

was the fashion of our forefathers to condemn, and is still the fashion in some quarters. The great piety, learning and eloquence of the reverend lecturer has enabled him to speak on this subject with an authority at least equal to, if not greater, than any living man.

The presentee in the Carriden case has withdrawn.

Dr. Croly, of St. Stephen's, Walthrook, the distinguished poet and author, the learned and eloquent preacher, is dead.

At latest accounts great preparations were making all over Scotland to celebrate the tri-centenary of the Reformation, and energetic efforts were being made to have the 20th declared a public holiday. This, however, is not likely to be the case, as it would look like persecution to compel the Catholics to shut their shops and cease from labor in honor of the downfall of their own Church. It may be worthy of note that the 20th of December is not really the Anniversary of the first meeting of the General Assembly. It was the 20th of December *old style*, the new style not having been introduced till 1582.

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#### REPORT OF MISSIONARY LABORS WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF PICTOU.

My last Report brings my labors down to the 6th of April, since which I have travelled in my own conveyance upwards of 1400 miles, and preached 83 sermons. I have assisted in dispensing the Lord's Supper at eleven different places within a period of about three months.

I trust that these services have not been in vain. If the number (always a large attendance), the interest, and apparent seriousness, only, of the audiences be taken into account, there is good ground to rejoice and take courage; but if the criterion be renewed zeal and self-denial in supporting the cause of the Gospel, I fear there is but little ground for congratulation. The Presbytery, aware of the supineness of certain congregations in contributing their share towards maintaining missionary services among them, issued an order requesting immediate payment of these. I regret that tho' the order was most peremptory, coupled as it was with the express determination, in case of non-compliance on the part of any congregation, to withdraw my services from such altogether; and though I took care to enforce the Presbytery's demand by every argument I could use, some congregations were most difficult to be put in motion. I delayed forwarding to the Clerk an account of the number of Sabbaths on which I preached at each station until I had exhausted every other means. In this I am perhaps to blame, but I thought it so unlikely, and let me add also, so disgraceful, that any congregation having at the utmost no more to pay than £20, should have to be officially dealt with by the Clerk of the Presbytery, that I

could not transmit the requisite abstract of my journal sooner. I trust that all, ere now, have done their duty in this matter. I should state that the above remarks cannot by any means be applied to the East and West Branches, E. R., to Pictou Island, Lochaber, and St. Mary's. To Roger's Hill they apply but in part.

While alluding to this subject, which I do with pain, it is some pleasure to be able to bear witness to the unaffected kindness and cordial welcome accorded to me personally everywhere, but I do not know whether I am more supported in spirit by the latter trait of character, than depressed by the former. It were well that personal regard and gospel support should go together. I commenced in hope, I trust I shall not end in despair. A strong attachment to the Church of Scotland is expressed every where, and no one can rejoice at genuine attachment to our beloved Church more than I do; but is that a genuine attachment that will receive any amount of aid and grudge to give any in return? I know that there are noble and generous minds in our connection, whose liberality in every good cause is above all praise, and I know of hundreds whose benevolent wishes are larger than their means; but I know there are others of wealthy reputation who shrink from their duty for fear the deficit of the balance sheet shall have to be made up out of their abundance. Instead of taking the lead, these, by their example, hold back others who might prove useful in the Church. Croaking away, always, on the dullness of trade, and flatness of markets, has, before now, been a good subterfuge, though to many an oppressive reality.

I notice these pecuniary things once for all, trusting that an amendment may take place, obviating the necessity of a minister of the Gospel hammering after every sermon on secular affairs. This is the great objection to voluntarism, that the minister must act in the capacity of a tax-gatherer every Lord's day, if he is not blessed with a congregation that understands its duty, and is alive to its responsibilities.

I deem it my bounden duty to give utterance to my experiences in this large field, however unpleasant to myself or to others. By concealing, I would be conniving at remediable evils; I shall therefore always praise what is praiseworthy, and blame what is blameworthy. JOHN SINCLAIR.

Pictou, December 1st, 1860.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR,—As your remarks upon the Scheme of Sabbath School Lessons that I submitted to your insertion, is calculated to mislead, or, at all events, as some readers may imagine that unfair play has been practised upon the Halifax Scheme, I take the liberty of remark-