government," was also to be a member. Dr. H. said, on reading it said that it was "a strong case," but he had, apparently, objections still stronger, and so no attempt was made to have the injustice rectified. They offered, indeed, to guarantee him £100 a year, if he would give up his salary from the military chest, and trust to the voluntary liberality of the people; but apart from the circumstance that that amount was what he had been promised "in addition to what the settlers might give him," he had no hope of their making up any considerable proportion of it, and he did not wish to be a burden on the mission fund. Therefore he declined the committee's proposal.

The voluntary principle was thus made, in his case, a term of ministerial communion, although it never formed a part of the constitution of the Church. And he was, in effect, put out of the Church, for being in a position in which that same church, or a branch of it, had assisted to place him. He saw, of course, the difficulties which beset the Synod, in the matter, on account of the voluntary controversy, and excused them. But yet he felt his exclusion keenly; and the more, that he had been always proud of his church, and had maintained her honor and her interests in this country, at the expense both of labor and of obloquy. He was, indeed, the principal means of having the Secession Church recognized by the Government of Canada, and the claim of her ministers acknowledged to perform and to register official acts, involving civil rights. By a decision of the Court of Appeals, all ministers in Lower Canada, except those of the Church of Rome, and the established churches of England and Scotland, were cut off from the right of having legal registers of baptism, marriage and burial, and were thus, in effect, legally debarred from officiating in these matters. Mr. Henderson exerted himself, by petition and otherwise, to have this iniquitous state of things remedied; and when a Bill was before the Legislature for this purpose, he sent up a memorial to Parliament, in December, 1831, giving an historical account of the Secession Church, in regard to which reliable information was desiderated.

Mr. Henderson did not regret the course which he took; but yet he afterwards owned that it was questionable whether it was the best for the interests of the people, or of his successor. For forty years and more they enjoyed the Gospel almost without charge to themselves, and thereby lost the privilege of exhorting themselves for the support of Christ's cause, and the blessing which flows from faithfulness in the discharge of this Christian duty; and when, all at once, the burden was laid upon them

of supporting their minister entirely, some, faint-hearted, were ready to shrink from it. The greater part, however, stood forward manfully, and by bearing, became stronger to bear (for to him that hath shall be given); they found a new pleasure in new duties and new relations, and were ready to acknowledge that Christ's way was the best. And it speaks volumes for the religious culture to which they had attained, and for the faithful servant of God through whose labors they had grown so much in other Christian virtues that when called upon suddenly to give proof of liberality, they were able to abound in this grace also.

But we are anticipating. This state of things did not exist till the year 1860, when Mr. H. became, through weakness of sight and failing strength, incapable of carrying on the work of the congregation. With the view of obtaining a colleague, he sent a memorial to the Montreal Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church, requesting to be received as a member of the Presbytery. They unanimously agreed to ask leave of the Synod to receive him. The matter, however, never came before the Synod, for before it met, the congregation had obtained supply of preachers from the Free Church Presbytery, through Mr. (now Dr.) Kemp, to whose talents, tact and unwearied activity, the church owed so much in those days, at least in this section of it; and with the view of calling one of these, they had applied to be received into that Presbytery. We believe indeed that on account of the experience of 1842, and perhaps from the apprehension of a possible repetition of it, it seemed better, both to the congregation and to some of the brethren in Montreal, that Mr. H. and his people should connect themselves rather with the Free Church than the United Presbytery, an especially as union of the two bodies was to take place so soon, viz., June, 1861.

The settlement expected was not accomplished, through an unhappy circumstance. But in the same week that it should have taken place the present writer, having just arrived in Canada, was sent to preach at St. Andrew's, and, as he also, although belonging to the United Presbyterian Church, had no difficulty in anticipating the union by a few months, he was, in the fall of 1860, settled as assistant and successor to Mr. Henderson, who thenceforth left the whole work and management to his colleague.

He had thus been actively engaged in the work of the ministry for exactly fifty years; and he had been no idler in the vineyard. Of the various departments of pastoral duty, he regarded the work of the pulpit as the most important; and to it he directed his whole strength. Many volumes remain, in his close neat hand-writing, largely mixed with short-hand, out of which much might be selected that would instruct and edify the Church. His sermons, which were very carefully composed, were logical, comprehensive, going exhaustively into the subject, especially if it were a doctrinal one, and eminently scriptural; and they had in the delivery, much of that "unction" so necessary to any spiritual effect. In his early ministry his habit was to write his forenoon lecture on Monday and Tuesday, his sermon on Wednesday and Thursday, and to commit them to memory, *verbatim*, on Friday and Saturday. In this country he emancipated himself from the bondage of "manudation," and read his manuscript freely in the pulpit. He visited his people at their own houses once a year, going a good deal on foot, for unlike the most of Canadian ministers, he never kept a horse here, nor ever, we believe, either rode or even drove one in Canada, though he once owned a pony in the old country. In his visiting he dealt very faithfully with the people, exhorting and rebuking, where he saw cause, as one that watched for their souls; and wherever sympathy and tenderness, in his ministrations to the sick and the dying.

The old Scotch plan of public catechizing of the congregation he once tried in Carleton; but found it did not flourish in that southern latitude, for only his wife and his servant girl presented themselves for examination. He never attempted it in this country. If he had, the result would have been equally discouraging as to attendance, and more so as to the proficiency of the catechumens, if we may judge by one specimen. He used to tell of a man who came to ask baptism for his child. Mr. H. began to question him about the ordinance, but not finding much intelligence, asked "What is a Sacrament?" He received for answer, "A Sacrament is a saving grace whereby the souls of believers do rest in their graves till the resurrection." Confounded with this answer, he then put the simple question, "How is it that we are to be saved?" to which the man gravely replied, "By taking the name of the Lord in vain;" and this not as a profane jest, but in sheer bucolic stupidity. This certainly, it must be said, was not a fair specimen.

NEWMARKET CONGREGATION.

MR. EDITOR.—During my three years labour in this place I have said nothing of the progress we have been making. I suppose a point of delicacy has been the reason, considering my relation to the cause itself. This, however, I lay aside for the present, and wish to do the people justice who have so willingly seconded every effort I have made to establish and build up the cause of Christ. And in order to give a definite idea of what has been done, and how we have come to our present position, I will go back to the beginning of my three years work in this place. When I came here, Rev. Mr. Bruce was labouring between this place and Aurora, having succeeded in building a church in the latter place, and had the foundation of one laid in Newmarket. When I began we divided the labour as well as we could, he taking Aurora and I taking Newmarket, where I have laboured ever since. Now of the work that he did in both places, before I came, I say nothing, for that work speaks for itself, and will I hope be even more fruitful in the future than it has been in the past. My object then in giving the following statement is threefold,—*first*: to give the worthy people up here credit for what they have done; *second*: to encourage weak congregations to struggle on; and *third*: to induce probationers to take hold of a weak cause and work it up almost if not altogether, to the self-sustaining point.

Well, when I came here we had only six members, and there was not much done to swell this list during the first half of the first year, for we were trying hard to build a church. We had no church of our own then, only a borrowed one, very small and uncomfortable at that, and yet a few can look back with satisfaction even on the days of small things. By a good deal of planning and unflinching perseverance, we managed to build a good brick church, and have occupied it for the last two years. It was thought by many to be a wild scheme when it was first mentioned, and some thought we would never be able to finish it. But the work was God's and it did prosper. When we had our first Sacrament, after taking possession of our present building, we had an addition of twenty-eight members; and now our roll of six members at first, has swelled up, until we have more than a hundred, as well as an active and energetic congregation. Surely "the Lord hath done great things for us," and more than rewarded our feeble endeavours. With regard to money matters I am unwilling to speak, at least so far as salary is concerned. But of the moneys collected for the building fund and other current expenses, it is only proper that a fair statement should be made. The building and the lot on which it stands cost over \$6,000, and of this there is a remaining debt of \$2,750. This, however, is put in a shape not to distress the congregation, and there is nothing that I can see to discourage. During the past year (ending with March) we raised and paid out for all purposes over \$1,200. Of course there was some of that raised by special effort to help to reduce the debt, which may not be looked for every year. The above sum would appear even more surprising if I were to tell you what was raised the first year I was here, but this I forbear to do at present.

Of the congregation too, I would like to say a few words. I hope it will not be considered weakness on my part, nor yet taken as an evidence of boasting, when I say that there is not to be found in any congregation in Newmarket such a noble band of young ladies and gentlemen who are both able and willing to work. And the past winter has tried them on this point. During the winter months we have had our annual tea meeting, which was a great success, as well as eight or nine socials. And through all the arduous duties connected with these, there has been no evidence of flagging on the part of the young people. In holding the socials referred to we had three objects in view. *First*: To provide an entertainment for the young people of an innocent and enjoyable character, to keep them from resorting to questionable expedients and doubtful places of resort. *Second*: To bring all the congregation more closely together, break down stiffness and formality, and make them more familiarly intimate with each other. Of course I believe firmly in personal recognition in heaven, but just as tenaciously do I hold to recognition on earth, although it is sometimes not very lavishly practised. And the third object was to make a little money. Now in all these particulars we gained our object, as the congregation well knows. Here then we have a congregation possessed of life and vigour, one of respectability and influence, having arisen almost from nothing, sitting now under its own vine and fig tree, and everything going on

in harmony. Of course I know that general prosperity is not always an index to the amount of good that may be done, and that all who are in the church may not be of it. But here we have evidence clear enough in the case of most who have joined on profession of faith, and there are yet of these on the roll sixty-seven, that they are struggling to serve the Lord. For all these tokens of favor, I, for one, thank God and take courage. I just hope that this letter may fall into the hands of the students and probationers, and that they may be persuaded to follow the course I myself have taken. I do not think they would ever regret it, and they would acquire experience that would do them good through life. Far more permanent good will be done to the Church in this way than by the spasmodic efforts put forth for a few weeks, or at most months, in mission stations, where a season of silence follows, or strange supply every Sabbath during the winter. Yours truly,
JOHN R. BARTISBY.

SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS.

MR. EDITOR.—Would you kindly allow me to offer some suggestions of various kinds for the consideration of members of Assembly, and especially to members of Assembly Committees and others entrusted with the management of affairs.

1. That a rule of procedure to the following effect be incorporated in the new forms, viz., that a Presbytery which has received a minister from another church by designation shall intimate the reception to other Presbyteries. The object of such rule is, that if the minister receive a call in another Presbytery than that which received him, it would have official knowledge of his eligibility to the call.

2. As to the publication of the Church's finances, that they be all printed together instead of being scattered through the appendix of the minutes of Assembly; that each scheme be numbered in large Roman numerals so that the reader may know where he is; that the debtor and credit sides of the accounts be printed on opposite pages; and especially that the finances of the Western Section be more specifically stated, as clearly and minutely as they are in the admirable financial reports from the Eastern Section. Knox and Montreal College accounts should be put in the same business-like style as those of Queen's College.

3. As to presentation of reports to the General Assembly. Should they be all read in their entirety? I think it would serve all useful purposes for the Conveners in laying their reports before the Assembly to give *viva voce* the leading points or recommendations. Appreciating thoroughly, as I do, the diligence and excessive anxiety which must be expended by the Convener on statistics in preparing the tables and report thereon, I cannot but think that it is needless and wearisome to spend an hour, more or less, with minutiae as to congregations in all the Presbyteries which have failed to report, and similar things. Members of Presbytery can see these details at a glance of the report, when the time comes to deal with them. In the same way I hold that it is needless for Conveners of the Home Mission Committees to read the details about the stations. It is certainly wearisome to hear them, though such details are useful as records to be read at leisure. Let Conveners treat the members of Assembly as they do their congregations, with an effort to please and with a wholesome fear of tediousness.

4. As to the publication of Assembly minutes: Is it necessary to issue copies to all members of Sessions, as is done with us? The Free Church issues only one copy to each congregation. What purpose is served by our profuse distribution? To what purpose is all this waste in these hard times, or at any time? It is hereby suggested that one copy be sent as usual to each minister, and if more be needed only one copy to each session.

5. As to expenses of members of Home Mission Committee, it is with some diffidence, not at all felt in making the foregoing suggestions, suggested that they be paid out of the Presbytery funds, and so relieve the funds of the Committee; though members of the Assembly's Committee, they virtually do the Presbytery's work. The accounts do not show clearly what was paid to members of Committee for their expenses. Very likely the amount of their expenses was \$876, which appears as "expenses of Committee." Now a good many Presbyteries do not contribute for Home Mission purposes as much as the sum named. The thought is not very palatable to the members of such Presbyteries or to the members of the Church in their bounds, that more than all they contributed was expended in trav-

elling expenses. Let each Presbytery defray the expenses of its own member of the Committee, and such a thought can have no existence.

6. As to the statistics for the present year. The alterations on the forms are not an improvement. There is no column for Knox College Building Fund, and I know, as a fact, that congregations in their returns sometimes enter their contributions to the Building Fund in the column for the ordinary revenue of the College. Then the column for adult baptisms is left out. *Why?* A more interesting fact is scarcely needed by last year's tables than that there were 661 adult persons baptized into the Church during the preceding twelve months. And now we will not be able to form any conception of the work done by the Church and its members, who come to adulthood with "having any standing in the Church; no ill we be able to show that we are baptizing perhaps as many adults as those who assume to be Baptists *par excellence*. It is perhaps unavoidable that the forms used this year do not state the date up to which the statistics are required, but it will prove awkward, suppose some congregations make their returns to December 31, and others to March 31; how will the Presbytery Clerk state the term for which the returns are given in filling up the forms provided to them? Then again, the committee ought to use words free from all possibility of being misunderstood. Have they not already discovered how hard it is to make people understand matters of this kind though very plain to themselves? Let them look at questions three and four in their financial form. The third asks for the "Stipend promised from all sources." That is plain enough, but question four asks for the "stipend paid." The Committee knows what they want, but many who fill up the paper will not be certain whether "stipend paid" means "stipend from all sources," or "stipend paid by the congregation alone," and the clerks will be troubled by answers given both ways. Then when I look to the form provided for clerks I find the Committee's explanation to be "stipend paid from all sources," which as I take it is the reverse of what they really meant in column four. There should have been more care, greater precision in terms, and accuracy in preparing the forms.

7. And lastly for the present, I wish I could wake up the Western Foreign Mission Committee. I have known a former effort fail. What are they doing to keep alive the Church's interest in the important cause confided to them? The College Committee, the Home Mission Committee, and especially the French Evangelization Committee, (with Dr. McVicar's and Mr. Chiniquy's frequent appeals to the Church) make themselves heard, and their want-known through the press. An occasional communication from a Formosa Missionary appears to be transmitted now and again to the *Record*. But is this all that is needed? Why do not the readers of the Denominational paper see frequent and stirring communications from the committee themselves, and from the missionaries? We used to have frequent letters, and most interesting, from Dr. Fraser, and, more frequently than now, letters from Mr. Mackay? The missionaries but rarely write now, from whatever cause; and a letter published by one of them contained the strange request that it should not be published. Their chief duty is of course to labour in China, but one of the principal subordinate duties they owe is to keep the Church fully and regularly informed as to their work. Let them slip away from public notice by failing to let themselves be heard, and let the committee be equally non-communicative, and the cause will fail of support. Then once more the Committee, I humbly suggest, should tabulate the results of Foreign Mission Work, and present statistical tables as is done so well by the eastern section.

I beg, Mr. Editor, to submit these suggestions to all parties concerned with respect, and hope they will meet with approval, though perhaps they will be thought to touch with what is not exactly the writer's business. They are mine however as much as any other persons. It is in no ill-natured or soured spirit I write, but I like to see things well done, and believe these suggestions are called for. Perhaps I may, if you find place for these, send other suggestions for

IMPROVEMENT.

BIRROCK and Saltfleet congregations have given for all religious purposes, for the current year, at the rate of,—the former \$28, and the latter \$43, per family. For the schemes of the Church they have raised over \$180, as compared with \$101.49, last year—an arguery we trust of better things, when better times return.