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Contributors and Correspondents

Union with the Church of Scotland.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

My DEAR SIR,—I shall not wait longer for Mr. McKay's further remarks upon my letter of September 12. With your leave, I now offer to your readers some defence of myself against his attack upon me in your paper of October 3, leaving him to wind up his observations leisurely or otherwise, as he may think best or find most convenient. My reasons for taking no particular notice of his second letter (Oct. 31) will, I trust, be readily understood and appreciated.

Mr. McKay has entirely overlooked the fact that, in my letter, I deal not with the brethren of the Church of Scotland, but with brethren of my own Church, of whom I am entitled to assume, from the very position they occupy, that their views of Disruption controversies are in the main identical with my own,—the fact that I am not discussing the question who was right or who was wrong at the Disruption, but the question on what terms may we, assuming that we were right, and knowing at the same time that the brethren of the other Church believe that they were right, enter into union with them, without either party modifying their views in reference to the merits of the Disruption Controversy, and yet without any sacrifice of principle.

In reference to the earlier portion of my letter, I cannot see that I expressed myself in such a way as to warrant the use of the language applied to me by "Presbyter" (Sept. 26), and by Mr. McKay. I cannot but think that they are both of them open to censure for the impropriety of their language, and that Mr. McKay is unfair in the representation he gives of my views, and in the inference he draws from them. Feeling as I do on the subject of Union, surely I was warranted, if not bound, to utter my mind to my brethren, avoiding offensive language. As I have no desire to urge the considerations referred to in opposition to Union, I shall say no more here in relation to them, but shall pass on to the chief matter of controversy.

I expected that my views on this matter would not be allowed to pass without adverse criticism, but I could not have thought that my objections to the terms of Union would have been met with nothing more worthy of consideration than has been advanced by "Presbyter" and Mr. McKay. The letter of the former calls for no particular notice. Mr. McKay, however, regards his own letter as unanswerable both in "spirit" and "argument." As to the "spirit" of it, I think it best to say nothing, and as to "argument," I believe it can be shown to amount to nothing. He does not throw a particle of light upon the subject. He makes no attempt to relieve the perplexity of brethren or to meet their difficulties. Statements, the insufficiency of which I endeavored to point out, are simply reiterated without any apparent thought of its being proper to take notice of the arguments of the person whose views he professes to controvert.

That I have good reason to speak in this way respecting Mr. McKay's letter will, I hope, be evident enough in the sequel. Meantime let me state briefly the position that I occupy in this discussion, and from which I cannot see how I can withdraw.

We have been accustomed to believe, and we do believe, that the position assumed by the brethren of the other Church in 1843, and occupied by them ever since, was inconsistent with the principle of the Church's distinct and independent jurisdiction, involved in the Presbyterian doctrine concerning the Visible Church and Christ's Headship over it—a principle not only contended for in the controversy that issued in the Disruption of 1843, but maintained by the Scottish Church in all its branches, up to that date. We differ among ourselves on the subject of Establishments, and some of us may be of opinion that the independence of the Church must be affected by alliance with the State. But whatever difference of opinion may exist among us on that point, the fact cannot be disputed that both the Established Church of Scotland, and those who sought relief from the oppression of a dominant Moderatism, maintained the great principle. And I may add in reference to the establishment, that it was thought, up to the time of the Non-Intrusion Controversy, that it became apparent that they claimed, notwithstanding the strongest remonstrances of many eminent legal authorities, to have a supremacy in matters in which hitherto the Church judicatories had been supposed to possess a recognized power, supreme and irrevocable. We have always held that in 1843 the established Church of Scotland, by consenting to the encroachments of the chief authorities upon the jurisdiction of the Church, acted inconsistently with the Church's independence. On the other hand, the brethren with whom we are negotiating about Union maintain, or are understood or represented as maintaining, that we put an unwarrantable construction upon their action in 1843—that it did not involve on their part the sacrifice of the Church's independence, or anything inconsistent with it, and that they held the principle as firmly as we do. Well, then, what we desire is this. Holding, as they say they do, as firmly as we do, the great principle, while we differ from them in this, that we hold that certain action of theirs was inconsistent with it, while they hold it was not, we are prepared, (that is, on the supposition that all existing relations are cancelled, so that there may be no offence to the feelings and convictions of either party), we are prepared, I say, to consign to oblivion the matter of inconsistency, alleged on the one side and repudiated on the other, provided such a place be given by the United Church to the principle itself that no one

can doubt that it is a fundamental principle of the Church.

Mr. McKay in his letter objects to this, in language which I venture to call unwarrantable, if not highly reprehensible, and for reasons which, the more I think of them, the more I am convinced, are without any weight. He speaks of me as making a "demand," using the word several times. I make no demand. I stated indeed what I considered *indispensable* to Union. To describe such a statement as a demand is a misuse of language. Surely something is indispensable to Union, even in the judgment of those of my brethren whose views are farthest removed from mine,—we shall say the cessation of connection with the Church of Scotland. If they say such separation is indispensable to Union, is it proper to speak of them as demanding it? As little is it right for Mr. McKay to speak of me as demanding anything, insinuating, as such an expression does, an imperative and peremptory mode of asking what we think reasonable, that cannot justly be charged against me. There are other instances of Mr. McKay's misuse of language that will call for notice before I am done.

Before giving his reasons for refusing to accede to our proposal, Mr. McKay puts it in a form which I can only regard as equivalent to evading the point at issue. Referring to our desire to have a full, express, and authoritative exhibition of the principle as fundamental in the United Church, that Christ has appointed in His Church a government distinct from and not subordinate to that of the civil magistrate, and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction, &c., he represents this as being, "in fewer words," a desire on our part for "a declaration from the adherents of the Church of Scotland, that they believe in the Headship of Christ over His Church." He then proceeds to give reasons why he cannot consent to the making of such a declaration. Now in point of fact, we do not want such a declaration. What we desire is of a much more definite and specific character. I do not charge an evasive design on Mr. McKay; but he has no right to put our proposal in this general form without taking any notice of the fact that, instead of asking for such a declaration I made no question of their believing in the "Headship of Christ over His Church," but placed the necessity of its being made apparent that a certain principle, which we regard as involved in the doctrine of the Headship, is considered fundamental in the United Church. I said, "It is not conceivable that any man calling himself a Christian should deny the Headship of Christ over the Church," and referred to the admission of it by a dignitary of the English Church, who has, since my first letter was written, told his northern friends that the Scotch doctrine respecting the visible Church, and Christ's Headship over it, belongs to the same category of error as the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. He, too, would say with Mr. McKay, that he holds "this important truth as fully and broadly" as we do. Does he mean that he holds it as including the principle of the Church's independent administration of the law of her Head; or does he mean, in accordance with the current usage of the word *broad*, that he regards it as being fully and consistently held by those who will not admit that great principle?

Mr. McKay gives three reasons why the brethren of the Church of Scotland cannot, in his judgment, accede to our proposal. The first is, that "Christ's Headship over His Church is expressed as clearly and as satisfactorily in our Confession of Faith" as we are capable of setting it forth in words. In reference to this, let me remind your readers that it is simply the reiteration of an objection to our proposal which I took up in my first letter, in which, besides referring to the duty of the Church to be careful, especially at the present time, to know what sense those who sign her Confession attach to its statements, I presented the true state of the case by supposing a controversy, ending in disruption, to have arisen on the subject of inspiration. There is no call to say anything more on this point, except that Mr. McKay's letter cannot reasonably be regarded as a reply to mine, when, instead of replying to what I plead in defence of my position, he simply reiterated what I plead against. As to his representation of our request as a proposal to tamper with the standards of the Church, I can only say it is another instance of his misuse of words. We do not wish to touch the standards; we simply wish the assurance, after a great controversy, that we are as one in relation to a great fundamental principle.

Mr. McKay says, *secondly*, that "to accede to our request would be a practical acknowledgment that they had in some way denied this great truth." I cannot see this; and we certainly do not present our proposal with any such view. I have said that I was quite sure "that if we had given them any ground, in their judgment, to suspect our soundness upon any point, we would have been not only willing but desirous to give them any satisfaction they could possibly require." We ask no more from them. But let me call the attention of your readers to a distinction referred to in your letter: "We may greatly wrong these words: 'We may greatly wrong these words' by holding up brethren by charging them with holding an erroneous principle, because they hold what, in our judgment, involves it; or with not holding an important principle, because of their doing what, in our judgment, is inconsistent with it." Surely this distinction is consistent with it. It is a sound one, and of great importance in controversy, much as it may be overlooked or disregarded. And I repeat that I can conceive of brethren holding the great principle which is the chief matter of our anxiety and perplexity, while they may have been chargeable with what was, in my judgment, inconsistent with it; and that we wish no acknowledgment of inconsistency or confession of

wrong-doing, but simply such a recognition and exhibition of the principle as may remove doubts and fears which we think we have good reason to entertain. Even if Mr. McKay had thought that the distinction was not a sound one, or that it did not apply in the present case, and that I am inconsistent in saying that I wish no confession of wrong-doing, while I ask that the principle in question shall be distinctly and expressly recognized as fundamental, it would have been well if he had refrained from the use of such words as "pitiable" and "fearfully dishonest." And what shall I say of the way in which, in his second letter, he misrepresents me in relation to the perplexity we are in? I had said that, while I judged of the sentiments of the brethren of the Church of Scotland chiefly by the position they occupied a lawful thing surely, some of my brethren said one thing about them, while others said the reverse, and that this was a case of perplexity. This perplexity, occasioned by conflicting testimony, he represents as a manifest openness on my part to receive any evil report and unwillingness to believe anything favourable. Shall I say this is "pitiable" and "fearfully dishonest?" Certainly not.

Mr. McKay says, *thirdly*, that to accede to our request would, he conceives, help to confirm me in my belief that I am right in charging them with denying Christ's Headship. Now I am fully persuaded that the effect upon our minds would be quite different from what Mr. K. conceives. Speaking definitely, the charge is not that they denied Christ's Headship, but that they acted inconsistently with a principle involved in it, viz. The Church's independent jurisdiction. In reference to this, my conviction is such that I believe it is not likely to be affected in any way. But it is not to this that our difference has reference. We are not discussing who was right and who was wrong at the disruption. If our views of the old controversy are not likely to be altered, we do not ask them to modify theirs. But, I repeat, to charge with doing what we regard as inconsistent with a principle is one thing, and to charge with not holding that principle is another thing.

In relation to the former, my conviction is not likely to be affected in any way. But in relation to the latter, i.e., in relation to the question whether the brethren of the Church of Scotland hold as fundamental the great principle under consideration, my views must depend greatly on the issue of present negotiations. If our request be acceded to, our suspicions will be removed; if not, they can only be strengthened into conviction. As Mr. McKay insists that I have as good right as he to express myself, to make confession of schism, as he has, to plead guilty to the sin of denying the Headship of Christ, let me say, that if I had been aware that the argument on that point had been put otherwise than hypothetically, I would not have used expressions regarding it that I have done. But it is certainly most fallacious, and I am surprised that any one can plead it. The simple fact that the sinfulness of schism never has been and never can be questioned, makes the alleged call for its exhibition wanting in the first element of parallelism, with the necessity for the exhibition of a great spiritual principle that has been in controversy for ages is still in controversy, and will be in controversy so long as the Church is a distinct institution in the world. As to Mr. McKay's way of putting the argument, enough has already been said to show that neither directly nor by implication do we wish him or any one else to plead guilty to the sin of denying the Headship of Christ. No good cause can be benefited by such an argument, and only a bad cause can be in need of it.

I trust I am done with Mr. McKay, who, like "Presbyter," does really nothing more than make a noise, if it be not to throw dust in people's eyes, though not, I am persuaded, enough to mar the vision of any considerate reader. And while neither of them contributes anything that is fitted to lighten any difficulty that presses on our minds, all that I see and hear is fitted to deepen our perplexity and confirm our suspicions. As I am almost vilified for entertaining these suspicions, allow me to justify myself, which I believe I can do, in the judgment of every candid person. Both are highly esteemed and favorable to Union say (I give, as nearly as I can, words I have heard used) that they are aware that some are of the opinion that while the Church's legislative power is not to be interfered with, she should be held, in her administrative capacity, to her own laws, by the civil authorities—the view presented by "Presbyter" in his first letter (Oct. 3)—and they say further, that this opinion may be a matter of forbearance on our part. If this information does not surprise me, it excites astonishment and apprehension that I should have to argue the point with any of my own brethren, that this opinion involves the total surrender of the Church's independence. To say nothing of the intrinsic absurdity of the opinion, are brethren losing sight of the elementary truth that the Church's ruling function is, strictly speaking, purely administrative; that Christ is the only legislator of His Church; that that He has not delegated to Church officers a power to make laws for His Kingdom, or to modify them in any way, but has committed to them the administration of the laws He Himself has imposed; that it belongs not to Church officers to legislate (in any proper sense of the term), but only to declare and apply the law of the land? Who will say that the information of these brethren is incorrect, and that I am bound not to believe them? Am I not, rather, bound to call upon the Church to awake from her apathy in relation to one of the most important and distinctive of all her principles, and to take heed lest she be juggled out of it, and awake some day to find that she has got, instead of it, the high-

sound fiction of a legislative supremacy, which can be no other than a nullity without invasion, on her part, of the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am,
Yours truly,
JAMES MIDDLEMAS.
Elora, Dec. 1, 1873.

Basis of Presbyterianism in Victoria.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—By the kindness of Professor Campbell, your readers, and Mr. St. C. especially, have been favoured with the "Basis of Union as a Formula of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria." Professor Campbell has told you what he saw and heard in the two assemblies of Scotland in 1861, in the way of endorsement of that union. It is interesting to know from the pen of such an eye and ear witness, that "one or two dissentients from the Union who appealed to the Free Assembly to obtain recognition as still representing the Free Church of Scotland in the colony received no countenance from the Assembly." Let those who take exception to our basis on the ground of the absence of a distinct article on the headship "read, mark and inwardly digest" the above statement.

I have now before me the abridged report of the proceedings of the F. C. Assembly of 1860, as contained in the Home and Foreign Record of the Church for the month of June in that year. From that report it would appear that at that assembly also at least one dissentient from the Union in Victoria had appeared, claiming to be recognized as the representative of the Free Church of Scotland in the colony. The kind of reception met with is shown from the quotation following:

"Next followed a long discussion on the memorial of Mr. Miller, Melbourne. The space at our disposal renders the mention of that discussion impossible, and indeed all that is here essential is the deliverance of the Assembly, which was as follows:—

That the Assembly having heard the Rev. Wm. Miller, of John Knox Church, Melbourne, Victoria, welcome him as a Free Church Minister who has laboured devotedly for several years in a distant land, and with regard to the position in Australia of himself and certain other brethren referred to by him, the Assembly, having respect to the deliverance of 1858, decline to recognize Mr. Miller and these brethren as the "Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria," in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland, but renew the expression of their earnest hope that the parties who have been at variance may yet see their way to reconciliation and re-union, and respectfully suggest to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to adapt any measures competent towards the removal of any obstacles to such re-union, existing in previous deliverances of the Free Synod of Victoria."

I am sure your readers would like to know the deliverance of 1858, and this little bit of ecclesiastical history would be very imperfect without it. It is a long but a happy deliverance. I will give you the final part of it, which in this case is the best part of it, as it will apply equally to our Church and our times:—

"The General Assembly recognize the great desirableness of union among all Presbyterians, 'holding the head, which is Christ,' in those large and important colonies, as of the utmost consequence of Presbyterism and the cause of true religion, and they entertain a lively hope that on such a basis as that which has been adopted in the negotiations of the Free Synod of Victoria with the other Synod there, and of which all the parties concerned appear to have approved, a strong united Church may speedily be raised up, embracing all sound-hearted Presbyterians in the Australian Colonies, and prepared to go forth in the name of her only King and Lord, on the noble enterprise of doing His work, contending for His truth, giving battle to all forms of sin and error, and crime, and winning souls to Him through His own blessing on the faithful preaching of His own word."

The report says further that the deliverance proposed by Dr. Caudlish was unanimously adopted. (The italics in the quotations are not in the original but have been authorized by the writer.)

Now, sir, we see from the foregoing that the Free Church of Scotland has unanimously recognized a union on a basis in which no distinct article on the headship is found. I think it is very likely that what they have done before they will do again. If the contemplated Union in Canada is realized and recognized, of course dissentients from the Union will not be recognized. But the question may be asked how has Union on such a basis stood the test? On this point some information will be furnished in our next. In the mean time,
I am yours truly,
Wm BENNETT.
Springville, Dec. 8th, 1873.

[Our esteemed correspondent is slightly in error as to the writer of the communication accompanying the Basis of Union in Victoria. We are indebted to the Rev Robert Campbell, M. A., Minister of St. Gabriel Church, Montreal, for the document referred to. E. B. A. P.]

It is said that the Roman Catholics contemplate the establishment of a university in London similar to the one proposed in Dublin. This decision appears to have been made to alter the Oxford oration to Dr. Manning.

A laugh to be joyous must flow from a joyous heart, for with it kindness there can be no true joy.—*Carlyle*.

We should scarcely think it need to keep the best company by introducing it only to the best books.—*Ignatius Smith*.

Total Abstinence as a Term of Communion.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

In common with others, I expected much from the vigorous manner in which the discussion of this subject was entered on by your correspondents. Mr. Straith was confident that his friend, Prof. McLaren, had been misunderstood, and seemed to come out very strong. So far as I have seen, the Professor has given no sign, yet Mr. Straith only designs to give a short note of explanation, and apparently backs down from the high stand he seemed to take. Mr. Scott has put the matter very fairly in his last, to which no answer seems forthcoming. Have Prof. McLaren's defenders no answer? Does the Professor himself think it beneath his dignity to set the matter right, and satisfy the minds of those who have been seeking light? Or does he find it easier to deal with such skeptics as cannot reply or call in question his arguments? Surely no question of the present day demands more earnest consideration than this, the duty of the Church with respect to the use of intoxicating drinks! Many of our ministers may labour for years and scarcely meet with a single live skeptic, but who can move out of his dwelling without meeting with some poor devotee of the rum-bottle? Where is the Session that has not in some form or other to make a record from the influence of the intoxicating cup? Surely, then this subject demands a place, and a very important place, in our Theological books and lectures.

It has been said that the Church is not warranted in making total abstinence a term of communion, and that should she do so, she would drive from her pale many of her pious and devoted members. As to the latter of these propositions, I must say that I do not think so ill of our Church members. Were the matter brought before them in this form, Choose between your cups and your Church, I am confident that few, if any, would go out from the Church of their early fathers, and of their early choice. But the great question is the Bible aspect of the matter. Does the Bible warrant the Church in making total abstinence a term of communion? This is assumed to be a difficult question, and perhaps it is. To my mind it seems like the Bible aspect of human slavery, to be a subject of which God will give light to His Church, by opening her eyes to the enormity of the evil of intemperance, and of the liquor traffic, and thus reach her intellect through her heart. It seems that the practical good sense of the Church has already reached the solution of the question, and given a decision from which she cannot go back. At the last meeting of the General Assembly, a motion was carried, without amendment or dissent offered, appointing a committee to draft a petition, to be signed by the Moderator, praying the Dominion Parliament to pass a Prohibitory Liquor Law. This covers the whole ground. If it be right for the Church to petition the State to pass a prohibition law, it is right for her to use her own power and prohibit the use of intoxicating liquors within her own pale. What she asks the State to do for her is right for her to do for herself. Perhaps some members of the Assembly can give another solution of the Church's action, than that which I have given; if so let them speak out, and set this matter right. I believe in the duty of the State to prohibit the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating drinks, except as a medicine, and with such conviction, confirmed by the late action of the General Assembly, I can find no medium course, but that the Church ought to make total abstinence a term of communion.

The Church cannot ask the State to be more virtuous than herself, and hence Bible argument or no, she is shut up to prohibition as far as her own members are concerned. It would look hard to have the members of the Dominion Parliament haul back our petition in our face, and tell us that we cannot be sincere in this matter, or we would use our own authority in putting down the use and the abuse among ourselves.

Yours, &c.,
PROHIBITION.

Father Grassi, who for thirty-six years performed successively in Rome the duties of priest, confessor, curate, nitred abbot, Lent preacher and lastly incumbent of the great Basilica, Santa Maria Maggiore, but who has now, as we have already stated, thrown off the errors of Romanism, has been summoned before the Inquisition to recant or endure the penalty. Against the advice of the Roman Government he went to the "Holy Office," attended by three friends, who were, however, not admitted to the room where for an hour he stood face to face with the Inquisitors, whom he thus addressed:—"Oh! you Inquisitors, Pontiffs, Cardinals, and Prelates, God speaks to you! To what have you brought the Church? She that was so pure, so beautiful so glorious, you have betrayed, violated, despoiled, wounded, and crucified by your doctrines, superstitions, and immorality, and sealed her tomb by your blasphemous dogmas of infallibility. . . . But the breath of God has for ever extinguished the fire of Inquisition and swept away your power, therefore I stand before you to-day and declare these truths, while you dare not touch a hair of my head." After this bold language, he was allowed to return to his friends, and has since preached more than once at the Protestant Vatican Mission. Father Grassi had a touching farewell with his associates, six of whom are now emigrating into the truths of Protestantism. Several other priests were also at present seeking instruction, and recently the superior of a convent sent to a Protestant minister for tracts and scriptures to distribute among the inmates. The work of evangelization is hopefully progressing in Rome.