

occasion he took up the second verse. He spoke of (1) *The person here referred to*,—"My Beloved;" (2) *His place*—"His garden," "The beds of spices," "The gardens." Several beds of spices, several gardens, yet all making one garden. Several evangelical denominations, yet all in the true Church. (3) *His work*,—"feeding in the gardens," "Gathering lilies." To shew that even those in the lowliest ranks in life can work for Christ, he related the following anecdote: A very poor woman living near Goldsmith's statue, in Dublin, used to distribute tracts. Once a student of Trinity College, "a stranger to grace and to God," though he had been religiously brought up, tried to shun her by passing on the other side of where she was. She, however, came up behind him, and, touching him, said very respectfully, "Please, take a tract." Out of politeness, but very unwillingly, he took the one which she offered him. It was entitled "Pointed Questions." The very first arrested his attention. It was to this effect: "Have you not a soul which shall be happy or miserable for ever?" He went under an archway and read the tract through. God blessed it to his conversion. "That student," the preacher said, in conclusion, "now occupies the pulpit of St. Bartholemew's church, Montreal, to testify of the power of the grace of God." This reference to himself seemed to thrill the whole congregation.

Bishop Gregg is in the prime of life. He is a ready speaker and has a very pleasant voice. As will be readily inferred from what I have already said, he gives no quarter either to High Churchism or to Ritualism. When he is engaged officially he wears the dress of an Anglican bishop on such occasions with academic hood. His ordinary dress, like that of an Anglican bishop, consists in part of knee breeches and leggings, and "the bit apron." I have tried hard to admire the last article of attire, but have failed. It seems to me to make the wearer look like some "Souter Johnnie."

T. F.

Montreal, Oct. 13, 1879.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. EDITOR,—I beg leave to join most heartily in the demand that anonymous writers give names and proof, in matters affecting individual character. But ought they not to do more? Can they do the right thing without giving their own names also? The mercy of concealing names in such circumstances is by no means unquestionable. Nor is it a valid plea, that such writers are too cowardly to write over their own signatures. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." And, perhaps, it would be nearer the truth to say, that as a rule, they are too criminal and cowardly to act in such an open, honest manner. Be that as it may, in such cases morality and religion demand that it should be done.

I write not because the present controversies about "Plagiarism" and "Colleges" affect me personally in any way. So far as I know they do not. But others are concerned, and the law which bids me respect myself, bids me also do all that I can for the good and protection of my neighbour, be he far off or near. I, therefore, join most heartily in urging the course demanded by Dr. Waters. And should the accuser not adopt that course, then the editor should give the name of the accuser, the Presbytery in whose bounds he is should deal with him, and the mode of dealing should be such as I understand the Presbytery of Bruce lately used in the Paisley case, viz., that when the accuser failed to substantiate his charges against his innocent victim, the Presbytery charged their guilt upon himself and censured him accordingly—not by giving him a certificate of good standing and allowing him to leave, as the manner of some Presbyteries is, but by deposing and suspending him. Let open justice be done to all.

JOHN MACMILLAN.

Mount Forest, October 7, 1879.

A GENERAL SUSTENTATION FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—It is evident that we are to have a spirited discussion on the above subject as opinion is divided somewhat equally thereon. In the "Record" for March there is a good article by "P. McF. McL." being the first contribution in our papers designed to give information which may be of use in the discussion. This paper is written for the same purpose. I have no wish to be "oracular" in my tone, nor by my "ejaculations" to attempt to guide others, far less to dictate to them. Although I am among those

who think a general sustentation scheme not practicable in our Church, I wish to look at the question calmly and fully. No argument is needed to convince me of the superiority of such a scheme to any other method for sustaining the ministry. So desirous am I to know what plans can be proposed with hope of success that I will not state my difficulties now, lest I may appear to be hostile to such a scheme. If any plan can be found I will heartily fall in with it and try to make it a success.

It is, therefore, in no spirit of indifference that I proceed to look at the plan generally set forth in the "Record," but desiring to ascertain its feasibility. The scheme proposes: (1) the division of all the congregations into two classes, viz., aid-receiving and aid-giving; (2) an equal dividend of \$750; (3) that aid-receiving congregations should send in *all their revenue* to the sustentation fund, except what is required for current expenses; (4) that aid-giving congregations should send "the proceeds of their associations or collections *plus* the amount of equal dividend, \$750; (5) that aid-giving congregations should supplement the stipend of the minister beyond the equal dividend as they may be willing.

The first thing that occurs here may be stated in the following question: If the *whole revenue* of an aid-receiving congregation is sent into the Sustentation Fund, how is the interest on church debt, with which many such churches are burdened, to be met? This at present is often a *first charge* which keeps down the stipend. And unless the debts of all aid-receiving congregations are paid off, it must continue to be a serious drawback. Church debt paralyses the smaller congregations even more hopelessly than it does the large and wealthy.

Let us now look at the proposed plan in the light thrown on the subject by the reports of 1878. According to them we find that in, say, 500 congregations in the Western Section there were 80 receiving supplement. That during the years these congregations contributed \$26,504, and received as supplement \$10,179, making the total stipend \$36,683. This gives an average contribution of \$331, an average grant of \$127, and an average stipend of \$458. Now, according to the proposed plan, with an equal dividend of \$750, the average grant would require to be increased by \$292, or instead of receiving as supplement \$10,179 these 80 congregations would require \$33,600.

But if all congregations not paying \$750 are to receive aid, the number of aid-receiving congregations is immediately raised to 220. A few might *come up* under the sustentation scheme, but 200 at least would remain in that category. If again, the Temporalities Fund is not to be counted into stipend, as was decided last year in reference to the missionaries in Manitoba, the number would immediately rise to at least 230. Then we should have, of 500 congregations in the one case, 300 aid-giving and 200 aid-receiving, and in the other case 270 of the former and 230 of the latter.

Again, of these 300 which are supposed to be aid-giving a good number, at least 70, will not be able to send in anything beyond the equal dividend, \$750, leaving about 230 to raise the whole amount required for supplement.

Then what will that amount be? Suppose the average contribution of each congregation to reach \$450, an average supplement would be required of \$300; so that \$200x300 would give \$60,000; or in the other case \$230x300 would give \$69,000. Taking, however, the smaller sum and dividing it among the 230 congregations which would be able to contribute, it would require an average contribution of \$260 from each of them.

Now can we reasonably expect this to be done? Look at it. Will you find 230 congregations in the Western Section of the Church which would be willing to enter on such a scheme? On an average, they would require to raise for equal dividend \$750, for current expenses \$250, for other schemes \$250, for Sustentation Fund \$260, total \$1,510. And after that, pay the interest on their church debt and supplement their minister's salary beyond the equal dividend up to, say, from \$1,000 to \$4,000. Can we expect this? I wish it could be accomplished, but I fear.

Of course the equal dividend may be put at \$600 instead of \$750 and this would lessen the difficulty, but I have taken as my basis the proposal of "P. McF. McL." I will add no more at present. If I have made any mistake in my estimate I wish to have it pointed out, for no one would be better pleased to find

a sustentation fund a practicable scheme than, yours truly,

JOHN LAING.

Dundas, March 29th, 1879.

[This communication ought to have been inserted some time ago, but was mislaid. As it is on a subject which is of general interest, and which still requires discussion, we now place it before our readers.—ED. C. P.]

HOME MISSION DEFICIT—A SUGGESTION.

MR. EDITOR,—Many of your readers will feel thankful to Dr. Macvicar for delivering, and to you for printing, the address in your last issue on "Hindrances and Helps to Presbyterianism." It appears to me it would be for the good of the Church if Presbyteries would see to it, that a copy of that address was put into every family under their jurisdiction. They could not do a more useful work for the Church, and it is to be hoped that steps will be taken to have this done.

But my chief object in writing is to make a suggestion as to our Home Mission work. I regret that the Committee have separated without proposing some course for the adoption of the Church in order to overcome the present difficulty. The Committee seem to have looked on the situation with despair.

No doubt the Church has been sufficiently appealed to by means of circulars, which in many cases have very little weight. But this does not exhaust all that could be done in the premises. Nor as it seems to me does it exhaust the duty of the Committee. Of course it is a simple matter to pay out funds when they are put into your hands—any committee could do that. But is it not within the competence of the committee to recommend a means by which the money could be procured?

You tell us that no less than 210 congregations and mission stations have contributed nothing in the past year to this fund, and that many other congregations have fallen short in their contributions. Is it impossible within three months to have every one of these congregations visited and canvassed? I think not. Nor is it impossible to have *every* congregation at once visited and appealed to, and the debt wiped off within that time. Let the Church be divided into districts for visitation, and ministers and elders be deputed to each district, and an earnest appeal be made by these deputies, and I believe all that is required would at once be secured. Let Presbyteries, where they are able, undertake to relieve the Committee within their bounds. And if the work be gone about cordially and earnestly the thing will be done. Surely something like this should be at once attempted. The debt is not at all beyond the power of our people to remove, and if the Committee would devise some plan of this kind no doubt the ministers and people would cheerfully do what they could. Such a united and immediate appeal as is here suggested could not fail to remove the difficulty, and it appears to me the Committee have not exhausted their duty till they devise and attempt some such means to extricate the Church from her present unhappy position.

The appeal that was made last year to the ministers did not commend itself to many. It appeared to many unjust to ask the ministers to undertake a debt for which the Church as a whole and not they were responsible. But an appeal to the whole Church, and especially to the delinquents, would commend itself as necessary and proper, and I trust the Committee will reconsider the situation and attempt something of the kind. The thing is not at all impossible. The course which the Committee has taken will discourage the Church at large, and they themselves seem to be discouraged.

Let us have a visitation instituted at once, and in a short time all that is desired will be accomplished. Until something of this kind has been done we cannot say that we have exhausted all the means in our power for the carrying forward of this all important branch of the Church's work.

PRESBYTER.

THE transcendentalist, A. Bronson Alcott, believes in the Trinity. He thinks that there is an analogy between the threefold nature of man and the threefold nature of God. He maintains that if New England orthodoxy at the end of last and beginning of the present century had spoken as it does now, American Unitarianism would not have been born. He asserts also that orthodoxy will soon swallow the better part of American Unitarianism ere long.