

# British American Presbyterian

Vol. 6—No. 12.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1877

[Whole No. 272

## Contributors and Correspondents

For the Presbyterian.]

THE LATE REV. ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, M.A.

BY REV. D. PATTERSON, M.A.

### No. III.

Here we may indicate Mr. Henderson's ecclesiastical relations, the narrative of which involves some curious things in Colonial Church history. We shall give it partly in his own words. In a letter to the late Dr. Taylor, of Montreal, dated Nov. 22, 1854, he says, "I will cheerfully do what I can to assist Dr. McKelvie" (of Balgownie, then preparing his invaluable *Annals and Statistics of the U. P. Church*); "by telling him what I know of that lost tribe 'the Presbytery of the Canadas.' . . . Going a little farther back, I may mention that among the ministers who came over to the United States with Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Mason, in the autumn of 1802, to labour in connection with the Associate Reformed body, were Mr. Forrest, formerly of Salt-coats, and Mr. Easton of Morpeth. That body appears to have thought of extending itself into Canada; for I have learnt that Mr. Forrest preached for some time, I know not how long, in St. Gabriel Church, Montreal. The attempt was abortive. When he had upon one occasion proposed to the congregation to connect itself with the Associate Reformed, a gentleman, as they were dismissing, gave utterance to the prevalent anti-American feeling in the form of a profane oath against the proposal. When Mr. Easton afterwards settled in Montreal, there was a fairer prospect of introducing the Secession, and that in immediate connexion with our Synod at home. He succeeded in erecting a place of worship, chiefly by the help of contributions obtained in the United States, on the express condition that it should be for the use of a congregation in connexion with the Secession."

He goes on to say that when he left Scotland for Canada, in May 1818, he brought with him a minute of the Associate Synod, authorizing Messrs. Easton, Taylor, Bell, and Smart, to form themselves into a Presbytery, in accordance with a petition those brethren had sent, and then proceeds—"I had no sooner arrived in this country than I found that the brethren instead of waiting the result of application to our Synod, had formed themselves into a Presbytery on entirely different grounds, and had proceeded to license and ordain some very unworthy characters." Mr. H. therefore declined to join them. Mr. Easton, however, having gone on a visit to the old country, made such representations that the Synod at his request, put "the Presbytery of the Canadas" on their roll. This action of Mr. Easton's which had been entirely unauthorized, was repudiated by his co-presbyters, who did not wish to connect themselves with any church at home. "After some time it divided itself into three Presbyteries,\* composing, I believe, the Synod of the Canadas. . . . Having become desirous, as well they might, to get rid of their brother—" (one of the 'unworthy characters,') "and fearing that, if they attempted to proceed in the way of discipline, he would plague them with civil law, they could think of no better way of accomplishing this end than by dissolving their corporate existence, and so letting him drop. After remaining thus separate for about a year they formed themselves anew under the title of the 'United Synod of Upper Canada,' and at length became absorbed in the Synod connected with the Church of Scotland."

Mr. Easton's congregation in Montreal had already preceded them to the same destination, carrying their property with them, by means of a "manoeuvre," in violation of express engagements. "It was this resolution that gave rise to the American Presbyterian Church of Montreal. The Americans belonging to St. Peter's street, many of them very excellent people, would most willingly have stood connected with the Secession; but they were indignant at the management which had been used, and spurned the idea of being handed over to another body."

In December 1834, the "Missionary Presbytery of the Canadas" was formed in connexion with the Secession Church of Scotland, containing eight or ten ministers, from Mr. Proudfoot of London to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Taylor of Montreal (V. M. Sec. Mag., June 1835). There were then the following three Presbyterian Churches in Canada; as appears also from the interesting notices of Mr. Smart in recent numbers of this paper (which show, as to Mr. H's reminiscences, the confused

character of the proceedings of certain of those worthy fathers, arising probably from the imperfect training in church order of some of their leading spirits.) There were (1) what had been the "United Synod of Upper Canada," which came into existence in the singular manner related above, but which had now descended from its Synodal Status, and became the "United Presbytery of Upper Canada," occupying an independent position (2) The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland, formed in 1831. (3) The "Missionary Presbytery of the Canadas," connected with the United Secession Church. Of these the first two united in 1840, or according to Mr. H's version No. 1 became absorbed in No. 2, while No. 3 had become in 1842, or sooner, a synod embracing three Presbyteries.

In October, 1848, another Presbytery, the "Missionary Presbytery of Eastern Canada," was formed by authority of the United Secession Synod of Scotland. It consisted of the Rev. Andrew Kennedy of Lacerte (now of London, Ont.), and the Rev. Alex. Lowden of New Glasgow, with their respective elders, Messrs. John McAnat and John Murray. In the year after it joined the Missionary Synod of the same body, and was strengthened in 1846 by the accession of Dr. Taylor of Montreal and his congregation in Lagachetiere St., which had been formed in 1838, but had hitherto been in Presbyterian connexion with Upper Canada. The Church was then being consolidated by a sort of crystallizing process, the scattered elements coming together gradually according to their natural affinities. The last named Synod grew rapidly into the United Presbyterian Church, their name being assumed on the Union of the Secession and Relief Churches which took place in Scotland in 1847. We do not know that there were any Relief congregations in Canada. On the other hand, the body formed by the union of 1840 was broken into two by the disruption of 1844, making three bodies once more. These all vigorously pushed their way, shooting up with varying measures of strength, till the unions of 1861 and 1875 reunited the whole Presbyterian family in the Dominion, and healed, let us hope for ever, the breaches of a hundred and forty years.

If the Presbyterian Church has been noted for divisions, it has also been distinguished by its efforts to heal them. These divisions have arisen from the clear apprehension of principles characteristic of the Scottish mind, and strong attachment to them; and when the separated brethren have come to see that they could unite without compromising truth, the same loyalty to their Master which parted them has brought them together again. The poet says of the two alienated friends:

"They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another,  
To free the hollow heart from paining;  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder:  
A dreary sea now flows between.  
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been."

And so, in the Church of Christ divided, the sense of brotherhood remains. But what the elements of nature cannot do, in joining cliffs that had been covered by some convulsion, any more than in obliterating the traces of their former union; and what natural affection and worldly interest will not always do in reconciling separated friends, duty to Christ and love to him have done, and will do again in gathering together the dispersed of Israel, all their suspicions and jealousies and envies being left behind. The subject of this notice lived to see no fewer than five such unions, those, viz., of 1820, 1840, 1847, 1851 and 1875, in the last and greatest of which he was honoured, and counted it no small privilege to take a public part.

(To be continued)

(In the former article, column two, line six from the bottom, for "active" read—"otiose.")

The contributions of the Orillia congregation for 1876, are not \$1,887.72, but upwards of \$2,400.

The Rev. O. Chiquiquy lectured to a crowded house at Stratford, on Tuesday evening of last week. The net proceeds, amounting to \$60, were handed to the lecturer in aid of the French Mission.

Mr. Wm. Weatherstone, for many years leader of the choir of St. Andrew's Church, Galt, was lately presented by the members of the congregation with a beautiful Albert gold chain, an album, and a violin case, in recognition of the endeavors which he had put forth on behalf of improving the Psalmody of the church. The presentation was accompanied by a very feeling and complimentary address, to which Mr. Weatherstone made a fitting response.

## MODERN BIBLICAL HYPER-CRITICISM.

MR. EDITOR.—In his article No. V. (in the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, March 23rd), Mr. Gray says:—"Principal Snodgrass certainly misinterprets my meaning, however unwittingly when he takes a sentence out of my introduction, changes it from a fact to a motive, and then concludes that I am ascribing a motive of a very low order to the Professor."

My letter (in the PRESBYTERIAN, March 9th), had reference solely to Mr. Gray's first communication, in which, immediately before alluding to Prof. Smith's article "on the Bible in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*," the Professor was named as a "conspicuous example" of many "who are trying in their longings after originality to find out how far they can wander outside of the wholesome teachings of creeds and confessions without exposing themselves to church discipline or expulsion." Before quoting these words I remarked that I could not convince myself that Mr. Gray was justified in using them. After quoting them I stated that my repeated perusal of the Professor's article did not tempt me to account for it as Mr. Gray does. Mr. Gray tells me that I have changed the sentence from a fact to a motive. Admitting the sentence to be a fact there is certainly room in it for a motive. Statements of fact are not necessarily statements of motive, but in this case the look of the thing seems to be in favour of identity. What does Mr. Gray ascribe to Prof. Smith? The Professor has longings after originality. Creeds and confessions are not favourable to the gratification of such longings, and the gratification of them is kept in check by the dread of exposure to Church discipline or expulsion. With the fear of exposure before his eyes, there is, nevertheless, a certain point in the direction of heterodoxy to which the Professor thinks he may venture; outside of creeds and confessions, a certain domain within which he may wander. He is trying to find out how far he can go and wander. This effort relates itself somehow to longing after originality. In his "trying," the Professor has an object—a very unworthy object—in view, and in his longings he tries to attain it. This seems to be the amount of Mr. Gray's sentence, and yet no motive is ascribed! Well, the philosophy of motives has puzzled many an intellect, and little good results from mere verbal disputes. I am not desirous of accusing Mr. Gray of imputing what is usually understood to be a motive; and therefore whatever it is that he ascribes to the Professor in connection with the production of his article on the Bible, whether a longing after originality or an effort in the line of heterodoxy, or both, my judgment is that it is something of "a very low order."

I do not doubt the earnestness of Mr. Gray's love of truth, and it may be quite interesting to the public to learn that part of his excuse "for intruding at all into this controversy" is the presentation to him, by an old country friend, of "the forthcoming volumes of the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*." Nor do I question the sense of responsibility with which he undertook to give to thousands, not so befriended as he, his judgment on the views of Prof. Smith. It is altogether to the manner in which he presents the Professor's statements that I demur. In any case there is a demand for the fullest fairness in the exposure of error, real or supposed, and in this instance the demand is specially exacting when nothing less is at stake than the reputation and status of a Christian theologian, of acknowledged scholarship, the occupant of an important professional position by virtue of the appointment of the General Assembly of one of the leading Scottish Churches. It ought not to be without indisputable reasons that the epithet "unscrupulous writer" is flung at such a man, or that an "unhealthy moral tone" is ascribed to his writings.

The "Oracles of God" themselves often suffer by the manner in which particular passages are quoted, and perhaps we should not wonder at the writings of honest Biblical students being sometimes presented in such fragmentary forms that misleading impressions are produced as to their real attitude. Prof. Smith affirms that he is not a "destructive" theologian, and yet his history of the literature of the Bible is represented as sapping the foundation of the Christian faith: he believes in the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, and yet, when giving the results of investigations into their human authorship, his statements are identified in character and tendency with the rationalistic positions of what is called the higher German criticism.

Mr. Gray is constrained to say: "After frequent perusal of the article of Professor

Smith, I cannot but express a very high opinion of its freshness, originality, and ability." As to originality, it must be in form rather than in matter, for Mr. Gray has found no difficulty in tracing the writer's views to German sources, to one German author in particular, supplemented by "a work so very hostile to truth as *Paine's Age of Reason*."

In my former communication I remarked that in my opinion Mr. Gray's method of quotation needs reconsideration, and gave what appeared to be some pertinent examples of his method. Although I had abandoned all intention to revert to the subject, I now venture upon another line of observation.

The subject discussed is very large, inclusive of an immense mass of historical materials, numerous principles of literary and linguistic criticism with their applications, endless details and illustrations. For such a subject the condensation of the article is remarkable. This quality more than "vagueness" makes quotation difficult. It is no doubt to some extent a reflection of the author's ideas and habits of literary execution, but in any attempt to account for it fully, the hampering effect of limited space should not be overlooked. Admirable as conciseness is in any production, in the present instance it may occasion some liability to misapprehension. But it is nothing short of the wildest hypothesis to credit a possibility of that sort to an improper design in the authorship, when adequate rational causes are assignable; and for the contributor of that article, to such a work as the one in which it appears, is surely entitled to assume that his readers are prepared to discriminate between the application of general principles and the introduction of subversive elements, and that they will be considerate enough not to tear examples from the positions they are adduced to illustrate.

With regard to the text of Scripture, Mr. Gray affirms that Prof. Smith "seems to take delight in proving it to be incorrect and unreliable," citing as an instance of this what the Professor says about the text of Micah, namely, that it is "often unrecognizable, and many hopeless errors" older than the oldest version." This statement is introduced by Mr. Gray as if it were advanced in proof of a declaration made by the Professor that "the Hebrew text of Scripture" is in "a very unsatisfactory state." The Professor, however, does not introduce it for that purpose, but in illustration of a brief historical survey of causes which led to errors in copying. The really important questions—open for disputation to any competent reviewer—are (1) whether or not the positions affirmed historically accord with the facts of the case; if so, then (2), whether or not the alleged state of the text in Micah is a fair exemplification of their tenableness. If it be possible to predicate absolute purity of the text, then no discussion can arise, but Mr. Gray himself affirms of his favourite Masoretic no more than general, substantial correctness and purity. Allow any uncertainty and the question of purity becomes a comparative one, as regards the condition of the text, in the several books of Scripture. They are not all alike in that respect. The Professor's statements, according to Mr. Gray, one of his "fierce onslaughts" on the integrity, authenticity, and genuineness of the Old Testament. It is impossible, however, to discover a greater indication of delight than of regret, and I am inclined to think that even "the famous spectacles of Joe Smith" to which the Professor's "critical insight" is not too happily compared by his Canadian Reviewer, could not detect a trace of sanguinary satisfaction.

Mr. Gray, in his second article, is explosive against Prof. Smith because of his remarks in reference to a partition of the prophecies of Zechariah and Isaiah. The canonicity of these books or of any part of them is not questioned. The question adverted to is not new, and by any one who does not start, as Prof. Smith does not, from the empirical position that an inspired record is impossible, if it should be to a certain extent anonymous, the conditions of authenticity and genuineness are not imperilled. The question claims discussion according to its merits, and a decision according to evidence. To ignore it is more than that simple acknowledgment of difficulty which is sometimes all that is possible or safe. To honest students following the preponderance of proof a choice of sides cannot be denied, except from a fear that the Word of God may not survive any test but that of friendly criticism. Had Prof. Smith originated the question, and with "youthful" (?) rashness committed himself absolutely to one or other of the views that have been adopted, the epithet, "presumptuous critic," might have been plausibly if not de-

visedly applied: had he driven out in support of either opinion, some reasons so paltry as to make the absurdity of his position only the more apparent, that other term of reproach, "unscrupulous writer," might have been flung at him. The Professor's account of the question as it stands at the present stage of criticism may not be incontrovertible, but Mr. Gray, I cannot help thinking, would have been more like himself as a lover of truth, if instead of calling a brother by such names, he had allowed the Professor's statements through a full quotation of them to speak in the first place for themselves.

To advert to one other point—the apostolicity of the Synoptical Gospels—there appears to be no good reason to deny that apostolicity is a characteristic, or that the belief of it was a condition of these books. The extent to which this may be affirmed is the subject of questionings. Mr. Gray is not dogmatic on this point, for while he speaks of the "Apostolic origin of the New Testament," he represents the view of the Church in all ages to be, that the New Testament was written either by apostolic men, or under their direct or indirect superintendence. But he tells us (in the PRESBYTERIAN, March 9th) that Prof. Smith's statement and reasoning tend in the direction of doing away with this principle, and that the general drift of his conclusions is to unsettle the mind in regard to the apostolic origin of the Greek Scriptures. The Professor says, as quoted by Mr. Gray, "It appears from what we have already seen that a considerable portion of the New Testament is made up of writings not directly apostolical (the italics are mine), and the main problem of criticism is to determine the relation of these writings, especially of the Gospels, to apostolic teaching and tradition." The Professor's remark, which Mr. Gray also quotes, that "all the earliest external evidences point to the conclusion that the synoptical Gospels are non-apostolical digests (the italics are Mr. Gray's, although he does not say so), of spoken and written apostolic tradition," is not to be overlooked, but in all fairness it should be taken in connection with the preceding quotation, and it is specially important to observe that it is not in the article, as it appears in the quotation, an absolute, but a relative and hypothetical statement, dependent upon the acceptance of one of two possible solutions of a well-known difficulty with regard to the original form of the Gospel according to Matthew. From a critical point of view the Professor's survey of varying positions on this topic is perhaps the ablest and most interesting portion of that branch of the subject headed, *Motives and origin of the first Christian Literature*. It is impossible to do it justice except by a complete transcription.

Mr. Gray tells a capital story about acquiring fame by killing a famous man—a story specially interesting because of the manifold applications of which it admits. If the notoriety which comes of manslaughter be ever a proper object of ambition, it may be emulated by the manner in which the deed is done, for even murder admits of degrees in the artfulness of its execution. Should the Presbyterian "thunder" which, Boanerges-like, the minister of Orillia invokes to complete the business he has on hand, reverberate in answer to his call, we can only hope that it will do more good than harm, for we must not forget the well-known lesson of sacred history, that it is not always a Christian or a prudent course to imitate in every particular the "Prophet of Fire." Yours, etc., W. SNODGRASS.

Queen's College, March 26, 1877.

THE QUARTERLY. A periodical connected with the Hamilton Collegiate Institute. A little more learned than usual. The article on "The Science of Language" is good. The poem called "The Plea of the Rivulet," contains forty-seven stanzas.

THE NORMAL CLASS. A Quarterly Magazine. J. H. Vincent, Editor. New York: Nelson & Phillips. Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden. Price fifty cents per year. This magazine is entirely devoted to Sabbath schools and Sabbath school teaching. Normal classes for the training of Sabbath school teachers are now established at various points in the United States, at which the course marked out by the Chautauqua Convention is followed. All necessary information regarding that course and the working of the normal classes is given in this magazine and in a series of tracts, the first seven of which we have received along with it. The tracts are published at the rate of four pages for one cent. The magazine also gives the regular S. S. Lessons with a number of fresh anecdotes to illustrate them.