

CORRESPONDENCE.

IS IT HERESY PER SE, OR MERELY HERESY DENOMINATIONAL?

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—The forthcoming trial for heresy of a certain eminent professor of theology is reported to take place early in the month of August. It may seem intermeddling on a part of a layman and outsider to mix himself up in an affair that apparently does not concern him. Yet if the Presbytery or General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is duly qualified to pronounce dogmatically on any one item of revealed truth, it is equally competent to pronounce on all. In other words,—if, armed with divine authority, it can truthfully and unhesitatingly proclaim—"It hath seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us" to stigmatize as heretical certain propositions in the celebrated lecture of the aforesaid professor, it is equally competent to pronounce as heretical the doctrine of the Unitarian, the Baptist, the Roman Catholic, &c. Yet those denominations have,—at least humanly speaking,—an equal right to pronounce heretical the doctrines of the Presbyterian when they happen to disagree with the distinctive formularies of each. For example, the Unitarian Church would be amply justified, under similar circumstances to the case in point, in finding a member of that communion guilty of heresy who should presume to advocate a belief in the Trinity. In like manner a member of the Baptist persuasion would be instantly hauled over the coals if while professing to teach Baptist theology he should maintain the necessity of paid-baptism as requisite for salvation. In my opinion before the General Assembly can proceed to adjudicate on any case of Christian doctrine or morality, it must be prepared to answer to general satisfaction the momentary questions.—By what authority doest thou these things, and who gavo you this authority? Matt. xx., 1, 2, 3. If in reply, appeal should be made to the constitutions of Calvin, (which I concede the General Assembly has a right to dogmatise),—what then? What is Calvin to the Unitarian, the Baptist or the Roman Catholic? In the Old Testament the expression occurs—"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, &c.," but no where is it recorded that the Lord spoke to either of the Two Johns, Calvin or Knox. The only points of any importance to discuss in the premises are the following: 1st. Did Christ establish any tribunal with full authority to act and decide in his name? 2nd. Is there any instance on record of its so acting and deciding? 3rd. Was such tribunal meant to be perpetual or merely conterminal with the lives of the Apostles? That Christ did institute such a tribunal is beyond dispute. "He that heareth you heareth me. whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven. Lo! I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." That they acted as representatives of The Most High is abundantly confirmed by their decision in the Council of Jerusalem, Acts xv, and by their changing of the Seventh or Sabbath day to the first day of the week. As that tribunal was constituted to last to the end of time, and was the only one established by its divine Thunder to which all Christians were required to submit, it logically follows that it is the only one to which recourse must be had in cases of doubt and difficulty. It will however be contended that such tribunal has ceased to exist, having for ages lapsed into errors innumerable. If such really, be the case, there is nothing left of original Christianity, but the dry bones; the soul has fled; and the gates of hell have prevailed, and the magnificent promise made by Christ to His chosen representatives to be with them all days, and to guide them into all truth has notoriously failed and become the derision of the powers of darkness. Should the Faculty of the Presbyterian College deem these remarks of any weight, they will pause before fulminating a decree of heresy against the learned professor. As a matter of course he will be called upon to explain certain startling propositions in his lecture. This he is doubtlessly prepared to do; and we may expect to find his defense so ingeniously modelled as apparently not to contain anything contrary to the Confession of Faith. What will be his line of defense it is impossible for me to fore-

cast; but I presume it will be something like the following. He will readily admit that certain passages in his lectures have proved to some pious souls a stone of offence. But like the independent member in Pickwick, Mr. Blotton, who had the temerity to apply the offensive epithet of *humbag* to the venerable founder of the Pickwick Club, he will refuse to 'withdraw' certain high-flavored expressions of opinion, the result of many years' earnest and profound study of the Holy Scriptures. When he stated, what to ignorant men might savor of rank blasphemy—that in the "goblin" 'old—testament God broke every one of his own laws.' He will now contend that said expressions were not intended to be construed in the light of 'common sense, but in a purely Pickwickian point of view.' Finally, he will impress upon his accusers the necessity of devoting themselves with renewed vigor to a thorough searching of the Scriptures as the sure and only groundwork of the Presbyterian faith, in which he hopes to live and die. On this assurance a burst of applause may be expected to greet the retiring professor. How far such sympathy may induce his judges to modify or dismiss the charge of heresy it is not easy to predict. For if what is heresy in one denomination is the pure Gospel in another, the existence of a plurality of conflicting Gods is inevitable. I cannot conclude without admiring, in the hypothetical defense of the learned professor, the earnest appeal to his judges, for a more diligent study and search of the Scriptures. As a general rule men are prone to search for what they have lost, or for something which they may have a reasonable expectation to find. I therefore sincerely hope that the result of their labors may be the finding of some divinely constituted society to whose living voice all that glory in the Christian name may cheerfully submit, without question and without demur.

A. G. GRANT.

SCHOOL INSPECTORSHIP.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—I was very much flattered with 'Marie's,' charming compliment to my letter of the 26th ult., on the question of the appointment of an Inspector of English Schools. I fear, however, that 'Marie' has been trying to flatter my vanity, by giving me undue credit for opening up the way for herself and other lady teachers to express their views publicly on this important question. If, by being the first of my own sex to break the ice, has been productive of any good, then indeed, I have legitimate cause to feel a little pride. To break the ice, it is true, I had to set at naught a 'cast iron' rule, which I do not consider binding on conscience—in fact, I look upon such rules, as the 'Great' O'Connell looked upon every Act of the English Parliament of his day; when he said he could 'drive a coach-and-four through each and all of them.' So, it will be seen, how much credit is mine, for having the courage of my convictions publicly expressed. I have nothing to add to what I have already stated,—but, for the edification of 'Marie,' and my numerous lady friends of the teaching staff, I may reiterate, that my opinion with regard to the appointment of an English Inspector for English schools, is unchanged and unchangeable.

NORAH.

SCHOOL INSPECTORSHIP.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—At the time you were working so devotedly, and I believe conscientiously for the appointment of an Irish Catholic Representative on the School Board, I had, I must admit, like many others of my confreres, doubts as to the success of your enterprise, while never questioning its justice, and I was not slow to warn you, from conversations held with various parties on the question, that, I believed you were knocking your head against a stone wall. Seeing, that my predictions have not been verified by the course of events, I am no longer a confirmed doubter in the exigencies of circumstances, but, to say the truth, I am somewhat skeptical of your success in obtaining the appointment of an English School Inspector. I need not point out to you that the two appointments are by no means identical. It does not follow that by your obtaining the appointment of a *persona grata* to represent Irish Catholic interests on the School Board, that the same consideration will be given your demand for an English Inspector. The former was a

right in itself, recognized by the Law, the latter, whether a right, an act of justice, or both, has yet to become law, hence the distinction between the appointments. The very fact of the strong opposition at influential quarters, to the TRUE WITNESS demand for an Irish Catholic School Commissioner, justifies me in publicly stating that, however just and pressing the demand for an English Inspector of School; you will now be met with redoubled opposition from the majority of the Board, from the Secretary-Treasurer, who is *de facto*, himself, the Board, from some of the ex-Commissioners, and lastly, from a majority of the teachers; in fine, these men will make a national cry out of it; and vent themselves against the Irish Catholic organ, for its temerity in trying to disturb the existing order of things. This cry will not resound from the house tops, that would be contrary to their diplomacy; but, it will be quietly whispered into the ears of the powers that be; and thus, will the distilled poison be made to do its deadly work, silently, but effectually, against the efforts of the 'True Witness.' These are some of the grounds on which I base my predictions this time, and I think they are sufficiently strong to strengthen my doubts in the success of your present undertaking. Whether, my convictions are well founded remains to be seen, but of this I am fully sensible; the 'True Witness,' has made out a good case—a just, reasonable, and practical case, and none among your many subscribers, will hail with greater pleasure than I will, the appointment of an English Inspector of Schools. Your articles and correspondence on the question, have opened up a field of thought, hitherto, unexplored. You have convinced the most skeptical of the justice and utility of your demand; and you have left a debt of gratitude, which, I hope, some day to see requited, on the shoulders of our teachers and pupils of more than ordinary amplitude.

ANOTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER.

THE MAYOR'S STAND.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—If the limits of your editorial space prevent your expressing in the TRUE WITNESS the opinion of Irish Catholics on the subject, give me leave to say in your columns what at least one of them thinks anent the conduct of the Mayor in declining to take part in the civic reception of the officers and crew of the Italian war-ship *Etna*. Let me say at once that the reasons given by the Mayor, when criticized, appear to be such that it would have been unmanly and in the last degree inconsequent for the Hon. Mr. Desjardins to have acted otherwise than he did. These foreign officers were not to be received here merely as distinguished individuals. Their ship represented the present Italian government, and to join in welcoming her could mean nothing less than approval of the power whose flag the ship carried. The Hon. Mr. Desjardins knew this and he could not forget that for twenty-three years he had constantly and publicly protested against the action of the Italian government in despoiling the Pope of his territorial possessions, the patrimony of the Catholic Church. He could not and fortunately did not forget that during all that time he had joined openly with the Catholics of this country in condemning the attempt of the same government to make the Viceroy of Christ the subject of an Italian Prince, for "between the subject and the sovereign there is no middle state." The Hon. Mr. Desjardins held and proclaimed the opinion expressed by the late Cardinal Manning, "that the Head of the religion of all nations could not be the subject of any one; that since he could not be national, the subject of a nation, he must be extra-national, or independent of all, that is to say, he must be sovereign." What, then, was the mayor to do, these being his convictions oftentimes proclaimed? "He is the mayor," his critics say, "and as mayor he should have welcomed the war-ship of Italy, a power which is at peace and on good terms with this country. There was evidently a conflict between his duty to himself to act as a logical and consistent man, and the duties of his office, as these seem to be generally understood. He could not divide himself and say:—"When I protested against the continued usurpation of Rome by King Humbert, I spoke in my private capacity—" I am now acting as mayor, and it is only in "my public capacity as such, and not as "Alphonse Desjardins, that I welcome this "enemy of the Pope." If it had been necessary for the mayor himself to receive and do honor to the Italian war-ship, it would perhaps have been his duty to resign the mayoralty. But it was not necessary, there was an acting-mayor and a reception committee, who did not share Mr. Desjardins' views, and to these gentlemen he turned over the task of doing what they might consider right in the case, stating frankly to them his own reasons for having nothing to do with it. There is not room for two opinions on the subject; and if a man, with Mr. Desjardins' professed views, had, as mayor or in any other official capacity, assisted at a lunch or dinner given to or by the officers of the 'Etna' and proposed the health of King Humbert of Italy, he would merit the contempt of every Protestant and Catholic in the country. From their long and inseparable attachment to the Church, and because of their constant devotion to the inalienable rights of the Sovereign Pontiff, Irish Catholics have deserved the name of Papists. At Castelfidardo hundreds of heroic Irishmen gave their lives to protect the territory of the Pope;—and this will still be remembered when people shall

have charitably forgotten the insignificant fact that one Irish-Catholic was found in Montreal to blame the Hon. Mr. Desjardins for refusing to take part in the public reception of the representatives of a government which has robbed the Head of the Church of its rightful possessions and attempts to deprive the Pope of that independence which is necessary to the fullest exercise of the Pontifical office.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
H. J. KAVANAGH.

5th August, 1893.
(In our issue of last week it seems to us that our editorial, the 'Etna's Reception,' was about as strong an expression of opinion as could be made. Perhaps it escaped our correspondent's notice.—ED. TRUE WITNESS.)

THE MAYOR OF MONTREAL AND HIS CRITICS.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

Mayor Desjardins' attitude in declining to preside at the reception to the Italian officers in Montreal, whom he rightly deemed represented their Government for the nonce, was a fair subject for hostile criticism, but not for impeachment of motives, or of unmitigated personal abuse. It is an old axiom that abuse is not argument, and it is strange that the Catholic Mayor of Montreal who so recently was applauded as an exponent of Christian charity in welcoming the Christian Endeavorers, should be within a few weeks, held up to derision as an unparalleled bigot. It is well to bear in mind that Mayor Desjardins, among those of his own faith, and among Protestants generally, has been hitherto regarded as a cultured gentleman of irreproachable character. It should also be borne in mind, that beyond, for grave personal reasons, declining to preside, he did nothing to frustrate the proposed reception, and thought it quite fitting, and more becoming, than an acting Mayor of different predilections should do the civic honors on this occasion.

It is not my purpose to enter into an analysis of the question in how far Mayor Desjardins' conduct commended itself to devout and loyal Catholics generally, but to respectfully submit that his attitude was thoroughly consistent and intelligible. The Church has not laid down any binding rules on this subject, but has rather left it to the individual conscience and judgment. Time effects many changes, but it is powerless to make a right out of a great moral wrong. We Catholics have always regarded, and do still regard, the usurpation of the Papal States by the Italian Government, as an unequalled act of spoliation, and robbery. We have always regarded, and do still regard, these temporal dominions as the imprecipitable right and patrimony of the Holy Father, as the earthly visible head of the Catholic Church, and we look forward, and teach our children to look forward, to the restoration of these rights as inevitable. There is no better gauge of a Catholic's civil allegiance, and sincere devotion and loyalty to his rightful sovereign, whether Queen, Emperor or President, than the measure of his submission and devotion to our holy Church and religion, and to her Supreme Infallible Head.

AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC.

Toronto, 8rd Aug., 1893.

ROMAN NEWS.

[Gleaned from the London Universe and other sources.]

The Government of King Humbert has demanded of the authorities of certain towns in Italy returns as to the number of Catholics voting at the recent elections. From these it appears that our faithful co-religionists carried off the victory when they set themselves seriously to the work at Venice, Turin, Bergamo, and Rome itself.

The audiences of the Holy Father, suspended since the beginning of June, have been resumed, and will be continued throughout the summer. In spite of the recent tropical heats the health of Leo XIII. is excellent. Every day he takes a walk in the gardens of the Vatican, and goes at noon to the tower of Nicholas IV., where he has a repast and reposes himself for a little. At seven he returns to the palace Dr. Laponi fearing that the garden air be comes dangerous at this hour and might engender the fever of the malaria.

It is stated that the Pope's speech before the recent secret consistory was unusually forcible and grave. Leo XIII. is said to have declared that events were tending towards a disastrous course in a downward direction; that the governments, whether impotent or accomplices in evil, were being dragged onward in the storm; that the Sovereign Pontiff was persecuted and placed under an intolerable yoke, and that he could support this state of things no longer, but must raise his voice so that it would be heard as it had never been heard before.

We read in the *Moniteur de Rome* that a Rescript has been given in favour of the ailing whom the priests cannot readily approach in the Paris hospitals. The religious attached as nursing sisters to establishments of the kind are to have the privilege of presenting a crucifix to the dying, which carries with it a plenary indulgence at the hour of death on condition that it is kissed with a contrite heart or even touched. But the crucifix can only be used when the moribund is deprived of all other religious succour. It must not be imagined that the indulgence here spoken of can replace the reception of the sacraments or supply their default. Sin can be effaced by the sacraments only on perfect contrition; the indulgence comes afterwards to remit the penalty due to the already pardoned sin.

Monsignor Marquis Arrives in New York with a Relic.

New York, August 7.—Mgr. Marquis, of Quebec, who arrived to-day on the French steamship "La Champagne," brought with him a part of the remains of Ste. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. The relic comes from the Basilica of Apt, in the province of Avignon. Father Tetreau, of the little French Church of St. John the Baptist, in East 76th street, met Mgr. Marquis at the pier and took to his church the silver bound glass jar containing the relic which is about six inches long. Mgr. Marquis and Father Tetreau are friends, and when the Monsignor started for Rome, Father Tetreau asked him to go to the Archbishop of Avignon and intercede for a part of the Saint's body.