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Contributors and Correspondents.

Church Independence.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MY DEAR SIR,—I trust I shall not be regarded as craving too much from you in requesting room in your columns for some remarks on the second letter of "Presbyterian" in your issue of October 21. I certainly did hope that my letter of October 13 would have been sufficient to remove his difficulty in relation to his "extreme case," and to lead to his taking right views on the subject of Church Independence; but, revealed as he is in his second letter, I have little hope of saying anything that will lead him to do justice either to the views which I contend for, or to those who hold them. He expresses himself with a flippancy and confidence that ill accord with his original presentation of himself as an inquirer seeking light. These qualities are not wanting in his first letter; but they are so conspicuous in the second as to justify the suspicion that he writes with another design than to get relief from a difficulty that perplexes him.

I have, however, a much more serious charge to make. I have to charge him with misrepresentation of the worst kind short of deliberate misrepresentation—misrepresentation both without a shadow of excuse, and in the face of strong and definite statements, in which I maintain the very reverse of what he ascribes to me. His entire reply being grounded on that misrepresentation, it is of course, no reply to me, of whatever use it may be in other respects. For one thing, it lets us know what his views were before his conversion, within the last fortnight, to what he calls "Presbyterian Ultramontaniam,"—views which I suspect he still holds, notwithstanding his professed conversion, and I may add, views which I expect too many hold, and wish to hold under the shelter of the essentially defective Basis of Union now before the Church.

Your correspondent sets out with saying that Mr. Middlemiss "acknowledges that the civil authorities may in some cases intervene in Church disputes and ecclesiastical difficulties." He means, of course, not that I admit the possibility of their interfering, but that I acknowledge that they have the right to interfere. In reference to this statement, I say,—First: That with my whole heart, I disavow and detest what he says I acknowledge; and Second: That my letter of Oct. 13 not only gives him no warrant to ascribe such an acknowledgment to me, but makes him inexcusable in doing so. That the civil authorities may interfere in any case with the proceedings of the Church in relation to her office-bearers and members, is the one thing that I do not admit; and I feel sure that no person of ordinary discernment and candour can fail to see from my letter as a whole, and from definite statements occurring throughout the course of it, that it is the one thing that I will not allow, but on the contrary, persistently contend against. Notwithstanding expressions dropped in the haste of a pretty long composition, or occasioned by the very extravagance of your correspondent's supposition, how could he but say that, even in reference to his "extreme case," I indicate repeatedly and distinctly my conviction that the remedy suggested by him, viz. an appeal to the civil courts, would be at once wrong and dangerous. He will say that I make an admission which he considers equivalent to the acknowledgment which he ascribes to me. If this be so, he ought to have said so. I may assume that, as a person interested in the discussion now proceeding in your paper, he has read my letter of Sept. 13, in which I say, "We may greatly wrong brethren by charging them with holding an erroneous principle, because they hold what, in our judgment, involves it." Now, it is just such wrong that your correspondent inflicts on me. Instead of saying that I acknowledge what, in point of fact, I contend against, he should, in fairness, have said that, while contending against the interference of the civil authorities in any case, I had made an admission that he regarded as inconsistent with that contention, and equivalent to an acknowledgment which he ascribes to me. Instead of this he assumes that the one is equivalent to the other; and in doing so displays a failure in discernment which may be sufficient to shield him from the imputation of disingenuousness. He does not discern between the matter of *privilege* and that of *jurisdiction*. My admission as respect to the former; the acknowledgment he ascribes to me has respect to the latter. Privilege is freely and justly accorded to persons acting in an official capacity, including civil rulers, and church officers. On the one hand it is freely allowed by the civil authorities to church rulers; and on the other hand it is freely accorded by church rulers to her members who are magistrates or judges, or who fill any other official position. In other words, it is admitted on all hands that persons acting in any official capacity are entitled to have it pronounced that their proceedings in that

capacity, even though they should, in point of fact, operate most injuriously to a man's reputation or other interests, and conducted in good faith, to the best of their judgment, with a view to the promotion of the interests committed to them. But important as this privilege is, and large as it ought to be, and really is, it may be abused, and is not without limits. Cases may arise, both in civil courts and in church courts, in which it may be a question whether a man has abused his privilege or acted in such a way that his privilege cannot be a shelter to him; and each court must settle the question for itself. But the refusal of a court to allow a man the shelter of privilege which is freely and largely accorded to him is a wholly different thing from a refusal to allow the distinct and independent jurisdiction of the court of which the man is a member, or from invading or usurping its jurisdiction. That no man, whatever be his official position, is to be allowed by the civil authorities to shelter wrong doing which it belongs to them to take cognizance of, under privilege freely accorded him, but which in their judgment he has abused, does not imply a liberty or right, on their part, to interfere with the church's administration, or to meddle in any way, or in any case, or under any plea, with her exclusive and independent jurisdiction. Reverse the position of the parties. A civil ruler is a member of a church, and is guilty of receiving bribes and preventing justice. His privilege does not in such a case shield him from the censures of the Church; but, however heavy and just may be the censure inflicted, no one will say that the Church's action implies her right to interfere in matters of civil administration or to invade the exclusive and independent jurisdiction of the civil authorities. There is, and need be, no dispute about the matter of privilege, and certainly it was not the matter in discussion in the non-intrusion controversy. What was contended for, what was thought to have been accorded to the Scottish Church, but what the civil authorities of last generation refused to accord, was not the privileged position of Church rulers, but the distinct and independent jurisdiction of the Church,—a refusal which compelled those who could not acquiesce in it, to take up a position in which certain alleged grounds of that refusal could not be pleaded. We have since seen that other grounds can be pleaded; and such productions as those of your correspondent only increase our jealousy in relation to the great principle of Church Independence, and our fears that, unconnected with the State though we are, a conflict is not far off. If our own ministers and people, in spite of their professions of what your correspondent calls "Presbyterian Ultramontaniam," assumed evidently for the purpose of raising a prejudice against us in reference to our consistency, contend for the supremacy of the civil authorities, what may not the civil authorities themselves be expected to do?

Putting aside, then, the matter of privilege—leaving both civil and ecclesiastical rulers to determine for themselves whether or not an official person subject to them, as a citizen in the one case, or a member of the Church in the other, has acted so as to place himself beyond the shelter of his privilege—we hold the Presbyterian doctrine that the Church and the civil government have each its own proper sphere, and each its own distinct and independent jurisdiction, that, springing though they both do from the same source, the appointment of God, the one does not come through the channel of the other, and that neither is subordinate to the other, so that there can be no appeal from the one to the other. If any such appeal is made, it should be instantly dismissed, without examination, so soon as the terms of it are understood. This Presbyterian doctrine is equally a protest against Romish assumption on the one hand, and against Erastian supremacy on the other. "Presbyterian Ultramontaniam" is a contradiction in terms, and equally so is "Erastianism." To excite a prejudice against us by speaking of us as "highflyers," and by charging us with Romish assumption, is nothing new. When men talk in this way, they only do as their fathers did thirty years ago. How differently they would speak if they knew the weight even of the Pope's little finger! To those who say this doctrine of co-ordinate jurisdiction may sound well as a theory, but it won't work in practice, we confidently say that no other doctrine can work anything but evil, and the history of the past evinces the wisdom of God in appointing that the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be entirely separate and mutually independent. Though it is to the clear apprehension and maintenance of this great principle by our fathers, that British liberty owes more than perhaps to anything else, yet, it would seem, it is so much a spiritual principle that men are unwilling to receive it, as they are in relation to the peculiar and simple gospel, which is equally remote both from legalism and antinomianism.

Allow me, before closing, to refer to a charge of inconsistency brought against us. I would not do so in this letter were it not that "Presbyterian" makes common cause with another correspondent (L. M. N.), who founds his charge on the fact that we resolved recently that, if the majority shall ask the Legislature to pass an Act which, we believe, would alienate property from the purpose to which it was originally destined, we shall ask them not to do so. My reference to this charge will be such as may throw some further light upon the subject of my letter. I shall suppose, what I have not the slightest fear of, another extreme case. I shall suppose that, at the General Assembly next June, the majority, considering that we are no longer to be borne with in our opposition to Union, as they would say, or in our dissatisfaction with the terms of it, as we would say, and believing that the good of the Church requires

it, should summarily depose and excommunicate us all, present and absent alike without distinction, then whatever we might do, there is one thing we would not do. We would not appeal our case to the civil courts. Such appeal on any plea would be utterly inconsistent with our principle, according to which, if any of us should make it, it should be instantly dismissed, without investigation and without the introduction of any *quoad* whatever, which is only a pretext for the invasion by the civil authorities of a province that does not belong to them. Of course we would not be without our remedy. Believing that the sentence passed upon us was perfectly null and void in heaven, we would treat it as null and void. We would, without a thought of civil courts, submit to the sentence as severing our connection with an apostatising, if not apostate, body; but we would, at the same time, without paying the slightest respect to it, hold our selves to be divinely appointed ministers of Jesus Christ, as much as before, but more honored than before as being persecuted for the truth's sake, and we would act accordingly. But suppose my congregation, having the same views as I have, possessing property which they contributed to the acquisition of for one purpose, are unwilling that it should be alienated to what they believe to be a different purpose, and decline, though they adhere to me, to be dispossessed of their property until the civil authorities, with whom rests the final and irrevocable disposal of all property, shall pronounce they have lost their right to it. Can any man in his right senses say they are inconsistent, or say that I am inconsistent because I do not insist upon their giving up their property till the civil authorities say it is no longer theirs? I do not dispute the superior simplicity of the American ruling on this subject. Your correspondent says, "The civil courts in the United States have ruled that they will without investigation give legal force in the disposal of Church property to the decision of the majority of the body by which it was held." It would be more satisfactory if all civil courts, whether British or American, were to rule that they would without investigation dismiss all references made to them respecting matters with which they have absolutely nothing to do, without divesting themselves of their right or renouncing their obligation to do their best in determining in matters whose final determination belongs to them.

I trust you will excuse the length of this letter, which, when I began it, I had no thought would be so long. I have no wish, but to be helpful in the settlement one way or other of the great question now before the Church. But let me say that, if it is to be settled in the way of satisfactory Union, it will not be by the communications of those who deny the Church's independent jurisdiction in one letter, and, in the next, plead for the civil magistrate divesting himself of his jurisdiction, and who make Erastianism to consist in the refusal of a minority to submit themselves in judgment, conscience, and estate to the majority. If such want to damage the cause of Union, let them persevere; if not, let them leave the matter to those who, like some of your correspondents on the other side, are capable of understanding the position of their opponents, and are incapable of misrepresenting either their utterances or their actions.

I am, yours truly,
JAMES MIDDLEMISS.

Elora, Nov. 11, 1873.

Vacancies and their Causes.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Some of the old philosophers maintained that conscience escaped the effects of the Fall, and might be relied on for perfect integrity. I wish the same could be truthfully said of the printing press. But no. It is evident the printing press is fallible. And when I think of the attention, constant care, patience, and painstaking labor needed to correct its erring tendency, I sympathize with those who have charge of it, and feel thankful for the accuracy with which my letters are transformed from the work of the pen to that of the type. However, in my last, by some furtive act, the word "you" was substituted for the word "few," making the reading somewhat offensive to my friend the "Country Elder." The sentence should have read thus: "Few, my friend, can with safety intimate," &c.

But now, resuming the main subject, "Vacancies and their Causes," I would attempt in this letter to call special attention to the monetary considerations which act as a cause in throwing so many vacancies on the hands of Presbyteries. Let it be distinctly understood that I only speak of monetary considerations as one of the causes—not all the causes—of vacancies. Having been frequently called out to cooperate with ministers and elders in congregational difficulties, and by this means having had some opportunity for years to judge of the causes which militate against success in the ministry and a continuous and prosperous pastorate, I feel persuaded that due weight is not given to the exhortation, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." It would be well if the Assembly, instead of sending down instructions to presbyteries to deal with congregations in financial matters, would so adjust the relation of pastor and

people that this work of collision would be, if possible, prevented. And it will never be prevented, never can be prevented, until the relation is so adjusted as to give a reasonable prospect of adequate support. In vain are pastoral relations formed, and five or six hundred dollars offered as salary, and a promise of additional support as the Lord may prosper the congregations, unless such be adequate to a sufficient support, and such promises faithfully and timely implemented. Life has natural exigencies, which adhere to it everywhere. Ministers must have food and raiment like other men. And it is the law of nature and revelation that the necessities of life are to be attended to, and that he who "provideth not for his own and specially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." There are often in Scripture plain and pertinent illustrations, taken from town and country, of the relations of life and the duties of men. One of these is the Levitical law in regard to the laboring ox, and its application by the Apostle to himself and the ministers of the Gospel and their congregations. It seems almost ludicrous and profane to place the servants of God on a par with the ox that treadeth out the corn, but I am not asking any more for them in the way of support. I am not asking riches for them—no, by no means. But I am asking for them, in one of the richest countries on the face of the earth, adequate support for their work. The illustration quoted above is one that the "Country Elder" and I can easily understand. The ox has been one of the most useful of creatures to man in Canada. It is to the interest of the master as well as the animal that he should be well attended to. So in reference to ministers. We cannot do without them, and it is not for them alone we are pleading when we say that they should be liberally supported. No. We are pleading at the same time and with equal urgency for the success of Christ's cause, the salvation of souls, the spiritual edification of saints, and the good of congregations. But the ox that treadeth out the corn is a laboring ox, and man's life as a minister is a laborious one. Delusion and ignorance have attached idleness and ease to it. But it is not of that kind. Such was not the life of Christ and his Apostles, and such is not the life of the men we call to take charge of ourselves, our children, and our congregations. We invite men whom we expect to abound in labor by night and by day, heat and cold, on week-day and Sabbath, in health and sickness—they are laboring men. But the ox which treadeth out the corn is precluded by working for his master from getting support for himself. He is not at liberty to graze like other animals. This is also the position of ministers. They are precluded by their work from providing for themselves like men of other professions. Besides, we call them to give themselves wholly—their life, time, energies, talents—to one work, the work of Christ in the gospel. Further, the ox that treadeth out the corn is not to be muzzled. It may be vexing to his master, and he may think it a loss that the creature cannot live and work without eating. But it cannot be helped, the ox has his rights as well as his master. And he is not to get his food like the dog which feeds on the crumbs that fall from the table, or as the beggar gets his alms; but, like the Shepherd who is to live on the milk of his flock, the ox is entitled to live on the fruit of his labor. "Doth God care for oxen?" Is not this written for a higher purpose? Its application to ministers is easy and scriptural. Let due provision be made for them. Let their means of support honestly increase as promised in their calls, as their congregations prosper, and as their work requires it; and let not this be done as a donation, or the work of charity. How many congregations and office-bearers think that they have fulfilled all their obligations to their pastors when they have paid him a nominal salary promised years ago; and that no matter how the congregation has progressed, the times changed, or his labours increased, he is not entitled to more—that the increase of the revenue should be theirs, and the additional labor his? Here is where the trouble often comes in, and the muzzle is applied. A cursory glance at the statistics of the church will soon reveal the fact that there is such a thing as a muzzle in the church. It is needed that conscientious justice should be done as promised in a gospel call to all ministers. But further still, let it be observed that if the ox that treadeth out the corn is muzzled he is entitled to his liberty. I am no physician nor lawyer, neither have I seen the "ox sermon," but it seems to me, this is clearly implied. Nor are ministers under obligations to tell their congregations that this is the cause, when it is the disturbing cause of pastoral relation. The muzz-

led animal could not be expected to plead his case with his master. But should he find an opportunity to leave it would be his right and wisdom, if he would not lose heart, health and strength, to do so, and leave the threshing floor vacant. The first Presbyterian pastor of Hamilton was a wise man, and greatly beloved, venerated even as a father by his people. But, as we have been told, rumor had it that he was about receiving a call to a country station and would likely accept it. Some were angry, some were indifferent, some blamed their hardness of heart which might bring upon them such a judgment as the removing of such a candlestick out of its place. Others more wisely sounded their minister upon the matter. The secret was soon known. The pastor could not support himself and work such a growing congregation on such a limited salary, and a little "monetary consideration" prevented the dreaded vacancy. But I am afraid all this is not practical enough to produce an impression on our "Country Elder," for he tells us in his letter of the 10th ult., "That in dealing with the causes of vacancies, such considerations, (monetary considerations) never once came to be considered by me." Indeed! Is it really possible that the "Country Elder" could consider the "causes of vacancies" so exhaustively, distribute blame so freely, and tender his admonitions so wisely and fatherly to the Presbytery of Chatham, and never once think that such monetary considerations could have anything to do with the evil of which he complained? It is the fact that he did it, and that others might be of his mind, that induced me at all to write on this subject.

But the question might be still raised, What would secure an adequate support? In answer to this question, I beg to remind the "Country Elder," that there are twenty-five of our ministers who have not five hundred dollars a year, that a large number more rate about six hundred dollars and to ask him what bill of fare he would furnish to a minister, and say, a family of five, on such an income?

Dr. T. Hall "thinks there is a kind of irony, almost mockery, in some of our calls by which a minister, of the description stated above, is asked to come and settle in a congregation, give his whole strength and time to it, and is promised, that he may be free from care, the sum of six hundred dollars a year in four quarterly payments." I trust the "Country Elder" will expose the heresy of this divine; and offer a good and reliable bill of fare for that sum. He shall have also for his commission all that he can spare out of it. Meanwhile,

I remain, yours truly,
ANOTHER ELDER.

Presbytery of Simcoe

The ordinary meeting of this Presbytery was held at Barrie, on Tuesday, Nov. 6, at 11 a.m. A call in favour of Rev. James McConnell, of the Presbytery of Louisiana, U. S., from the congregation of Tecumseth and Adjala, was sustained, and ordered to be transmitted to Mr. McConnell's Presbytery. The people are entirely unanimous in the call and promise \$625 stipend and a manse. Mr. W. Fraser was authorized to ordain elders to be elected by the newly organized congregation of Adjala. On application of the congregations of Duntroon and Nottawa, Mr. Luke G. Henderson was recognized as Missionary laborer in said congregation till April 1st, 1874. Though there were many other items of business before the court they were not of sufficient general importance to call for publication. In the absence of a more extended report the account given in another column of a visit to the missionary field of Wauhaushene, Port Severn, and Sturgeon Bay, by Mr. Gray, of Orillia, will be found of interest. Mr. Gray's report gave rise to the following resolution thankfully acknowledging the co-operation of the Students' Missionary Society of Knox College:—"The this Presbytery desire to express their high appreciation of the unwearied and successful labours of the Missionaries of the Students' Missionary Society within our bounds, and we do hereby tender to the Society our sincere thanks for all their endeavours to extend the boundaries of the Lord's vineyard in our new territories. Further, we do respectfully and earnestly request them to continue their labours as during the past year.—COM.

Mr. E. H. Pantou, who has been since the beginning of April laboring as Missionary at Vroomant and Sunderand, has been unanimously called to Lindsay. The call will be before a special meeting of Presbytery on the 25th Nov., when, if it will be sustained, Mr. P. is likely to accept.

The Rev. Mr. Mackintosh, of Markham, having been invited to the house of Mr. Gormley, on the evening of the 5th inst., was met by a few of the members of Melville congregation. After a pleasant and agreeable evening had been spent, the gentleman was presented by his congregation with a valuable horse, accompanied by an address, to which he replied in a feeling manner.