

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 5—No. 17.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, MAY 26, 1876.

[Whole No. 225

Contributors and Correspondence

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Allow me to acknowledge with cordial thanks the receipt of contributions for French Evangelization as shown by the appended list. I am happy to say that money continues to flow into our treasury, and we need it all and far more. Our work has out-grown our ability to overtake it. This was the feeling expressed at the recent meeting of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, and some resolutions were unanimously adopted to ask the General Assembly to devise means by which to secure us a much larger income. This is absolutely necessary if we are not to abandon the openings the Lord has made for us, and to allow the many souls brought out of Romish darkness by our mission to pass into other hands. At this moment we have six families of converts in the west of the city, with no church in which to congregate and instruct them. An Episcopal missionary has been placed in the very heart of them, and is doing his utmost to gather them into that communion. In these circumstances our Board has resolved to build in that neighborhood a Mission Church to seat six hundred. This will cost not less than ten thousand dollars. We should at the same time build a similar church in the east of the city, where we have a large number of converts, among whom the Wesleys have sent a missionary. These two churches are required in addition to Russell Hall. We also require a mission school house at St. Paul de Chester, and another at St. Chrysostem. The people at both these stations offer land on which to build, and material, labor and contributions according to their ability, but they cannot build without considerable assistance. To day I have furnished our young missionary, G. Mousseau, with an outfit of Bibles, Testaments, Shorter Catechisms, and French tracts, and books to take with him into the backwoods of the county of Suffolk. There are twenty French families already settled there who have little or no faith in the Pope and his messengers. Twelve French Protestant families from our Russell Hall Church leave this morning for the same place, to settle on wild lands granted them by the Government. Our Board sends Mr. Mousseau with them to teach themselves and their children the way of God more perfectly, and to evangelize the surrounding population. We think this a wise step, one which our church will approve. But we need a school house there at once, otherwise how is Mr. Mousseau to carry on his mission work? Where is the money to come from for all these purposes? Our people have it in their pockets. They have millions of dollars going to waste for want of proper investment in the Lord's business. From such a church as ours, with its great numerical and financial strength, there should be no difficulty in realizing thirty thousand dollars annually for this mission, and with less than this it cannot escape injury and reproach. A friend of mine writes me from England that this is "one of the greatest works of modern times." He is quite right; but does our church properly realize this fact? The British Religious press has taken favorable notice of it, and copied extracts from letters which have appeared in your paper, and this suggested to me that the Churches at home should aid us in this work. I have accordingly furnished the Rev. Dr. Jenkins and Prof. Gregg with information to lay before the General Assemblies of the church of Scotland and the Free church, and the Synod of the united Presbyterian church, and the Presbyterian church in Ireland. I trust their appeals to these venerable Courts may be eminently successful; but we need something more than this. We need a British Agent to send us ten or twelve thousand dollars per annum. And in this connection it must not be forgotten that for our want of such agency, others whose organization and doctrines are not Presbyterian, draw the money which we need for our people, both in Britain and in Canada. I intend next week to present the claims of this work before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States, through Father Chiniquy, and otherwise we are doing much to enlighten the French Romanists of that country, and as yet we have received little financial aid in return. We therefore wish to tell our American Brethren what we are doing, and to draw their sympathy and support in our behalf.

It is unnecessary for me to anticipate our report to the General Assembly by going into recent details, but I cannot close this hurried note without mentioning that our Board directed Father Chiniquy to spend this month at Ottawa. This decision was made at the request of Brethren in that city; and already tidings of success have reached me. A deep interest is awakened throughout the city by the stirring addresses of our venerable missionary, and large numbers of Roman Catholics assemble to hear him. Let us hope and pray that the Lord may open their hearts to receive the truth. Yours truly,
D. H. MACDONNELL.
Pres. Coll., Montreal, May 18th, 1876.

The Macdonnell Case.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—As I have seen in your columns and elsewhere, observations on what is called "the Macdonnell case," which appear to me to proceed from a complete misconception of its present relation to the Church—permit me to say a few words on the subject. There has been a good deal said of late about introducing "a new type of teaching" into the Church—about making the duration of future punishment "an open question,"—about uttering no uncertain sound regarding it, etc., etc. Now all this has nothing to do with the present question at all. No one is attempting to introduce any "new type of teaching," or to make the question an "open" one. The immense majority of the members of the Presbyterian Church have probably no doubt that future punishment will be endless, and that is the recognized teaching of the Church. Well and good. No one, so far as I know, has objected to this being so. That sonnet which seems to have so needlessly alarmed some of your correspondents is really only a statement of what few will care to dispute—that we ought to treat with Christian charity those who differ from us even on this point—and so long as they "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," should acknowledge them as brethren in Him. If this is to be disputed the word of God will first have to be set aside.

As for Mr. Macdonnell every one should know by this time that neither he nor his friends claim any right to introduce "a new type of teaching." On the contrary, he has himself expressed his regret for the solitary sermon in which he merely glanced at "restoration" as seeming to be indicated by some passages of Scripture, while he fully admitted the force of those on the other side. And he has distinctly stated that he considers it no part of his message as a minister of Christ to hold out any such hope. He has, moreover, stated that he has "reached no conclusion at variance with the Confession," and that his teaching is not to be at variance therewith. Many think this might have satisfied any reasonable care for the purity of the teaching of the Church. But where is there any ground for talking of "a new type of teaching" or "open questions"? What the Church has to do with is simply the question whether an honest scruple of conscience is to be tolerated in an excellent and useful minister, who, having difficulties in regard to a certain subject, cannot see his way clear to express his inmost thoughts in the words of others. And why should not such a scruple be tolerated in regard to one point, when we are assured that such scruples are tolerated in regard to others? It is not long since you stated editorially that "no minister of our Church regards himself as in the position" of being obliged to endorse every statement of the Confession. Why, then, should such extreme rigidity be practised towards one who is confessedly among the brightest ornaments and most devoted ministers of the Church?

The Confession of Faith itself clearly lays down the principle of conformity to human standards, when it expressly says that "God alone is lord of the conscience," and that the requiring of an implicit faith and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also." Furthermore it declares that as "all synods or councils since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith and practice, but to be used as an help in both. Many are of opinion that these principles have been ignored in the recent proceedings, and that the Confession has not only been used in a way never intended by its excellent compilers, but in a way expressly condemned by them. It has not been objected by any member of our Church, so far as I am aware, that the Church has been jealous in guarding the purity of her teachings. What has been objected to has been "the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience," the attempt to trammel a man's conscience and his inalienable freedom of thought, which is sadly out of keeping with the ancient history of the Presbyterian Church. As the *Methodist Guardian* well puts it, in an article of which you publish an expurgated edition, "It seems to us that the gentlemen who took the lead in maintaining the doctrine of the Confession, while professing to concede to Mr. Macdonnell the liberty of entertaining doubts and perplexities on the question, really required of him a statement such as could only be given by one who had no doubts on the subject." I do not desire here to give expression to the strong opinions on this point held by thousands of Presbyterians, including some of our ablest ministers, as well as by many other Christians. But certainly it has not been the practice of the Presbyterian Church to establish such close surveillance over the private thoughts and consciences of her ministers. Even in the celebrated "Row case," the result of which has occasioned such general regret and condemnation, it was the teaching, not the private thoughts of their brother with which his judges concerned themselves; and it was solely on the ground of his teaching, as reported by examined witnesses, that he was expelled. Mr. Macdonnell's teaching has been unimpeachable, except on the one occasion for which he has expressed regret. And is it not making a man "an offender for a word," to make that single sermon the ground for probing his most private thoughts, after he had clearly indicated his intentions as to his teaching? That Mr. Macdonnell should have said what he did say regarding the conduct of the case is a proof of his large hearted magnanimity and charity. Others, looking not at words but at hard facts, must draw their own conclusions. A man's motives, but

as we all know, many things totally at variance with the liberty with which Christ has made His people free, have been done under a mistake though "painless sense of duty," and with the best and kindest intentions. The whole history of religious differences abounds in such instances.

A good deal has been said about what a Church has a right to do, as if it were a kind of club which could irresponsibly draw up its own code of admission, and blackball every candidate who did not come up to an arbitrary standard. Surely it is forgotten that a Church must first of all seek to follow out the "mind that is in Christ Jesus!" And can any one truly say that it is in accordance with what we know of that "mind" to cast out one of His true and faithful servants because he may chance to differ from the majority of us on a point which need never enter into his teaching? And if not, then to do it because it is in accordance with Church law, is simply to place Church law above the will of Christ. Moreover, if this were so, no minister who is not absolutely at one with the Confession on every point, could help feeling himself in a false position.

And is it not possible that Presbyterians are apt to think a little too much of merely theoretical differences, and much too little of the "honest and good heart," the life "blameless and harmless," the "abounding labours," the "work of faith and labour of love," the following Christ and the desire to do His will, on which He laid such paramount stress, declaring the latter the best preparation for "knowing of the doctrine"? I have known of ministers whose coldness, worldliness, indifference, ruined their congregations and discredited their profession; but I never saw the expression *erring brother* applied to them by any paper. This was reserved for one of our most earnest, faithful and devoted labourers, to whose love for Christ and unceasing labours for His cause all who know him can testify; and simply because he has not been able to feel as sure as to a mysterious point as the rest of his brethren! I say that such things are a reproach to our Christianity, a betrayal of our professed beliefs, and a fruitful cause of a bitter and abounding scepticism. I should be glad if your readers would simply take this question to "the law and the testimony," and study it, not in the light of Presbyterian discussions and newspaper disquisitions, but in the pure spiritual light of the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. I shall be surprised indeed if they shall find there a single argument for driving from their fellowship a man of true faith and zealous in good works, because he may not be able to accept their interpretation of certain mysterious words. If any maintain that he cannot therefore preach distinctly the endlessness of future suffering, I reply that he can at least use Scripture language, which he has no difficulty in accepting, and I do not think he requires any more powerful arguments than he habitually employs, to call men to "repentance and the remission of sins." And even if this should not satisfy all, is there any human preaching so perfect and so comprehensive that it brings out all doctrines with equal clearness? If we find that any faithful minister fails to bring out some portion of truth as clearly as we should like it, do we therefore reject his ministry? Surely not. If Christ is preached, we do rejoice and will rejoice!

There are many of us who have no doubt at all that to cast out a minister of Christ for such a cause would be deeply displeasing to our master. If we are in the minority, are the majority going to coerce us into what we believe to be sinning against Christ, or leaving their fellowship? Surely this is an occasion on which we might expect to witness some of the love and forbearance,—the "practical benefits of union"—of which our moderator spoke in his opening address. On the occasion of what is known as "the union Synod" in Toronto, you remarked editorially that the noble stand for union taken by certain speakers of the Church of Scotland branch, had won for them the warm love and esteem of their brethren of the other section. We want now a *practical proof*, and practical proofs are infinitely better than any amount of mere words!

But if not,—then I sorrowfully say that not a few of those who most earnestly promoted union, will be constrained to the painful alternative of parting company with their brethren, rather than become parties to a transaction which they feel would grieve and wound the Lord Jesus in the person of one of His faithful servants, whom He has called into His ministry, and whose ministry He has signally blessed. For they feel that they shall have to answer,—not to Church Courts and newspaper editors—but to Him who has solemnly said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto me," Yours truly,
PRESBYTERIAN.

Students' Missionary Society of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

The following is an abstract of the above Society for the years 1875-76. The Society has sent out five Missionaries for the coming summer.

1. L'Amable, York River and Egan Farm, Ont.; C. McKillop, B. A.—2. Thanet and the Ridge, Ont.; C. McLean.—3. Upper Gatineau, Que.; M. H. Scott.—4. Portland and Cantley, Que.; J. Allan, B. A.—5. Coaticook and Compton, Que.; J. T. Donald.—The total expenditure for the past year has been \$1,575.00. The members of the society thank the many friends who by their contributions have aided them in breaking up waste and untried ground, and beg leave to solicit a continuance of that liberality in the future. They also express their gratitude to God, who has hitherto blessed their humble efforts to make known His love.

SCOTCH LETTER FROM AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—In your paper of 21st April, in an article styled "Notes from Edinburgh," there is one statement which as a native of that good town I cannot pass over. It is coolly stated there has not been a whole day of sunshine since October up to 13th March, date of the notes. I came to Edinburgh on the 8th of November, and except a fortnight at Christmas was resident in the good town the rest of that time, and kept a note of the weather. There were eight fine days in November, some of them like the bright frosty days of Canada, where I lived most of my days. There were twelve fine days in December. There were sixteen fine days in January, two or three of which are marked in my notes as *splendid*. There were some fine days in February. Up to 17th March the date of your correspondent's letter, there was only one fine day, and it was windy, so I fancy your correspondent, who I take to be rather a delicate person, did not admire it. March on the whole was "the winniest month, snowy, wet, and windy. April only middling, but May so far, has been bright, dry and fine, though cool. The thermometer at 8 p.m. was never during the winter below 30°, and only some eight times below the freezing point, 32°. I noticed in a previous article, some queer remarks about the statues in Edinburgh. Well commencing at the Register Office in Princes Street, there is an equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington. Then Mr. Scott's monument with a statue of Sir Walter and his fine deer hound. Then a statue of Professor John Wilson known as Christopher North. Then a statue of Allan Ramsay. In St. Andrew's Square there is an equestrian statue of General Lord Hopetown at the Royal Bank; then the Melville monument with a statue of Lord Melville the Scottish Statesman; then a statue of George the Fourth, the first king who visited Scotland after the Union, and then a statue of Wm. Pitt the great Statesman. I leave your readers to judge for themselves of the fitness of Scotchmen placing these statues where they stand. I think these are all at present in the new town, but there is to be one of David Livingstone, shortly erected close to the Scott monument—too close I think. I agree with your correspondent respecting Mr. George Muller of Bristol. His addresses were so plain, unaffected, and energetic, that any one would understand every word. He told us one day, how when he commenced work, he first prayed for men to help him, for premises to work in, and for one thousand pounds. Well he got all these requests granted, but to his astonishment no orphans came. Then he remembered he had not prayed for them, so he went home and lay on his face in prayer for three hours, and next morning his first orphan came. Since then he had in charge ten thousand orphans, and had received seven hundred thousand pounds. He had to peruse about thirty thousand letters in a year, had five orphanages in charge, and had to do with about one hundred and fifty schools, and one hundred and eighty missionaries. He never omitted preparation for work by reading the Scriptures and prayer every morning before he did anything else. He told us very honestly that every one was not fitted for such work, and that every one should trust implicitly in God and look to him for power and direction. As to temperance matters the plain truth is just this: the Government here like the Government with you, "don't know what to do." They desire an immense revenue from the liquor trade, and don't see how to do without it, and like as with you there are a great many sham supporters of the movement. As to total abstinence it hasn't the ghost of a chance in this country, but I think limitation of licenses will succeed if not this session, at least the next. I was present at the meeting your correspondent alluded to, and heard some good speeches, particularly from Lord Polworth, an excellent man and an eloquent speaker, but I have little faith in Parliamentary Commissions. I am very sorry to see your Presbyterian Church horizon troubled with clouds; may the Good Lord clear them all away and prosper your noble Church. There is little prospect of Union here.
SCOTCH CANADIAN.
Edinburgh, 11th May, 1876.

"How shall we keep Christmas?"

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—In the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN of April 14th, there is a long reply to me from "A Modern Presbyterian." I suppose then that you will not refuse to allow me to say a few words in reply. As you desire to shorten it, I shall pass abruptly from point to point of my opponent's letter.

The allusion to Chiniquy and his hearers is as nothing to do with the question of keeping Christmas. My opponent charges me with neglect of "perfect fairness." Well, if I am guilty, "there's a pair o' us," as the Scotch say—as I shall afterwards show. I have no doubt that many of those who laughed at what Chiniquy said, were strong Christmas men. They laughed at the enemy's weapon being used against himself.

We are not bound to keep Christmas day, either as a day of devotion, or aversion. One can do much useful work of a worldly kind at home, if he cannot follow his usual calling. Those who work as usual on that day, do not "resist the pow-

ers that be." I dare say of our rulers to punish any one for so doing.

"A Canadian Presbyterian" sneered at my views regarding Christmas. He brought forward a very common, but very weak argument in favour of it as a season for friendly greetings, and bestowing of gifts. I particularly applied to it the Scotch term "perfect leavers"—its true description. "A Modern Presbyterian" says that I regard courtesy as little as I do Christmas. This argument in support of the first part of his charge against me is a very weak one.

The incarnation of our Lord is not "the greatest of all events." If it is, why are we nowhere in Scripture commanded to observe it? His death is the greatest of all events. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "In whom we have redemption through His blood." True, the shepherds were commanded to rejoice on account of His birth, but that was because He had come to give His life a ransom for many. But now, His birth has "no glory" by reason of "the glory" of His death "which excelleth." His incarnation took place, not at His birth, but at His conception.

The "days" of which Paul speaks, had, at one time, the stamp of Divine authority, and, therefore, were as sacred as the Sabbath. This cannot be said of such days as Christmas. What Dr. Dawson says of the regular Jewish hours of prayer, and the regular temple service, may be said of the "days" of which Paul speaks—"Many continued to observe them until God in His providence had fully shown that the Jewish nations was rejected by Him, and its ritual no longer recognized by Him."

There is a wide difference between Christmas and such days, and Thanksgiving Day. The former are called "Christian Festivals." On the latter God is thanked specially for the temporal mercies which we have received from Him. If it is to be regarded as a sacred day like the Sabbath, away with it too.

Christmas and such days, are a piece of will-worship, and, therefore, it is right to protest against them by our actions. Would "A. M. P." if he were going past a Romish Church, enter in, and engage in prayer? For aught I know to the contrary, he might pray aright, even though his face were towards the altar. Would he fall down on his knees if the Host were passing by? Could he not, even then, pray aright? Would he take off his hat on that occasion? He might do so to cool his head. The three Hebrew youths could have fallen on their knees before Nebuchadnezzar's image, and yet have prayed to Jehovah.

I have a very low opinion of a turkey-and-pie Christmas. If that day is to be observed, let it be observed as a Christian Festival, and not made merely a time when one has something good to eat, and perhaps also "a wee drapple o' it." Let it not be kept in a manner like that in which the Jews now keep the feast of Purim.

I do not claim for Scotland a monopoly of the wisdom of the Christian Church. I am quite willing to take as a rule the Bible and Christian common sense. The fact that so many do keep Christmas, does not prove that they are in the right.

In the Province of Quebec, there are many holidays kept by the papists, which, of course, to those who are dependent on them, are idle days. I refer to such days as Annunciation Day, Lady Day, St. Peter's and St. Paul's Day, All Saint's Day, Immaculate Conception Day, etc. Would "A. M. P." have Protestants to have services on these days? If he would not, why not?

If it be right to keep Christmas and Good Friday on their own account why not keep the other days mentioned in my former letter, even if few others kept them? Would it not be well, on the same principle, to have holy water in our churches? "Let us draw near having * * * our bodies washed with pure water." Why not also have burning candles in the day time? Christ's the Light of the world. His word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Christians are commanded to let their light shine.

In Churches where the Communion is often dispensed "preparation days" could not well be observed, otherwise an argument often brought against popery, I think could be as fairly brought against them—that of having too many holidays.

"A. M. P." in his former letter hinted that the opponents of Christmas are often mint-a-nise-and-cumin-men, who neglect the weightier matters of the law. Well, I can safely say that the number of that class among its advocates is not smaller.

"A. M. P." seems to me to argue for the religious observance of Christmas and such days, sometimes on their own account, and at others as a better way of spending holidays than in innocent amusement, or in useful worldly labours disordered from those in which we are usually engaged.

According to promise, I have passed abruptly from point to point of "A. M. P.'s" letter, in order not to make mine too long. Yours truly,
AN OLD-FASHIONED PRESBYTERIAN.

By the bursting of a boom at Trenton 70,000 logs escaped into the bay between Prince Edward and the mainland. It is not known whether they are entirely lost or not.

The Dunkin Act went into force in Prince Edward County on May 1st. The tavern keepers resolved to close their houses, but the combination failed, and they are now doing business as before, except in the matter of selling liquor.