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Contributors and Correspondents.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF A CANADIAN ABROAD.

THE GOSPEL IN ITS OWN VINDICATION.

Sir,—Dining one evening at a friend's house in the West of London, there was present among others, Gen. Burrows, the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, with whose publications many of your readers will be familiar, and the Rev. Marcus Haunford, a clergyman of the Established Church, distinguished for the eloquence and spiritual power with which he preached the Gospel to the aristocratic sinners of the West End. Naturally the conversation turned to the work of the Society just mentioned, and an interesting discussion took place between these two gentlemen as to the best method of dealing with skeptics. Mr. R. holding strongly that the word of God was sufficient for its own defence. After referring to Christ's method with Satan, and Paul's with the Greeks at Corinth, etc., he proceeded to illustrate his argument from his own experience and observation. "Some time ago," he said, "I received a note from a lady of my congregation, saying that there was an immodest young man lying dying at one of the clubs, a countryman of my own, wouldn't I go and see him? Now I had got myself into trouble before by pushing in where I was not wanted, doing more harm than good, so I hesitated for some days, till my conscience, ill at ease, impelled me to take courage. So I wrote as politely as I could, saying I had heard of his illness and, being a fellow countryman, I wished to do all that I could to comfort or relieve him in any way, and taking it to the door, sent it in with my card. The house-keeper brought the answer that her master was too ill to see any one, and I left quite relieved. In a short time after I received a note from the gentleman thanking me for my politeness, and adding that if passing I might call, but mind only he wanted no person! I called, and after some common-place conversation spoke of the Saviour, but immediately he showed ungovernable anger and rudeness, and turning his face to the wall took no further notice of me or apparently of what I said, only his illness I believe hindered him from turning me out of the room. After repeating a few simple passages of Scripture of Gospel import, I left him. In going out I spoke to the house-keeper of her master's state, and took advantage of the recent death of her son abroad, in a state of friendliness and ignorance, to work upon her feelings and excite an interest in her master's condition which would aid my easy access to him again. On returning next day she told me she dare not admit me, as it would be as much as her place was worth, she had never seen him so angry as after my last visit. I talked to her a little explaining the importance of possible results and reminding her that there was no danger of her being dismissed as the man was dying and quite unable to act in the matter. 'Well,' she exclaimed at last, 'you are a man. I am only a woman, and if you will come in I can't keep you out!' So I passed in, only to experience a repetition of the same conduct as before the moment he saw me; and so again and again for several days. Each time I remained but a few moments saying only a few simple words of God's great love and grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ—nothing of his infidelity whatever, not even venturing to pray with him, for I don't believe he would have endured it. At last after about a week had passed he did turn to ask, 'Are you the same as the rest of them?' 'What do you mean?' He repeated the question, and I mine, till in explanation he said, 'I have known heaps of prisons, and they were good for nothing but to eat a man's liver and drink his wine. Are you the same as them?' 'Well, I said, I think you are rather hard on them. I dare say I could have eaten your dinner too if asked, and drunk of your wine, but I'd have tried to do good to your soul.' 'I believe before you would,' he replied, adding, 'Now tell me about all this that you have been saying to me, is it true?' 'Don't you think must be?' I said, 'It's so wonderful, only no man could ever have invented it, and I must have spoken it, and it is impossible for him to lie.' 'And do you believe yourself?' 'Most certainly I do. It is one hope of my soul. He raised his head and looked steadfastly upwards, and in deep agitation exclaimed, 'Great God, believe it too!' At the same time smiling forehead with open hand, the room rattled with the stroke. From that moment he seemed quite decided and much

got for him come back of bold type, in which he might read these promises for himself; with the Bible itself he said he would be lost not knowing where to look for them. He didn't want anything so conspicuous as a roll for the wall, but something light for his hand, and easily slipped under the pillow. It was Saturday night and getting late, so time was to be lost. I set off in the search, taking a homeward route; but in vain, every likely place was closed. On entering the house I found Miss — with my wife. She had recently become anxious for herself and for others, and on hearing what was uppermost on my mind, exclaimed, 'I've got the very thing—' 'Weighty Words—sent me by a friend the other day.' I know the little book, with its single text in large print on each page, and desired her to hasten home and send it by her servant, with my compliments. As soon as the next day's services were over, I called and learned from the housekeeper that at the moment of my entering the house his spirit had departed. "Since that book came, she said, drawing it from under his pillow, 'he had not ceased to read it over and over, while awake. When his eyes got dim he asked me to do it for him.' 'Sir!' said I, 'I think they are very pretty.' 'Woman,' he says to me, 'What do you mean? Don't speak of them that way. They are the living words of the living God. They have brought me life and now I am not afraid to die upon them.' And he did, for these were the last words he ever spoke.' Thus will God's own word, simply trusted and honored, surely show its power. Though some were not yet convinced that "the evidences" had not an important place in the work of the Church, all united in thanking Mr. R. for his very interesting narrative.

Church Independence and Ultramontanism.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR DEAR SIR,—The last letter of your Ultramontanist correspondent is of such a character that I might be more than satisfied to let it close the discussion between us. But discriminating, as I do, between Church Independence and Ultramontanism; having the strongest conviction of the value and importance of the one, and an equally strong persuasion of the dangerous and detestable nature of the other; and knowing that it is the invariable policy of Erastians to confound the two and to charge the advocates of Church Independence with aiming at clerical domination, I trust you will permit me to endeavour still further to insist upon the essential difference between the two things, in opposition to your correspondent's continued endeavour to confound them.

Referring to a distinction which I pointed out in my last letter, he says he never dreamed of arguing that an appeal, in the technical or proper sense of that term, either could be or had been made; that no one ever thought of such a thing being possible; and that in no case in the history of the church was the idea of such an appeal ever held or acted on. Let me remind your readers of his pleading in his first letter, which he wrote when his preference was in favour of Erastianism. His Presbytery being supposed to have deposed him in utter disregard of the laws of the church, "like a good Presbyterian, appeals to the higher ecclesiastical court, and failing to get justice there, he appeals to the highest. Failing to get justice there also, he pleads his right to appeal to another court—higher therefore in his estimation than the highest ecclesiastical court—and declares his belief that the civil judge should have the right, "not to review and revise of the spiritual court," but to insist upon its regarding the laws of the church, and to determine finally whether it has done so or not. This is not perfectly clear; but I believe I present his view fairly when I put it thus: Failing to get justice by the removal of his case first to the higher and then to the highest ecclesiastical court, he will remove it to the civil court, which, on being satisfied that the ecclesiastical courts have not acted right in their professed administration of the law of the Kingdom of Christ, shall present to them the alternative of either reversing their sentence or paying damages, &c., or shall even "quash their proceedings quoad the temporalities, standing, and character of the appellant." Let this view be acted on, then the removal of the case from the ecclesiastical to the civil court is an appeal in the strictest and most proper sense, just as much as the removal of it from the lower to the higher ecclesiastical court. That civil judges are not ecclesiastical persons and cannot perform spiritual functions, but can only use the powers they possess to constrain and control others in the performance of these functions, does not alter the nature of the act of submitting an ecclesiastical cause to them. The removal of the cause from an ecclesiastical to a civil court may not be

one ecclesiastical court to another; but, inasmuch as it implies a competency on the part of the civil court to prescribe their duty, in spiritual matters, to ecclesiastical courts, and to enforce the performance of that duty by its own peculiar arguments—damages, fine, distraint, imprisonment—it is essentially an appeal in the proper sense of the term, or its full equivalent. But even if what your correspondent originally not only dreamed of but plead for, were not an appeal strictly so-called, it is not the less a thing radically and essentially different from the act of bringing before the civil court men who, "under cloak" of acting in their official capacity, do what is, in its own nature, criminal in the eye of a righteous civil law. This is the whole of my much and persistently misrepresented acknowledgment. The difference between the two things I have insisted on from the first, and in my last letter I asked your correspondent to assert and maintain that the competency of the one follows from the competency of the other. He finds, as I expected, that he cannot do so; but, instead of frankly admitting his inability, he covers it up in a statement, which contains the insinuation of his original misrepresentation, and which besides a mass of misapprehension and fallacy made to sound like argument. His words are, "I said, and say, that any appeal, even for protection from the civil consequences of an ecclesiastical decision, whether in the matter of Church property or anything else, involves substantially a recognition of the civil court's supremacy, for it repudiates the decision of the ecclesiastical courts, and seeks by the intervention of the civil, to have that decision practically, though not technically, set aside."

In reference to this statement, let it be observed, first I all, that "Presbyterian" mixed up the two things that have hitherto kept separate in the discussion between us, and, in this way, he could divert the attention of readers from the fact that I maintained the competency of action in the civil court, against ecclesiastical persons for criminal acts committed "under cloak" of discharging official duty; and from the fact that he has persistently misrepresented my contention on this point, as an acknowledgment of the right of the civil court to interfere in matters ecclesiastical, and of the competency of the appeal of an ecclesiastical cause to the civil court, on the plea of civil interests involved—a misrepresentation which, regardless of all that is fair in controversy, he manifestly still persists in.

But apart from this controversial trick—far it looks like nothing else—under which he covers up his inability to sustain an Ultramontane position, his statement cannot stand examination. Let us look into it. By appeal of course, after explanations made, is meant application. That, he means to say, "Any application &c., involves a recognition of the civil court's supremacy." Of course it does. But the question is, Supremacy in what? We understand two supremacies, the supremacy of the civil power in things civil, and the supremacy of the ecclesiastical power in things spiritual; and the one we maintain as strenuously as the other. "Any application" to the civil court is a recognition of its supremacy in things civil. If your correspondent says it is a recognition of its supremacy in things spiritual, he asserts what cannot be sustained. But he seems to argue the point. "Any application," he says, "is a recognition of the civil court's supremacy, for it repudiates the decision of the supreme ecclesiastical court." Suppose it does, argument betrays his usual want of discrimination. An authority may be recognized as supreme by the man who repudiates and disregards a particular exercise of it. The fathers of the Secession repudiated and disregarded an ecclesiastical decision, and they did so most righteously. Was their doing so a disavowal of the supremacy of the Church in things spiritual, or a recognition of the supremacy of the civil courts? It will be said it was not. Then why put in such a claim at all, except for the sound of it? Its insertion, however, confirms us in the suspicion that your correspondent has the idea that Erastianism consists very much in not submitting to a majority or in not "following the multitude," however they may lead. But he goes on to say, such application "seeks by the intervention of the civil courts to have the decision practically set aside." Now, what does he mean by practically set aside? Does it mean that the decision is disregarded, or that, in a question of civil right before the court, which it is alleged to endanger, it is declared not affect that civil right? If so, the argument is worthless. That involves no recognition of the supremacy of the civil court in things spiritual. Nay, it may involve or be accompanied by the most distinct, and even the most express, recognition of the proper supremacy of the ecclesiastical power. A Socinian Church, let us suppose, has by an immense majority, become orthodox. A trustee of a particular congregation, whose minister belongs to the majority or the minority, has been deposed or not deposed, or has been deposed righteously or unrighteously—for none of all these affect the question—a trustee, I say, raises the question in a civil court as to the future use of the property of the congregation. The judges use all orthodox men, some of them members of the reforming church, and none of them disposed to say, as your correspondent lately wanted judges to say, "We insist upon your keeping to your principles" &c., but rejoicing in the reformation. But the trustee asks them to look into a certain legal document, and to declare that the civil right which it secures shall not be affected by the decision of the Church. The judges, though fully persuaded that the decision of the Church is right—what Christ would have it to be—have no option but to decide according to the legal document placed before them. This I be-

lieve to be the position of the trustee in a righteous law. I hope that the jealousy of the civil power in relation to Church property, more than warranted by the experience of a thousand years will never go to sleep, or waver in refusing to the Church a supremacy which it is contrary to the will of God she should have. Such an application and such a decision as I have referred to, whatever inconvenience or expense it may entail, involves no recognition or claim of the civil court's supremacy in things spiritual.

Again, let us take an historical and well-known example. If the presentee to the parish of Anehterarder had not gone beyond his original application to the Court of Session, which asked to have it found that, in consequence of his presentation, he had a "just and legal right to the stipend, manse, and glebe," notwithstanding the refusal of the Presbytery to ordain and admit him; and if the court had decided in his favour, there would have been no recognition on his part, and no claim on the part of the court, of its supremacy in things spiritual; and the troubles that arose in connection with the Anehterarder case would never have arisen. I say nothing of the propriety of the application or of the correctness of the decision. These are different questions from that now before us.

I need not refer to other meanings that your correspondent might be supposed to attach to the expression "practically set aside." I think I have said enough to prove that the statement which I have analyzed is wholly unwarrantable, and to make it plain that an applicant's recognition of the supremacy of the civil court in things spiritual depends on what he asks the court to do, or on the nature, and not on the fact of his application, as "Presbyterian" asserts. I do not know what he may say; but I confound applications such as I have referred to with applications in which the civil court is asked authoritatively to set aside an ecclesiastical decision, or to bring its power to bear upon the Church to control and censure it in the discharge of its spiritual functions; or to say that the former includes all applications that ever were made, would show a want of discrimination and ignorance of history, or a power of assertion, almost incredible.

In reference to the two questions that I proposed on the subject of Church property, I think I may warrantably assume that "Presbyterian" finds himself unable to sustain an affirmative answer to them. If, instead of considering how he might best retreat with the claim of having obtained a victory, he had followed my suggestion to discuss principles, and given a steady and unprejudiced application of mind to my questions, he would, I doubt not, have come to see that the affirmative cannot be sustained by sound argument. That the civil court, informing its own independent judgment on Church Trusts, and deciding accordingly, does not invade the jurisdiction of the Church, or claim a supremacy in matters spiritual, or do anything inconsistent with the proper independence of the Church, is a position impregnable to all assaults. As my suggestion has not been followed, I say no more on the subject, beyond remarking that this principle being admitted, the charge of inconsistency is seen to be baseless. A man cannot be acting inconsistently with his recognition of the Church's supremacy, in asking the civil court to do what is not inconsistent with it.

There are other things which, but for the space already occupied, I would have referred to. In particular, there is a sentence which I am somewhat at a loss to know your correspondent's object in introducing. Conjecturing, however, that it is introduced for the sake of its first part, I would have liked to offer some remarks on the matter, of due submission to a majority, in regard to which, as already hinted, he appears to be under misapprehension.

There is one thing that I can hardly leave out particular reference to. His last paragraph is perhaps the worst thing he has written in the course of this discussion. It is hard for me to believe that he is so admirably innocent, as to think that my complaint respecting his improper use of his knowledge of my name had reference to his *third* letter, and not to his *second*, in which he introduced the matter of Church property. And how can I characterize his insinuation that I entertain a doubt in reference to the warrantableness of an application to the civil court in relation to the disposal of Church property? He knows from the questions I proposed, and which he cannot venture to answer, that I have no doubt on that point. To speak of such an application as an appeal from the decision of the Assembly to the civil court, is another instance of his inability to discriminate between things that are essentially different, and a begging of the question at issue. And any measure of good feeling, combined with the exercise of ordinary judgment, would have made him see that my avowed inability to say what I would do in certain circumstances, had no respect whatever to the cause which he insinuates.

In parting with "Presbyterian," as probably I now do, let me state an impression made on my mind by careful attention to what he has written. Having, as he says, been always suspicious that there was a deal of Erastianism in the "Highlanders," he cannot reasonably complain of one of them, founding exclusively upon a "conjunct view of his whole appearance," should express a suspicion of him. To be frank, I cannot direct my mind of the idea that he is championing Ultramontanism, and has been doing controversial *hocus-pace* in your columns. I can no more believe that he is an Ultramontanist, than I can believe

eral strain of his reference to Erastianism, and his low views of the Church, indicated, for instance, in his speaking of it as a "rotigious form," almost convince me that he is Erastian to the core.

I am, yours truly,

JAMES MURDOCH.

Eliza, Jan. 23, 1874.

WHAT ABOUT THE INEBRIATE ASYLUM?

How is it, Mr. Editor, that our excellent Ontario Government have said nothing of an Inebriate Asylum in the Governor's speech? Last year the hearts of thousands throughout Ontario were cheered by the proposal to erect such an Asylum for a class of men that are, alas! too numerous in the country. Many of themselves desire it as about the only hope they have of being able to overcome this fearful habit, which has become a desire that has affected their whole being, physical, intellectual and moral, and left them without purpose or decision of character, sufficient to enable them to say No, when the tempter enticed them to drink—just one glass for good-fellowship—when that is done they are gone.

Multitudes of sad and sorrowing relatives of such persons hoped that they would soon be able to place their weak brethren and sisters under the care of able, wise, and kind physicians, who would heal them as their symptoms required, and in due time restore them to their friends and to society, healed, and in their right minds. It is at once a most needy and charitable work, indeed; the most so of any in the land. While there are a few incurables from other causes, there are thousands from this cause who are not only helpless, but who cause a fearful amount of misery to their relatives, destroying their property, peace and happiness, reducing many families to beggary and wretchedness, and causing more sad and broken hearts than all other causes put together. The wife of one of these unfortunate lately spoke to me with tears, asking if the Asylum was going on, and saying what a blessing it would be to many a family. I do trust that this most needed of all charitable enterprises in our day will not be permitted to fall through, because of any chicanery policy; for let the government be assured that they will be sustained in this by the great majority of the best and most intelligent of the land.

A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE O. T. AND PROHIBITORY LEAGUE.

Teetotalism and the Church.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I have read "Prohibition" in your issue of 12th ult. very carefully, and cannot help making a few remarks on it. I may promise, however, that I have no wish to enter on the defence of Professor McLaren, as that gentleman is much more able to defend himself than I am, were that necessary; nor do I wish to palliate, or explain, the apparent inconsistency of the General Assembly. But I do wish to say, that I for one would be sorry to see total abstinence made a term of communion, until it is clearly shown that it is one of God's terms, and not man's. "All extremes are dangerous" is an old and tried proverb, and I am very much averse to seeing such an extreme introduced into our Church. It appears to me that teetotalism partakes too much of the idea of retiring to the cloister or the nunnery for safety, instead of trusting to our Heavenly Father in the midst of temptations that lie in the path of duty. That we are to deny ourselves for the sake of a weak brother or sister, we admit, but this does not refer to one thing, but to everything, and the denying at times for a weak brother supposes gratification, where no weak brother is concerned. I would be sorry, indeed, to make the door into the Lord's Supper narrower than it is, or was intended to be. I remember hearing a respected and beloved official of the U. P. Church say, that "when he was a young man he was a rigid teetotaler, but in a mature years his severity had relaxed, and now wines were kept in his house for the accommodation of those accustomed to the use (not abuse) of them." Another disjunct subject referred to, was driving on Sabbath, and he said, "when in London first, he would not put his foot in a cab or omnibus, but now he used all the ordinary means of conveyance, as he found that his extreme view in this, as in other cases, did away with his opportunities both of doing good and getting good." His lengthened experience has shown him the danger of extremes, and he has relinquished them for more moderate views. We need scarcely say, he was not alone in steering such a course, as we have met one or two prominent men here who have followed in the same footsteps, experience being the guiding star in every case. In fact, we have seen this teetotalism alienating the members of a faculty; we have known of it separating the members of a Church, and we would be very sorry to repeat the experience in the various Churches of our denomination.

We yield to no one in our anxiety to abstain from anything for the sake of a weak brother, but this is a very different thing from abstaining on account of some strong-minded advocates of teetotalism, and we do object to the latter. We trust that the way is far distant when such a term of communion will be thrust upon us, and we suggest to our teetotal friends the medical caution, "when uncertain what to do, do nothing," as being very appropriate to the present case, where there is no warrant for a change in Scripture.

I am,
Yours faithfully,