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I. ILLOGICAL METHODS IN BIBLICAL CRITICISM.<sup>1</sup>

I SHALL scarcely be expected, on an occasion like this, to speak on any other theme than Old Testament Criticism. When, eleven years ago, I was inducted into a similar chair in another institution, the discussion of this subject, in its present peculiar aspects, had just begun in this country; to-day it is the question of questions in the theological world. The movement, at once a sign and a fruit of the times, has passed far beyond its incipient stages. Its literature is already large. Even single phases of the subject have come to occupy no inconsiderable place in current thought. It is to one of these phases of the general theme that I shall invite your attention at this time. It especially concerns the style of reasoning adopted by those who advocate the newer views of the Bible. Is this reasoning in harmony with the accepted rules of logic? Can the critics of this class vindicate their often asserted claim to be scientific? On the answer to this question really depends the value of the conclusions reached.

Mr. Gladstone, not long since, speaking of modern criticism of the Bible, while confessing that he was no expert, gave this excellent advice. He said: "We must be on our guard against drawing warmth of affection into the field as having the force of argument. We should rather endeavor to defend the Scriptures upon the same principles of evidence and reasonableness governing our mental processes in other matters. When the arguments of specialists point to negative conclusions, we should beware of haste. We should reserve our judgment, even if yielding provisional as-

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<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address, May 3, 1893.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

The General Assembly of the Canadian branch of the Presbyterian Church met in June last in Brantford, a prosperous little city in the heart of western Ontario. The population of this growing place is about 18,000, and there are two very flourishing Presbyterian churches in it, with a membership of about 1,200 in the two. It was the first time that the Assembly met in so small a place, and yet the commissioners, nearly 400 in number, were entertained in a manner which justly called forth high praise on every hand. Abundant hospitality in comfortable homes, every possible convenience at the place of meeting, an excursion on Saturday afternoon to the celebrated Bow Park farm, and a splendid reception at the Presbyterian Ladies' College the same night, together with many other courtesies, combined to make the sojourn of the members of Assembly exceedingly pleasant.

The Assembly is a large body, so large as to be almost unwieldy. The ratio of representation is one in four of the Presbyterian membership, and this gives about 200 ministers and 200 ruling elders as the strength of the Assembly. Several attempts have been made during recent years to reduce the representation to one in six or one in eight, but so far they have failed. Our own church, with a ratio of one in twenty-four, may have rather small a representation, but an onlooker of the Canadian Assembly could scarcely fail to feel that the body is too large for effective deliberative work. It is an advantage to have as many as possible of the ministers and ruling elders in attendance, for those who attend can scarcely fail to return to their several duties in the church stirred up to diligence and zeal; but the expense of a large body is heavy, and it is not always the best for effective legislation. Perhaps one in twelve would be a good ratio for both these churches, as their numerical strength is just about the same.

The opening sermon was preached by the retiring moderator, the Rev. W. Caven, D. D., the honored Principal of Knox College, Toronto. His subject was: "The Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures," and the sermon gave no uncertain sound in regard to this most important subject. It was listened to with great attention, and gave the utmost satisfaction. The Rev. T. Sedgwick, D. D., of Nova Scotia, was unanimously elected moderator, and Rev. W. Reid, D. D., and Rev. R. Campbell, D. D., clerks of Assembly, were in their places. The moderator is one of the leading ministers of the eastern section of the

church, and is well known for his faithful service and conservative views. He proved a firm and careful guide to the business of the Assembly.

Most of the first day was taken up with routine matters of organization, appointment of committees, presentation of reports, and overtures and notices of motion. At night Home Missions engaged attention. The reports were presented by the conveners of the Eastern and Western sections respectively. The reports were very complete, and gave a full account of the work done in a mission field extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The field is simply immense in extent, and in the great northwest is rapidly expanding. During the year 404 ministers, divinity students, and catechists were employed for the whole or part of the time. Large and useful service is done by the candidates for the ministry, who work during vacation under the care of presbytery, and supply many a region which otherwise would be left destitute. The number of stations supplied more or less regularly during the year was 1168. Of these 712 are in the northwest and British Columbia. A large number of weak churches are also aided by means of the Home Mission Augmentation scheme, and the whole amount raised for Home Missions during the year was just about \$120,000. On the whole the outlook is encouraging, but the field is so vast that many men and much money is needed to overtake the work to be done. The college at Winnipeg is making the experiment of holding a summer session for its theological classes, so that the students may have vacation in winter to labor in the mission field, when the students from the other seminaries withdraw to attend the usual winter session. This scheme gives good promise, although it has not yet been in operation long enough to discover how it will affect all the interests concerned.

The reports of the Foreign Mission Committee, together with several addresses by missionaries from the heathen field, made another exceedingly interesting night meeting. The interest rose almost to enthusiasm when the veteran missionary from the New Hebrides, Rev. Dr. Paton, arose as the last speaker, and stirred the vast congregation deeply with his simple and earnest words. Six leading centres are occupied by the Canadian Church in the foreign field. These are Central India, Formosa, Honan in China, New Hebrides, and Trinidad. This committee also conducts the work among the Indians of the northwest and British Columbia. Nearly \$170,000 was expended on the work in all these fields. Mission work among the Jews at some point in Pal-

estine is instituted, and one missionary has been sent to explore the field and see where to locate this mission.

Another interesting sphere of missionary effort in which the Canadian Church is engaged is that among the French Roman Catholics in the Province of Quebec. The headquarters of this work are at Montreal, and the report of the committee showed that the work had been pushed with vigor during the year. By means of missionaries, catechists, colporteurs, and teachers in schools, much is done to bring the gospel in its simplicity and power to bear upon the French Romanists. Over \$26,000 was expended in mission work proper, besides a considerable sum spent in the support of schools.

The reports from the theological schools and discussions thereon, took up most of a day. They were interesting, and showed satisfactory growth in this important department of church work. There are six points where theological education is conducted, viz.: Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and Winnipeg. Most of these institutions are fairly well equipped for the work of preparing men for the ministry, and the supply of candidates is fairly well up to the demand. It is not easy to gather from the reports how much is spent in theological education, but it must be over \$50,000 in all.

The question of the relation of these schools to the church, and of the appointment of professors, was discussed at length on the report of a committee appointed last year to consider this matter. Since the union of 1875, when four different bodies united to form the present Presbyterian Church in Canada, this question has been more or less discussed. The four churches entering into that union had their seminaries, and their custom as to the appointment of professors. There has been a growing desire to have some uniform plan of procedure in the United Church, and a committee was appointed last year to report this year in regard to this matter. The committee reported in substance that Seminary Boards are to make nominations, but that the General Assembly shall appoint the professors. As some legislation is necessary in order to carry this into effect, final action was deferred until next year. The mind of the Assembly was decidedly in favor of having the church exercise close supervision over the institutions which are to train the ministry for her service.

Another question which called forth earnest debate was that of Young People's Societies. A committee appointed last year presented a report which recommended the organization of such societies under the direction of the sessions of churches, and along the general lines

of the Christian Endeavor Societies. After earnest debate for several hours, this matter was laid over till next year, and the committee continued and enlarged. This is a difficult and important question with which all the churches are concerned, and the remarkable spread of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor everywhere presses the question of the interests of our young people upon the churches. That all such organizations should be under the control of our church courts may be assumed as the only sound principle upon which the solution of the problem should rest, but it is not yet perfectly plain what precise forms of organizations shall best meet the case. Too much machinery should be avoided, yet some orderly system is necessary for practical effectiveness.

Many other matters of much importance engaged the attention of the Assembly. The report on Sabbath-schools was very elaborate, that on Temperance was able, and took strong ground against this great evil, and the discussion on the State of Religion was earnest and timely. Sabbath Observance, Systematic Beneficence, and the Hymnal all received merited attention. For the support of Aged and Infirm Ministers, and the Widows and Orphans of Ministers, a large fund is being raised. Already almost \$200,000 is subscribed, and the prospect is good for raising the whole sum aimed at in a few years.

The only incident which happened to mar the entire harmony of the Assembly was in connection with Professor Campbell, LL. D., who holds the chair of Apologetics and Church History in the seminary at Montreal. Last February the professor delivered a lecture at Queen's College, Kingston, taking as his subject, "The Perfect Book or the Perfect Father." At the time of its delivery the lecture caused some anxiety, and when its full text was published this anxiety deepened into alarm in the church. An overture from a presbytery in Ontario asked the Assembly to take cognizance of the matter. The Assembly heard the overture and its supporters, and decided that inasmuch as the Presbytery of Montreal of which Professor Campbell is a member had instituted proceedings in the case, the matter be left to that court for action. Since that time the presbytery has pursued the case with due diligence, and at meetings recently a libel was drawn up, found relevant, and ordered to be served on the professor, and the day appointed for the trial early in September. The libel consists of two main counts, as follows: First, "Holding and teaching a view of the Holy Scriptures which impugns and discredits them as the supreme

and infallible source of religious truth." Second, "Holding and teaching a view of God which sets him forth as one who does not smite either in the way of punishment or discipline, and who has nothing to do with the judging or punishing of the wicked." Both counts are supported at length by quotations from Scripture and the standards of the church, and the lecture is also quoted frequently to sustain the relevancy of the charges.

So far, the manner of conducting the case has been marked by an excellent spirit, in which kindness to a teacher of twenty years standing, and loyalty to the truth of God were finely blended. Should the same spirit prevail to the end of the case the cause of truth will be nobly served. At this stage, when we are not discussing the lecture formally, it is needless to express a definite opinion, but that the great majority of the Canadian Presbyterian Church is against the professor's views may be taken for granted. The sentiment of the Assembly was decided, and only two members of the Presbytery of Montreal voted against the relevancy of the libel.

This note will be closed with some statistics which are of interest when compared with those of our own church: Ministers, 1,100; membership, 183,525; pastoral charges and mission stations, 2,528; ruling elders, 6,364; Sabbath-school scholars, 140,730; contributions—pastoral support, \$832,017, and for all congregational purposes, \$1,653,216. This gives an average of nearly \$9 to each member. To the various mission schemes of the church, \$295,475 was contributed apart from the income of the various colleges. The total contributions nearly reached the \$2,000,000 point, a little less than last year, but more than double the sum given in 1875.

As represented by this Assembly, the Presbyterian Church in Canada is earnestly addressing itself to the work committed to its care in a wide territory, its equipment for work seems to be effective, its spirit hopeful and earnest; and, with the Master's blessing, it cannot fail to be crowned with success.

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