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SCRIPTURAL TESTS AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

WE have, with pleasure, made room for another paper by "Laicus," though frankly we as little as ever see that such pleadings either call for an answer or admit of any. They are vague, with all respect be it said, somewhat declamatory, and with no definite or practical suggestion as to what is to be done in order to remedy the supposed evil and to secure the much desired liberty without falling into the admittedly possible license. It is a very easy thing to plead for liberty and to cry out against every kind of mental and spiritual bondage, but what does it all amount to unless there be individual points indicated where relaxation should be made, and certain statements in the complained of creeds pointed out as inconsistent with the Word of God, and calculated to act as stumbling blocks to weak or sensitive consciences. On the principle for which apparently "Laicus" pleads every man would be a law unto himself, and this one cry of liberty would cover every anomaly and condone every possible eccentricity either in thought, speech, or behaviour. We can understand individuals coming with definite propositions, and arguing that this, that, or the other point of doctrine or discipline should be changed or modified. In such a case there is something tangible in the proposition, and manly and straightforward in the bearing with which such a proposal is brought forward. But when it is a mere cry for liberty, without any distinct statement of grievance or any suggestion as to what ought to be amended or how the change was to be effected, we confess we are at sea. Such liberty, conceded, would admit within the pale of any section of Christ's Church equally those who believed everything and those who believed nothing at all. We at once and frankly acknowledge that it is neither desirable nor proper to multiply or complicate terms of communion beyond what Scripture sanctions and requires. But how is the desiderated simplification to be secured except by all concerned frankly and honestly stating their objections and formulating their wishes. Even "Laicus" wishes to have "a creed," as every sensible person must, and would very likely complain of culpable laxity and unscripturalness if parts of that shortened formula were mutilated or rejected. Surely it is but fair that others should have the same liberty. The whole teaching of our Presbyterian Church on ecclesiastical polity has been rejected with indignation and scorn by many who "have been abundantly blessed in preaching." What then? Would "Laicus" cast it aside and admit as Presbyterian ministers all who were successful preachers—from the highest Episcopalian to the most radical Congregationalist? The whole system of doctrine usually styled Calvinistic has been ostentatiously rejected by those whose preaching has apparently been "abundantly blessed," and whose Christian character could not be reasonably called into question. Well? Would "Laicus" be prepared for what must logically follow? So we might ask about a good many other points till we landed ourselves in all the fog-bound goodyism and irrelevant drivel of Plymouthism, with all back-bone taken out of our religious beliefs, and all practically effective motive eliminated from our lives. As we have said, it is only some six years since the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada were gone carefully over, sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. Was that an honest proceeding? or was it a fraud and a farce? "Laicus" may say that it was the latter, but many as true and manly, as honest in examination, and as fearless in avowal as any whom "Laicus" either knows or could name, had and have a very different idea of that transaction. Those who are still satisfied with what was then done, and

with the conclusions then arrived at, could not be expected to move in the matter. They have nothing to complain of. They feel no fetters. They are conscious of no galling restriction. A prominent and transparently honest minister and father of our Church lately remarked that he felt as little galled, harassed, or restricted by his ordination vows and engagements as he did by the multiplication table; and will any one say that there are not very many in the Presbyterian Church in Canada who could as frankly and as honestly make the same avowal? If there are, and we believe there are, it is not in the nature of things to be expected that these should begin a movement for relaxation and simplification for which they feel no need, though they might be perfectly willing, for their brethren's sake, and still more for the sake of the Master, to go so far in the way of shortening, simplifying, or even modifying, if they knew exactly what was wanted, wherein the grievance consisted, and how the proposed remedy was to be applied. All this, we repeat, must come from those who feel aggrieved, and must be stated, not in weak, washed-out, and somewhat tasteless declamations about "liberty," "free thought," "free speech," etc., etc., but in definite, manful statements of what is felt to be wrong or oppressive, and in indications of how that wrong is to be put right. Church censures, cold looks, or ecclesiastical anathemas are very small things to a man who lives ever in his great Master's eye, to say nothing of what is still smaller, the loss of Churchly position or daily bread. But it is something, indeed everything, for such an one to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; and if, in order to do this, he cannot get the liberty he wants and asks *within* any Church enclosure, he will seek it *without*, and that without either looking for shelter in mental reservation, or finding a defence in the ignorance of those who have not changed and could not acquiesce in the divergence if they knew. We are quite ready at once to admit that there is a certain kind of manliness and courageous honesty, or something like that, in those who plead to be allowed to continue in the Presbyterian Church, to eat its bread, and to minister at its altars so long as they are consciously loyal to what they understand to be Christian duty and fundamental truth, though they should, or at least might, have cast much of the Confession of Faith to the winds, and be ready with the somewhat profane Glasgow professor to say in answer to the question, "Does this contain a confession of *your* faith?" "Aye, faith does it, and a great deal more." But even then the question is reasonable, "How much more?" So that those who have *not* changed at all, and claim to be equally honest, may know exactly how much they are asked to give up, and where they stand. The whole drift of our correspondent's communication, so far as we can gather, is that ministers of the Presbyterian and other creed-bound Churches are so utterly without honesty and back-bone that they have not the courage of their convictions, and are either so unable or unwilling, or both, to sacrifice for conscience and Christ what men of the world are every day sacrificing for honour or even for common honesty, and all the while never dreaming that they are doing anything very much out of the way, that in order to keep them from telling or acting a lie, it must be made impossible for this to be done so long as they are consciously honest to their convictions whatever these may be, and are able to speak as they really think, at least so far as their mastery of the English language will enable them to accomplish such an exploit with any measure of distinctness and success.

REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR IRELAND.

IT is surely a matter for congratulation that the land law proposed for Ireland by Mr. Gladstone secures so large an amount of justice to the occupants of the Irish soil without doing anything like practical wrong to the landowners, and without even in the slightest approaching that confiscation of property which was either feared or hoped by multitudes, according as their personal interests or political leanings might suggest or influence. There is not even the shadow of justice in a landowner coming in by sanction of law, and sweeping away, for his own benefit, all the permanent improvements which the tenant may have made on the raw material called land, without any equivalent being thought of or proposed. The time for that sort of thing is either past or is fast passing, not only in Ireland, but the world over. The tenant pays for the use of the raw material called

land. If, at the end of his occupancy, that land is deteriorated, reason would say that he ought to pay the landlord for such deterioration. If it has been rendered more valuable, that improvement belongs to him who has made it, and ought to be appraised and paid for like any other piece of property. In fact the law of landlord and tenant requires considerable revision the world over, and it is in the fair way of getting it, if only all concerned would so cordially unite in the revision as to prevent anything like excess, either on the one side or the other. A great many other kindred questions about keeping land unused and uncultivated till the industry of others shall add to its value, and as to who should, in such circumstances, have the right to accretions, will also have to be faced here in Canada, as well as elsewhere, and may give a good deal of trouble before they are finally and fairly settled. Beginnings, however, in the right direction are being made, and the established reign of righteousness, truth, and equity may not be so far distant as some imagine. It is so far established already wherever Christ's law and Christ's love bear sway, and whoever may protest to the contrary, it will be still more so when that gentle rule shall be universally established, and when all nations shall flow to it and recognize its power. We believe Mr. Gladstone never spoke a truer word, or one he more cordially felt, than when he said he rejoiced to get away from the uncongenial work of coercion and repression, however necessary that work had been, to that which was intended to be at once remedial and ameliorative; and to help towards the undoing of heavy burdens, and the letting of the poor and oppressed go free without any other having a right to complain of being deprived of any just privilege or any equitable right. Let us hope that this effort at doing justice may be crowned with abundant and gratifying success.

THE TORONTO HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.

WE have once and again drawn the attention of our readers to the Hospital for Sick Children which has for years been established in Toronto. It is one of the most modest and most deserving of our public charities, and well deserves the cordial support and earnest sympathy of every Christianly benevolent heart. Those who wish to see and judge for themselves could not do better than pay a personal visit to 245 Elizabeth street, and we shall be greatly mistaken if, after such a visit, they do not become earnest supporters and advocates of this charity for all time coming. Cast-off clothes, and playthings no longer required at home, are always acceptable at this hospital, as well as flowers and much else, not forgetting the money, which is always needed, and is indeed, in a certain sense, indispensable. The hospital is too small. It surely ought not to be difficult to raise all the money needed for the proposed enlargement.

KNOX COLLEGE.

The following is a list of those who succeeded in the competition for scholarships at the late examination in Knox College:

SCHOLARSHIPS IN THEOLOGY—FIRST YEAR.

Bayne Scholarship.—Proficiency in Hebrew on entering Theological course, Joseph Builder, B.A.
Alexandria Scholarship, \$50.—General Proficiency, D. M. Ramsay, B.A.
Scholarship, \$50.—Systematic Theology, Jos. Builder, B.A.
Goldie Scholarship, \$50.—Exegetics, J. A. Hamilton, B.A.
Gillies Scholarship, \$40.—Church History, J. Ballantyne, B.A.
Esson Scholarship.—Bible History, R. Myers, B.A.
Dunbar Scholarship, \$50.—Apologetics, John Mutch, B.A.
Gillies (II.) Scholarship, \$40.—Bible Criticism, A. K. Caswell.

SECOND YEAR.

J. A. Cameron Scholarship, \$60.—General Proficiency, W. H. Hunt, B.A.
Bonar Scholarship, \$40.—Church History, Samuel Caruthers.
Loghrin Scholarship, \$50.—Systematic Theology, John Neil, B.A.
Alexandria (II.) Scholarship, \$50.—Exegetics, John Gibson, B.A.
Esson (II.) Scholarship, \$40.—Bible History, J. Jamieson.
Heron Scholarship, \$40.—Best average by students who have not gained another scholarship, A. G. McLachlin, B.A.

THIRD YEAR.

Hamilton Centennial Church Scholarship, \$60.—General Proficiency, R. V. Thomson, B.A.
Fisher Scholarship (I.), \$60.—Systematic Theology, M. McGregor, B.A.