

To the Editor of the Record.

HAMILTON, 26th Feb., 1851.

DEAR SIR,—

I was glad to see, in your February number, a communication from Mr. Murray of Montreal, in regard to the Widows' Fund scheme, and to find that the leading features of the plan are approved of by him, as indeed they have been by all who have given an opinion on the subject.

With regard to the want of "explicitness" in the clause to which Mr. Murray refers, he must at once see that the resolution which he commends, of leaving details to the Synod, is the very cause of this vagueness. It was scarcely possible to be more "explicit" without entering into details; and the expression "average sum," as I think, clearly and necessarily implies that the circumstances and number of the family are to be taken into account in the allotment of the annuity. I may add, however, that the views of the Committee, as far as I have been able to ascertain them, are nearly at one with those of Mr. M., viz., that a single widow should receive (as may afterwards be determined by the Synod) £25 to £30, and £5, £10, or £15, or more, according to the number of children, and that for two reasons,—first, because it is but just; and secondly, because by making the allowance for the children to cease at the time when each child shall be able to provide for itself, which in Canada is comparatively at an early age, it will be less burdensome to the fund.

A provision for superannuated Clergymen is most desirable, but let us first provide for the widow and the orphan; that effected, the next step will be comparatively easy.

Various considerations deterred the Committee from naming a larger sum than £1000 to £1500, as the foundation of the fund; to these it would be inexpedient to allude; it is needless, however, to say, that they will be delighted if Mr. M.'s anticipations should be realized,—nor, looking at the details, does it seem to me impossible, or even very difficult to realize them. Meantime, the matter is in the hands of the congregations of the Church, and if they will act on the suggestion of Mr. M., and resolve that the present year's contribution of £1000 or £1500 shall be an instalment of the more enlarged scheme of Mr. M., the exertions of the Committee will be crowned with a success far beyond what they had ventured to look for.

The co-operation of Mr. M., and men of a kindred spirit, will greatly contribute to the success of our object. And, in conclusion, let me once more intreat the ministry and office-bearers of the various congregations, and every liberal-minded and right-hearted man in our Church, to use their utmost endeavours to forward the object of the Committee, as a scheme which, if successful, will confer lasting benefits both on ministry and people; if unsuccessful, will tend to paralyze the exertions of the Church, and will clothe her with shame.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

G. ELKSLY.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR SIR,—

Permit me on behalf of the members of the Students' Missionary Society of Knox's College, to acknowledge through your columns the receipt of several numbers of the *Madras Native Herald*, per Mrs. Esom, to whose indefatigable, though unostentatious zeal, both our Society and the Church owe so much. At her request, the Rev. P. Rajahgopal, whom she met during a recent visit to Scotland, has kindly sent us this deeply interesting paper. We trust it will not be without effect in drawing closer the ties which unite us to our brethren in India, and helping us to realize that the whole family of Christ, how-

ever widely separated geographically, is one band labouring in a common cause, and fighting against a common enemy. These papers contain much cheering information regarding the Free Church Mission in Madras. The account of the annual examinations of the schools, male and female, which contain 1700 pupils, is fraught with interest and encouragement to the friends of India.—The night has long reigned, but already the faint beams of light in the eastern sky announce that "the morning cometh," when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.

W. McLAREN, Secretary.

KNOX'S COLLEGE,
22nd March, 1851.

To the Editor of the Record.

MONTREAL, 19th March, 1851.

MR. EDITOR,—

When I sent you Mr. Murray's letter on the Widows' Fund scheme, which is inserted in the *Record* for February, I prefaced it with a few lines, by way of introduction. These, however, you did not insert, I presume on account of the crowded state of your columns. When the communication had reached you. I did regret that they had not been inserted, simply because without them, or some other notice, your readers must have wondered how Mr. M.'s letter, addressed to myself, and not to the Editor, found its way into the *Record*. The truth is, that as I have expressed a favourable opinion of Mr. M.'s views on the fund, especially his plan of raising a larger capital than that contemplated by the Committee, he wrote them out for me, that I might myself, and in my own name, bring them before the Committee. But I sent them to you, almost against the consent of the writer, as I believed his name would give more weight to them than my own. The temporal Committee, in my own congregation, have resolved on acting on the scheme as recommended by the Committee, though they have declared their preference for raising the larger sum by termly payments. And I may only say, and that on account of the somewhat sharp remark of A. D. F. in your last, that this would have been the true way of drawing out, both here and elsewhere, large subscriptions to the Fund, while I think it would not have delayed the carrying out of the scheme.

Begging the insertion of this explanation, and wishing the Fund all success,

I am, &c.,

WM. RISTOUR.

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

We meet on all hands with cavillers at the simple, but mysterious, doctrine of grace, and frequently with those who either try to reduce every thing to the level of their own reason, or reject all that they cannot comprehend. The creed of such persons would be a small tract.

Vinet, in his *Christian Philosophy*, shows that it is *unjust* to demand of God, what he does not owe us:—

"If a claim so unjust be admitted, where I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than he has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you,—the agreement of the Divine prescience with human freedom—the origin of evil and its ineffable remedy—the incarnation of the eternal Word—the relations of God-man with his Father—the atoning virtue of his sacrifice—the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter—all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the word of the Apostle, stoop to explore their depths and cannot. If you reproach the Eternal for having kept the knowledge of

these Divine mysteries to himself, why do you not reproach him for the thousand other limits he has prescribed to you? Why not reproach him for not having given you wings, like a bird, to visit the regions which, till now, have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses, which he has, perhaps, granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on the earth? Ah! you do not reproach him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits, which suspends, in so many wretches, the feeling of grief;—that night, during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads with the opiate of sleep, the thick veil of oblivion; that night, which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars not known to the day, reveals the Infinite to our enraptured imagination. Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of Divine mysteries,—night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is a revelation; where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations he has permitted us to form to himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity, by the thought that the Being who has humbled himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigned before all time, who includes in himself all existences and all conditions of existence,—the centre of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of every thing! So, that, if you are just, instead of reproaching him for the secrets of religion, you will bless him that he has enveloped you in mysteries."

SHORT COMMENTS ON THE PSALMS.

PSALM XI. *For the Leader of the Music. By David.*

1. In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain!

Those who, according to the warrant of God's gracious covenant, commit themselves to his guidance and keeping, will distrust the counsels of timid friends, especially when they suggest carnal expedients for the avoiding of dangers.

2. For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

Unbelief always magnifies dangers, and quails before them; though, it is too true, that persecutors often exhibit the patience and the cunning of the fowler, in their plots against the people of God.

NOTE.—This verse and the one that follows, are part of the address that had been made to the Psalmist by some timid friends, and for which he is expostulating with them.

3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

There are always some who, from eminence of station in the Church, and their piety and talents, may be regarded as pillars; and when, at any critical period, these are taken away, the timid are apt to think that the cause of God must be ruined, and they discourage even the stout-hearted with their fears.

NOTE.—With most of modern interpreters, we take the word "foundations," in the sense of "pillars."

4. The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord