

able promenades and splendid scenery, but these have all been sketched by abler and more competent hands, so that the beauties and attractions of the ancient capital should be widely and extensively known. Just at present there is a pall over the city. The news of the death of the Pope has cast a temporary gloom over it, and masses are being said for the repose of his soul just at the time that we would suppose that a servant of God would have entered upon "that rest that remaineth for the people of God." Let us rejoice that the head of our Church is He that now liveth, and was dead and is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death. K.

Quebec, 12th February, 1878.

### THE MODERATORSHIP.

MR EDITOR, I observe that one of our Presbyteries has nominated Rev. Dr. Cochrane for the moderatorship of next Assembly. While feeling that the Assembly would be only honoring itself by raising to its chair a minister who has added to pulpit and parochial labors of a high order the responsible and multifarious duties of Convener of Home Missions, I would yet venture to remind the brethren of our Presbyteries that by a well understood principle of courtesy the next moderator should be chosen from the last of the four contracting parties in the matter of the union, which has not as yet been represented in the chair of the General Assembly. Dr. Cook, the first moderator of the united Church, ably represented the Synod of the Church of Scotland in the Upper Provinces. Then Dr. Topp was chosen from the Canada Presbyterian Church. Next, we have the present moderator from the roll of the Presbyterian Church in the Lower Provinces, the venerable Dr. Macleod. As it was generally understood at the time when the auspicious union was accomplished that the four bodies, which now compose the united Church, would be successively represented in the moderator's chair, it follows that the next moderator should be chosen from the late Synod of the Church of Scotland in the Maritime Provinces. After the present year, the Presbyteries will be free to nominate any one without respect of previous Church relationship; or the General Assembly itself may by acclamation appoint a man like Dr. Cochrane, who has distinguished himself so nobly in the service of the Church. Let me add that the Free Church of Scotland evidently considered the principle of Christian courtesy in elevating to its Assembly's chair the Rev. Dr. Goold, the able representative of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with which they entered into union. And in the same way, the Presbyterian Church of the Northern States did not consider herself free to elect any one as moderator, until the new school as well as the old had been represented in the chair of the Assembly. I am sure the principle of courtesy thus illustrated has only to be mentioned to secure the respectful attention of those who shall have the honor of electing the next moderator.

CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Toronto, Feb. 22nd, 1878.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES AND OBITUARY NOTICES.

MR EDITOR, I trust the modern literature coming under the above caption will be considered a fit subject of enquiry, whether or not it tends to edification, and the development of Christian life in the reader. I do not mean those pious fictions or highly colored realities, that pass under that name, specially manufactured to supply spiritual nourishment for our Sabbath School youth. I think there are very few that would venture to say a word in their defence. I mean the lives of real actors in the drama of Christian life. Biographical sketches apparently will soon be as common as funeral sermons. No sooner does any one who may have held rather a prominent position in life pass away, than immediately some relative or warm personal friend proceeds to enlighten the world on the irreparable loss they have sustained. To accomplish this, they endeavor to shew that their hero was as near by as possible the embodiment of perfection. Such a style of writing, I think can only be justified on the ground, that the world would have remained in ignorance of the varied virtues of the departed, if it had not thus been told them. We would justly condemn the artist who in drawing the portrait of our deceased friend should round off the angular features, smooth out the wrinkles, and successfully cover over every

defect that would detract from perfect symmetry and beauty. However much we may admire his production as a work of art, as a beautiful representation of the "human countenance divine," still I say we would condemn him as a cheat, should he persist in saying that it was a correct representation of our friend. Why should not the biographer and his work, be tested and treated in the same way. I venture to say that no great moral means of instruction or edification will ever be successful that has a lie (or at least only a part of the truth), as a foundation to rest upon. I am persuaded that could there be a law passed and enforced, prohibiting the writing the lives of the dead till twenty-five years after their decease, there would be much valuable time, and good white paper saved and made available for more profitable purposes. But since that cannot be, the question arises, How should they be written to produce the most benefit? I am strongly under the impression that the good to be derived from Christian biography, will just be in proportion to its faithfulness; that when the Christian graces that adorned the life of the departed are held up for our admiration and imitation, at the same time, his or her failings and defects should be just as clearly and faithfully portrayed, so that they would serve as beacons to warn us to avoid the rocks upon which the departed suffered damage in their life voyage. Such appears to have been the mode adopted by the inspired writers. Abraham's lack of faith in God's protection, leading him to deny his wife before a heathen king, is given as faithfully as the act of faith that entitled him to be called the father of the faithful. The sinful deceptions of Jacob, the prince that had power with God to prevail; the sin of the meek Moses, that precluded his entering the promised land; the gross sins of David the sweet singer of Israel; the folly and sins of Solomon, as well as his words of wisdom; Peter's sinful denial of his Lord and Master, as well as his faithful confession of him; these are all faithfully given, that all succeeding generations may profit thereby.

What a contrast to the above does modern biography present to us. I sometimes glance over some of those sketches to see if there are any indications that the parties whose sayings and doings are professedly given were sinners, and had frailties like the rest of us; and in those rare instances in which such imperfections are hinted at, it is not after the style of the faithful sacred historian, but rather that of the poet, as the evident intention is to make it appear that "Even their failings lean to virtue's side." When for example we find pride spoken of as proper self-respect, and niggardly sordidness denominated honest thrift, and so on to the end of the catalogue, we are then not surprised to find that the whole range of the English language is scarcely sufficient to supply adjectives in sufficient number and strength fitly to portray the exalted virtues, mental, moral, and spiritual, of the saint thus dressed up for our admiration. But, sir, this evil is on the increase; it is no longer being confined to those who have departed this life and therefore cannot be affected by this fulsome flattery. When it is becoming common to dose the living with it, it is time for us to pause and enquire whither it tends; for example, should a minister who may have discharged his duties in a respectable, ordinary sort of manner, tender his resignation to the Presbytery and purpose moving without its bounds, then the work of praise begins, after which, a committee is set apart to draw up a suitable minute of the virtues of the retiring member, and the estimation in which he is held, all of which is put upon the record. Now the danger I apprehend to be to the graces of sincerity and humility, which should be kept pure and bright, but in this process of laudation are sometimes in danger of having their lustre tarnished. But it is time to return from this digression, and for the present bring these remarks to a close by repeating the question with which we commenced, viz: Does the reading of modern biography tend to the edification of the Christian? Hoping that some abler pen will throw light on the subject, as I have at the present grave doubts of the propriety of the question being answered in the affirmative. EQUITY.

King, Feb. 21st, 1878.

MR. AND MRS. ROBERTSON were the recipients, on the evening of the 15th inst., of a handsome present of a study chair, cruet and egg-stand from the Bible Class of Knox Church, Winnipeg.

## MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.

THE church at Emerson, Manitoba, is to be finished this winter.

KNOX CHURCH, Elora, has decided to purchase an organ by a vote of thirty to seven.

REV. MR. MCKELLAR has gone on a mission tour to Little Saskatchewan, 150 miles west of Winnipeg.

REV. MR. CAMPBELL, of Rockwood, Manitoba, has gone for a week to Contract 15, C. P. Railway, on which there are above 1,000 men.

LETTERS received from Mr. Straith, Battleford, show him safely ensconced in Government House there.

A SOIREE was held in the Indian school house at Roseau, Manitoba, at which "Mitche" was greatly delighted.

GREAT anxiety and disappointment is felt in Manitoba at the failure to obtain a missionary for C. P. R., when \$1,000 salary is guaranteed from local sources.

A VERY successful entertainment was held in connection with Chalmers' Church, Winterbourne, on Friday evening, 15th inst., for the benefit of the poor.

SOLOMON TUKANSHAIQIVE has written to Winnipeg from Fort Ellice, and the Winnipeg brethren have invited him to come the 200 miles in to the May meeting of Presbytery.

THE annual soiree of the Brampton Presbyterian Church was held on Tuesday evening, 19th inst. Rev. J. Pringle, the pastor, presided, and addresses were delivered by Rev. Messrs. Denchfield, McLaren, Burnett and Milligan.

At the annual meeting, the salary of the Rev. J. Somerville, M.A., was increased by \$100; and the managers were empowered, if the state of the funds admit, to add another \$100—making it for the present year \$1,200. Very well done!

THE Presbyterians of Thedford and vicinity have nearly finished one of the handsomest and most commodious churches in the county. It is built of quarried stone and white brick, is 44 x 70 feet, with basement, gallery, and tower, at a cost of \$5,000.

MESSRS. BORTHWICK AND ROSS are holding a series of some twelve or fifteen socials in the Pembina Mountain District, which serve to raise small amounts for church building, and to bring the scattered settlers together. They have some twenty-six townships under their charge, and have some three churches on hand.

At the recent induction of Rev. Mr. Lyle, as pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Rev. Mr. Burson presided; Rev. Dr. James preached; Rev. D. H. Fletcher addressed the newly inducted minister; and Rev. James Black, the people. The services throughout were interesting and impressive.

THE congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Gananoque, have given a unanimous call to the Rev. Henry Gracey, of Thames Road and Kirkton, in the Presbytery of Huron. The amount of salary promised is one thousand dollars. The Rev. Finlay McCuaig is appointed to prosecute it before the Presbytery of Huron.

On the 15th inst., a number of the members of the congregation at Vankleekhill met at the residence of Mr. A. Stirling, their late precentor, and presented him with a purse of money, accompanied by an address. Mr. Stirling has led the psalmody for the congregation for about fifty years, but is no longer able to do so being now over eighty years of age.

A PARTY of young people connected with the South Church of Inverness, visited Rev. Mr. Mackenzie, the pastor, on Monday the 21st January, and presented him with a purse containing a goodly sum of money accompanied by an address expressing their attachment to their pastor and their appreciation of his work, to which Mr. Mackenzie replied in appropriate terms.

The congregation of Richmond and Stittsville, have presented their pastor, the Rev. A. M. McClelland with a beautiful cutter and robes, thus showing their very high appreciation of that gentleman's services among them. The cause of Christ is here making marked progress. A new spirit seems to have entered into the people, and many additions have been made to the Church of "such as shall be saved."—COM.

THE annual dinner under the auspices of the Presbyterian congregation, Colborne, took place in the Temperance Hall, on the 13th inst. The proceedings