

their own gifts, and those of their confiding neighbours, in robbing their successors, but abuse the liberality of those who give to chapel cases, and who aid in sustaining the minister occupying the pulpits so erected. At least, we are justified in refusing to aid in the erection of any church edifice, or in sustaining a minister therein by missionary funds, without positive and satisfactory proof that the title has been legally completed.

#### WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

Another important question that has engaged the protracted and close attention of the Union for the last three sessions, is the Fund for the Widows and Orphans of Congregational Ministers. The necessity of some such provision being too apparent, it was yet a difficult matter to choose one of the many possible ways in which it could be made, and to settle the details of the plan actually chosen. This, however, was finally accomplished at our last meeting. The credit of originating this scheme belongs wholly to the brethren of Zion Church, Montreal; and on them has since devolved the chief labour of thinking and working it out: but all the intelligence, zeal and liberality which they have manifested throughout would not have sufficed for its practical inception, had not the multitude of counsellors which this body, so fairly representing the parties concerned,—ministers and churches,—has been able to furnish,—reviewed the plan, sanctioned it with their approval, and taken measures to put in operation. Now that that is accomplished, the Society constituted out of the subscribers to the Fund takes the entire charge thereof upon itself, and the Union as such, will have no more to do with the matter, after it has accepted the Report of the Trustees chosen by it at the last meeting. What that Report may be, we shall very soon know. The continued scarcity of money must have interfered most seriously with all the endeavours of the Trustees to raise the required capital of £1000; but though their hope has been deferred for three years, allowance will have been made for the time necessary to mature a plan of this character, involving so many difficult and delicate questions, pertaining to vested funds, around which so many interests will grow up, and designed to stand for many generations,—as well as for the utter poverty of at least Western Canada, which has brought home to almost every family the question, “What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” *to-day*, to say nothing of *to-morrow*, and if not for themselves—how for others? As soon, however, as prosperity returns, this plan will doubtless engage the generous sympathies of every church, and this, year by year. Allow me to say, further, that while constantly protesting against that system of inadequately remunerating pastors which compels charity to step in after their death, and do the work belonging to justice during their life,—yet, as the necessity exists and is too likely to continue, the plan adopted by us combines, in my judgment, a due regard to the proper sensibilities, and manly independence of the ministers, with a faithful vigilance over the free contributions of the churches.

Such are the important plans to which the Union has given being and shape, though no longer superintending their operation. It may now watch, with no small parental satisfaction, not unmingled with solicitude, the career of its children who have left its roof and commenced business for themselves.

#### THE ESSAYS.

Coming now to current items of interest,—the *Essays*, read before this body, and the discussions to which they give rise, claim prominent notice. We have had one on “Purity of Communion,” by Dr. Wilkes, in 1854, published at our request; another by Rev. E. Ebbs, on the question, “Is our amalgamation with any other Evangelical denomination practicable? if so, to what extent? and by what means?”—read at our meeting for 1856. Two other essays, appointed for 1855, on the Common School Systems of Canada West and Canada East, respectively, failed to appear. \* Last year we had another from the pen of Dr. Wilkes,

---

\* I have since learned that the latter Essay was written and brought to the meeting; re-written, and brought to the next; but not read on either occasion, for want of time!—F. H. M.