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Contributors and Correspondents.

THE ELDERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—I notice in your issue of 13th February, a contribution on the qualifications and duties of the ruling elders, in which, while there is a good deal of sound advice as to the qualifications of those called to this high office, and the duties revolving upon such, I find lurking some errors very generally prevalent in the church on the subject, and I am sorry to say engrafted into its constitution. For instance, your contributor says a session is composed of the Pastor and Ruling Elders, &c., now sir I find in my reading of the Apostolic Epistles, but two classes of office bearers in the churches, viz., elders, bishops or overseers, and deacons. The one class having oversight of the spiritual affairs of the church, the other of its temporal. I find no distinction made in the qualifications required of bishops, and so superiority of rank conferred upon such of their number as by natural gifts or education were better fitted to conduct the religious services of the church than others, true they were devoutly honoured who were able to do so, as were those who ruled well and wisely, but I have yet to learn that this gave them any precedence over their brethren in the government of the church. I say then a session according to the Word of God is composed of the elders of a congregation only.—your contributors theory is only a modified episcopacy.

I also deny that the elders are lay representatives of the congregation. When called to this high office they are ordained into the ministry of the church and are accountable to the great head of the church alone, in fact the terms *clerical* and *clergy* have no warrant in the word of God, but all elders are alike spiritual.

Your contributor from the false views he entertains of the office necessarily limits both the qualifications and duties of the eldership, and gives countenance to the idea that a certain portion of the members of a session are mere satellites revolving round a central sun.—The whole question is one, however, requiring more time and space than I can at present devote to it, involving the germ of priestcraft, and supremacy in the church. I therefore conclude by inviting your contributor to examine once more the New Testament before he prepares another article on the subject.—PRESBYTER.

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY.

A correspondent of the St. John Presbyterian Advocate writes as follows on one question which was before the recent Assembly in Australia:—

"The Presbyterian Assembly held its annual meeting in November, and it may be safely affirmed that people of all persuasions of religion and those of no religion were keenly interested in one, at least, of the topics discussed at the sitting. The Deceased Wife's Sister was the person dignified by the notice taken of her by the assembled divines. By one party of the reverend convocation she was accused, and by another excused. One side justified her in like the fair Rebekah, she should say—"I will go with this man;" by the other she was stigmatised as an incestuous person. To the law and to the testimony to settle this matter said the one, to the Confession of Faith said the other. Persons about to marry appeal to another code altogether—to the statute book of this colony, which now permits a man to marry his deceased wife's sister. The Queen sanctions the procedure in Victoria, and also in South Australia, and probably, looking to the direction of public opinion, she will do it at the request of other communities of her royal subjects ere many years. It must be said that the Presbyterian Assembly of November, 1873, in the city of Melbourne, distinguished itself by coming to a vote affirming, by a majority of 61 to 23, that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is wicked and incestuous. All Presbyterian ministers and congregations are warned against countenancing such practices. It is evident, from the martyrlike spirit which was displayed on both sides, that conscientious men are ready to burn others, or be themselves burned at the stake, in the 19th century, for the sake of truth and the Confession of Faith. Speeches have been made, sermons preached, pamphlets printed on this vexed question, and yet, as in the case of the Tielborne trial, people are divided of opinion. One popular preacher in Melbourne has made up his mind to remain in the Church for three years in the hope that his counsels will then prevail; but that if the Confession of Faith is to be set above the Bible, then there must be a disruption. Of course, that is the way to bring about unanimity of views. In the meantime, the majority regard themselves as martyrs, who stand that this matter should be one of endurance."

As the Spanish proverb says, "He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him," so it is in travelling: a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge.

THE "INFERNAL STUFF."

BY REV. THEODORE L. GALLER.

Our brave brother, Mr. D. L. Moody, threw a well-aimed shell into the great Christian Convention, assembled in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, a few days since. Several noblemen and hundreds of clergymen were present. Among the practical questions proposed for Mr. Moody to answer, was this one: "What should be done in regard to the intemperance among us?" This touches Scotland right "on the raw, for the national curse is the bottle. Brother Moody gave this condensed reply: "That is a large question, and would take a long time. But as I come from a land where the ministers scarcely ever touch the *infernal stuff*, I think it will be a happy day for Scotland when every minister hurls the intoxicating cup from his own table. Then they would have great influence with their people."

This short, sharp speech produced a prodigious impression. It is already widely published, and commented on by the Scottish press. Had some of the rest of us Yankee teetotallers blurted out so plump a rebuke, it might have provoked some warm retorts. But Mr. Moody is *king* just now in the mighty work God is calling him to, and he has the royal prerogative to speak out his own mind. If that one pithy sentence of his could be heeded, the whole face of Scotland would be changed in a twelvemonth. Hitherto the mass of her churches, and a majority of her ministers, have clung to the drinking usage with a terrible tenacity. Alcoholic drinks have been supplied, in ample quantities, and freely used in the refreshment-rooms of the General Assembly! At the hospitable dinners given in Edinburgh during the sessions of the Assemblies, wine and ales were furnished almost universally. If this glorious revival now in progress shall banish the bottle from the houses of Scottish Christians, the way will be cleared for a thorough reformation among the masses.

There is a moral power gained by calling bad things by their right name. If "intoxicating beverages," and "vicious stimulants," slip into good people's houses, under mild euphonious epithets, they do not excite alarm. But suppose that Rev. Dr. — should offer a glass of Madeira, or of hot toddy to Judge —, with the startling invitation, "Come, Judge, try a glass of the *infernal stuff* with me! Would the tittle taste quite so palatable, and go down quite so smoothly?"

For one, I thank brother Moody for a well-chosen name for the bitterest curse that has ever stolen in, under respectable skirts, to destroy households, and to damn souls. The shot fired in Edinburgh ought to echo over our own land. The "infernal stuff" still nestles in thousands of Christian families in America. Ladies in influential families still offer it at weddings, and at evening parties. It stands on the tables of thousands of church-members. The sons of ministers, elders, deacons, class-leaders, and others who rule in Christ's flock, are often among the victims. Is it not time for a new crusade against the "infernal stuff" within the pale of the Christian Church?

The noble uprising of Western women to assault the dram-shops of Ohio and Indiana with spiritual weapons, is thrilling the nation. God speed them! They are extorting praise from even those secular presses that have never dared to sep a syllable against the rum-power. Although in some places their success may be but transient, yet they gain a temporary respite from the havoc of the "infernal stuff" in the community. They are demonstrating that women can do something besides baking bread and teaching Sunday-schools.

But how many people who applaud the Ohio ladies, will banish the "infernal stuff" from their own houses? During the present revival in my congregation, I have seen what need there is of exercising this demon of strong drink from the homes and the bodies of those with whom God's Spirit is striving. At this moment the noblest revival this nation ever had is just on one question, *Will the Church of Jesus Christ rise up against this "infernal" curse of the bottle and the dram-hop, with the same spirit and the same strength that Martha Luther rose up against Rome?*

Headship of Christ.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR,—That Mr. Walter Inglis may no longer remain in a state of perplexity as to what his Church believes, and what he himself has subscribed as his creed on the Headship of Christ, will you please request him not to read Mr. Stuart's book, but to read Chapters XVIII, XXV, XXVI, XXX, of that much neglected little book, the Confession of Faith.

Let any other Brother should be in a state similar to that of Mr. I. will you be so kind as to print this bit of information.

Yours,
ANOTHER ELDER.

I have known boys who were the despair of their hundred fathers and mothers, because, forsooth, they had the faculty of writing verses in their youth. They were regarded by these parents with a kind of curiosity, but they had no expectation for them except poverty, instead of purpose, said dependence. I have seen these same parents, many times, depending in their old age upon the ever-writing boys for comfort and luxury, while their practical brothers were toiling for their daily bread, unable to help anybody but themselves and their families. — J. O. I. —

Philos and Teetotalism.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MY DEAR SIR,—The first letter of "Philos" was weak and childish; his second is babyish in the extreme. Like the rest of the tipplers, he abuses what he cannot disprove. He complains that my language is "intemperate," but fails to show it. The fact of the matter is, the truth which my previous communication contained *stung* Philos, and he *winces* under it, therefore he calls it "intemperate." His use of the word of God will convince your readers that his brain is sadly muddled with beer, or something worse.

Towards the latter part of his communication he tries to blacken the character of temperance men by endeavoring to make them responsible for the evil that actually follows his own manner of living and that of his companions. No "views" can be too "extreme" against an evil which takes the fairest in our own land from the family circle, and drags them to a drunkard's grave! Four years ago, in the town of M—, I was called upon to attend the funeral of a man who led a drunken life, and at last hanged himself in a barn through the influence of strong drink. A few days after this, in the town of G—, a miserable drunkard put the muzzle of a gun in his mouth and blow his own brains out. Both these cases were the natural result of tampering with strong drink, and neither of them fifty miles from Toronto. I ask your readers, and I ask even "Philos" himself, can any views be too "extreme" to condemn a practice which *inevitably* leads to this as its *legitimate* result? "Philos" holds up both hands, and says "ah! but such 'extreme views' would drive these men right to the tavern! My good friend was till I in done. Were it in my power, I'd dry every cursed fountain where strong drink is manufactured, and every sink of iniquity where it is sold as a beverage—I'd even go further, and compel the "beloved officials of the U. P. Church" to take the last bottle out of his cellar, and Philos the last drop out of his parlour closet. And, if after all this an occasional drunkard would turn up, I'd be tempted, either to make him spend his time within the walls of the Granite Palace in Kingston, or send him to a lunatic asylum. I rhaps "Philos" will be good to tell us how such "extreme views" will have their "legitimate fruit in the ruin by drink," when they wouldn't *lose a drop* of drink in the land, or a drunkard when he could have access to it? If these views were carried out, there Philos'ous (if he has any) "would rise and call him blessed" instead of cursing his grey hairs, and the day in which they were born, for what they saw in their father's house, and the habit they learnt at his table.

BRUNSON.

Ennisville: 1 Feb., 20, 1874.

Union Must Go Forward.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—In your report of the late meeting of Toronto Presbytery, with respect to the question of Union, you correctly state that 14 voted for Rev. Dr. Topp's resolution, and 8 for Rev. W. Reid's amendment. Though this vote shows decisively how a large majority of the Presbytery feel in the matter; will you permit me to say that having attended the court during the whole day and taken a deep interest in the debate I regretted exceedingly that I was constrained to be absent for a few moments at the very time the vote was taken. Had I been present I would have voted for Dr. Topp's resolution. It is also a fact known to me that there were other ministers and elders of the Presbytery necessitated to be absent who would have voted on the same side. I feel anxious through the medium of your columns to make this known, from the deep conviction I now have that every legitimate influence ought to be brought to strengthen the Union cause. The closer I look at the present object of the movement the more do I feel persuaded that the cause of Union must go forward, it not to an immediate, at least to an early consummation, and to this conclusion I am helped by the contentings of the much respected brethren in our own Church who oppose it. When I read these letters I am constrained to say, surely it must be a good cause when men of such intellect, learning and earnestness of purpose can bring so very little by way of substantial argument against it. Were Erastianism to be dreaded at all in the United Church, I would be afraid, from the way in which some have written, lest it may be found among the brethren of our own Church who oppose. But feeling assured that whatever their theory logically interpreted might lead to, they would be found, as in the past, strictly orthodox in practice. I would not make even this fear any bar to Union. As to the sentimental pleadings, or that based upon the relation in which we now stand to the contentings of the past, if it can be shown, as I think it has clearly been, that no principle would be violated on either side by entering into union on the proposed basis, would it not be well, just at this point, as the lawyers would say, "to apply the statute of limitations" to those contentings, and so far as we are agreed, walk by the same rule and mind the same things. I do think it is too much to expect that those of us who have entered the Church since these contentings, and who may now see, or think we see, the finger of Providence pointing to us to go forward in this matter or Union, should be content to be told you must wait till the last moment of being existed in these days has died away. Besides, it may be truly said, whether the present discussions,

while they have certainly perplexed the mind of some, have done anything to remove difficulties, or to make clear in what position we really are in respect to the all important doctrine of the Headship. I for one, do confess to some sympathy with a brother who asks, "What does the U. P. Church teach on the Headship of Christ?" The basis may not be the best conceivable, but if it were to have specific points of doctrine enunciated I agree with those who say we ought to have *many more*. For important as is the question concerning the Headship of Christ who that looks at the tenaciousness of religious thought in the present day would not say we ought to have a definite article on the doctrine of inspiration, the supreme divinity of our Lord, the respect of provinces of reason and faith in matters of religion, and others that might be named. I have allowed this communication a little to exceed what my intentions was, in taking my pen, merely to mention how I desired to vote in the Toronto Presbytery.

Yours truly,
R. EWING.

Georgetown, 17th Feb. 1874.

Drinking Ministers in the Olden Time.

In the autobiography of Dr Guthrie, from which we made a few extracts a few weeks ago, it is stated that when the doctor was ordained, the fees for the ordination dinner usually given on such occasions at the expense of the young minister, amount to about a hundred and fifty dollars. The following description of what was not uncommon in those days would not be now appropriate even in Scotland, far less in Canada. There is something frightfully audacious, yet, at the same time, inexpressibly saddening the whole scene:—

"On this occasion one or two of the farmers were rather uproarious, and one minister got drunk before leaving the table. Some years thereafter, he was tried by the presbytery, and deposed by the General Assembly for drunkenness and other crimes.

"Nor, I may here state, was that an easy matter in those days. The Moderate party raised every objection to Church discipline, using all legal quibbles and quibbles and their unscrupulous majorities to shield the worst offenders. This person I refer to was notorious both for intemperance and lying, yet, not reckoning his expenses, it cost us, the ministers of the presbytery, about £500, and two whole years before we got him deposed.

"Looking more with pity on the misery to which deposition reduces a minister's wife and children than to the interests of religion and the Church, in such cases people are always slow and unwilling witnesses; and though not prepared to swear to a lie, will so hedge and dodge about, that it is difficult to get at the truth. After we had drawn out of them proof in the case of this man that on such and such occasions he talked arrant nonsense in the pulpit, or reeled in gait, and stammered in speech—exhibited, in fact, all the marks of drunkenness—on being asked whether he was drunk, they slipped out of our fingers like an eel; their answer was this, 'We'll no say, far less swear, he was drunk; he might have been but sick, or something of that kind; what kens?'

"We were thus losing our case, till we fell on another way of getting at the truth. This was by asking them, not whether he was drunk, but whether, without saying for a fact that he was so, it was their impression that he was drunk. Into this net most of them walked but one, a strong partisan of the offending minister, was clever enough to see that if he gave honestly the impression made on him by his minister's appearance and language in the pulpit on a particular Sunday evening, he would damage the cause he wished to defend.

"Besides other proofs of drunkenness, having drawn this out of him, that the minister, on that occasion, as he lolled over the side of the pulpit—being, in fact, unable to stand upright—said that he loved his people so much that he would carry them all to heaven on his back, I asked him, 'Now, John, when you heard him say so, what impression did so strange a speech make on you?'

"Others, to the same question, as unwilling witnesses as John, had already said that, though they would not say he was drunk, at the time they certainly thought so.

"But John showed himself to the occasion.

"'Well,' he replied, 'Master Guthrie, I'll just tell you what I thought. There was a great fat wife, you see, sitting in the seat before me, and thinks I, 'My lad, if you set off to the Kingdom of Heaven with that wife on your back, my certion, you'll no be back for the rest o' us in a hurry!'

"The clever escape, the ludicrous picture presented of — on his way through the sky with this enormous wife seated on his back, and the serious air with which John delivered himself of his reply, were irresistible. We were all convulsed with laughter, the culprit himself as much as any of us. So John left the field with flying colours.

Sabbaths, coming to quiet for a little while all the week-day toil, noise and strife of life, are like islands, green, fruitful and flower-laden, emerging at one from the midst of wild ocean and storm-tossed waves—oases in the sand-deserts, with cooling shade and pure water springing for the weary travellers.

Presbytery of Simcoe.

A special meeting of this Presbytery was held at Barrie on Tuesday, 17th Feb., for the purpose of disposing of an application made to the General Assembly for readmission to the ministry of this Church, and referred by the Assembly to the Presbytery. Six ministers, one elder, and the assessors, Dr. Lopp, Mr. J. M. King, and T. W. Taylor, Esq., were present. The case was at once proceeded with. The relevant papers were read. Mr. Wright was heard in support of the application. After discussion the following motion was made by Mr. M. Fraser, seconded by Dr. Topp. "That the Presbytery feel considerable anxiety in dealing with this application in consequence of the conduct of Mr. Wright in connection with his occupation of the Mission field at Muskoka, which seriously affected the interests of the Church in that district; yet, considering that there is no charge against his moral or ministerial character, or his doctrinal views, and without justifying in the least degree his proceedings since he was separated from the ministry of this Church, and looking to all the circumstances of the case, resolve to grant the prayer of his petition." It was moved in amendment by Mr. King, and seconded by Mr. T. W. Taylor:—"That the Presbytery, while sympathizing with Mr. Wright in the circumstances which have led him to make the application, now before it, to the General Assembly for restoration to the Ministry of this Church, finds itself unable, with proper regard to the interests of the Church, to entertain favourably." The vote being taken, four voted for the amendment, and five for the motion. Mr. W. Fraser from the chair intimated to Mr. Wright the decision of the Court, with appropriate counsel. The clerk was instructed to call for answers to the queries on the state of religion before next meeting.—ROB. MOODIE, Clerk.

Rev. George Bell L. L. D.

We (Walkerton Telegraph) clip the following from the Queen's College Journal, published at Kingston. The Presbyterian Congregation in connection with the Church of Scotland in Walkerton have much reason to congratulate themselves on their good fortune in securing for their Pastor such a scholarly and accomplished gentleman as Dr. Bell. His settlement here will be a valuable acquisition to the town, and eminently promises a happy and prosperous career for both Pastor and people. Referring to the close of his lectures to the Students in Queen's College, the Journal says:

Last week the Rev. Dr. Bell concluded his course of lectures on "Science in relation to Revelation." The time at his disposal did not permit him to go over all the subjects which he announced at the commencement of the course, and of which we published a synopsis at the time. The field which he proposed going over was so vast, and the subjects embraced were so interesting, engaging, as they do at the present time, the most serious attention of Scientists and Theologians, that it would require at least a whole session to overtake, in anything like an exhaustive manner, so extensive a course. But the learned Lecturer made the most of his time; and his treatment of the different subjects which came under review and discussion was certainly highly suggestive, and eminently calculated to stimulate thought and enquiry among his students, and this we deem one of the first qualities in a teacher. We think the College Authorities were very fortunate in their choice. Free from a spirit of dogmatism, thoroughly conversant with his subject, and imbued with a profound reverence for, and a strong faith in the Christian Religion, Dr. Bell is well fitted to impart correct and liberal notions on so important a branch of human knowledge as "Science in relation to Revelation." An ardent and cultivated student of Science himself, and acquainted with its latest developments, he is qualified from a Scientific point of view to deal with those so-called objections to Revelation arising from discoveries in Science. It must be admitted that too many Theologians of the day measure lance with Scientists and come out of the lists ignominiously, because, instead of meeting the foe with his own weapons, they endeavour to compensate for the feebleness of their defence by enveloping the subject in a cloud of turgid declamation or flowery rhetoric. In his lectures before the Theological Students Dr. Bell avoided this mistake. He dealt with the objections urged against Revelation in a fair and impartial manner, ignoring no theory supposed fallacious, until he had patiently examined and disproved its claims. Apparent discrepancies between the facts of Science and Revelation he removed, and showed how these discrepancies arise, either from hasty and imperfect generalizations, or from a misinterpretation of the Divine Record. His style is simple, easy, and perspicuous; and his courteous manner made him very popular with his students. We would be very glad to see him a regular professor of the College. The success which has attended the course of lectures just concluded, shows that his ripe scholarship, his critical powers, and good judgment render him eminently suitable for such a position.

Truth, whether a part or out of it, is the measure of knowledge and the basis of understanding; without it, we are lost; however, as being by reason, or recommended by rarity, something out of the ordinary, or something strange.