

Correspondence.

The Aged Ministers' Fund.

Editor THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW :

SIR,—In THE REVIEW, 22nd March, you have an article on the above fund in which it is stated that the General Assembly at Winnipeg directed that a capital of \$100,000 should be raised. This is the origin of that proposal. My attention was directed many years ago to the great destitution of some of our ministers in broken health, and by personal effort raised some \$800 for two ministers' families. This led me to bring an overture before the Toronto Presbytery about 1885 to provide a capital fund of \$100,000, in order to make a better provision for our aged and infirm ministers. This overture was approved by Drs. Reid and King and carried. In 1886 I brought this up in the General Assembly at London, Ont., and it was agreed to endeavour to raise such a fund. I brought this up again at the General Assembly at Winnipeg, when it was agreed to raise the amount to \$200,000. I also proposed to grant \$10 per year of service, or \$400 after 10 years or more of service, which had been agreed upon many years before when Rev. Dr. John McTavish was convener of committee. Dr. Grant, of Queen's College, moved that it should be \$300 after 40 years' service, the same as in the eastern provinces, and this was agreed to. The Rev. William Burns, who was the very successful agent in collecting for Knox College, was appointed agent for this fund. But as the last three or four years have been very unfavourable for collecting money, he has not been able to reach the whole amount yet, but he has secured subscriptions to the amount of \$120,000, of which \$94,000 have been paid, and I hope, ere long, he will obtain the whole sum, as one rich man at Montreal has promised \$20,000 if Mr. Burns can secure the rest within a reasonable time. The amount paid until lately was only from \$100 to \$220 per annum. Now the pressing need of such a fund, in order to secure some adequate provision for aged and infirm ministers, must be evident to all earnest Christian people when they learn that early pioneers only received, on an average, \$100 to \$500 a year while doing very hard work, often preaching six to ten times a week, each having also to keep a horse and travel great distances, sometimes over several townships in a year and over mud roads and swamps, and when laid aside with overworking, receiving no salary. In several cases their expenses were more than their salary having often also to subscribe for the erection of new churches and thus utterly unable to lay up anything for old age. The sums paid into this fund have been far too small to meet even the smaller amounts promised the aged ministers, and it would be well for the young people's societies, such as the Christian Endeavour, to assist Mr. Burns to raise the \$200,000 capital, which would place the fund on a firm basis and prevent much anxiety and privation to those aged ministers who laid the foundation of our Church in Canada.

ROBERT WALLACE.

TORONTO, April 5th, 1894.

Hymnal Revision.

Editor THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW :

SIR,—Would you allow me to express my regret that my remarks on the Hymnal in a former number of THE REVIEW should have appeared to your correspondent, "Ex-Precentor," as written in an "unkindly and unchristian spirit." Notwithstanding his assertion I can assure him that they were not written in that spirit. It is surely quite possible to hold the views which I expressed of the Hymnal, and of the proposals of the committee, and yet entertain a kindly and Christian spirit toward the committee.

But I have noticed frequently the same impatience of criticism on the part of those engaged in public work for the Church, and the same tendency to charge with an unkindly spirit towards individuals, any one who offers a strong and honest disapproval of such work.

The views which I expressed are held by many. They may be, in the judgment of your correspondent, erroneous, still those who hold

them have a right to express them. The facts stated by him do not alter the fact stated by me. It may not have the slightest effect on his opinion, or on that of the committee, but surely one may be permitted to make such a statement without being guilty of cherishing an "unkind and unchristian spirit."

I am as free from that as your correspondent, and with him only seek to serve the interests of the Church in discussing the important subject of the Hymnal. Yours, etc.,

D. D. McLEOD.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR,—In the Presbytery meeting at Barrie on 30th January last, it seems to me that the sentiments of the great body of the Presbyterians of Ontario, at least, were faithfully represented in the Rev. W. McLeod's excellent report. With the hymns and paraphrases certain liberties may be used, perhaps to the advantage of the Church, but not with the inspired Psalms. If the inclosed would serve any good purpose, please make use of it. Wishing your excellent periodical great success,

Yours, etc.,

PRESBYTERIAN.

WHITBY, March 26th, 1891.

[Before beginning the reading of the Psalms in his "Horæ Biblicæ Quotationæ," Dr. Chalmers, of Edinburgh, offered up the following prayer: "Before entering on this rich and precious department of Scripture, let me lift up a solemn prayer to God, that he would enable me to gather from it those fruits unto holiness, the end of which is life everlasting; and that the same spirit which animated the Psalmist would enlighten and impress me with all the fervour and devotedness which he us and breathes throughout these sacred compositions—a treasure and blessing to the Church in all ages."—Post-humous Works of Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D.]

Spurgeon on the Use of the Psalms in the Service of Praise.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR,—In the *Sword and Trowel* for October, 1886, there is a notice of a work entitled, "The Divine Institution of David's Psalms, and the Unlawfulness of using Uninspired Hymns in Praise-Worship." The writer calls himself "A Lover of Purity in Religious Worship." I need not say that Spurgeon did not write every one of the "Notices of Books" which appeared in the *Sword and Trowel* during his lifetime, but the one of which I speak is very much in his style, and it, at least, had his approval. I, therefore, treat it as one from his pen. The following is a copy of it:—

"It is pleasant to read what can be said upon such a question. We cannot say that we are convinced, but very much the reverse; yet we like to know what can be written. The Psalms are too much neglected among English Non-conformists; if they were better known, and oftener sung, they would soon be preferred to numbers of the poor, meaningless hymns which are now current. If one wishes to sing a hymn upon electing love, or upon others of the deeper truths, where will he look for one in the denominational hymn books? To suit the many, the more precious doctrines are pushed into a corner. Were the Psalms of David more frequently sung, it would evidence a deeper spiritual life; but the exclusive singing of them would be impossible when that life rose into full fellowship with Christ.

"In our more elevated fellowship we pine to sing unto the Lord a new song, and hark Holy Mary and Zacharias we speak in other language than that which the older forms supply to us. There must be room left for hearts that glow with love to express themselves in rapt devotion; the free Spirit can no more have tied us down to sing in fixed language than to pray with a liturgy."

Of course, I do not look on this article as settling the question. I simply quote it as expressing the opinion of a master in Israel whose words deserve to be listened to with the greatest respect. His noblest work as an

author is the "Treasury of David." While he was engaged on it, he "dug" in the Psalms as "for hidden treasure," and therefore, had special opportunities of seeing the richness of meaning in them. Whoever reads that work attentively, will see that the Psalter, as a whole, is more suited to the Christian Church, than at first sight appears. Now, it will be observed that Spurgeon, while he is opposed to the exclusive use of the Psalms, is also opposed to the exclusive use of hymns. In the article which I have quoted, he "reasons well."

There is, certainly, a very great difference between advocating the retaining of the whole Psalter while allowing the use of hymns as a supplement, and advocating the exclusive use of the Psalter. Very few of our people who advocate the retaining of the Psalter are opposed to the use of hymns as a supplement.

We must either retain the Psalter as a whole, or reject it as a whole. We have no right whatever to treat the Psalms as the fish spoken of in one of our Lord's parables were treated the good were gathered into vessels, but the bad were cast away.

The growing disposition to "out" the Psalms from the service of praise, is doing very much to many of our ministers. They put themselves to no trouble whatever to train their people to correct views of the Psalms. They just step into the boat and sail along with them, which is so much easier than the other. They are like the old Moderate minister who, when he was asked if he was ever "fashed wi' temptation to fish on the Sabbath," said: "I'm no fashed ava, I just gang." Of course, the example of the ministers of whom I speak, encourages the people to treat the Psalms as having "outlived their usefulness," as bows and arrows and slings have theirs in modern civilized warfare. A remark of the same kind will apply to ministers and the fashionable posture of sitting during public prayer. How apt the people are to think that it must be a very proper posture, when they see ministers in it, while others are leading in prayer. "Behold now the words of the prophets declare good unto the King with one mouth; let Thy word, I pray Thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." T. FENWICK.

WOODBRIDGE, Ont.

Tax Exemptions.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR,—I have carefully read your editorial on "Tax Exemptions," and am sorry to have to express my opinion that the arguments in favour of church exemption are neither strong nor convincing. I trust you will pardon this expression of a difference of opinion on a live subject from a Presbyterian who is not a "crank" on the subject, and for that matter, is not in a great hurry to tax churches, but it is truth and right doing that we should all be after, and it is either right or wrong to tax churches and church property. I am firmly convinced that there are no real arguments on the side of church exemption, while admitting that plenty of true statements can be made as to the inexpediency of so doing; such as, they are doing good, etc. It is a mistake to assert, as is done in this editorial, that in the assessment of property for taxation, a municipality only takes cognizance of revenue-producing property. If this were the case, vacant lots, furniture, etc., should be the same, and even dwelling houses, which are not productive, in the same sense as stores, factories, stocks of goods, etc. But to come down to the root of the whole matter. For what purpose are taxes levied? For payment of fire protection, police maintenance, sidewalks, streets, interest on public debt, for public improvements, etc. The churches receive the benefit of all these in common with the ratepayers, and why should not they pay their share? Perhaps you are not aware that even now, church property fronting on streets paved and sewerage, has to pay its share of the cost of such improvements. If it is proper to so assess churches for such local improvements, why draw the line