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I. Literary.

THE CHARACTERISTIC AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

BY REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

THE *Reformed Church in America* has no noteworthy "characteristic features" to distinguish it from the larger branches of the "Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System." It is, to all intents and purposes, identical in doctrine and polity with the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches.

Nevertheless it holds a separate existence, because of a belief, more or less prevalent among its adherents, that it has a real *raison d'être*. There are those who aver that its power for good—which is not inconsiderable—would be greatly increased by an alliance with one of the larger Presbyterian bodies. Overtures looking to such a union have been made more than once, but for various reasons have come to naught.

I. The Reformed Church has an honorable history. It is the oldest evangelical organization in America. The first Dutch immigrants came over in the *Half-Moon*, Hendrik Hudson, skipper, in 1609. This was the year of Holland's armistice with Spain after a century of bloody conflict for religious liberty. The *Half-Moon* returned to Holland the following year, reporting an exploration of the Hudson River in vain search for the fabulous open passage to the Orient. An allusion to "fertile lands and fur-bearing animals" tempted the thrifty spirit of the Dutch

IV. The Seminary.

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?

Last session the Seminary felt honored in having as its special lecturer the Rev. James A. Worden, D. D., of Philadelphia. This session has equally favored us in the visit and addresses of the Rev. P. P. Flourney, D. D., of Bethesda, Md. As the author of *The Search-Light of St. Hippolytus*, and a frequent contributor to the religious press, Dr. Flourney needs no introduction to the clientele of this magazine. His three addresses, delivered on the evenings of January 17th, 18th and 19th, were heard with increasing pleasure by the Faculty, students and friends of the Seminary. This outline report of them is debtor to Dr. Flourney's blue pencil, and for the addition by him of the last paragraph but one.

The question discussed was, "When Were the Gospels Written?" "Long after their reputed authors were dead," declare the Tübingen school. "By their reputed authors and in the latter half of the first century," declare the orthodox theologians of the world. The addresses were designed to give answer to this question (the vital character of which is seen at a glance) by a line of proof including the witness borne to them by Aristides, Quadratus, Justin Martyr, the *Diatessaron* of Tatian and the *Syriac Palimpsest* discovered by Mrs. Lewis in the Convent of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai, in 1892.

The lecturer, speaking of Baur's influence upon theological thinking twenty-five years ago, told of the publication in England of the anonymous and quite able book, *Supernatural Religion*. Under the guise of candor, this work was but a restatement, in pleasing style, of Baur's views, and in six months six editions went through the presses. It was time for the friends of orthodoxy to take alarm, and if vindication was forthcoming to present it.

God's providence stepped into the thick of contest and settled it for candid men. In 1889 Prof. Rendel Harris discovered at Sinai the *Apology of Aristides*, a defence of the Christians, de-

livered in the presence of the Emperor Hadrian, A. D. 125; and the later discoveries of Mrs. Lewis, linked with others that had preceded these two by a number of years, give now a chain of testimony remarkably complete in its witness to the early and authentic composition of the Gospels as we have them.

For lack of time, only a passing reference could be made to the testimony of the apologist Justin Martyr. The *Apology* of Aristides, who was an Athenian philosopher, contains no direct quotation from the New Testament, indeed, but the references to it are many and striking, as the speaker showed. The *Apology* is witnessed to by Eusebius. The copy found by Prof. Harris is in the Syriac. Another copy in Greek, almost complete, has been found imbedded in a strange story of the Middle Ages, entitled Barlaam and Josaphat. A fragment in the Armenian language also had been previously discovered.

Associated with Aristides in this defence there stood another Christian—Quadratus. Though his *Apology* is yet undiscovered, an extract from his speech is recorded for us by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Book IV., Chap. 3. He appears to have been an evangelist and distributor of the Gospels for about fifty years. This would carry him back to A. D. 75. He had probably heard Paul preach, and he called Hadrian's attention to the fact that within his own life-time there had been living some whom Christ had healed. The rescript of Hadrian followed this twofold defence. If we could find Quadratus' *Apology*—and that it will be found seems not unlikely—it would tell us much perhaps concerning events of which we should like to know, in this little-known period. The apostles' last days and manner of death may yet by some such discovery be put upon historic record.

What versions of the Gospel did Quadratus as colporteur distribute? Probably, during his earliest labors, the predecessors of the next great discovery, that, namely, by Mrs. Lewis in 1892, and later, that copy itself. The Convent of St. Catherine at Sinai had yielded to Tischendorf, in 1859, the priceless Codex Sinaiticus, and to Prof. Harris in 1889 the *Apology of Aristides*. It now gave to the world through Mrs. Lewis, of Cambridge, England, the *Syriac Palimpsest*, containing, excellently preserved, our four Gospels, dating from about 400, and, as even Harnack admits, "translated from a Greek original that can hardly be later than the second century." The circumstances of the dis-

covery, as the speaker showed, were so interesting that they read more like fiction than fact.

Agreeing in a striking way with this latest text is the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, discovered in the Vatican library in 1876, in a MS. brought from the East by J. S. Assemani about the year 1719. This, as its name reminds us, is a harmony of the four Gospels. It is arranged as a continuous narrative of our four canonical Gospels, *and of these alone*. The narrative is broken up into fifty-five sections, covering the Sabbaths, and the feast days no doubt which were regarded as worthy of special honor. Tatian, as we know, was philosopher, traveller, cosmopolite, and a convert, about 150, of Justin Martyr, who met death in 163. The evidence that this harmony was composed *before* the latter date is practically conclusive. The harmony embraces 76.5 per cent. of Matthew's Gospel, 50 per cent. of Mark's, 66 per cent. of Luke's, and 96 *per cent.* of *John's*. This last fact should go a long way towards settling that unquiet ghost—the Johannean problem.

When we find our four Gospels thus woven into a harmony by Justin Martyr's pupil, Tatian, showing that they must have been for a long time recognized by the church as the records of our Saviour's life and work on earth; then hear Justin himself speaking of "Memoirs of the Apostles" as read in public worship along with the Old Testament books of the prophets, calling them in another place (1 *Apology*, Chap. 66), "The memoirs drawn up by the Apostles and their followers;" then hear Aristides delivering his defence, or apology, to Hadrian twenty-five years after the death of the Apostle John, and referring to the New Testament under the name "The Gospel" throughout his discourse, and then find that Quadratus, his fellow-apologist on this occasion, had been a preacher among many nations and a distributor of "the books of the Holy Gospels," taking up the work where the apostles themselves laid it down, and then find the *New Syriac Gospels* bearing such marks of antiquity that they might have been in the hands of this early evangelist and colporteur from the apostolic age and identical with our own Gospels, we must conclude that, from this limited line of evidence alone, we have such proof that our Gospels come to us from the hands of apostles and contemporaries of Christ, that all doubt of the fact is unreasonable. There is probably no classic whose genuineness is more clearly attested.

These three lectures of Dr. Flournoy will be remembered by us as among the most edifying and instructive of the session.

J. G. MCA.

RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT.

Whereas, It has pleased God to remove from our midst our esteemed brother and fellow-student, J. A. Young, and whereas the intimate and fraternal relations held by our deceased brother with the students and Faculty of Union Theological Seminary render it befitting that we should place on record our appreciation of his services as a co-worker for the Master and his merits as a man; therefore, be it

Resolved, 1. That we bow with humble submission to the will of the Most High, who doeth all things well.

Resolved, 2. That in the death of J. A. Young this Seminary and the church lose a brother who was always zealous and active in his labors for the Master.

Resolved, 3. That we give expression to our high esteem and regard for our brother, and also to the grief and deep sense of loss caused by his death.

Resolved, 4. That the Seminary tender its heart-felt sympathy to the family and relatives of our deceased brother in this affliction.

Resolved, 5. That these resolutions be inserted in the UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE and our church papers, and a copy sent to the family of our deceased brother.

F. M. ALLEN, *Chairman*,

M. M. MCFERRIN,

J. B. FICKLEN,

J. A. GILMER,

T. E. P. WOODS,

Committee.