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Contributors and Correspondents.

REV. J. LAING ON THE "FOURTH ARTICLE" OF THE BASIS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—It is a proverb—"one must go from home to get news." It was as great news to the other members of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, probably, as it was to me, which Mr. Laing vouchsafed through your columns on the 17th inst., to the effect that the Church of Scotland is the owner of the property which we enjoy in this country, and that Imperial legislation must be sought before our present designation can be altered. Those conclusions only afford amusement to those who are most immediately concerned, and who, it may be assumed, are as likely to know the real state of the case as Mr. Laing; but, as many of your readers may not have the means of informing themselves on the question, and yet are deeply interested in everything that relates to union, I ask your indulgence while I offer a few remarks on this formidable thesis on the "Fourth Article in the Basis," to correct the misleading impression which it is fitted to produce. I do not doubt Mr. Laing's desire to throw true light upon the question; but it seems to me that the promises he lays down, even though they were granted, do not warrant the conclusions he arrived at. To take the last of them first: does Mr. Laing mean to say that the mere offering of resolutions in a Synod, when these resolutions were not carried, determines anything? Or that the use of the term "our rights" in a report presented to the General Assembly establishes that the Church of Scotland claimed the possession of "legal" or "constitutional" rights in Canada? If he takes pains to inquire, he will discover that the Church of Scotland, as then and now constituted, cannot be out of Scotland, and can have no corporate or legal rights but in that country. Any rights she has or ever had in the Canadian Church, called by her name, are moral only—of the same kind as those which the "Free Church" of Scotland has in any of the Colonial Churches which have sprung from her.

Mr. Laing thinks he finds in the absence of any mention of the "legal" or "constitutional" rights of the Church of Scotland in those resolutions offered in our Synod in 1844, when the spiritual supremacy of that Church was denied, proof that these legal rights were conceded. But I read the history of these resolutions quite differently. I take it that those who framed these resolutions were men who were thoroughly acquainted with the facts of the case. They were not called upon to say anything as to rights of property, because those rights were not matters of dispute. The matters about which there was a difference of opinion in the Synod were wholly of a spiritual kind, arising out of the relation subsisting between the Church in Canada and the parent Church. There were, indeed, references to troubles that might arise, provided the name of the Church was changed; but as I understand the question, the obstacles apprehended were to arise, not from any action taken by the Church of Scotland, but from the members of the Church in Canada who might resist such legislation as should be sought to legalize the change, and who might give great trouble by bringing questions of Church property before the civil courts.

Mr. Laing endeavors to make a great deal out of the fact that Dr. Urquhart's non-committal motion was carried, and thinks that the Church should rather have courted difficulty, and have tested the questions raised; but I believe he will be singular in his opinion of what was the wise course in the circumstances. No Church that can avoid it is ever anxious to plead for her rights before the civil courts. He also quotes a passage from a report of the Colonial Committee presented to the General Assembly before the Disruption, in which the phrase "our rights" occurs; and from this he infers that legal rights are implied. But the meaning of the passage is obvious enough. The Church of Scotland had rights in the Canadian Church. It was her money for the most part that had built our first churches—it was her licentiates that first filled our pulpits, sent to this country many of them at her expense, and, to a considerable extent, maintained by her; it was through her good offices in large measure that our claim to share in the benefits of the Clergy Reserves was conceded, and surely in these circumstances she was warranted in saying that she had rights in our Church. But these rights were not legal, did not extend to proprietorship, any more than I have a legal right in any gift I bestow upon a public charity. In a sense, they were of a stronger character. She had moral claims upon us, as a parent has upon a child whom she has fondly nursed and protected. She knew that the Church here was being tampered with to subvert us from our allegiance to her at a critical period in her history, when a withdrawal of cooperation and sympathy would be a Brutus-like stab; and, having also full information of the fact that many of the ministers and people in this country were averse to any change in the relations then existing, she was justified in resolving to use all her influence to prevent the perpetration of the talked of "invasion of her rights." But her rights were only moral, as the means she was to employ in defeating the proposed legislation in this country were only moral means. In the very passage quoted by Mr. Laing, she speaks through her Colonial Committee, of the legal rights as belonging to "the recognized branch of the Church of Scotland." Here,

That is to say, all the title-deeds of property were made out in favour of the adherents of the Church of Scotland in Canada; and so long as the people desired to retain nominal connection with the parent church, she declared herself determined to stand by them. But, supposing that the proposed legislation had been carried into effect, the Church of Scotland could, in her own name, do nothing towards recovering property. Any actions taken in the civil courts would have to be entered in the name of persons living in Canada and claiming to have previously had rights in such property. And if they would take no steps to resist legislation to claim the property, she at home would be powerless.

And the same thing may be said now. If the Church of Scotland disapproved of the proposed Union, and if she thought any considerable portion of the people in our Church were opposed to it, she could unquestionably throw great obstacles in the way of Union by giving them her moral support; but the same might be said, I presume, of the "Free Church" of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church. But the Church of Scotland, while preserving a position of dignified neutrality, as between her children in the Colonies who differ among themselves in opinions, has shown unmistakably that the proposed Union, if consummated in such a manner as to satisfy us, will be abundantly agreeable to her.

As to obtaining Imperial legislation on the question of the property of our Church, I fancy we shall have no more need to do so than the "Presbyterian Church of Canada" had on entering the United Church in 1861. There was a period when all the legislation of the Colonies was done in Westminster, but that period is long since past, and I apprehend our House of Commons is quite competent to grant us all the legislation that is requisite to enable us to take our property with us into the Union. On this point our Synod entertains no fears. If we go to our own Parliament with anything like unanimity, we do not anticipate any serious difficulty in securing a bill that will quiet all titles. It will be as easy to bring our property into the United Church, as it will be for the Canada Presbyterian Church to bring theirs. I have never known more than one person in our Church express the quixotic views which Mr. Laing has recorded on this subject, although it has now been before the Church for nigh fourteen years. Principal Campbell's resolution, offered in 1844, quoted by Mr. Laing, seems to deny to the Church the right to alter her designation. If it means that she cannot of her own motion change the titles to her property, then the position is quite right—Parliament alone can do that—but there is no more limit to the right of the Church to alter her constitution than there is to that of the State, provided it is done constitutionally—that is, all the steps, prescribed by the laws of the Church relating to changes, are taken.

But as I have already written at greater length than I intended when I began, I must reserve what I have to say on other parts of Mr. Laing's article for another letter.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Minister St. Gabriel Church, Montreal.
Montreal, April 21, 1874.

THE REVIVAL AT MITCHELL.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

I have thought for some time back of giving your readers some account of the wonderful outpouring of God's blessing which has been going on in Mitchell for over two months. I was forestalled by another correspondent, but there are interesting facts of still later date of which all who truly love the Lord will delight to hear.

Meetings have been held for the most part simultaneously in the Presbyterian, the Wesleyan and the Bible Christian Churches, and in all with the most gratifying results. It is now ten weeks since they began. The number of anxious inquirers has been very wonderful. It has all along seemed as if an epidemic of conviction was among the people, the most unlikely persons were finding their way into the meetings, then beginning to manifest deep personal anxiety, and then readily and willingly waiting to receive direction. One very pleasing circumstance is the fact that no controversy has ever arisen to lead away the interest into a wrong channel. Controversy on such occasions seems to be one of the devil's best artifices to check the Spirit's work.

Evangelistic meetings have been held in the Presbyterian Church every evening from the beginning. At these meetings the singing of Gospel hymns and short pointed prayers by the people present are prominent features. Short addresses by such ministers as may be present, are delivered. Then, at the close, an enquirers' meeting is held, when the immediate acceptance of Jesus is pressed upon sinners by personal dealing. Many prayer-meetings are held at different times in the day, and by different sections of the people.

One interesting feature at all these prayer-meetings is the sending in of requests for prayer for certain persons. It is quite impossible to estimate the number of such prayers which have been answered, but many were manifestly answered within my own knowledge. I had the pleasure of ad-

dressing the boy's prayer-meeting once or twice. A more interesting meeting could scarcely be conceived. Very many of the children are rejoicing in a Saviour clearly found. Their meetings were of their own organizing and conducted by themselves.

I shall give some quotations from a letter from the Rev. Mr. Mitchell. "The work," he says, "has been characterized by much believing prayer. We have a morning prayer meeting, a union noon meeting, a mother's meeting, a boy's meeting, and a girl's meeting. The work has also been characterized by quietness and power. There has been very little physical demonstration—tears often, but no voice, and little surface excitement. The power with which God has accompanied the preaching of the word has been such as to break down all opposition. Very few have been brought under conviction who have not been converted. I do not know of one who has attended the meetings with any measure of regularity, who has not been compelled to yield. A considerable number of strangers or visitors making a passing stay here are among the trophies of divine grace. Infidels, drunkards, and degraded persons have been reached, and rescued. Some of those singled out at first as the most hopeless are now rejoicing in Christ. Several of our professional men and a few of the most prominent business men have received the message of peace. It has reached high and low, rich and poor, the best and the worst. I estimate that there are now upwards of five hundred persons who have come to lay hold of Christ more or less firmly as their Saviour; or, for the first time, to see their security, in him, since the present year began. Another characteristic of late is, the completeness of the work in many of those who have been brought to Christ. Many have cast themselves on Christ fully and now rejoice in the possession of the peace which passeth all understanding."

I should not omit to say that, when in Mitchell, an employer of labour told me that there was the most manifest improvement in the fidelity and trustworthiness of those of his employers who had made a profession of faith. What a grand testimony!

There must be many in Canada who are wondering if this work will not spread. I think a visit to Mitchell would convince any one that all that is required to bring an outpouring of the Spirit in any place is faith on the part of the people. We pray but we do not expect an answer—which shows that our praying is not of faith. The work has already begun in some neighbouring localities for which special prayer was offered at the meetings in Mitchell. It will begin in other places, too, just as soon as the people really ask for it.

W. H. RENSELSON.

Hamilton, April 21st, 1874.

Forms of Procedure.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—A Session Clerk asks for information on several points; and the answers I take to be as follows:—

1. A new Roll of members is not necessary at every purging of the Roll. Four new Rolls would be made up every year in some congregations. The names of communicants who have left or have died are removed from the list, by noting opposite them left or died as the case may be, and the new names are added. At least a year should elapse before removing from the Roll the name of a communicant who has left without a certificate.

2. When a joint meeting of Session and of the Board of Trustees is held clearly the minute of such meeting should not be entered in the Session Book, because such decisions are not strictly the decisions of the Session. Such meeting is a meeting of Elders and Trustees, and not a meeting of the Session and of the Board; for in this latter case there would be two courts in session presided over at the same time the one by a moderator, and the other by a chairman. Such a meeting is impossible. The preferable course is to record the proceedings of such joint meetings in a separate Book or in another part of the minute Book of the Board of Trustees for subsequent reference. Where there is a Deacon's Court, Elders may sit and vote as Deacons, the higher spiritual office, including the lower, but the office of Elder does not include that of Trustee.

3. A Session is liable to censure for cutting out a part of its minute Book, and for very obvious reasons. It might thus destroy the evidence of its own censurable proceedings towards some member of the Church. When an error is found to have been committed a formal reconsideration of the subject should be moved, and the former decision changed or modified, and a new minute to that effect entered; but of course the old minute remains unless the leave of Presbytery be obtained to have the record destroyed for special reasons, in the case.

Yours, &c.,

LEX.

REMARKS ON CORRESPONDENCE.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—A short time since I read with some surprise "A Reader's" remarks on correspondence, a letter in which he takes yourself, "Canadian," and myself to task. On reflection, however, surprise gave way to satisfaction as I thought you might consult him in future in reference to what should or should not appear in your paper, and so save any further mistakes? But while such a thought was filling my mind with satisfaction, judge of my astonishment to find that some one was bold enough to take exceptions to "A Reader's" letter! "Another Reader" even charging him with inconsistency, while Mr. D. Anderson goes so far as to say "A Reader" "has missed the very gist" of a passage of Scripture he refers to. Of course "A Reader" may in his own peculiar language say that those correspondents have "assurance to flaunt" such statements in his face, and that they would be better suited to the *Westminster Review* or some other journal, (although, by the way, he does not deign to notice either letter) but this does not reassure me and I am afraid you must feel as if you had lost your compass. Still there is a lesson to be learned from the circumstance I have noticed, and it is worthy of our attention. It is this, that if your columns were only open to "A Reader" & Company, your paper would not merit the support it is entitled to, as he hospitably his articles too freely with terms which are not very complimentary, nor true either, according to the views of others. I refer to such words as the following "misanthropic," "stupid," "stale," "illogical drive!" "mawkish mind," "reckless statement," "false reasoning," "assurance" "free thinking," "menlying," "satanic talent!" "illogical inferences" "rambling letter," &c. all of which are calculated to wound without serving any good end whatever. If there is to be any limit to discussion, Mr. Editor, I trust it will begin here, in throwing out any letter or article that contain ungentlemanly and unchristian language, which can only wound the feelings and sow seeds that will yield a harvest that neither you nor I desire to reap.

Yours very truly,

PHILOS.

April 20th 1874.

[Philos has some ground for complaint. We reject a good deal of "strong" severe language, but what is left is sometimes not altogether what it ought to be. Will our correspondents, both lay and clerical, take the hint?—Ed. B. A. P.]

Case of Mrs. Malcom.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—In common with Ministerial Brethren, I lately received a circular from Mr. Boyd, Banker, London, of which the following is an extract:

"I have great pleasure in soliciting your sympathy and co-operation in a scheme which deserves the attention of the whole C. P. Church. In February, 1873, the Rev. James Malcom, became unfit for his ministerial work, and his mental condition now is not such as to warrant the hope that he will ever resume it." (It is well known that, ever since the above date he has been an inmate of the Lunatic Asylum in Toronto.) "He was married to a lady who came out from Cran, in Fifeshire, to become his wife, and she (an orphan with no relatives in this country but a sister) has now to bear the burden of her own support and that of three children, all girls, from 2 to 9 years of age. It is surely not asking much to solicit a contribution from every congregation in the Church to create a fund for the purchase of a homestead or other permanent benefit for such a family.

So soon as Mr. Boyd's circular came to hand, I made an appeal to the congregations of Newton and Newcastle, and speedily succeeded in raising, among a willing and sympathizing people, a little over fifty dollars, which have been transmitted to Mr. Boyd. Now Sir, I mention this fact not by way of boasting; but rather in order to provoke other ministers and congregations to "go and do likewise." If each congregation in the Church were to act in this matter according to its ability, as these two have done, a sufficient provision would at once be made for this deserving, but unfortunate family. This surely is a case that powerfully appeals to the active sympathy of all who call themselves the disciples of Him who has said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Hoping that you will find a niche for this notice in this week's *PRESBYTERIAN*,
I am, yours &c.,

ARCN. CROSS.

The annual statement of Knox Church, Woodstock, shows that for all purposes there has been contributed the sum of Five thousand four hundred and eighty-six dollars and eighteen cents, including three hundred and forty-three dollars seventy cents for the schemes of the Church. The membership is two hundred and sixty-six,

Union.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I see in some of the articles "anent Union" lately published in your interesting paper, there is some anxiety manifested respecting property at present belonging to the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland. I would just remark that for many years past Acts of the Ontario Parliament and the old Province of Canada, have been passed authorising congregations to sell their globes, &c., and I never understood that they required to consult the Scotch Establishment on the subject. I feel confident that the Dominion Parliament, by desire of the several churches, could in like manner transfer their property to the one Body it is to be hoped speedily to be framed under the name and title of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. I don't think either the English or Scotch Establishments are recognised as corporations in any part of the Dominion, but even if they are should the body connected with it so wish, there will be no opposition by the Scotch Establishment to the formation of a great national Presbyterian Church in Canada, and if necessary, (which I don't believe it is) a short act would very soon be passed by the British Parliament sanctioning both change of name and transfer of property, and as Parliament generally sit till August I dare say such an Act could be passed before that time.

Yours truly,

A FRIEND TO UNION.

20th April, 1874.

P.S.—As the Canada Presbyterian Church is a different body both in name and actual composition from the Presbyterian Church of Canada formed in 1844. Now I can see no good whatever in going back to the debates and contentions of those days which ought to be left at rest for ever.

"D" To Mr. Herald.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

The Rev. Mr. Herald, in his attempt to escape from his own net, has hopelessly entangled himself therein. He asserts that my syllogism violates the rule in logic "that the Major premise must include the Minor." For the proposition, "whoever denies Christ is not a Christian," he substitutes "whoever denies Christ and does not afterwards repent his denial is not a Christian." While I do not accept his emendation, yet to please him, I may grant, though from no necessity in the case, the rule referred to is violated. If it is, Mr. Herald must mean, either that Peter was not a Christian until he repented his denial of Christ, or that he ceased to be a Christian at the time he denied Him. He may choose either alternative, though the latter is not quite consistent with Scripture, and the former not altogether agreeable to the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith which I fancy he professes to be the confession of his faith. I think any of your readers may now see that my syllogism violates no rule.

In my former communication, in order to make it plain that Mr. Herald attempted to weaken the force of Mr. McTavish's statements by an "ad captivandum vulgus." I found a similar syllogism wherein the same fallacy is more transparent, and so, more easily detected, that of Mr. Herald's is. "All, whether individuals or churches, who deny the Headship of Christ over his Church are not Christian. The Church of Scotland denies the Headship of Christ over his Church. Therefore the Church of Scotland is not Christian." This I imitated by saying, "whoever denies Christ is not a Christian, the Apostle Peter denied Christ. Therefore the Apostle Peter was not a Christian." Since I did not expressly limit the minor premise and conclusion to the period in Peter's life between his call and repentance where he went out of the hall of the Chief Priest, and wopt bitterly for his sin, your correspondent took advantage of the omission, and lauded himself where I expected he would, by virtually denying that Peter was a Christian till that time, or else admitting that he fell from grace, I do not mean to say that he intended either, but this is the position that he now occupies.

Mr. Herald is perfectly correct in saying that I am "afraid to avow the fearful conclusion that the Church of Scotland is not a Christian Church," because I believe that she is, notwithstanding that she has not yet answered the protest of 1813 "for good and sufficient reasons," and that, instead of being guided by the law of Christ, she consented to be guided by a statute enacted by the British Legislature (Lord Aberdeen's Act,) in the matter of the settlement of ministers in congregations. At the risk being charged with "Broad School" sentiments I distinctly assert that Christian individuals and Christian churches have often, and in various forms of opinion and practice denied Christ. If your correspondent thinks otherwise, I fear he cannot find a Christian on earth, not even himself, I venture to say. Perhaps he supposes as it appears others do, that no one verbally professes the Headship of Christ over the Church should be charged with denying that truth however inconsistent therewith their practice and their opinions might be. The Church of Rome professes the same doctrine as clearly as the Church of Scotland, or any other Church, or even Mr. Herald does, but she denies it by her submission to the Pope as her earthly head.

I remain,

Truly yours,

D.