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ELDERS AND THEIR WORK.

I.

THE work of the eldership in connection with the Presbyterian Church is one which may with advantage be considered in such a periodical as this. It is not the Scriptural origin of the office that I propose to consider, but rather some of the duties devolving upon those who hold the office of ruling elder in our Churches, and the best mode of discharging these duties, that I would shortly discuss.

The work of an elder may be fairly divided into two parts—viz., that which refers to the congregation of which he is a member, and that which refers to the work of the whole Church, consisting of very many congregations. Under the first head there falls to be considered the duty of an elder to his minister, to his fellow office-bearers, and Church members in relation to their strictly congregational work; and further, here, the duty of an elder in relation to the work undertaken by his congregation in order to tell upon the masses, lying for the most part outside the bounds of all ordinary Church influences. The second head embraces the place and work of elders as members of Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly; as members of committees belonging to any of these, and having for their care the extension of the Church, the maintenance of home and foreign missions, with the support of Gospel ordinances in country places where, unaided, those places could not maintain them. These are some, but by no means all, the duties which devolve upon elders in their relation to the whole Church.

It is only a small part of the duty and work of an elder under the former of the above-named divisions that I will venture to touch upon. The first duty of an elder is to make the position of his minister as happy and comfortable as it is in his power to do. If the surroundings of a minister in his congregation are unhappy, it is not likely that his ministrations in the pulpit and out of it will be greatly blessed in the highest and holiest sense. It is not, therefore, simply for the minister's sake personally that an elder should make it his first care to try and

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an age in which the temptation is strong to make concessions to the questioning and doubting spirit, to sacrifice theological detail, to fall back on what seem main essentials. The Federal method could hardly have arisen in such a temperature of theology, and it is little wonder that in this climate it does not thrive. It may be held that theology has thus retreated in order by-and-by to advance again more securely and successfully. But, at least, it is in an age of theological retreat, not in an age of theological advance, that it has become for many difficult to speak in the forms so familiar to our fathers. In any case, it is well that students and ministers should mark how full of profitable suggestion the developed Federal theology was. It was especially favourable to the exhibition of the interest which Christ and His people have in one another, and the faithfulness and care with which He administers their concerns. In the hands of vigorous preachers it furnished rich and profound conceptions of union and communion with Christ; and the "Marrow men" found in it special facilities for urging on all men the free call of the Gospel. Read, for instance, such sermons as Ebenezer Erskine's: one, especially, in the first volume, on "Christ, the Covenant of the People."

This paper has been written with reference to the theology of the orthodox Reformed. As the doctrine of covenant between God and man is plainly expressed in Scripture, all theological schools, as we have said, are bound to have a Federalism of their own. They may not make this conception the main means of unfolding the scheme of their theological thought, but they are all alike bound to have a theology of the covenants. The Arminians, as every one knows, spoke much of the covenant; but they explained it to be a compact with men into which God enters for the sake of Christ, under which faith and repentance, with sincere though imperfect obedience, constitute the righteousness of Gospel believers. Another instance from another quarter may be worth mentioning. The Jesuits maintained semi-Pelagian doctrine against the Dominicans and the Jansenists; and one school of them, following Molina, asserted in this connection a covenant between the Father and the Son. The tenor of it was, that for the Son's sake, and as an engagement to Him, it was decreed that to every man doing what in him lies (according to the power he has), grace shall be given to enable him to make the further attainments which are needful to salvation.

R. RAINY.

THE MOUND BUILDERS OF AMERICA.

AMERICA is generally called the New World in its relation to Europe; but the facts are, that, both geologically and with reference to its occupancy by man, it is the older of the two continents. Its vast chains of mountains were worn and furrowed with age before

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the Alps and the Apennines had emerged from the primeval ocean. Its ruins tell of a civilisation that yields the palm of antiquity only to that of Egypt and Asia. It is now a well-established fact that there was, in remote ages, on this continent a race of men who had attained a civilisation immensely superior to anything found among those Indians who occupied North America at the time of its discovery. The imposing memorials of their presence and power are to be seen in huge mounds, embankments, fortifications, and canals, scattered in vast numbers all over the land, from the Rocky Mountains to the Alleghanies, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The early European settlers of the country in occupying what was to them virgin soil, were often startled and amazed at the unmistakable traces of an unknown race of men who had been there before them. And still, the dwellers in the valley of the Mississippi, as they grade the streets of their growing cities, or dig their wells, or open trenches in the mounds on which their houses stand, find that they are building, and sowing, and reaping over a ruined and buried civilisation. Beneath their feet is the dust of a mighty people who once held this continent, but now are lost in the misty past. The character and extent of these ruins forbid the supposition that they were the work of the migratory and savage Indians. In fact, the universal traditions of the latter attribute them to a great people who were in the land when their fathers came. The impression which Captain Carver of the British army records in his *Journal of Travels*, in the years 1766-78, is fully confirmed by subsequent investigations in a wider range. In describing an earth-work which he found on the banks of Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River, he says, "Its form was somewhat circular, and its flanks reached the river. Though much defaced by time, every angle was distinguishable, and appeared as regular, and fashioned with as much military skill, as if planned by Vauban himself."

After speaking of the evidences of its great antiquity, he says, "How a work of this kind could exist in a country that has hitherto, according to generally-received opinion, been the seat of war to untutored Indians alone, whose whole stock of military knowledge has, within two centuries only amounted to drawing the bow, and whose only breast-work, even at present, is the thicket, I know not."

Who, then, were these people, who, in view of their greatest works now remaining, have been appropriately called the Mound Builders? This is a question which, for more than threescore years, has engaged the attention of scholars and antiquarians both in America and Europe. Numerous societies, having for their object the special study of the antiquities of America, have been formed, and large collections of implements of war, pottery, idols, skulls, and decorations of various kinds, have been made. In short, a vast amount of material has been gathered. But, so far, the question is an unanswered one. This remote people stubbornly refuse to stand out of the darkness and come into the

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light of authenticated history. It is only very slowly, and with great difficulty, that sober research has been able to penetrate even a little way into this dark sepulchre of a dead and vanished race. The materials from which the answer is to come, if it is ever found, are of two kinds.

First, there is the very large and constantly-increasing literature of this subject. Observing minds in every part of the country have been collecting and recording the facts that came under their observation, or the discoveries made by others in their neighbourhoods. The number of labourers and explorers in this field has been quite large, and the recorded results of their toils and investigations furnish most valuable aid to the archæologist who seeks a clear solution of the problem.

As early as 1812, the American Antiquarian Society was formed, for the collection and preservation of the antiquities of this continent; and since that time the collection, not only of relics, but also of books, pamphlets, and records of explorations, has steadily increased. All this material is not of equal value. There is much that has been written to sustain peculiar notions or theories; as when some have tried to identify the Mound Builders with the lost tribes of Israel, or as the descendants of the Norsemen, or of the Egyptians. But still, investigation has greatly widened the field of knowledge, and made a proper solution of the question more possible.

Two things in this class of materials are of special value. One is the record of tradition gathered from the Indians. True, tradition has often proved to be a lying witness. But when the common traditions of widely-separated and hostile tribes all agree, and none testifies to the contrary, their testimony ought, in the absence of documentary proof, to be accepted.

The other is the contribution which the new science of philology has made to the solution of the problems of archæology. "It may be," as a recent fascinating writer on this subject has said, "that the lamp of this younger sister may light the footsteps of the elder to the final results of ethnological investigation."

The limits of this article forbid any statement in detail, either as to the nature of these traditions, or the extent of philological investigations. It is enough to say that both are in striking harmony as to their testimony. They proclaim the unity and the common origin of the primitive inhabitants of America. They also unmistakably link them with the race of people that settled Eastern Asia.

The second source of information on this subject is that found in the material remains of this ancient people and of their civilisation. These are various in their character, and excite wonder both as to their magnitude and extent. They are scattered all over the northern continent, but more especially do they abound in the middle and western part. They can to-day be traced in an ascending gradation of skill and magnitude from Behring Straits to the Isthmus of Darien. They are

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found all along the shores of the Mississippi and its tributaries. The presence of numberless mounds, fortifications, burying-places, sites of villages and towns; vast quantities of darts, arrow-heads, stone axes, and implements of household industry, turned up by the ploughshare of the farmer, are the sure indications that a vast population dwelt here in the pre-historic ages.

Mr. Conant, the accomplished artist and antiquarian, in his recent work, entitled "Footprints of Vanished Races," presents in detail the evidences that the region now covered by the States of Missouri and Illinois was once thickly populated by the ancient Mound Builders. Many monuments of their patient labour and enterprise still remain within a few miles of the city of St. Louis. The writer well remembers the great mound that stood until a few years ago in the northern part of the city. Before the Vandal hands of American civilisation despoiled it, it was in form a parallelogram, about 200 feet in length, and over 100 feet in width at the base. It rose, with sides inclining like a pyramid, to a height of forty or fifty feet. It was a burial-mound, and when removed disclosed a sepulchral chamber within, in which was found a vast number of bones and ornaments of shell. It was only a sample, however, of scores and hundreds of mounds of like, or even of larger, proportion to be found along the Mississippi. Not all, however, of these mounds were devoted to the same purpose. Some of them were manifestly temple-mounds; others, again, the residences of chiefs or leaders among the people. Perhaps the best conception of them will be obtained from a description of their appearance as they existed in the year 1812 on the American Bottom—a rich alluvial plain on the eastern shore of the Mississippi river opposite St. Louis. Mr. Brackenridge, a man well known in that day for his scientific knowledge, thus describes his visit to this locality:—"I found myself in the midst of a group of mounds, mostly of a circular shape, and at a distance resembling enormous hay-stacks scattered through a meadow. Around me I counted forty-five mounds or pyramids, besides a great number of small artificial elevations. Pursuing my walk along the bank of the Cahokia, I passed eight others in a distance of three miles before I arrived at the largest assemblage. When I reached the foot of the principal mound, I was struck with a degree of astonishment not unlike that which is experienced in contemplating the Egyptian pyramids. What a stupendous pile of earth heaped up! Such a mass must have required years and the labour of thousands. The shape is that of a parallelogram, standing from north to south. On the south side, there is a broad apron or step about half-way down, and from its inner projection into the plain, about fifteen feet wide, which was probably intended as an ascent to the mound. By stepping around the base, I computed the circumference to be at least 800 yards, and the height of the mound about 90 feet. The step or apron has been used as a kitchen-garden by the monks of La Trappe, and the top is sowed with wheat." It is of the same form as those

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which are known as temple-mounds in Mexico. It is still in existence, and the traveller passing by in the railway-car may see this singular hill on the plain, but very few know of its associations with a remote people and the worship of bygone ages.

This and similar mounds, and burial-places, and sites of ancient towns, await the investigation of the antiquarian. The new race that has come in to take possession of the land has been too busy in building houses and cities to turn its attention to the sifting of the ashes of the past. But from all the material already in hand, the following conclusions are fairly drawn :—

1. This ancient race was substantially the same people whom the Spaniards found in Mexico. The evidence goes to show that there was communication or trade of some kind between the Great Lakes on the north and Mexico. The peculiar specular copper of Lake Superior has been found in the needles used by the Peruvians. There were probably several branches of this one race, which, in their separation to different regions, maintained their own peculiarities and dialects, but their course of travel and emigration was plainly from the north to the south. In Mexico their civilisation found its culmination. There the earth-mounds of the north have become stone-cased pyramids, but they are the same in form and in use. The pottery dug out of the mounds in the Mississippi valley is the same in its peculiar form and colouring as that used among the ancient Mexicans. Indeed, its counterpart can be found to-day in use among the Indians of New Mexico. Other facts, pointing to the same conclusion, are found in similarity of religious customs, in the manner of burial, and in the habits of the people in their domestic life.

2. They were a religious people. They had their temples, their system of sacrifices, and their belief in a life beyond the grave. In their cemeteries, where the dead are buried in a circle, it is usual to find, on the right side of the skeleton, in the circle of the arm, an earthen dish, on which provisions of some kind were placed for the long journey. On the other side, near the head, is a small earthen jar, probably, as interpreted by the customs of their descendants, the sacred medicinal vase, whose magic powers would help the soul in its passage to the spirit-world. They were sun-worshippers, and the traces of human sacrifices on their altars are plain and unmistakable. Quite a number of idols also have been found in the mounds and graves. Some of these show a high degree of skill in their execution, and their features have a striking oriental appearance. We can learn from the Spanish account of the Mexicans in the days of Cortes, something in detail of the faith of this people ; but out of the darkness of their past these facts stand out plainly :—They recognised the existence of a Supreme Power to whom they were responsible ; they had the sense of sin and guilt ; they felt the need of a propitiatory sacrifice ; and they believed in a life to come. Those who are anxious to disprove the Mosaic account of the

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creation of man may make the existence of this people as remote as they choose, but so much the worse is it for the modern theory that seeks to deny the fact of the Fall, and makes man's moral nature simply a development of his animal life. The earliest traces of human life on the continent of America reveal the fact that men felt themselves to be offenders against God, and in need of some atoning sacrifice.

3. All the material gathered thus far goes to show that the immense antiquity attributed to the works of this ancient people has no foundation in fact. Romantic people, and those especially who are exceedingly anxious to disprove Bible history, have claimed that the Mound Builders were dwelling on this continent twenty or thirty thousand years ago. Even so high an authority as Sir Charles Lyell enters into a calculation to show that a skull found in the alluvial deposit of the Mississippi Valley must be about 30,000 years old. It was, however, about as accurate as Mark Twain's famous deduction with reference to the length of the Mississippi River. Having learned that the river in the last century had shortened itself one hundred miles by the changing of its channel, from the data thus furnished he showed that 20,000 years ago it was 20,000 miles longer than it now is; and that two thousand years hence it would be so short that St. Louis and New Orleans would only be a few miles apart.

Stratifications of mud, with their imbedded bones, do not, to say the least, furnish very solid evidences in proof of the vast antiquity of man's existence on the earth. The truth is, that careful and sober investigations have dispelled the illusion of romancing geologists in this case. The highest and latest authority on this subject says, "On the one hand, not a tittle of evidence is on record to carry the age of man in America beyond the present geological epoch. Dr. Lund examined in Brazil more than eight hundred caverns, out of which number only six contained human bones, and of these six, only one had, with the human bones, those of animals now extinct. Even in that instance the original stratification had been disturbed, and probably the bones had been interred there. The same is true of the caves of California, Kentucky, and Tennessee. So in every other example where an unbiassed and competent geologist has made the examination, the alleged discoveries of human remains in the older strata have proved erroneous."

The report of the United States Survey in the Mississippi Valley, under the direction of General Humphreys, gives a period of 5000 years as ample time to account for all the traces of human life found there. Indeed, a much shorter time would be sufficient to cover the origin, growth, and decay of the civilisation of the Mound Builders. True, the mould of many generations of forest trees covers their crumbling temples and burial-places; but two or three thousand years is a long period in man's history, and brings to pass much waste and ruin. The present mighty civilisation on this continent is a growth of less than three hundred and fifty years. If some sudden blight should fall upon

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it, and a thousand years of desolation and decay succeed the three centuries of growth, the ruin would be as complete as that which now remains as a memorial of the vanished Mound Builders. It can, then, be accepted as an established fact, all fanciful and sensational statements to the contrary notwithstanding, that the pre-historic remains in America furnish no evidence of the vast antiquity of man's life on this planet. On the contrary, all the carefully-considered discoveries thus far made, tend to confirm the Biblical account, both as to man's origin and his comparatively recent creation.

ST. LOUIS.

SAML. J. NICCOLLS.

DO PRESBYTERIANS HOLD APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION ?

THERE is no doubt that Scotch Presbyterians have held what, in some sense, might be called a doctrine of Apostolical Succession. That is, they have held that those who were ordained by apostles to the ministerial office were endowed with the authority to ordain others to that office, and so to continue the succession—that ordinarily neither the possession of the needed gifts, nor the call of the people, superseded the solemn setting apart of the Presbytery. When the Westminster Assembly “voted that ordination is the act of a Presbytery,” they expressed the view unanimously held by the Scotch theologians of the period. “Ordination,” says Gillespie, “is necessary and essential to the calling of a minister. Ambassadors, . . . generals, admirals, . . . do not run unsent. Shall the visible Church of Christ have less order than a civil republic ?” “The established and settled order of calling of pastors,” says Rutherford, “is by succession of pastors to pastors.”

We have an illustration of how strong was the feeling in this matter in the conduct of the Cameronians. After the martyrdom of Cargill they were without a minister, and there was no minister in Scotland whom they could acknowledge. But instead of ordaining at their own hands, they sent Renwick to Holland to get theological training from Dutch professors, and orderly instalment in the sacred office from Dutch presbyters ; and from the middle of 1681 to the end of 1683, they had neither preaching nor sacraments. Shields mentions that Renwick, in the first year of his wonderful ministry, kept note of five hundred baptisms performed by him, and, at that number, “lost count.” At the Revolution, they were again pastorless—Shields and Linning having gone into the Established Church—and they did as before. Instead of making a minister, they waited on, till, sixteen or seventeen years after, God in His providence sent them Mr. M'Millan, extruded from the Church for his sympathy with Cameronian principles. And further, as one presbyter could not ordain, they still waited and prayed for about thirty years