

REMUNERATION OF PROBATIONERS.

MR. EDITOR, Two communications have appeared in your paper on the above subject. The reference in both of them to St. Andrew's congregation, Chatham, requires refutation. I do not say that the writers willfully misrepresent the matter, but they both do the congregation an injustice by what they state. The impression conveyed by both writers, if not clearly stated, is, that St. Andrew's congregation was in the habit of *paying no more* than eight dollars per Sabbath for supply. This is simply not true. It sometimes cost the congregation more than thirty dollars per Sabbath for supply during their vacancy. This happened by bringing ministers from a distance to give them a hearing as candidates. Probationers were frequently sent to supply their pulpit, that the congregation would rather have paid to remain away; and one of the above writers was one of them. This was repeated so frequently that the congregation wished to supply their own pulpit, and hear men of their own selection. But before this privilege was granted, they had sometimes to pay two men for the same Sabbath. The Presbytery sent one, whom the congregation paid not to preach, and paid the man of their own selection as well. I charge no one particularly with this, but the fact occurred. Both the above writers declare that St. Andrew's congregation violated the law of the Church both in the spirit and letter, when they only paid eight dollars per Sabbath. What law do these men mean? The law that was in existence when Rev. Mr. Burr supplied St. Andrew's pulpit was the law of 1876. That law was complied with, both in the spirit and letter, as far as his case was concerned. Here is the law: "And there shall be paid by the Presbytery and sub-committee conjointly for a licentiate or ordained minister a minimum of eight dollars (\$8) per Sabbath with board." The Presbytery were satisfied that the law was complied with, and its provisions fully met in Mr. Burr's case, and hence their just decision. The congregation paid Mr. Burr just at the same rate as they had paid their previous pastor. The law of 1877 was not in existence when Mr. Burr preached in St. Andrew's, and that being the case, its provisions were not violated. I ask you, then, if the harsh terms used in "Equity's" letter are applicable to St. Andrew's congregation, or are they in keeping with the cause he attempts to advocate? "Lacking common honesty," "no conscience," "withholding the hire of the laborer," are the terms used by the "simple proportion" man in King. He is utterly ignorant of the matter he attempts to discuss, as far as St. Andrew's congregation is concerned, for if he understood all the particulars he would not have said that the Presbytery "snubbed the applicant for redress," or that the law of the Church was violated either in the spirit or letter. Perhaps the approaching Assembly may act on his suggestion, and appoint the small committee he speaks of. That committee is to be. "Principally elders, men of good sense and business habits, to devise a system that would be as much a credit as the present is a disgrace to the Church." This is pretty hard on the ministers who formed the present scheme. Perhaps the Assembly in its wisdom may appoint "Equity," and declare at the same time that his dictum shall be infallible, and his scheme remain in force for all time to come. I do not wish to question the wisdom of the brethren who framed the present scheme regarding the payment of Probationers; but it does seem to me unreasonable that they should be paid at the same rate as the regular pastor, who has all the business and work of the congregation to attend to. He must visit the sick in season and out of season; attend his weekly meetings; officiate at funerals; and work incessantly for the spiritual welfare of all around him; while on the other hand, the Probationer, as a rule, does nothing except the Sabbath day work.

It may not be easy to amend matters so as to give satisfaction to all concerned; but to my certain knowledge the Probationers' List has not been satisfactory to the Probationer himself, nor the supply given by that list satisfactory to vacant congregations.

Chatham, April 8th.

JOHN R. BATTISBY.

A CHURCH BUILDING FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—A few weeks ago a letter appeared in the PRESBYTERIAN on this subject, and in your issue of the 15th inst. your correspondent "Madoc" evidently feels the want of such a fund. It is perhaps a little strange that such a capital idea has not

occurred to the mind of any one before; but now that the subject has been broached, it is worth while considering. Certain it is that such a fund is badly wanted, and if secured would be a great blessing to many small congregations (and large ones too) which are now laboring under the great disadvantage of debt. This we all know is only too apt after a few years' continuance to take away from the life and usefulness of a congregation, and the onus usually thrown on to a few shoulders becomes too troublesome to bear.

The plan proposed by your Queensville correspondent seems to be a very feasible one, and would, I think, meet all requirements. Young places would soon come forward, and small congregations would be encouraged to build. At any rate, it is well worth considering, and it is to be hoped that some influential brother may be induced to take it up.

A CONSTANT READER.

Toronto, March 25th, 1878.

THE BELIEVER'S DESIRE.

1 Kings iii. 11, 12. Prov. iii. 13-18.

Oh let me ever walk in Wisdom's way,
That I may wiser grow, and day by day
Prove that her paths are pleasantness and peace;
And, therein walking, may my years increase
In fruitful days of labour and reward,
Of love, and joy, and peace, and sweet concord.
Grant me the work which angels most enjoy,—
A life well spent in Heaven's blest employ,
In deeds of love, and works of holy zeal,
And in that occupation may I feel
The kind approval of a God of grace,
Who owns His servants with a smiling face;
My work accepted, and my sins forgiven,
Bless'd while on earth and doubly bless'd in heav'n.

Toronto.

—J. IMRIE.

THE GRANT TO METIS.

MR. EDITOR,—I regret that absence from home during the whole of last week prevented me from replying at once to Dr. Cochrane's letter on the Metis grant, contained in your issue of the 5th inst. I venture to say that nine out of every ten readers will conclude that the Doctor's meaning is that were he not restrained by a sense of what is becoming and proper he could report conversations that took place in Committee that would seriously compromise me. Now, I must insist on Dr. Cochrane giving to the public, through your paper, whatever he has to say in this connection affecting me personally. Insinuations are unfair and unmanly, and I for one shall not tolerate them. The Doctor must have observed that in my reply to his first letter I carefully avoided making any personal references whatever, and contented myself with simply correcting the mistakes into which he had unconsciously fallen. The reply thus far was complete, nor could any more direct contradiction of the original statements be conceived, but I fear the Doctor has misinterpreted my motives for leaving unnoticed the delicate threats that were then confined to parenthetical clauses, or were peering out from between the lines. I do not believe that any member of that Committee has expressed a sentiment or cast a vote at its meetings that was not dictated by a sincere desire to promote the interests of our Home Mission field. Many of them perform, in a quiet, unostentatious way, a great amount of work in their respective Presbyteries, and they have a right to speak on these matters, even though it be to correct a mistake of the Convener, without being told that if they persist in such a course, damaging revelations will be made. The man who makes these insinuations does not, I think, act brotherly, but he who tamely submits to them forfeits all claim to the respect of his fellows. I say nothing further now, nor until the Convener's promised disclosures are made, and then I hope you will accord to me the privilege of speaking fully and fearlessly. Yours sincerely,

Montreal, April 12th, 1878.

MODERATORSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—I have recently observed several communications in your paper in regard to the Moderatorship of the next General Assembly, which do not appear to be very judicious. This keeping up of sectional distinctions after the different Churches have been united is not wise. The three large bodies which united to constitute the Presbyterian Church in Canada have each been honored by having a Moderator chosen from its ranks, henceforth let all sectional distinctions disappear. He can hardly be regarded as a friend to the united Church who insists unnecessarily

on sectional claims. The welfare of the whole Church should be the aim of all. A man should not be chosen for Moderator merely because he happens to occupy a prominent position in the Church, but because he is best qualified to discharge the duties of the office.

Maritime Provinces.

PRESBYTER.

OBITUARY.

MR. JOHN RATCLIFF OF EAST WHITBY.

The subject of this notice died suddenly at his residence in East Whitby on the evening of the 9th March. In his death, a loss of no ordinary kind has been sustained, not only by the congregation of which he was an active office-bearer, but by the general community which had so often called him to fill positions of trust and of power.

Mr. Ratcliff came to Canada in 1833, from Avondale, in the county of Lanark, and settled in the township of Whitby, where he has ever since lived, and where he has year after year grown in the esteem of the community whose advancement in every respect he had so materially promoted.

Mr. Ratcliff was a man of much more than usual intelligence. Although he had probably received in his youth no more education than that which the parish school of half-a-century ago afforded, such were his activity of mind, keenness of observation and application to study that he could take a creditable place in any council, and give an intelligent judgment alike both on civil and religious questions. He had not only an active mind, but an emotional nature, unusually warm and sympathetic. He had his feelings indeed under excellent control, but they were so strong as often to defy concealment on occasions fitted to call them into play. These high qualities of mind and heart naturally made him active and enterprising in all the affairs of the district. It was only their just recognition when he was appointed the first Reeve of the township of East Whitby, and afterwards, in 1863, the Warden of the county of Ontario.

Nature, as it will be seen, had done much for Mr. Ratcliff; he himself would have been the first to claim that grace had done still more. He had enjoyed the benefit of a good religious upbringing. It is but a few months since his excellent and godly mother, whose house stood beside his own, passed away. The religious influences which had been formed in his childhood and youth, were greatly assisted by those to which he was subjected shortly after his arrival in Canada. Though a young man at the time, he took an active part in the formation of the congregation which is now known as that of Columbus, and to its first minister, the late Rev. Dr. Thornton, he was probably more indebted than to any other person, for the course of life, of which so happily for himself and for many others, he was led to make decisive choice. While the minister of Oshawa continued to give his much valued services to the congregation in the rear, Mr. Ratcliff was one of his most earnest supporters and co-workers, as he was of the ministers who have successively occupied the pulpit of that church. The writer of these lines can never forget the kind appreciation and cordial assistance which he received at his hands when entering, without experience, on the duties of the ministry.

Mr. Ratcliff was ordained to the eldership in 1856, and continued faithfully to discharge its duties until his death. He was a wise counsellor in the Session, and an ardent advocate of progress in any direction which seemed to him to promise the promotion of the spiritual life of the congregation. He was frequently chosen to represent the congregation in the Superior Courts of the Church in which his counsel was much valued, and in this capacity was a member of the Assembly which met in Halifax last June.

He was an active and laborious Sabbath School teacher; keeping his mind open with the youngest, to any improvements in the method of instruction which the various associations and conventions of teachers had to suggest. In his ripe scriptural knowledge, earnest piety, and ardent affectionate nature, he had the main qualifications for success in any age or country. Many who are now wives and mothers in that district, will remember to the end of life how much they owe to his instructions and influence.

Mr. Ratcliff was a zealous temperance man, and was, we believe, at the time of his death, President of the South Ontario Dunkin Bill Association. He has been a magistrate for over twenty-two years, and in that capacity he enjoyed the full confidence of the com-