

EDITORS MAIL

We are not responsible for opinions expressed by writers under this heading. Correspondents would oblige by writing legibly, and on one side of the paper only, name and address (not necessarily for publication) must always be sent. Correspondence should be as concise as possible.

To the Editor of the Advocate,
Newcastle, N. B.

Dear Sir,

There appeared in your issue of the 4th inst. a letter from one who signs himself "A loyal Presbyterian" and dates his letter, Chatham, Dec. 1st, 1923. The letter in question purports to be a reply to a letter which I wrote to the Chatham "Commercial" of Nov. 27th. Let me point out, Mr. Editor, that I think you have not been exactly fair to me as a friend and subscriber when you have published such a letter without having first given your readers an opportunity to see what I said in the first place to the "Commercial." In the interests of justice, fair-play and truth, therefore, I request you to publish in your first issue my original letter to the "Commercial."

Now with regard to the letter in your last issue, signed "A Loyal Presbyterian," let me say that it is not my intention to enter into any extended newspaper controversy with a person who hides behind a *nom de plume*, for one who so hides may indulge in very irresponsible statements. If he would be straightforward and above-board enough to come out from hiding and sign his name, one could treat with him on a more equitable basis.

After attending the Anti-unionist meeting in Chatham on Nov. 23rd, I resorted to the pen, not for the purpose of entering into any personal controversy but principally to place before the Chatham people two pieces of important documentary evidence bearing directly upon the discussion of this great religious issue. It is to be noted that your correspondent in his "reply" has not at all touched upon the second of these pieces of documentary evidence, namely that dealing with "Spiritual Independence." To the first, namely that dealing with "coercion," he has attempted to reply with invective and with the statement that "any documentary evidence drawn up by such an Assembly as this and submitted to Presbyterians by Mr. Matthews or any other unionist clergyman, as proof that coercion is not being used will have very little weight with intelligent people." This statement of his simply means that he closes his eyes to the light and his mind to the truth. There is no attempt made by him to refute the point made by me that the Assembly empowered its Committee on Union to "confer" and the anti-unionists have chosen to ignore the offer.

My letter might have closed at this point, but there is one charge which your correspondent makes in his invective that is too serious to disregard. In speaking of the last Assembly at Port Arthur he says: "It is a well-known fact that this Assembly was nothing more or less than a packed convention of Unionists, with minds fully made up to put the Union question through at all hazard." Allow me to say that this is emphatically NOT "a well-known fact." It may be a widely-circulated falsehood. On the face of it, it is a defamatory and libelous statement. One can understand why a person using such statements is moved to hide behind a *nom de plume*. He ought to be ashamed of himself. But how can he call himself "A Loyal Presbyterian" when he thus drags the good name of ministers and honored representative elders of his Church in the mire before the eyes of the general public? What love can he have for a Church whose Courts he thus so spitefully maligns?

Let me remind you, Mr. Editor, that the Presbyterian Church is governed by "Courts" which are constituted in a legal way and clearly defined constitutional lines as to

as the General Assembly is concerned, the number of commissioners and their mode of appointment are matters that are distinctly defined by rules of Assembly and Presbytery. To intimate that this highest court of the church is capable of being converted into "a packed convention" is to talk rubbish. Moreover, it is my conviction from personal association with some of the commissioners to the last Assembly at Port Arthur, and from observation of the tone of editorials and other writings in "The Presbyterian Witness" and elsewhere just previous to the Assembly, that never in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada did God-fearing men go up to an Assembly with a greater sense of responsibility and a greater burden resting on their hearts and consciences.

There are a few other matters in your correspondent's letter which I would like to discuss but I am afraid that I have already transgressed in the matter of space. Let me, however, say to my friend that we who have Unionist convictions are not at all afraid of discussion on this subject. On the contrary, the more fully the people are informed on this great issue, the better we believe it will be for the cause. "A Loyal Presbyterian" has been good enough to suggest a public debate. If he wants a debate merely for the purpose of fireworks and for venting inflamed partisan feelings, I wish to emphatically decline to be a party to it. If, however, he desires a full and frank discussion of this great Church issue the development of which is being watched by the whole Christian world, and if he will guarantee that the discussion will be carried on along a high moral plane and with a desire to arrive at the truth, let him come out into the open and name the place.

Yours sincerely,
W. McN. MATTHEWS
The Manse, Millerton, N.B.
Dec. 6th, 1923.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The "Advocate" was not given the privilege to publish Rev. Mr. Matthews' original letter to the "Commercial" as copy of same was not submitted, and it could hardly be expected that his letter be made an object of choice from among the many that each day appear in the press. The "Advocate" holds Rev. Mr. Matthews in high esteem both as a friend and a subscriber, but is unable to publish articles bearing his signature, without first being requested to do so and copy of same forwarded for publication. The "Advocate" received yesterday from Mr. Matthews a copy of his original letter to the "Commercial," and same will be published in next week's issue. We regret that we were unable to publish it this week but time and space would not permit.

Newcastle, N.B., Dec. 10, 1923.

To the Editor of the Advocate
Newcastle, N. B.

Dear Sir,

Herewith I enclose for publication "A Reply from Rev. Dr. Duncan" which appeared in the St. John Daily "Telegraph-Journal" on December 6th, 1923.

Rev. Dr. Duncan's reply speaks for itself and should allay any doubt, which might possibly exist in the minds of unbiased persons, who are endowed with the ability of receiving the truth.

Dr. Duncan's reply is also an answer to the base, vile, contemptible and illiterate epistle (couched in pugilistic slang) which appeared in last week's "Leader" over the misnomer "A True Presbyterian."

Personally I decline to answer one, who conceals him or herself anonymously, especially in a discussion of such a sacred question as the one at issue.

To write in such a disparaging insulting and vulgar manner as this writer did, concerning a minister of the gospel with the recognized ability and reputation of Rev. Dr. Duncan and also with such discourtesy and venom against another branch of our Christian Church, is NOT the product of "A TRUE PRESBYTERIAN."

The following is Dr. Duncan's reply.

Respectfully,
MRS. JAMES BAISLEY
A REPLY FROM

REV. DR. DUNCAN

Sir,—My attention has been called to an article in your columns, referring to an amusing incident at a Newcastle meeting, which I addressed. Only one side of the facts is reported; my reply is not mentioned, so, perhaps I should give this time the account of the overture between the Anglican and Presbyterian Communions referred to.

For several years past, official conferences have been held in Montreal between a committee appointed by the presbytery of Montreal and a committee appointed by the Bishop of Montreal. These conferences ended in an unanimous finding "as to forms of mutual communion whereby the ministers of each communion were to receive 'a wider exercise of their ministry' ministering acceptably in each other's communion." These conferences ended in May 1922, the report being submitted to and received by the presbytery of Montreal which approved what was considered, the "most constructive forward step made since the Reformation in the way of Christian Unity."

To test the mind of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches, five Presbyterian and five Anglican ministers, on the basis of the findings of the Montreal conference, resolved to approach the General Assembly and the General Synod; offering themselves for whatever

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reciprocal initiation the respective churches should approve. The distinct condition as to such mutual initiation or communion was in accordance with the findings of the conference, viz: "That, herein there is no repudiation of or reflection upon their past ordained ministry."

This memorial was transmitted by the General Assembly of 1922, and a special committee of Assembly was appointed

to bring in a report, which it did a few days later. This report was unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly which "rejoicing in the growing spirit of Christian Unity," appointed a larger special committee of Assembly with powers to confer with a similar committee of the Anglican Church. So, not only was there "no repudiation of or reflection upon their past ordained ministry," but there was reciprocal

recognition of each other's ordination endorsed by the General Assembly.

The lady at Newcastle did not evidently understand the condition submitted by the memorialists and approved by the General Assembly—which evidently in her eyes, can do no wrong. The word repudiation does not occur.

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