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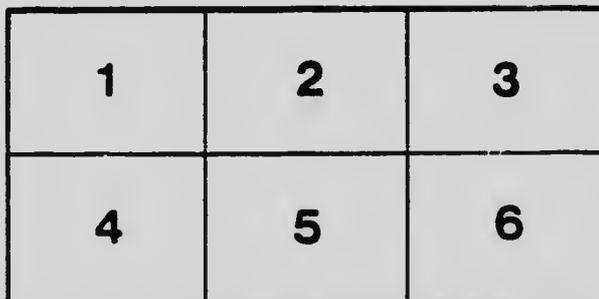
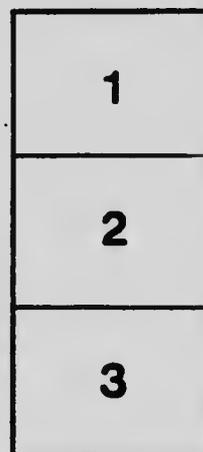
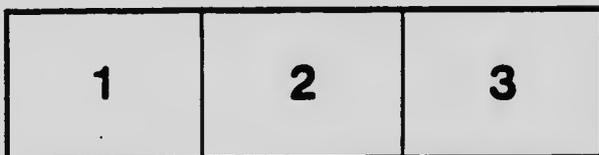
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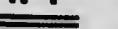
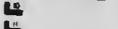
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# Three Letters on the Relation of Queen's to the Church

By Professor George D. Ferguson,  
Queen's University



Reprinted from "The Presbyterian"

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# Three Letters on the Relation of Queen's to the Church

## Letter I.

**P**ERHAPS no subject has for years so largely excited the interest of the General Assembly as the consideration of the relation of Queen's University to the Church, and this cannot but be flattering to all connected with the University, but at the same time we feel that the point of view from which evidently a large number in the Assembly regard this subject is wrong. I think that each member of the University is grateful for what the Church has done for it in the past, and for the sympathy which the Church of to-day manifests, in a matter which so deeply affects the best interests of the University; we, however, must not allow ourselves to be influenced by mere sentimentalism.

It is quite evident that if a University would retain an honorable position it must move with the requirements of the age, it must fulfil these requirements, and even perhaps anticipate them. This feeling has, within the last century, led to a complete change in every University in Europe, and not least in the Universities of Great Britain.

The Universities of England, Oxford and Cambridge, were, as we well know, closely connected with the Anglican Church, but the Government felt that this connection must be severed, however painful might be the steps to be taken to accomplish this object.

On the occasion of the appointment of one of the commissions to regulate the administration of these Universities in 1876, the Earl of Salisbury, with evident affection for these old institutions, but with as evident force of reason said, "It is a work I undertake with great reluctance, and I do not think Her Majesty's Government would enter upon it at all if

they did not feel that there was an absolute necessity for it." Sir Lyon Playfair, afterwards Lord Playfair, on the same occasion represented that the purpose of the Government was to nationalize these Universities, and said, "The object of the Commission is to adjust the curricula to modern needs."

Similar Commissions were from time to time appointed by the Government to consider the condition of the Scotch Universities, and these Commissions have had the same results as in the case of the English Universities. The four Universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, were closely connected with the Church of Scotland. Each "member" of a Scotch University was required to sign the "Confession of Faith," and in the case of Glasgow, to accept the "Book of Discipline." The Commission of 1836 did not break through this rule, but that of 1858-60 virtually removed this restriction except in the case of Divinity Professors proper. The Acts or Ordinances passed by this Commission, and enacted by the Parliament, separated the Universities from the Church. On the occasion of introducing the Bill, giving power to the Commission, Sir Lyon Playfair,\* evidently referring to the results of the relation of the Universities to the Church, said, "The Scotch Universities had lost sight of their proper object, these educational institutions have descended below the requirements of the age."

By the Commission of 1874-76, the separation from the Church was confirmed. The Commission was composed of some of the most eminent men of the day, including Lord Justice General Inglis, Huxley, Froude, Dr. John Muir, the great Sanskrit scholar, and some ten others scarcely less distinguished. They sat for a good part of two years, and their almost daily sessions show the great interest which they took in the work assigned them. They evidently realized their

\*Sir Lyon Playfair was himself an Edinburgh Professor from 1858 to 1869, and was elected as representative of the University from 1868, and was Postmaster-General in the Gladstone Ministry 1873-4. He must have perfectly known the condition of the Scotch Universities, especially Edinburgh.

great responsibility, and the large number of ordinances which they drew up testify to their remarkable diligence, and their close attention to every item of a University Constitution. Nearly every Professor from the four Universities appeared and gave evidence before the Commission. Throughout the evidence, which is quite voluminous, there is not a single word as to the renewal of Church connection. Sir Robert Christison, who had been a Professor under both regimes, said very distinctly, "I do not think that it is desirable that the affairs of a great University should fall into the hands of any religious denomination." In similar terms, Professor Leslie said, "The Scotch Universities should bear no ecclesiastical restrictions, but they should seek to disseminate the measure of literature and science which is most valued, and to do this in the most effective manner." This is the tone which pervades the whole of the evidence. Principal Tulloch, a strong Churchman, but a man of clear judgment, went so far as to say that he could see no objection to the Professor of Old Testament Criticism or of New Testament Criticism being a layman.

As further marking the separation of the Universities from the Church, the Commission of 1858 decided that the Principal should be a layman, and in Edinburgh Sir David Brewster became Principal, and was succeeded by Sir Alex. Grant, Sir Wm. Muir, and Sir Wm. Turner, who at present occupies this chair.

Now, it may be asked what has been the effect of these great changes in the constitutions of the Scotch Universities and their separation from the Church. No doubt there were some in the Assembly of the Established Church who bemoaned this separation, and like some in the Assembly of our Canadian Church, predicted the ruin of the Universities. On the contrary, the growth of the Scotch Universities has since been very remarkable, and Sir Lyon Playfair would not now say "that the Scotch Universities had lost sight of their proper object, that these educational establishments had descended below the requirements of the

age." In each of the four Universities, there was renewed life and vigor. In 1866, six years after the Commission of 1858-60, Glasgow began the erection of those magnificent buildings of which she may be proud. Much about the same time Edinburgh University, with new vigor not less marked, erected buildings for the School of Medicine, for the Engineering Department, for the Natural History Department and for the Institute of Public Health. The funds for the erection of these buildings were supplied almost entirely by private subscriptions—the Government only giving £80,000 towards the erection of the building for the School of Medicine, which cost £244,000—so great was the interest in the Universities, under the new constitution. Compared with the other Universities, especially with Aberdeen, Edinburgh had few scholarships and fellowships, but since 1860 some forty new scholarships and six fellowships have been established, besides the Earl of Morley's Foundation for the promotion of original research, which itself amounts to £640 annually.

Several new Professorships were established, as also a number of Assistant Professorships and Tutorships. The appointment to these new Professorships the Crown has retained in its own patronage. The number of students in all the Universities increased fully a third, and in Edinburgh more than doubled. The two colleges in Aberdeen, Marischal and King's, were united to form the University of Aberdeen, and the number of students is many more than had previously been enrolled in the two colleges. A similar union took place of the St. Mary's and St. Leonard Colleges in St. Andrews, with also a college founded at Dundee, in affiliation, and here, too, the increase in the number of students was very marked.

The work and industry of the students also improved. I think it was Professor Blackie, in his evidence before the Commission, who expressed his experience that increased numbers had incited his students to increased zeal.

I hope that they who are opposed to the changes desired in the constitution of Queen's will seriously consider these facts. We who are closely connected with the University may fairly claim that, though like the Earl of Salisbury in relation to the English Universities, we feel some pain in desiring the change, we advocate it only on the ground of its absolute necessity.

## Letter II.

In a previous letter I pointed out that by the action of Commissions appointed by the Government of Great Britain, which sat at Edinburgh, the several Universities of Scotland were separated from the Church of Scotland. These Commissions framed a large number of ordinances remodeling the constitution of these Universities, and entirely ignoring any Church connection. Queen's University, though modelled after the University of Edinburgh, still remained attached to and dependent upon the Church of Scotland in Canada till 1874, when the Presbyterian churches in Canada were united. In the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church (June 1872) it was moved by Dr. Waters, seconded by Mr. J. W. Mitchell, "That inasmuch as a large number of the office-bearers and members of this Church are opposed, in the present condition of this country, to undertaking any classical or philosophic teaching as a part of the Church's work, it would therefore be greatly preferable that the faculties in Arts of Queen's College and Morrin College, should be placed on such a basis which, while preserving them in all their efficiency, would at the same time remove them from the direct control of the Church." This motion did not come to a vote, and on an assurance that the matter would be fully considered by the Committee on Union, Dr. Waters next day asked per-

mission to withdraw his motion, which was granted by a vote of 43 to 36. This was evidently accepted as expressing the will of the Assembly, and in consonance with this wish, the joint committee on Union determined that the Theological Department of Queen's College, as well as Knox and the Montreal Theological College, should remain in the same relation to the United Church as they have stood to their respective Churches, but the trustees of Queen's were no longer to be elected by the Church, but were to be self-elected, and to discharge their functions as these had previously existed.

An Act of Parliament was passed giving force to the terms of Union in regard to Queen's University. This Act quoted the Royal Letters Patent by which Queen's had been established, and which constituted a Board of Trustees as the governing body. The present Act was "to enable the said College to stand to the Presbyterian Church of Canada in relations similar to those which it now holds to the Presbyterian Church in Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, and to enable the Board of Trustees, of said College, and their successors to continue the administration of its affairs, and the said College to continue its functions on terms and conditions like to those which now exist." Now the question is—what were the relations in which Queen's University stood to the Church in Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland? Simply that the Church elected the Trustees, to whom in full confidence it confided the entire administration of the affairs of the University. But the joint committee on Union, in order to meet the views of "a large number of the office-bearers and members of the Presbyterian Church of Canada" removed the election of the Trustees from the Church, and constituted the Board self-elective, and these were the terms of the Act of Parliament. By the action of the joint committee on Union, and by this Act of Parliament, the Church repudiated any control over the Arts Department of the Uni-

versity. Any future reference of the Trustees can only be regarded as an act of courtesy. Each year, indeed, the Trustees have been in the habit of rendering a report of the affairs of the University to the General Assembly, but the Assembly has no right to demand such a report. It is simply an act of courtesy on the part of the Trustees, arising, no doubt, from the force of habit. The result, however, has been that to the minds of many in the Assembly it expresses the relation of the University to the Church, which certainly is not the intention.

By subsequent Acts of Parliament, the number of Trustees has been increased, still further removing the University from any connection with the Church. New members being elected by the University Council, and others by the graduates, these free from any denominational restriction.

In 1900, the Trustees stated that it was their intention to make further changes, and that a conference had been called of the graduates and corporators of the University, and asked the Assembly to appoint a Committee to aid the Conference. In the report to the Assembly, it is stated, that "the Conference was largely attended, and after the fullest discussion, it was unanimously decided that the time had come to nationalize by statute the University as completely as it had been nationalized in practice for many years, and to give to the Faculty of Theology a separate and independent corporation, seeing that there is a certain inconsistency in having a denominational Faculty of Theology as an integral part of an undenominational University. In order that the changes may be in the best interests of the University and the country, and that the rights of the Church, especially as regards the constitution of the Theological College, may be safeguarded, the Trustees respectfully asked for the assistance of the General Assembly." It is well to notice that the Conference "unanimously decided" on the changes to be made, the nationalizing of the University, and that the aid

of the Assembly was asked to safeguard the rights of the Church, especially in regard to the Theological College. A Bill was drawn up by the Trustees for the purpose of carrying out the decision of the Conference, agreed to by the Assembly, but before it was introduced into Parliament, Principal Grant died, and action was delayed. In 1903, Principal Gordon laid before the Assembly the Bill which had been prepared, and introduced into Parliament, and the report of the Trustees intimated to the Assembly that "The constitutional changes which have been under consideration for the past three years have been embodied in a Bill which has been introduced in Parliament, and is expected to become law during the present session."

At this last stage, every step of which had been taken with the consent of the Assembly, a change, almost spasmodic, took possession of the Assembly, and the following motion was passed: "That this Assembly deprecates the proposed severance of the connection between Queen's University and the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and recommends, and will actively promote a movement for securing an adequate increase in the endowment of the University, if it decides to continue the connection at present existing, and that the Moderator be directed to appoint a Committee with Assembly powers to confer with the Trustees of the University, and adopt the proper means to secure the necessary financial aid for the purposes of the University, with the understanding that should it be found advisable for the Church to retain the University with a guarantee of adequate maintenance, the Committee should refer the question to the Presbyteries of the three central synods before taking final action." This remarkable motion with its numerous provisos, and "a guarantee of adequate maintenance" passed the Assembly. From 1903 to 1908, a period of five years, less than \$300,000, including Mr. Charlton's large donation of \$50,000, was subscribed. After the lapse of five years it was per-

fectly evident that the University could not depend on the Church, that the adequate maintenance which the Assembly virtually guaranteed was not available. In 1908, the Carnegie Fund for retired Professors was established, and this gave a fresh impetus to the desire of severance from any Church control.

Queen's has been growing very rapidly. Last session 1,517 students were enrolled, and this naturally necessitates a more numerous staff of Professors and assistants, and requires a largely increased revenue, which the Church cannot possibly provide. After a Bill has passed the Legislature nationalizing the University no government can refuse aid, for Queen's has become one of the most important educational institutions in the Dominion, and exercises a very extended influence. But even apart from Government aid, there is reason to believe that large subscriptions will come from individuals who have always been friends of Queen's, but who do not feel inclined to subscribe in the unsatisfactory condition in which Queen's is at present.

### Letter III.

Allow me to present another phase of the University question. What is a University? I am led to ask this question because some members of the General Assembly argue that Queen's should restrict her teaching to a preparation for entering the Ministry of the Church, and that this was the intention of those who founded the University.

Now I find the definition of a University, "Universitas Literarum" (the whole of Literature or Learning) "to be used to indicate that all the most important branches of knowledge were to be taught in these establishments." I do not know who drew up the charter which Queen Victoria granted to Queen's, but I do know that it is a Royal decree, which very expressly states that "we do for the purpose aforesaid

and hereinafter mentioned, really and fully for us, our heirs and successors constitute (here certain individuals are mentioned) 'one body politic,' with the style and privileges of a university for the education of youth and students in Arts and Faculties," and a little later it speaks of "matriculated scholars taking any degree, in any of the Arts and Faculties." That there may be no doubt as to the meaning of Faculty as here used, it is expressly stated in the preamble "that the purpose of the university is for the education of youth in the principles of the Christian religion, and for instruction in the various branches of Science and Literature."

Queen's then will only be fulfilling the terms of the definition I have quoted, and obeying the stipulated Royal Mandate, in extending her "instruction in the various branches of Science and Literature."

The very limited finances of Queen's have unfortunately prevented her carrying out this purpose, but Schools of Science, in several departments, have nevertheless been established, aided by the Provincial Government, but the relation of these to the University is satisfactory neither to the several Schools nor to the University. The situation is strangely anomalous. The Schools exist under separate Boards of Governors, who regulate their affairs independently of the Board of Trustees of the University. Their professors have no seat in the Senate, except two or three who previously held the position, and whose classes are open to Science and Arts' students alike, yet the Senate grants the degrees in Science on the report of examiners.

This anomalous position is naturally having an injurious effect on the relation of these Schools of Science to the University. If this unsatisfactory state of affairs continues, these Schools feel that they must very shortly apply for separate charters, constituting their entire independence of the University, which would then be shorn of some of her most valuable features, while she would be deprived of a good part

of her revenue, and at the same time be obliged to appoint new professors in place of those who would be exclusively employed in the several schools. The cause of this difficulty lies in the fact that the majority of the Trustees must be members of the Presbyterian Church, and that the University is regarded as a Church institution, and therefore can not be considered by government. The Schools feel in this undoubtedly awkward dilemma that they must seek independent charters, or that the University must obtain relief from the restrictions which are preventing her expansion and threatening her usefulness.

I shall not enter into any discussion regarding the bearing of the Church towards science. I have no sympathy with the idea of any warfare between science and religion, but I hold that the Church has no right to place any difficulty in the way of the expansion of scientific learning, or scientific research, which it is the purpose of a University to further by every means in its power. The present attitude of many in the General Assembly, in offering obstructions to placing these Schools in closer relation to the University, must very seriously affect her future development.

To my mind, it would be very sad, if the Trustees should be driven to any action which would in any way affect the good feeling and sympathy which have hitherto existed between the Church and the University, but unfortunately it seems as if a crisis was near which may force the hands of the Trustees, a result which, it is hoped, may be avoided.

It has been assumed that the severance of the University from the Church, will injuriously affect the finances. On the contrary, should the Schools of Science sever their connection with the University, the change would very seriously diminish the revenue of the University, which at present receives the registration and graduation fees of Arts and Science students alike.

But there is a strong feeling with a large number of those who have always been friends of the University, that the separation of the Schools will reduce the University to a moribund condition, and prevent her expansion. Six gentlemen, fearing this threatening result, refuse contributing unless the University is severed from any seeming connection with the Church, but promise \$75,000 so soon as the separation is effected. And may we not hope, that as Edinburgh received under her changed constitution large donations, so Queen's may receive pecuniary advantages from the change which we very much desire.

