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Correspondence.

CHURCH FALLACIES.

of the "Orkney Herald."

Argument in favour of the continuation of the Church is often stated, both in the press, that the Established Church is the means of bringing religious instruction to the masses, and that in the poorer districts. This is a grievous mistake, and very mischievous with open eyes can see the error around and see what voluntarism has done in the last century in Scotland it was a relief to tens of thousands, and to hundreds of thousands, who were under the yoke of bondage. In the case of the Established Church, it has been the means of erecting churches, with their manse and schools, the United Presbyterian nearly 600 manse; while other dissenting churches about 200. With regard to the Church raises somewhere about £400,000; and the other dissenting sum according to their reports is over and above what they may have to pay to support their Established churches there are about 1800 dissenting churches in Scotland—a considerable number. The Establishment has; and these are raised about £1,000,000 for work in connection, and by bringing the Gospel to the poorest of the kingdom, as well as sending missionaries far more mission work among the heathen than the State Church has done. And we told that voluntarism is a failure. We fail to see it. History and experience are that voluntarism has been the backbone of spiritual life in the Church in all ages. And what would have been the state of the Church but for this despised principle? Look at Switzerland, to all the European Kingdoms, how it has crushed out spiritual life in the churches there with rationalism. In the last century the same process going on in the Scotch and English churches when large secessions from both took place, which kept alive spiritual life in the people both in the Secession and Established Churches. What was the state of our own as well as other parts of the country under the reign of Moderatism fostered by the State? Secession came to these desolate regions? People were living in ignorance and superstition without the knowledge of the Gospel, although there were so called pastors of the Establishment in every parish. The truth is, to all appearance, spiritual life would have been extinguished under the ministrations of this Establishment. With regard to the ministrations of the Gospel, therefore, has not been in voluntary principle, but in the State-supported Establishment may have been the means of bringing churches in every parish, but what of that in many cases the ground was pre-occupied by Dissenters? And how have many of them got there? Has it not, in many instances, by poor farmers and other small proprietors, the threat of legal penalties? And what benefits these churches when built? Is it not the upper classes? So it appears these churches, in many instances, are put up, kept in and supported by these poor proprietors for the benefit of the rich.

It will be found that in these poor districts, in Shetland, Orkney, and especially in the Highlands, the Established Church is attended by handfuls, while the Dissenting Churches have a greater part of the population attached to them. The means of instruction are not within the reach of all. She has been neglected in these parts, and not the voluntaries, so well known that the providing of religious instruction for the poor is done as effectively, and more honourably, by non-Established Churches, by any State Church in the poorest districts of the country.

ing provided religious ordinances for the people, it is complained by the State Church that who choose to separate themselves from her communion, and out of envy at her supposed high position, demand her disestablishment and endowment. This is another mistaken notion. The truth is Dissenters did not choose to be established. They left it very unvoluntarily. For want of spiritual independence were forced out, both in the last century and present, and after they came out both parties adhered to the Establishment principle; but they have now got to see, by practical experience, the benefits of voluntarism, they much prefer to do without any account return. Having thus the benefits of this principle, they wish the Church to enjoy the same privileges with dissenters, and not to degrade the Church, as men say, but to lift her up above the influence of the State into the enjoyment of the same spiritual privileges with themselves.

It is also said in some quarters that the State enjoys even more freedom than Dissenters. We confess we do not understand what can be said by this, unless it be that she takes to the freedom to give a resting place and refuge to delinquents from discipline in Dissenting congregations, or to allow her ministers and teachers without remonstrance, to teach and publish her subversive of the Gospel, or to go forth and levy taxes on poor heritors for the support of a favoured Establishment.

more than this; we are told that the maintenance of ordinances of religion in connection with the existing Establishment was preferred by the pious liberality of their forefathers ten or twelve hundred years ago. We are told that it is from the produce of what are called donations, bequests, and mortgages in ancient times the clergy are maintained at the present day. We are also told that to meddle with this is to commit robbery that it is sacrilege, and answer to these statements we quote the State Church by Mr Williamson, a candidate for the St Andrews Burghs, in his real facts as he states, "that the ancient endowments given to the Roman Catholic Church were chiefly in the hands of monasteries, higher clergy, were to a great extent by them on the eve of the Reformation remained was either kept by the monasteries and bishoprics were supposed to be conveyed to favourites of the part of the stipends of the Establishment is derived from that source. The income of the Roman Catholic endowments, which are not and never were a bequest or voluntary contribution, are imposed under legal sanction, could successfully resist paying, have since the Reformation been in the hands of the Crown and of the heritors, who are now law to contribute out of them such stipends as the existing Presbyterian Church as from time to time may be appointed by the heritors." To speak of these endowments as the property of the Church and as the bequests of the Presbyterian Church of all amount of lamentable ignorance, do well to try to dispel, even in the most liberal circles. The property is not the Church. And in so far as the Christian Church enjoys the benefit of it there does not exist that property in the eye of the law which the condition of Scotland demands, and which it is the function of Liberalism to secure.

noticed some other fallacies, but I already too far on your space.—I

ELECTION TACTICS.

To the Editor of the "Orkney Herald."

SIR,—The other day I came across a fac simile of a ballot paper which had been sent to an elector during the contest between Laing and Badenoch. The evident intention of the sender was to show how the real ballot paper should be filled up. Above the names of the two candidates were printed the words—"Great care should be taken that a cross is placed on the paper as shown below." The peculiar thing was that on this paper the "cross" was placed opposite Badenoch's name. This paper was evidently the production of the Tory party, and intended to mislead illiterate voters, so as to secure more supporters for their candidate. Should the same tactics be followed this time, I trust the electors will take warning.—I am, &c., ARGUS.

WHY MR LYELL SHOULD BE SUPPORTED.

To the Editor of the "Orkney Herald."

SIR,—As I have received a circular from the Hon. Thomas Dundas, and a card from Mr T. W. Ranken, requesting my vote on behalf of Mr Dundas, allow me to state some reasons which prevent me from giving my vote to said gentleman. Mr Dundas, if returned to Parliament, will support the Tory party, whose past history shows that while it is far too prone to bluster and war, it is very averse to pay for the expenses so incurred; that while in opposition it is most obstructive to all home reforms, when in power it does nothing except on occasions it, for the sake of gaining popularity, tries to dish the Whigs.

The Government led by Lord Beaconsfield was, with the utmost difficulty, restrained by the Liberals from going to war with Russia in support of Turkey. It carried fire and sword into Afghanistan, contrary to every remonstrance and advice on the part of the Liberals and the Indian Council, and spent twenty millions of the Indian money and many valuable lives with the barren result of turning a friendly Power into a bitter enemy. It, on some paltry pretext, invaded and met with disaster in Zululand. It annexed the Transvaal, contrary to the desire of its inhabitants, which led to the Boer war. It joined France in meddling with the internal affairs of Egypt, which led to all our troubles there, and it left Ireland on the verge of rebellion. Such was the state of matters when the late Liberal Government came into power. Our troops were at once withdrawn from Afghanistan, and our old policy reverted to, viz., non-intervention with the internal affairs of the country, but a promise to support them against Russia or any external enemy. Thanks to this change of policy and the blunder made by Russia in attacking them, the Afghans are now again on friendly terms with us. Lord Beaconsfield gagged the Indian Press to prevent them exposing his nefarious dealings with Afghanistan. Mr Gladstone gave liberty to the press, and, as a consequence, when Russia threatened Afghanistan, the Indian Princes came loyally forward and offered their help against the common foe.

Few statesmen would have had the moral courage to withdraw from an unjust war after being defeated by a weak foe, as Mr Gladstone did when he discovered that the Transvaal had been annexed contrary to the desire of the Boers. Step by step the late Tory Government's interference with the finances of Egypt led us first to bombard the forts at Alexandria, next the subjugation of Arabi, then the withdrawal of Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan. It is convenient now for Tory orators to condemn the Egyptian and Sudan wars, but it was they who hounded on the late Government, not only to conquer, but to annex the pestilential deserts. The Tories had no objection to General Gordon being sent out, but when he failed to withdraw the Khartoum garrison, Mr Gladstone was called a murderer because he refused to sacrifice an army by sending them to relieve Gordon during the hot season, when, as we afterwards found to our cost, British soldiers can scarcely exist, much less stand and fight.

The late Liberal Government, while putting down crime in Ireland with a firm hand, at the same time neglected the hard question with a drastic measure. It has been the means of stopping agrarian crime. Due to their old instincts of not paying off debts, the Tories, with the assistance of the Parnellites, turned out the Liberal Government on the whisky tax, and as a return for such help the Coercion Bill was not renewed, and Ireland is at present the scene of boycotting and moonlighting. Parnell has ordered all his followers to vote for Tory candidates, and the Tories are thus acting with those who make it no secret that they wish Ireland separated from Britain.

Such is a resume of the past; now for a glance at the future. Mr Dundas, like others of his party, is a strenuous defender of the Established Church, because, among other reasons, he says the principles of this Church are conducive to religious liberty. Were Mr Dundas to take the trouble to read the history of the Church of Scotland, he would find that the connection between Church and State has been anything but conducive to religious liberty. It was to get such liberty that the United Presbyterian and Free Churches left the Establishment. During the ten years' conflict the Court of Session fined and threatened with imprisonment ministers who refused to ordain a drunken minister, and interdicted Dr Guthrie and others from preaching the gospel even in the open fields. Since then, no doubt, the State has granted the Church more liberty, but it has the power to withdraw that liberty when it suits itself, and the recent Sandwick case shows that even a large minority get but scant justice in the selection of a minister.

Mr Dundas refuses to grant free education to the children of the poor, but has no objection to pay large stipends to ministers who preach to empty pews. The Established Church has done its day, but is now antiquated and unworkable. The law is such that a minister can get a good house condemned, and heritors and fears compelled to build a most extravagant manse. Large numbers of almost empty churches have to be kept up throughout the country, while other districts would be entirely without religious ordinances were it not for the dissenting churches. The present state of church matters in Orkney is a scandal to religion. Two and three ministers in every parish, where one would be sufficient. State endowments is the bone of contention that at present keeps them from uniting. The U.P.'s and Free's would have united long ago were it not for the hankering after State pay that induced Dr Begg and a small party to threaten to break up the Free Church, rather than allow the union to take place. Withdraw State aid, and the various Presbyterian Churches will be forced to unite for the sake of economy, as witness Canada and Australia. The present voluntary subscriptions would provide handsome salaries were the number of churches reduced, and State Endowment would provide free education, and reduce the poor and school rates—a much more feasible plan of reducing Orkney and Shetland school and poor rates than that most extravagant method proposed by Mr Dundas, to nationalise these rates. Any one acquainted with parochial business knows that economy is not studied when a grant can be got from Government, and were the poor of each parish supported from a common fund allowances would be increased all round, and many now supported by relations and neighbours would be thrown upon the rates. This bait may catch a few votes in Shetland, but not in Orkney, where the rates would be increased instead of diminished were such an expedient adopted. We want home rule here, each parish to have its Parish Council, as each town has its Town Council, to manage both schools and poor. If those who disburse the money have also to pay the rates they will take good care that there is no unnecessary expenditure. At present the ratepayers in each parish have only two or three representatives on the Parochial Board, while the Established Church can send to the meetings the minister, who pays no poor rates, and five elders, who may altogether only pay a few shillings of rates. I have known, on more than one occasion, the minister and his elders, representing only a few pounds of rental, oppose with equal number of votes those who represented two-thirds of the rental of the parish.

It is of the utmost importance that we send a member of Mr Lyell's opinion to support Mr Gladstone against that unholy alliance of Parnellite and Tory, and that we send one as thoroughly conver-

sant as he is with Scotch business, to assist in passing a good Local Government Bill. Orkney, too, must show by her vote that she is prepared and waiting for disestablishment, and that the sooner that question is settled the better.—I am &c., A NEW ELECTOR.

A SUGGESTION TO OUR CONTEMPORARY.

To the Editor of the "Orkney Herald."

SIR,—The *Orcadian* in one of its leaders the other week said:—"That the Liberal Committee is not representative is patent to everybody excepting the wilfully blind. The great bulk of the electors in Orkney and Shetland belong to the crofter and cottar class. Is that class represented on the hole and corner committee? If not, where is its Liberal representative character? The fact is that among this class the greatest amount of dissatisfaction is to be found with the selection of the so-called Liberal Committee." If that mean anything, it certainly means that in the *Orcadian's* opinion the great majority of the electors belong to the Liberal party; and seeing that that is his conviction, had he not better ask himself if he is justified in bolstering up Mr Dundas with what he very well knows is only a false hope. Should he not rather advise him quietly to retire from the contest, and so save him further trouble and expense?—I am, &c., AN ELECTOR.

AMERICAN BEEF AT SOUTH RONALDSHAY.

To the Editor of the "Orkney Herald."

SIR,—The s.s. Express was observed to arrive in South Ronaldshay from Chicago having on board Dundas Brand, as supplied to the British Army. It was considered somewhat insipid of itself, and required an admixture of "Rosebery Sauce" to season it to the "Radical" palate. A few tins are reserved for Mr Lyell's analysis, who is expected to visit the neighbourhood on an early day next week. It is to be hoped it will prove of advantage to "Iota's" impaired digestive functions. I may add it was larded "free of duty."—I am, &c., AN OBSERVER.

A CRITICISM OF CHURCH DEFENDERS.

To the Editor of the "Orkney Herald."

SIR,—With your leave, I would beg to make a few remarks on some statements advanced by some members of the Kirkwall Church Defence Association. Mr Macrae says that "no Church can entirely free herself from the State, nor can the State, be it ever so desirous, free itself from the Church. Some Churches have made the attempt to free themselves from State control, but as the records of the Civil Courts show, these attempts have resulted in failure." While the State has a certain control over every individual, this general power is very different from what it exercises over those who are directly in its service and receiving its pay. The latter is the position of the Church of Scotland. She is paid by the State, and the State shows its power by altering her constitution and showing in a way which has never been done with any laws in non-Established Churches. Yet Mr Macrae tells us "she is the freest Church in Christendom—certainly more so than any of the non-Established Churches," showing wherein her freedom is so piously silent in the State gave the Establishment. Some time ago considered to be a little lished Church what was of her ministers. This more liberty in the election of a petition to Parliament was only given after repeated petitions, and the State ment on the part of the Church, sure. Did Mr Macrae ever hear of any of the Dissenting Churches getting up similar petitions? Yet a Church of the can hardly move itself without the consent of the State he considers the freest in Christendom! and he really believes what he says, his ecclesiastical education is shamefully deficient.

Speaking of the Church's endowments, Mr Macrae says—"It used to be argued by her opponents that her revenues were a tax upon the community, but that argument is now seldom heard. The historical light that has been thrown upon the discussion has convinced most people that the endowments from which the revenues of the Church are derived were the free-will offerings of pious Christians in bygone ages, who desired the extension and perpetuation of Christianity in the land." It is a great pity some of the "historical light" which has been so convincing had not been reflected in Mr Macrae's speech. Had this been the case, he would have done incalculable benefit to the Church party, and would have influenced the public in a way that mere assertions will never do. He might, however, inform people how he came by the information that all owners of land were at one time "pious Christians," and how it came about that all these took the peculiar power of leaving a burden on landed property for the extension of Christianity.

Mr Macrae also says—"It has been said by persons whose opinions are entitled to weight, that the Established Churches in this kingdom are the bulwarks of Christianity." He is not exactly clear on this point, but solemnly gives it as his opinion that if the Established Churches were overthrown "the non-Established would not long survive. Their existence seems to me to be inseparably bound up with the existence of the Established Churches." Let Mr Macrae compare what spiritual life existed in the Church of Scotland before there was any dissent with what there is now, and he will, I have not the least doubt, own that the existence of the Church of Scotland as a Church of spiritual life, is inseparably bound up with the existence of the non-Established Churches.

Mr Walker, again, tells us that the Church of Scotland is entirely the Church of the people! She has all along ranged herself on the side of those who have opposed all reforms, so long as it was safe to do so. Look how bitterly she opposed the Education Act—an Act which has already borne fruit in the elevation of the masses. And yet we are told she is the Church of the people. Well may the people pray to be delivered from such friends. He also says it is a most undesirable state of matters that the poorer congregations should be helped by their wealthier brethren. Mr Walker's opinion is entirely at variance with that of St Paul, who more than once commended those who had contributed to the support of their poorer brethren. Whether St Paul or Mr Walker's opinion is entitled to most weight, I leave the public to judge.

Again, Mr Walker says—"We are told that by disestablishment the people will be relieved of payment for education, by appropriating for educational purposes the money that is now used for supporting the clergy. This, however, is a mistake. The money would only be differently applied, but not applied to the relief of the people in any shape whatever." Does Mr Walker really believe that the people, who have now the making of laws in their own hands, will not apply that money to their relief "in any shape whatever?" If they do not they will have themselves to blame.

Disestablishment, in the opinion of Mr Walker, would not promote union among the Churches. If a man does him a great injury he is not the man with whom he would prefer to co-operate. It would be his duty to have as little as possible to do with that man. Has Mr Walker never found, in his experience, that a man whom he thought at one time was doing him a great injury was in reality his best friend. This is just the way with the Established Church. Her present supporters will soon find, after her disestablishment, that those who have been instrumental in bringing that about have been the Church's best friends.

Again we are told that if disestablishment come, "thousands of poor labouring men will be entirely deprived of Church ordinances." Can Mr Walker point to a single instance in Dissenting Churches where any person was deprived of Church ordinances on account of his poverty. And if the Church of Scotland, when disestablished, does not do likewise, the greater it will be to her shame.

Both Mr Walker and Mr Macrae have shown their entire ignorance of the working of Dissenting Churches. I would advise both to get better information on the subject, when, I have no doubt,

SIGMA.