

THE  
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27th, 1879.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR PROTEST.

"There is nothing so ruinous to man's welfare as his submission to clerical arbitrariness." - *Ottawa Herald*.

THE "Herald" is a Roman Catholic paper published in the Capital. It has been annoyed lately and it speaks up plainly. Its annoyance arises from the "unnecessary festivals and foolish displays" in the Romish Church, which squander the time of Catholics, and keep them in a chronic state of poverty. The priests at Ottawa had ordered a festival in honour of one St. Emilius or rather in honour of his bones, for he had been reduced to a skeleton by time—and good Catholics were commanded to turn out in force, to give the occasion *eclat*, whereupon the "Herald" says there is too much of this kind of thing, a superabundance of saints and saints' days, and appeals to the Catholic people to remedy the evil themselves, by refusing to attend whenever the priests see fit to command them. And then occurs the foregoing passage about "clerical arbitrariness," and its ruinous effects upon those subject to it.

The pressure must have been very great before this Catholic editor could thus have arraigned his Church. "The Church" can do no wrong. It is infallible. It ought to receive submission from the faithful. These are the famous historic positions of the Church whose foundations are set in the famous Italian city. Well, there is evidently one Catholic journalist who does not accept *in extenso* those positions. The Church may do wrong. It may command too much. It can claim submission only when it does right. The people are to judge whether the Church does right or wrong. And they are to act as their understanding instructs them. These are unusual positions for a child of "The Church" to occupy. But this editor is man enough to adopt them, and man enough to let it be known where he stands.

Unlimited power in the hands of ministers is just as likely to work out disastrously to the people as that power is in the hands of anybody else. Ministers are made up of clay after all. And the clay is pretty much like the clay of ordinary mortals. It is not sufficiently refined to entrust it with absolute control. History verifies this. Romish prelatism has borne hard on the people. Anglicanism in a time of *hauteur* did a wrong to Puritans and Methodists. And though there is less danger in Methodism and Presbyterianism—especially since the legal assemblies are jointly ministerial and popular—yet even Conferences and Synods have not always used their power kindly. All of which goes to prove that even in ministerial quarters, the possession of absolute power may graduate into arbitrariness.

The only effectual prevention of such an undesirable end is to be found in the simple New Testament ideas promulgated in Congregational churches. The New Testament is

against absolutism. It is against usurpation of power by any, whether clerical or lay, as the common terms run. It bids pastors be thoughtful and kind to their flocks, and the people to be considerate to those who labour for them. The apostles themselves, although possessed of considerable power, were always careful never to arbitrarily use that power. They were always considerate of the churches with whose affairs they were dealing. Caution, reserve, humility, characterize all apostolic conduct. And if religious men would only get back from their human expediences, and man-made plans, to the simple, genial, humble spirit of the New Testament, the world would never again hear the sad complaints it has heard about "arbitrariness," either on the part of laymen or clerics. The spirit of Christ is the grandest counteractive of all despotic tendencies both in the Church and in the State.

Correspondence.

PRAYER AND EFFORT.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

Mr. George Muller, the founder of the famous Bristol Orphanages, is now on a visit to Canada. A journal of your city the other day published a brief history of this Christian gentleman and his famous work. In the course of the article, reference was made to the fact that Mr. Muller never solicited assistance from men, but *just laid his case before the Lord*, and the prayer of faith always kept the exchequer full enough for the needs of the institution. And the impression sought to be conveyed by this statement is, that prayers of faith alone are capable of securing ample supplies for all Christian enterprises.

This declaration concerning Mr. Muller's work I candidly believe to be a great mistake. I have no wish to belittle this good man's or any man's prayers. I believe in prayer, and in something more than prayer. But facts, with which I am perfectly conversant, lead me to say that something more than the prayer of faith feeds and clothes the Bristol orphans. There is no benevolent institution in the world whose claims are so widely advertised, as that which Mr. Müller founded. The advertisement may not be a formal one in a newspaper. Neither may it be made by Mr. Müller personally, nor by those immediately associated with him in the government of the orphanages. But hundreds of persons advertise his work in public sermon and by private conversation. Moreover, I have repeatedly received a pamphlet calling attention to its maintenance. Public sympathy is aroused by these appeals, and hundreds of pounds are sent in response to them. God's spirit touches the fount of benevolence in men's hearts, and they send in their offerings. And these offerings are more praiseworthy because they are voluntary to so large an extent, instead of having been solicited by letter or by an agent.

It is, then, the veriest moonshine to say that prayer alone sustains this famous institution, without the assistance of effort in its behalf. It is prayer and effort which keeps its inmates fed. We grant that Mr. Müller may do nothing more than pray; but he has hundreds of unknown coadjutors, who plead with the public while he is pleading with God. And further, even Mr. Müller's presence with us in Canada is, and cannot help but be, a Canadian advertisement of his work across the seas. And every newspaper reference to him is just as good an advertisement, in the local column, as if it were in the regular column set apart to advertising. So it is as plain as noon-day, that prayer and effort combine to procure so beneficial a result as feeding thousands of orphans.

Prayer and effort must ever go together. They are complements of each other. Prayer alone does not bring business, or pay salaries, or fill missionary treasuries,

or clear off church debts, or convert men, or give seals to a ministry. Effort indissolubly wedded to prayer can do, and does do, all these things, and more. Two boatmen were in a skiff on a stormy night. They were alarmed. One said to the other, "you pray and I'll row!" The one lifted up his heart to the Divine Controller of the waves; the other rowed hard. And praying and rowing saved the men. Not praying alone, nor rowing alone did it. But both conjoined saved them. And so it is throughout all our spiritual history, men must work as well as pray. Then the blessing comes.

FAITH AND WORKS.

November 20th, 1879.

MR. EDITOR, We have been appealed to by the Treasurer and Secretary of the Acton church, or the church through them, asking us to help them out of the financial difficulties they are placed in relative to their church building. We cordially agree with them in the duty to help them, and all others, as far as we can; to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," and to remember that the body is *one*. But it is well enough to ask, what guarantee have we that our donations will not be lost, by not having sufficient after all to hold the property? Would it not be well to place the money in *trust*, until the whole amount is raised, and if there should not be sufficient to pay the debt, then apply it in some other way, if after all the building should be sacrificed? Again, what about the amount guaranteed by Dr. Ives, the "apostle of hard cash," at the time of the opening? And if the building should be sacrificed, what would our people in Acton lose by it, if they were to put up a plain and useful building, costing them say not a third of the amount needed now to pay this heavy debt?

These inquiries are made in all kindness, knowing the dear friends in Acton well.

November 19, 1879.

ONE OF THE PASTORS.

MR. EDITOR,—I wish to acknowledge through the columns of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT, the receipt of the following sums for the Sunday school at Winnipeg: Mr. Forbes, \$1; Miss D.'s S. S. class, Western Church, Toronto, \$1.50; Yorkville S. S., \$2.50; in all, \$5, to date. I shall be glad to receive further contributions.

W. H. WARRINER.

Yorkville, Nov. 21, 1879.

News of the Churches.

REV. J. R. BLACK has accepted the call to the pastorate of the Congregational churches at Douglas and Garafra.

REV. WM. MANCHEE has received and accepted a call to the pastorate of a Congregational church in Plainfield, New Jersey.

REV. DUNCAN MCGREGOR, M.A., late of Liverpool, N.S., has received a call to the pastorate of the First Congregational Church, Guelph, Ont.

MARGAREE, CAPE BRETON.—The Congregational church at Margaree, Cape Breton, under the pastoral care of Rev. W. Peacock, is in the midst of a powerful work of grace. We have not heard particulars. Within a few weeks fifty-four members have been received, and a number of others are candidates for membership.

WINNIPEG.—One of the valued workers of this church, Mr. Pim, on leaving to become editor and joint proprietor of the "Rapid City Enterprise," was presented by the Sabbath school with a testimonial and an address, wishing him success in his wider field of usefulness. He is anxious not to be out of the Congregational harness in working for the Master.

OTTAWA.—The second of a series of monthly socials was held on Thursday evening, the 20th inst. After singing and prayer, readings were given from the new M.S. paper, got up by the young people, entitled "Social Chat." The contributions, eight in number, were excellent. Two of them were original poems of very considerable merit. The success of the first number was very gratifying, and was a surprise to all present. The music was also excellent. The next entertainment will be of a Christmas character.