

Contributors and Correspondents.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE IN THE BASIS.

BY REV. JOHN LAING, H.A., DUNDAS.

The following documents speak for themselves, and show the character of some objections brought against the Fourth article of the Basis.

Article IV. The Church shall "regard itself as being in such ecclesiastical relations to Churches holding the same doctrine, government and discipline with itself as that ministers and probationers from these Churches shall be received into this Church, subject to such regulations as shall from time to time be adopted."

In 1844 the 3rd resolution of Dr. Cook, which was adopted by the majority, reads thus:—

"That the Presbyteries under the jurisdiction of this Synod, be directed to receive ministers and probationers from all Presbyterian Churches holding the same standpoints of Doctrine and Discipline as this Church, who shall produce sufficient evidence of their character and good standing and of their having undergone such course of education, Literary, Scientific and Theological, as has been in ordinary cases held to be sufficient by this Church, as a preparation for the office of the holy ministry, upon their coming under the usual vows."

The second resolution of Dr. Bayne contains this clause, "Therefore they" (the Synod) "resolve and declare that the peculiar connexion which has hitherto subsisted between them and the aforesaid Church of Scotland shall from this time cease and determine, and that any peculiar privilege, that may have been understood to belong in virtue of that connexion to her ministers and elders seeking admission into this Church, shall in like manner be withdrawn."

This resolution, with the others associated with it, was rejected and led directly to the Disruption; and the protest then tabled contains the following:—

"Fourth. That by leaving an open door for ministers and elders from the Established Church of Scotland, holding unsound views on the great principles aforesaid, they have most seriously endangered the purity of the Church, and brought even her independence into peril, through the probable introduction of office-bearers, prepared to submit to the same encroachments of the Civil Power by which the Church of Scotland has been enslaved."

From the above extracts it conclusively follows:—

1. That the 4th Article of the Basis is in substance Dr. Cook's resolution which was adopted by the Residuary Body in 1844.

2. That to adopt it now is to adopt Dr. Cook's resolution.

3. That to do so is virtually to withdraw the Protest and recede from the position which the Presbyterian Church of Canada assumed in 1844, and which she now maintains. If the Church is prepared to do this knowingly and to acknowledge that the Protesters were wrong let her say so; but let no one suppose that the 4th Article can be adopted, and Disruption principles be maintained. Let no one vote under the delusion that our Church concedes nothing. She concedes all.

As to the designation "In connection with the Church of Scotland," note the following:—Dr. Cook's 4th resolution was withdrawn, and in place of it a rider by Mr. Urquhart was adopted, part of which is:—

"This Synod do anew record their gratitude to God that He in His good providence does not call on them to enter on the discussion on decision for themselves of the practical bearings of those principles which have so unhappily divided the Church of Scotland, in respect either to any infringement of the spiritual independence of this Church, or of the privileges of its numbers, or to the connections which subsists between the Church of Scotland and this Synod, that connection neither implying a spiritual jurisdiction on the part of the former over the latter, nor involving the latter in a responsibility for any votings of the former."

Here while, spiritual jurisdiction is denied to the Church of Scotland, no decision is given as to the legal bearings of the connection, and its effect on the property and constitution of the Church. On this the Residuary Synod was not unanimous, and discussion was avoided. Dr. McGill had brought in a resolution proposing to change the designation, and

Mr. Campbell proposed in amendment as follows:—

"Whereas it is the conviction of many members of this Synod, that it is ultra vires of this Synod to change its designation or that of this community over which it rules, inasmuch as such alterations would be a fundamental change of the constitution of the Body, and of the terms on which it was formed and is held together, and a breach of faith towards those ministers and people who have from time to time connected themselves therewith, under its existing title: and that it is not in the power of a majority to make such alteration so as in any way to affect the position and rights of a minority adhering to the existing title and constitution; and inasmuch as any such alteration, if it would be made, would amount to a dissolution of this Synod; and whereas in the opinion of many members some of whom share, and some do not, the conviction previously set forth, an alteration of the designation of the Synod by itself, if at all constitutional or competent, must endanger or alienate the property of the Church in various quarters and injuriously affect in many ways, the rights and interests of congregations, the Synod thereby doing what it has manifestly no right to do without having fully ascertained the mind of the whole Christian community it is resolved, That the proposal to alter the designation of this Church cannot in equity and ought not to be discussed in the Synod or put from the chair."

Dr. Bayne on this point moved:— "As the designation is now inappropriate and might be used as a ground of misrepresentation and a cause of strife, wherefore for the cause of unity and peace they now resolve, decree and declare that the designation of the Church shall be henceforth the Presbyterian Church of Canada."

"But at the same time as in the event of a party claiming to be the true Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the alienation of the property of the Church might possibly result from the want of civil sanction to the change of our designation, this Synod further resolve and declare, that it is their purpose, should it be deemed advisable to seek such sanction, and further as it is altogether that by taking any action in this matter, this Synod are departing from the terms on which their endowments were conferred by the State, although they are fully and conscientiously persuaded that such is not the case, they solemnly pledge themselves that should the British Legislature declare this to be their understanding of these terms, they shall at once, and without further struggle submit to their decision, only protesting against its injustice, and reserving to themselves and their successors to use all competent means for inducing the government to acknowledge their rights."

The Colonial Committee, before the disruption, thus reported to the General Assembly:—

"An effort, it is understood, is to be made, or rather is now being made in the Colonial Legislature of Canada, to procure the incorporation of the Presbyterian ministers there, heretofore connected with the Scottish establishment, as a separate Presbyterian Church, adhering simply to the Westminster Standards and to the Presbyterian forms of worship, and the vesting in them of the property and endowments and interest in the Clergy Reserves Fund, now secured by law to the recognized branch of the Church of Scotland there. Such a measure the Committee will, with the approbation of the General Assembly, steadfastly resist as a gross invasion of our Church's rights, and those of her faithful and adhering brethren and children in that colony, and if such an act should pass the Local Legislature, they contemplate using every means in their power to have it disallowed by the Government at home."

These extracts manifestly establish

1. That the Synod in Canada has never asserted its constitutional and legal independence of the Church of Scotland in temporal matters; but evaded a decision and resorted to apply to the civil courts for a decision.

2. That a party in that Synod hold it ultra vires of the Church to change the designation, such alterations being a fundamental change of the constitution which would amount to a dissolution of the Body.

3. That the Church of Scotland regard the Synod of Canada as a Branch of the Church of Scotland recognized by law, and regard the property of the Synod as belonging to the Church of Scotland so far as to

speak of the vesting of the property in this country in the Canadian Church as an invasion of our rights, i.e. rights of the Church of Scotland.

4. That in the opinion of Mr. Campbell Dr. Bayne and the Established Church, nothing short of an act of the Imperial Legislature can change the designation or allow of the property being vested in a Canadian Church, not legally connected with the Establishment of Scotland.

In view of these facts it seems obvious that a legal separation confirmed by the Established Church of Scotland and the British Legislature is indispensable to any union between the Kirk Synod and other Presbyterian Churches; and till that has been effected Union cannot be consummated with due regard to the interests of the other Churches concerned.

OUR CHINESE MISSION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me a few lines to suggest to our Foreign Mission Committee, that the affairs of the Missions under their care ought to be kept more prominently before the Church than they are. We have various missions, but the members of the Church know little else about them than what may be gathered from occasional scraps in the Record, and from the yearly appendix to the minutes of the General Assembly, which comparatively few see. An intelligent and lively interest in the Missions cannot be sustained unless people know what is doing, and unless those in charge of the missionary operations of the Church manifest an earnestness themselves, and put forth all efforts to awaken the same spirit in others. The press is open to them, and should largely be made use of. I question, if there be any church, in which so little effort seems to be made to keep the interests of its missions before the members. Look to the Records of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and see the pains taken to keep the members acquainted by editorials and letters with the work and prospects of the Missions. I would say to our Committee, write, be always writing, and see to it that the Missionaries write, for frequent publication, interesting letters about the country they are in, the people, their religion, and customs &c. Let them describe their itineraries and intercourse with enquirers, gainsayers, and seceders. Such letters as are sent by Mr. Shoolbred, the U.P. Missionary in Beawr, India, cannot fail to arouse an interest, among the members of his Church, in the work, or to make the "Missionary Record" a welcome visitor.

The Committee, I am glad to learn, have resolved upon an important step in prosecuting our work in Formosa—that of sending out Dr. J. B. Fraser as Medical Missionary. But why do they not more ado about it? Where are the articles from their pens, that will show us the benefit to the cause that may justly be expected from such an addition to our Missionary agency? Where the rousing appeals for the pecuniary and prayerful support of the people, which might be, ought to be made. Let us not sleep as do no others.—NEXUS.

The Eldership.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I agree very much with what "T" says on this subject in the PRESBYTERIAN of April 3rd.

In one part of his communication he asks: "Why do ruling elders never find their way to the Moderator's chair?" There is, I believe, one instance on record in the history of the Presbyterian Church, but only one, of a ruling elder occupying the Moderator's chair. But, as such a thing happens so seldom, the word "never" in the passage just quoted, can hardly be said to be too strong. Why is it that such is the case? Now, there is Dr. Dawson, of the McGill College, Montreal. His fame, as a man of science, is European, as well as American. During, at least part of the year, he conducts a Bible Class every Sabbath. It is usually referred to in the religious notices which regularly appear in Saturday's Witness. Now, if he is qualified to conduct such a class, I cannot see how he would not be "the right man in the right place" if he was Moderator of the General Assembly. No doubt, if he were to be nominated, many would laugh at it, but let them give a good reason why he should not be elevated to that dignity. Perhaps, his duties in connection with McGill College might not allow him to act, but I am not speaking of convenience, but of qualification.

ENQUIRER.

If you invest your money in strong drink it is the same as turning hungry hogs into a growing corn-field. Ruin will follow in both cases.

THE REVIVAL IN MITCHELL, ONT.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—It will interest you and the lovers of Zion at a distance to understand that the work of God still goes on powerfully in Mitchell. Last night was one of the most striking seasons in the way of an interesting meeting that they have ever had,—several young men professing to have found the Saviour. Requests came in from a variety of places for an interest in the prayers of God's people—some bearing on individuals, and others on congregations. At the prayer meeting for boys, the 17th chapter of John's Gospel was read, along with singing and prayer—successfully engaged in by several of the young men. At the other meeting intended for all, a large attendance was present, addresses given by Mr. Kwing, of Georgetown; Mr. Scott, student, and their own pastor.

Mr. Mitchell's hands are ably held up by his excellent father, along with others who are intensely interested in the work of the revival. The Methodist Churches still keep up their meetings also. A hallowed atmosphere seems to pervade most of the churches in the village, and it may well be said, what hath God wrought? The good seed of the word has long been sown in Mitchell by servants of Christ,—some of them now deceased, and others remaining to the present day, and may the fruit be more and more abundant. The Presbyterian Church is now too strait, and it is contemplated to enlarge it at no distant day. Let private Christians and office-bearers visit the locality that they may be the means of doing out of getting good, and may God pour out his Spirit on all our churches and households, and may the kingdom of the Redeemer spread and break forth in every direction.

Egmondville, 8th April, 1874.

W. G.

Mr. Herald and "D."

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—When I sent you my communication, which you kindly inserted in your paper, in reference to Mr. McTavish's extraordinary statements about the Church of Scotland, I had no intention whatever of entering upon a newspaper warfare. Neither do I intend to do so now. I consider such discussions, for the most part, unedifying and endless.

Your correspondent "D." has been pleased to criticize my syllogism. Will you permit me briefly to criticize his criticism. Having done that I shall retire from the field, leaving your readers to form their own opinions of what I said in my last and I shall say in this.

Evidently my syllogism has cost "D." some uneasiness. He seems not to know very well what to do with it. First, he says the conclusion is really abominable, (strong word, that, and yet it is a legitimate inference. I didn't understand that exactly. I understand him better as he proceeds. He is not bold enough avowedly to accept the conclusion that the Church of Scotland is not a Christian Church. Perhaps he is afraid of public opinion. I agree with him when he says it is a fearful conclusion. Of course, he considers the minor premise, "The Church of Scotland denies the Headship of Christ over his Church," which Mr. McTavish gives as all right. To doubt the soundness of that would be to question the validity of the disruption cry. In fact "D." tells us that the Church of Scotland herself tacitly admits it. It is a historical fact, he says, that a protest was laid upon the table of her General Assembly in 1843, charging her with denying that doctrine, which has never been answered.

If the Church of Scotland has not given an answer to that protest, as "D." says, she withheld it for good and sufficient reasons, I have no doubt. But long before the Free Church had an existence, the Church of Scotland gave the most convincing of all evidence that she holds that doctrine, and she is prepared, I have no doubt whatever, to give that evidence again, should the same circumstances ever demand it.

Afraid to avow the fearful conclusion that the Church of Scotland is not a Christian Church, and being unwilling to call in question Mr. McTavish's proposition, "The Church of Scotland denies the Headship of Christ over His Church." "D." calls in question the soundness of my major proposition, "All, whether individuals or Churches, who deny the Headship of Christ over His Church, are not Christian." He is quite right when he says, I thought every one would admit the soundness of that proposition. Clearly, he does not, which shows I have been mistaken. If I had not seen from the spirit of his letter that he was a Free Churchman, I would have at once concluded that "D." belongs to the Broad School. Surely, to say that an individual or a Church may deny the Headship of Christ over His Church, and still be Christian, is broad enough—so broad that I hardly think that either Dr. Wallace or Dr. Caird, to whom Mr. McTavish refers in his letter, would accept it. I still see no other alternative but either to accept the fearful conclusion that "The Church of Scotland is not a Christian Church," or reject Mr. McTavish's minor, the Church of Scotland denies the Headship of Christ over His Church.

Let me look now at "D.'s" syllogism

Whoever denies Christ is not a Christian. The Apostle Peter denied Christ, therefore, the Apostle Peter was not a Christian. "D." has not closely observed the rule in logic I mentioned in my letter, that the Major premise must include the Minor. If he had done that, his Major premise would have been, "Whoever denies Christ and afterwards repents his denial is not a Christian." Peter, it is true, denied Christ, but he afterwards repented bitterly. In his repentance, and not in his denial, lies the evidence that he was a Christian. If Peter had not repented, but persisted in his denial, I may be mistaken; but I think all intelligent men will say, he would not have been a Christian.

Some men are like Goldsmith's schoolmaster: though vanquished they can argue still. Mr. McTavish and his friend "D." belong to that class.

Yours truly, JAMES HERALD.

"A Reader" and "Canadensis" Again.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR,—Your freethinking correspondent "Canadensis" becomes a little less dogmatical, but continues quite as unscriptural as before. Judged by his last lucubration he has all but developed into a full fledged Universalist. His theory, (his by adoption of course, not by origination, as it would require the highest satanic talent to be original in error at this late day) necessitates that he might as shy of divine revelation as its non-revelation will allow. He takes good care not to attempt an interpretation of the few inspired statements to which I called his attention. When, in ill disguised desperation, he does seek sanction for his sentiments in God's word, what mangling and perversion he perpetrates! Take the following example; as proof that men—all men it would seem—shall be saved, though they know not the gospel, he places the following words within inverted commas—"God so loved the nation" (not a small fraction of it) "that He sent His only begotten Son that the world through Him might be saved." And certainly these words are all found, but not consecutively, in John iii. 16-17. The term "saved" is limited in the 16 verse, and in the 15 verse as well, by the all important phrase "Whosoever believeth in Him." But this unmistakable and decisive limitation "Canadensis" withholds; and if designedly withheld, I leave it to your readers to characterize as it deserves such deceitful handling of God's Word! The world needs salvation, and it is proffered to the world in the glorious gospel, but it is distinctly stated and reiterated that those only who "believe" the gracious message "shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Mr. Editor,—Would it not be a waste of words and a prostration of time, and of your typographical, to discuss and expose the anti-scriptural statements and illogical inferences contained in the long rambling letter of "Canadensis"? Were it to serve any good, the thing could readily be done, though at the cost of a heavy tax on the patience of the writer and your readers; and the recording pen, though dipped in purest pity, could hardly be restrained from making unseemly and pain-giving scratches. In the meantime, I again pull him up to the post, and demand that he produce (if he can) proof, positive or fairly inferential, from the Statute Book of God—the only authority on the subject in hand—that salvation is available apart from faith, and faith too grounded on knowledge, more or less full, of God's revealed truth. We have had more than enough of trifling on this awfully solemn subject. What boots it to tell us what men think, when their thoughts tally not with the declarations of God Himself? Were it not for the interdiction of God's Word, who would not theorize as benevolently and freely in regard to the salvation of the heathen as "Canadensis" and his uninspired authorities? But when God forbids this, by lucid and oft repeated statements in reference to the only means of satisfaction, the respect of Divine authority is constrained to fold the wings of his wish, and to give place to bitter regret that he and his favored fellows have so little headed "the marching orders" of the captain of salvation,—orders sanctioned not merely by the highest authority, but having for their reason the rescue of the enslaved and the doomed, and backed too by pity for the perishing, a powerfully prompting motive that should be allowed its full force in the bosom of every soldier of the Cross. Would to God that "Canadensis" and the writer and all who know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent "would cease to feel at ease in Zion"—would cease to dream idly and presumptuously of the possibility of the heathen being saved without the gospel, and awake to the duty next in importance and place to a personal acceptance of Christ, viz., of putting forth the utmost efforts to have published, to the ends of the earth, the glad tidings of salvation. Were the Christians of to-day to set about this great work as they ought, under the command and promise of the Saviour, the predicted and blessed day would not long linger when "they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Thus, and thus only, by every man teaching his brother, saying "know the Lord," shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Let us strive to hasten it.

A READER.

Ontario, 7th April 1874.