

the gift which he donated for the purpose of education of the youth of California. The donor did not parade before the world the amount or the extent of his gift. His broad, thinking mind took in the great necessity of a wider education. He thought of the future possibilities of our state; its field of usefulness, situated as it is geographically; then the thought came up, What influences are to govern and bring out all the capabilities for the coming years? So his mind grasped the idea, Education; so out of his mind arose the grand idea, to afford a full and complete education for all who might desire it. What he has done, what he is doing, and what is in his mind to do, have all been prompted by his own heart, moved upon by good impulses, but all with the one grand object in view: The thorough and complete education of California's rising generations in every known branch of useful study.

This work he is now carrying out nobly, expending many thousands of dollars on the project as a trustee and faithful steward of the abounding mercies conferred upon him, and thus (while living) acting as his own executor.

As to the discrepancy in values, alleged by your correspondent, it is childish. Lands in California fluctuate greatly, as has been proven in our State during the past three or four years; land per acre advancing, in some localities, from \$5 per acre to \$500, but this needs no further comment. And so will proceed to the main object which I had in view, which comes nearer home, touching my own heart more directly. Having lived in Canada for a number of years, I thus know and love her and her institutions, and while I feel that no praise of mine is necessary on this behalf, I cannot sit idly by and wink at the un-called-for attack made by your correspondent. Therefore, in the cause of justice, truth and honesty, I will endeavour to give the facts of this case as I know them. And just here I will again presume to say for the benefit of your correspondent that had he not been so hasty in sending his news, but waited patiently and charitably for the turn of events, his matter would have gone to you in a different form, and he would have had no sorrowing of heart afterward for his unseemly haste, and no groanings of spirit (as uttered) would have been necessary.

I will now state the facts, as within my own knowledge, leaving the matter in the hands of your readers. In the month of October, 1887, a Presbyterian Church in this city being need of a supply, and the subject being mentioned to me, I at once thought of a young man recently graduated from Knox College, Toronto, of whom I had heard favourable comments, having learned that he was a good preacher, and knowing he was of most excellent stock. His name and qualifications were presented to the Session of said Church, and no one else nearer being available, he was requested to supply the pulpit for a short term; his reply was favourable. In due course of time he arrived in this city and entered on his labours. His ministry was appreciated and good results followed. Neither I nor the Session of the Church in which he ministered were aware that he had not been licensed, and as he had been preaching in various places in Canada, the thought of his not been licensed never entered our minds; but your correspondent is unfair in his choice of words. He says: "Passing as a full-fledged minister." I do not believe that the young man ever deceived any one as to his true position, but the inference drawn from your correspondent would be that he was found out not to be licensed, and "then application was made for examination for license." This is an utter perversion of fact and truth. The facts are: That after his graduation he intended spending a year or more in Europe, and while at any time he could have received his license in Canada, he preferred not to take it until after his return home. In October he purposed leaving for Europe, and just at that stage of affairs this offer from California reached him, which, after a very short time for consideration, he accepted. And as the Church was vacant, the people were anxious to have him without delay. Had he waited, he would have applied for license in Canada, but time would not permit, so he came as he was, ready to do what work he could, expecting to be licensed here if he remained.

At, or near the close of his engagement, the people to whom he ministered seemed anxious for him to continue. Therefore, he then felt he ought to be licensed, and made the usual application as a candidate to the Presbytery. After the usual notice, he

appeared before that body for examination. He, as usual in such cases, presented certificates of scholarship and proficiency which are received in good faith by all bodies in the Presbyterian Church. Why our "esteemed" friend should style them "flaming credentials" I cannot say. I did not see them, not being present at that meeting of Presbytery. But this I do know, that a certificate of scholarship from Knox College, in "Toronto the Good," will be recognized and carry as much credibility and honour, in the estimation of all true Presbyterian bodies, as from any other college in the world, Princeton not excepted.

The examination was proceeded with in its various stages, and, on adjournment, there was no decision arrived at.

I speak only from hearsay, and from after acquired information in Presbytery. It seems that some unfortunate irritation occurred, compelling the Presbytery to adjourn for further hearing, on which I will not comment.

Before the time for next meeting, the candidate, feeling that there existed a certain antagonism to him among some of the members, considered it advisable to withdraw his application; he therefore prepared his letter to that effect, and handed it to the Clerk, or read it himself as the case may be. The language of this document was not, in the opinion of some, in accordance with their views (I have never read or seen it). If the letter of withdrawal was handed in first, the Presbytery had nothing more to do with the matter, if they passed upon accepting his withdrawal. So there the matter ended. But the people to whom he ministered were not disposed to let the matter drop. They felt that they knew their man, that he was doing a good work and believed there must have been some misunderstanding, so after a little, prevailed upon the young man to make another application for examination, which he did, and a meeting was ordered.

At this meeting I was present, and a tiresome discussion was held as to whether the matter could be opened, but charity compels me to be silent, so I will merely say another adjournment followed, the candidate having no hearing. The adjourned meeting met in due course and, after some discussion, the candidate came in for examination. I have been present at a goodly number of examinations, but I have never seen one more searching, more trying, ever made; and through it all the young man came out nobly. Never to my latest hour shall I forget the closing scene, when the license was unanimously voted, and out from the midst of the brethren arose the reverend father in the Church, Dr. Buvious, the oldest professor in the seminary, and with feeble step walked up to the licentiate. Placing his trembling hands on his head, he thanked God who had led and kept him to this day, to be able honestly and thankfully to do his part in receiving such an one into the body of the Presbytery. I am now done, his orthodoxy is established. The young man stands up as a minister of Christ, and I trust and hope he will ever do honour to his alma mater, and above all, glorify the Master in his work here. M.

San Francisco, February, 1888.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR,—I am not conscious of having misrepresented Mr. Henderson's views on this subject, nor can I learn from his last letter how I have done so. I inferred from his former one that he wanted religious instruction by the teachers made compulsory, or, as he prefers to designate it, "mandatory" on all schools. If he does not want that, I have misrepresented his views, but unintentionally, and for that I crave his pardon. If he does want that, then I correctly described his attitude when I spoke of him as wanting "to deprive the people of their freedom," and as being actuated by a "persecuting spirit." If he disclaims the imputation, then he and I differ in our opinions as to the meaning of words, and there is nothing to be gained by a dispute over terms. If he does not desire to compel by law all teachers to give religious instruction in schools, then my remark about withholding the school grant does not apply to him. If he does desire to compel them to do so, then I must inform him that the Minister of Education would be in duty bound to withhold the grant for failure to comply with the law, and reiterate my opinion that while the enactment would be very generally

evaded, no Minister of Education would dare to enforce it.

Mr. Henderson has no right to infer from anything I have ever said on this subject that I am "opposed to the general principle of religious instruction in public schools." On the contrary, I have frequently, and in the most public way, expressed a desire to see religious instruction made as effective as possible. To indulge in such an imputation without warrant, I have long ago learned, is not unclerical, but it is none the less unmanly. Whether the difficulties I suggested as obstacles in the way of making religious instruction "mandatory" on the teachers are "imaginary" or not, the great majority of the teachers agree with me that they are likely to become very real and very formidable as soon as a "mandatory" regulation is passed, and they are better judges of the situation than Mr. Henderson is. If he will turn to p. lvi. of the "Education Report for 1887," he will learn that the Minister also regards them as not imaginary, but real, and of all observers he has the best opportunities of arriving at a correct view of the case.

I assume, from the fact that Mr. Henderson does not charge me with misrepresentation about his attitude toward the teaching of the "divine word" by agnostics, that he is still prepared to have it taught by them. I gave in my last letter a number of reasons for differing from him. I assume from his silence that he is unable to refute these reasons, and yet, if giving religious instruction is to be "mandatory" on all teachers, it must be mandatory on the agnostic and on the Christian alike. I feel quite certain that Christian parents generally would rather have no religious instruction given at all than have it given by those who do not believe in the Christian religion. I do not wonder that Mr. Henderson shrank from defending his former position.

I am quite well aware that certain religious exercises provided for in the regulations are "mandatory," that every public and high school "shall" be opened with the Lord's Prayer, and that every school "shall" be closed with the reading of the Scriptures and the Lord's Prayer or some other form of prayer authorized by regulation, subject always to the proviso that any teacher who declines on conscientious grounds is not required to do more than report his objections to the trustees, who may permit him to dispense with both prayers and Scripture reading. I would rather see religious exercises of all kinds left, as they once were, entirely optional with local school authorities, and I can assure Mr. Henderson that if more than the present regulations are to be made "mandatory," some of those legislators who think matters have been carried too far, will use their influence to have all the "mandatory" element taken out of the regulations. Clerical crusaders had better let well enough alone.

When it comes to explaining what he really wants, Mr. Henderson's demands are not extravagant, especially after his errors as to matters of fact are corrected. He wants two things: (1) that the Book of Selection shall not be made "mandatory" at the expense of the Bible, and (2) that teachers shall be allowed to make comments on or give explanations of the passages read. With respect to the former I have only to say that the use of the Book of Selections is not mandatory. Only "the reading of the Scriptures" is so, and the trustees may order the reading to be done from the Book of Selections or from the Bible as they see fit. Nor is there any limitation imposed as to the choice of passages to be read. What more can Mr. Henderson desire? If trustees and teachers think that a Book of Selections prepared by a committee of eminent biblical scholars, under the chairmanship of Principal Caven, is helpful, why should they be deprived of the right to use it? To do so would be a piece of impertinent tyranny. I would be willing to concede Mr. Henderson's second demand, and would be glad in this and all related matters to go back to the old regulations as interpreted by Mr. Crooks to Dr. Laing and Dr. Cochrane in 1878. I like them better than the new ones because they were less "mandatory," but I am willing to leave the latter now as they are.

I have shown that the first of Mr. Henderson's demands has already been granted, and I have expressed my willingness that he should have the second also. Wherein, then, do our positions differ? I really do not know, unless he is in favour, as I supposed him to be, of requiring all teachers to give religious instruction. If he is not, then we are well-nigh in accord; if he is, then we are wide as the poles asunder. I would like very much to have a square answer to the question whether Mr. Henderson would like to compel all teachers to give religious instruction either with or without the Bible as a text book?

Toronto, Feb. 16, 1888. WILLIAM HOUSTON.