

Contributors and Correspondents.

PATRONAGE VERSUS POPULAR ELECTION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—Before entering on the discussion of patronage, as proposed in our last paper, we shall quote the opinions of some leading men in different churches regarding popular election. And the first we adduce from a trustworthy source, is that of Cyprian, middle of third century, whose testimony becomes more striking as he was a strenuous advocate of Episcopacy. He says that "the established rule from the days of the Apostles down to our age, was that the power of choosing worthy prelates rests chiefly with the people." The Church historian, Waddington, asserts that, "of most of the Apostolic Churches, the first Bishops are appointed by Apostles; of those not Apostolic the first missionaries were probably the missionaries who founded them." The amicable and judicious Melancthon says that "Democracy, which takes the election to themselves, is at variance with the divine law and the primitive church rule." Nor can we find any writer of credible authority attempt to prove that the Apostles submitted the election of ministers to the people, or that the primitive church claimed this as their right. This custom would appear to have acquired prominence when the arrogant prelates began to place their clerics over the people, willing or unwilling. Dr. Emmanus, Congregationalist, claims for the people not only the right of election but of ordaining. He says:—"The truth is, ministers have no exclusive right to ordain others. The right of ordination is primarily and solely in the hands of the Church." But while he is usually careful to give Scripture authority for his utterances, he does not attempt to give any for this. The last but not the least authority which we shall quote is that of the honest, philosophic, clear-headed Dr. McCosh of Princeton. He writes only last month, "I have grave doubts whether popular election would always be safe in the hands of the parishioners." And he further says, when far remote from the heat of discussion in the fatherland, "It is certain that these noble men, Chalmers, Canliff, Cunningham, Buchanan, and Guthrie were led away" by the surroundings of existing patronage, to expect too much from popular election.

Let us now look fairly at patronage. And we would premise that, while considering this or any other subject regarding which Presbyterian churches hold different views, and regarding which some, in the same Church, hold various opinions, we should exercise more than ordinary care and inspection, lest we too inconsiderately reject all that does not run parallel with our accustomed mode of thought; and when looking beyond our own narrow sphere of action, we should cherish the instinct and relish of the bee rather than of the wasp—seeking to eliminate the good and permit the evil to pass into oblivion. And as not one of the Presbyterian churches has yet arrogated the dogma of infallibility or the stature of perfection, as other Churches have, we shall not assume, in our discussion, that any one of our Presbyterian churches has been infallible in government, or should cease to press forward to nearer approaches to perfection in the future. And it is surely more than time that Presbyterians, when looking at our past history and present condition, should do so with a less jealous and more charitable eye. There is so much in which we entirely agree, and so little of real importance in which we differ, that it would be highly criminal to continue to look with a microscopic lens at our differences, and with a telescopic lens at the great essentials which not one of us has ever doubted. There is surely more than enough outside of the Presbyterian families against which we should ever represent our united force. May the great Lord incline and enable us to build up and enlarge our Presbyterian brotherhood on the most extensive and charitable Scriptural basis. For, at best, our alleged ground of differences appear as the most trifling family quarrels in the estimation of those who are not accustomed to weigh ecclesiastical matters with such strict philosophical acumen as is the custom and heritage of Scotch Presbyterians.

It must be evident to all who have given some attention to the history of patronage, as it obtained a place in the Scottish Church, that it was never arranged by the deliberate judgment of the Scottish Church. And it would probably never have been allowed had not the Scottish people been sick or fighting against Papacy and then against Prelacy. And we suppose that those excellent men who remained, as well as those who, from time to time, withdrew, submitted somewhat as Paul yielded, and embraced the opportunity of proclaiming the truth before King Agrippa and sundry, at the instance of Festus, not from choice, but as the only available means of doing so. Paul would doubtless have preferred to be brought thither under different auspices and other patronage than the heathen ruler, but he would not lose the opportunity of declaring the counsel of God. Accordingly we find that after patronage was urged on the Church of Scotland, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, when ratifying the confession of faith in 1690, neither concurred nor utterly rejected patronage, but left it open for "further consideration." And we find, moreover, the same deliverance prefixed to the confession of faith, page 11, as authorized by the Free Church of Scotland in 1843, from which, as well as from other declarations, we must infer that patronage is not utterly rejected by the Free Church as absolutely evil. And this will appear more manifest from the fact that, only last winter, when application was made to have Dr. Buchanan, the celebrated writer of "The Ten Years' Conflict," and the earnest advocate of popular rights, to be appointed Principal of Glasgow University, there was general dissatisfaction experienced throughout his church when he did not receive the Queen's patronage. This should at least show that patronage *per se* is not regarded in either church as an absolute evil, to be despised and shunned by every good and great man. At the same time it is not less certain that neither Church, left to choose without any external

pressure, would submit Church patronage to the Queen, and downwards to Lords, land proprietors, city and town councils, and others. This system of procedure was never learned from Apostolic precedent and the inspired word. Church authority may have allowed it but never fully approved of it. The Supreme Head of the Church allowed it, and wrought out good under the system, but He never declared that it was the best method of directing and controlling the affairs of His Church. The fact that so many eminent Theologians, and so many devout Christians, have been trained within the prestige of patronage, proves that the Great Head of the Church did not utterly frown upon that system of patronage. As regards ourselves, we know not, in the history of Christendom, where, within such narrow bounds and for so many ages, so many justly celebrated divines and so many humble devout Christians had been trained as within the range of this form of patronage. At least in the early history of the Church of Scotland it must have suited better than popular election. We have worshipped in a church in Western Scotland where the godly minister who officiated, nearly two centuries ago, had to carry his sword by his side to defend himself when using the sword of the Spirit against the vices that prevailed. Indeed, patronage, as it exists in the Church of Scotland, has never appeared to us so injurious as it is regarded by some who reap its benefits. Patronage must rest somewhere, and must prove pleasant or unpleasant. There is in reality more patronage exercised in other churches over the ministry than in the Church of Scotland. All the patronage that the Queen or any of her subjects can exercise over the ministry is to signify whether John, Peter, or Paul, out of all her ministers, should preach in a certain church. There her patronage ceases, and may not thereafter exercise any control whatever. The minister is now neither at the will of the patron or people. No man can be more independent to preach the Gospel above the fear or favor of all. This we regard the grand excellency of patronage. And we owe to him if he does not faithfully reprove and admonish, as well as teach and exhort. But when the minister must be the choice of the people he must not only be subject to their judgment at the outset, but be ever and anon subject to their patronage, and too often they will make him feel it. And who that is thus subject to the continuous patronage of the people but knows that he requires much dignity of character, together with a large amount of grace, to enable him to acquit himself on all occasions as one seeking to "please God rather than man." Besides, how seldom does it happen, even when the choice is said to rest with the people, that it is really and truly popular election, either inside or outside the Established Church? How many wires are set in motion? How many put forth their influence in behalf of their favorite? And not often is the most noble and worthy licentiate found to go forth seeking the patronizing influence of others. As the result of this underhand patronage, found in all the Churches, we meet with excellent licentiates in all the leading Presbyterian churches in Scotland, who felt sorely that they had been coldly or unfairly treated by the dignitaries in their respective churches. Patronage will exist fairly and openly, or meanly and covertly. What is required in our Presbyterian churches is, to have it clearly defined who should exercise patronage, and to have it fairly directed and guarded. As it prevails, no one is more responsible than another, and therefore every one feels that he has as much right to control the wires as another, and to urge his protégé rather than another. It has often occurred to us that the greatest harm arose in the Established Church (to which the idea of patronage is usually attached) not so much from the direct influence of patronage as from the Church Courts not exercising with sufficient care the power vested in them—First, in not determining with due circumspection who were worthy to be set apart for the holy ministry; and secondly, in not exercising sufficiently strict discipline over those received into the pastoral office; in not exercising discipline with a firm hand over the slothful, as well as all others unfaithful in the care of souls. And these evils may occur, and too often occur, in all churches.

From what has been advanced it will readily appear that we are not ardent admirers of the prevailing mode of patronage any more than the ordinary method of popular election. Whatever may be said for either on the ground of necessity, or expediency, or human policy, we think one may claim about as much divine warrant as the other. And just as circumstances or the prevailing order required we should as soon the patronage of one layman as that of many; we should claim as much Scriptural authority for one as the other, and therefore should feel as conscientious in submitting to the one as the other. At the same time we should feel highly culpable in undertaking a charge contrary to the expressed wishes and remonstrance of even a minority, either under the rule of patronage or popular election. While we can discover no Scriptural authority for "popular election," we regard it contrary to the spirit and teachings of the Gospel to force a minister on a people rejecting his ministrations, and especially if willing to receive another. We know not how a Gospel minister should do it, while the wide world was before him. If any people refuse the services of a worthy minister, let the guilt rest with them.

Whence then should church patronage come, or who should exercise the patronage of the ministry of the Gospel? This is a grave question, demanding the earnest consideration of all Presbyterians. We think it has never been deliberately settled. We should therefore shrink from approaching it had we not advanced so far.

All Presbyterians concur in holding that the power of calling and ordaining to the pastoral office is vested in the rulers of the church. That it devolves on them "to commit Gospel truth to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This "oversight of the stewardship of the mysteries of God" could not be exercised without authority to receive into and exclude from the ministry. That the Church rulers alone are invested with these powers is freely granted by Drs. Muir of Edinburgh, and

Dr. Buchanan of Glasgow, in their discussion in 1840, conducted in a brotherly and Christian spirit, regarding the right of Church rulers and their people. The chief points of difference between them being,—the former maintaining that the office-bearers in the Church may in certain cases ordain a minister over a reclaiming congregation; and the latter holding that "the consent of the congregation should be a *conditio sine qua non* of ordination." We dare dissent from both. We would by no means intrude a minister on a people; at the same time we would in no case cast the responsibility on the people of saying whether a licentiate should be ordained to any one charge or another. We think the entire responsibility of committing "the Gospel to faithful men" rest, with the rulers in the Church. By shifting from one to another the responsibility is not sufficiently felt by either, and hence the most responsible duty is not discharged aright by those most competent and entrusted with the oversight of the churches. But let all due care be exercised in admitting to the work of the ministry, and there need not be so much anxiety as to whether the preacher of the Gospel be appointed to take charge of souls in one place rather than another. There is nothing else regarding which the rulers in the Church of Christ require more to use the highest wisdom and feel the gravest responsibility.

Let all thus set apart for the work of the ministry be held the willing, active servants of the Church, apt to teach, ready to do work in any part of the Lord's vineyard. Wherever there are souls to be saved and cared for let this be regarded their appropriate field. Let the Church rulers have the directing and controlling power of the entire ministry of the word. And as we may not easily find one, at the present time, possessing the burning zeal, the self-denying spirit, and heavenly wisdom of the great Apostle Paul, who was burdened with "the care of all the churches," and as the field is now wider and the churches more numerous, let there be one Presbyter chosen (not to exercise lordship over his co-Presbyters) of well-known zeal, prudence, and wisdom, who shall ascertain the condition and wants of about twenty churches, with the view, as in the case of Titus, "to set in order and ordain elders over the churches. Let this be done for every district of similar extent, and let these aged, experienced counsellors, in their united wisdom, report to the General Synod the location of every minister and probationer—submitting this for the approval or revival of all the assembled rulers of the church. And in order to allow full freedom to arrange and locate with a view to the interests of all the churches, we would have no marriage relationship formed, for we see no divine warrant for it in our perfect rule of faith and practice. Nor would we in all this ignore the just rights of the people. Let there be a ruling elder, who shall be truly a representative, from every congregation; and when attainable, let him surpass the teaching elders in earnestness and excellency of wisdom and prudence, who shall take part in the counsels and government of the Church, animated with a liberal spirit to promote the general good in selecting and appointing of the ministry as in other respects. It is true we would not give the people the opportunity of quarrelling as to what man shall be their settled pastor; we should prefer to leave such quarrels, as in the case of Paul and Barnabas, to the rulers in the church. Nor would we have three or four or more from opposite directions, and with purely local selfish interests, meeting to expend their eloquence, to woo a certain minister from his betrothed bride, or his married wife, which in our minds is the silliest procedure within all our Presbyterian churches; and next to this is that of assuming that every member of our most and least intelligent congregations is competent to judge who shall be their teacher and guide even unto death. But we would not deprive any rational member of the right of "trying the spirits," of discerning between "ravening wolves" and "faithful shepherds." Let them exercise all their best wisdom and humility, and reject "any other Gospel" not taught in the Inspired Word. But such are most likely to come from without, and not from those chosen and watched over by the aged overseers and the entire ruling body. Let them not receive any doctrine from within or without, not dictated by the sure word of prophecy.

To our mind this system of patronage affords many advantages. First of all, and especially, because most in accordance with the apostolic, primitive, and more ancient practice; and if this be granted, it must embrace the highest wisdom and the best policy for building the Church and extending the Gospel. Seeing that all received into the ministry must at once enter on the active service of the Church, and go wherever appointed, it might serve to keep back slothful spirits—only seeking their own ease and aggrandizement—whereas if would encourage active, zealous souls to enter the ministry, as they would not be left in the cold and unemployed. It would provide the best possible security of having missionaries for home and foreign work; and none should be regarded a true herald of the cross that is unwilling to go where souls may be saved. (Had such been the system of working in the Scotch Church even during the last century, they would have avoided secessions, and have twenty laborers for one, not only caring for their expatriated countrymen, but many more recognizing our Westminster Standard.) It should prevent the small, selfish strifes in congregations about the minister to be elected. There need be no forsaking of their Church, as the minister unacceptable to the few or many would be removed within a certain period. The diverse talents of the ministry would most generally meet the diversified wants and peculiarities of the people. The occasional periodic change would awaken fresh vigor and interest in the Churches. It would learn the people to consider and profit by the truths proclaimed, rather than to inquire about the good or evil discoverable in "the earthen vessel."

To all this we might anticipate many objections; but that which would serve to meet and overcome all, would be to become more thoroughly imbued with the self-denying

spirit of the Great Master and His devoted Apostles and their fellow labourers. Thus losing sight of self and looking abroad to consider the interests of humanity and the glory of God, we should rejoice in seeing His kingdom advancing everywhere, and all brought into one fold and under one Shepherd. But owing to this want of a central and general controlling power in our Presbyterian system, there is no church in which there is so much knowledge lying dormant, and disengaged. This is true not only as regards licentiates but laymen. But does not the idea of being under one King and one kingdom indicate that there should be some central power of organization. Our present system as regards directing the ministry, is almost purely congregational. One great secret and the chief cause of the success of the Church of Bruce, is in her internal controlling power, enabling her to make use of all her Ministerial servants and directing and appointing them where she wills. Without this controlling power she could not possibly have accomplished so much. And what but this has enabled the Methodist Church, in the event tenor of her way within the last century, to possess almost all lands. We have no favour for the peculiar teachings of the Methodist church, and ten thousand times less for those of the papacy, but should the Methodists take a full leaf of orthodoxy, we should be willing to copy largely of this part of their method of Church organization.

While seeking to be brief, we are encroaching on your space. We would not absorb this subject. We desire to provoke a friendly discussion, and see it taken up by those who have some time, opportunity and ability.

I am, yours very truly,
ALEXANDER MCKAY.
Elton, 1st May, 1873.

THE "CONSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE OF PRESBYTERIANISM."

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

MY DEAR SIR,—I observe that the remit on the "Standing of Retired Ministers" is occupying the attention of the church, and to my surprise comes heralded forth as "approved *simpliciter*" from Presbytery after Presbytery, without an apparent thought of what it means, or of the important consequences it involves. The Remit reads thus:—"That according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterians none but settled ministers, senior pastors, Theological Professors, and ordained ministers, called to fill special positions in the work of the church, should be entitled to have their names entered on the rolls of Presbyteries, and such being the case, any exceptions made should be made on their own merits, and therefore new legislation on this matter is uncalled for." Sir, as to this I beg to submit:

1. That the Remit is, vague and indefinite.
2. It is historically inaccurate.
3. There is no principle of representation in it.
4. It commits the Assembly to principles before unassorted.

1st. It is vague and inconclusive. What does the "Constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" mean? At College we used to hear of the meaninglessness of general conceptions, of it being impossible to conceive a man "except as referring to some individual man; of the general term colour being nothing if separated from some special colour, and yet there is, it seems, such a thing as a Presbyterianism which has a constitutional practice and which variety of the many coloured entity is referred to? Is it the Presbyterianism of Paul's day? or of the Synod of Dort? or of the church of Scotland? or of the U. P. church? or of the American Presbyterian church? or that of our own Canadian church? If the practice be different, which is to rule? or where is the essence to be got that has the quality of "constitutionalism"? This effects the assertion made by the Remit. This settled, the vague phrase "the ordained ministers called to fill special positions in the work of the church" needs explanation. This was probably intended to cover the case of church agent, Mission Secretary and the like. Whether this would not include retired ministers and Professors in secular institutions, who still do special mission work, is fairly open to question, but that it does include the following classes, probably not intended, is beyond doubt.

1. Ordained Missionaries who for a time agree to labor in a special field.
2. Ministers acting as some are doing as "stated supply."

The Remit is also inconsistent in the latter clause. "Constitutional Presbyterianism" declares certain classes mentioned to be entitled to a place on the Presbytery Rolls; none but these, it says, should be there. Yet provision is made for certain others being there. Meritorious cases indeed they must be that find their places on official Rolls, where only names resting on a legal status ought to be found. So much for the perpetuity of the Remit.

But, 2nd, the remit is historically incorrect in its statements. Its statement is inconsistent with the Presbyterianism of the early church. The constitution of the Church Court is shown by Cunningham, Miller and others to rest upon the authority given by the Synod of Jerusalem. The Synod of Jerusalem was made up, beside the Elders, of the ordained ministers of the church; but was not Paul a settled minister, or did he come under the heading of any of the classes of the Remit? No! he was in his ordained character, by virtue of which he held his place, as nearly as possible an "ordained missionary;" and his companion the Evangelist Barnabas had the same ground on which to rest. Or in what capacity did John Knox, the great founder of Scottish Presbyterianism take his place in the General Assembly? Sometimes he was preaching in Newcastle and Berwick, sometimes in St. Andrew's parish church; sometimes at Dundee; sometimes at Perth; more of an apostle than an ordinary minister was

the man who found his place in the General Assembly; and who died nearly twenty years before the first Presbytery was established. He occupied his place in the Assembly, in the same manner as the Superintendents, who without any special congregation sending them were considered legal representatives and would, had Presbyteries existed, have been considered members of them. What are the words of the form of Church Government of 1646, "A Presbytery consisteth of the word and such public officers as are agreeable to and warranted by the word of God to be church governors to join with the ministers in the government of the church."

Or further, what is the principle of the American Presbyterian Church? There the broad general principle prevails, that an ordained minister of the church is "ex officio" a member of the Presbytery. The younger Hodge, in commenting on the article in the Confession of Faith, says:—"There is the Classical Presbytery which consists of all the pastors or bishops of the churches (by representatives) in a city or neighborhood, who can conveniently meet together and unite in the exercises of ecclesiastical government. Ordained ministers are not members of particular churches but belong in the first instance to the Presbytery. Again, whether it be admitted as a true principle or not, it is a fact that the Church of Scotland has in its General Assembly, which the clever Irish writer on Church Government, Withrow, shows to be merely a large Presbytery, Commissioners elected by Royal boroughs and others by the Universities. Again, what has been the practice of our Canadian church? In taking up the Assembly minutes for 1872 in the official Presbytery Rolls, it will be found that of the retired ministers class there are in Brockville, 1; Kingston, 1; Toronto, 1; Huron, 1; Total 5. In the same roll will be found the names of the ordained missionaries who have seats in Presbyteries: Toronto, 1; Manitoba, 3; Total 4; and in Minutes, page 50, seats in the Presbytery were given to two ordained Missionaries, and this only three days after the Remit desired it to be affirmed that the "Constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" was not to give such ministers a place. In addition, the same Roll contains the name of the Convener of the Committee presenting the remit, there by virtue of being Professor of Moral Philosophy in a National Institution. Thus the Apostolic precedent—with Reformation precedent—with Church of Scotland precedent—with United States precedent and that of our own Canadian Church contra dicting the Remit—either unconstitutional Presbyterianism prevails, or the Remit is historically incorrect.

But 3rd, three different principles of Presbyterian representation are here involved. The phrase "settled minister" is plainly used on the principle that the minister is the representative of the congregation; he is a "settled minister," not simply an ordained minister—not holding position by virtue of his ordination. The phrase "senior pastor" involves another principle from the preceding, viz. that by virtue of being an ordained minister he holds his place, for it is plain that if representation of the congregation be the true and only principle one of the colleagues must lose his place. Other congregations quite as large have injustice done them if two ministers are allowed to represent one congregation. If the second minister be allowed a seat in Presbytery it must then rest on his being an ordained minister of the church. But another principle yet is implied in the 3rd and 4th clauses, of Professors and Church Agents, viz. that the church as a whole may constitute itself an electoral unit and have its representatives. It may plainly do so for its highest court, but on what principle it can be justified to make its representatives members of Presbytery needs to be made out.

1. Congregational representation.
2. Representation by virtue of ordination.
3. Assembly representation.

Plainly no principle is endorsed in the Remit.

4th. The church is asked to commit itself to an Educational Theology never before recognized by it. In the phrase "Theological Professors," it is implied that there are or may be two Theological Professors and the direction of the church, and that the church, guided by "Constitutional Presbyterianism" is not to give such a seat, declaring virtually that the church has no right to undertake secular education. Now while the church may be pretty generally convinced of the advisability of leaving secular education to the state—the strongest voluntary among us will hardly say, she should abrogate her right to educate as she chooses or declare that should she undertake such work she will not give Professors delegated a seat in church courts. That she is not willing to do so is shown by her giving a seat to a Professor in the Preparatory Department of Knox College in 1860; and at having a College in Manitoba with a minister of the church in charge of it and holding his seat by virtue of such position. Hoping I may have called attention to what seems to me an important matter.

I am,
G. H.

The communion wine dispute comes up this year before the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, being carried thither by the appeal of the Rev. John McKerron against the finding of the Edinburgh Presbytery. Drs. Peddie and Thomson with Mr. Monzie were appointed to defend the action of the Presbytery.

The remains of the late Bishop Mollvane who died in Florence on the 12th of last March, have been brought to America and to be finally interred in Cincinnati. Bishop Mollvane was originally a Presbyterian and was the most distinguished prolate of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S.

UNIVERSITY HONOURS.—The son of the Rev. Robert Rutherford, of Nowinamis, Scotland, a young lad of 19 years of age, lately carried off a prize at Oxford of the value of £30. He has more recently gained the Scientific Scholarship, tenable for three years. The Scholarship is worth £100 for the first and £50 for each of the succeeding ones.