

give no help, then go round when the business is done and industriously show how it might and ought to have been done differently and better. We ask those who act thus if it is fair or manly?

That indifference which takes no interest in the affairs of the congregation, which talks of fellow-members and office-bearers who do the work as "they" or "them," as if the complainant had neither act nor part with them, is a gross unfaithfulness to duty and the cause of Christ and neglect of privilege as respects the individual congregation of which he is nominally a member. It is shirking by laying upon our fellow-member work and interest of which we are in duty bound to take our fair share. It is taking a most effective way to discourage the pastor and all who are concerned in the work and well-being of the congregation. If things are languishing and going back the disaffected and indifferent are chiefly to blame for it. The congregation is made up of individuals, and suppose all were to follow the course of the indifferent and disaffected, must it not inevitably soon die? The Presbytery is made up, the whole body is made up of individual congregations, and if one is feeble and languishing, the whole body is affected. So serious is the responsibility which lies at the door of those who for any reason hold back.

We might say that this year, owing to very general business depression and consequent shortcoming of funds in many cases, there is special need for the united, hearty interest of all connected with our congregations. It is at this meeting that the financial standing and general interests of the congregation are fully examined into and allocation of the funds made to the various schemes of the church. Every member being really a partner in the concern ought to be anxious to know the church's standing, and what is done with money entrusted to its care. It is not only unchristian, it shows a want of good common judgment to take no interest in the annual investigation into the affairs of the congregation both sacred and secular, if such a distinction can be made in this case. It has already been stated in these columns that this year there is danger of a considerable shortcoming of funds in some branches of our church work, a shortcoming which involves very serious trial to many of our most devoted missionaries and their families. However indifference and disaffection may affect the church in prosperous years, in this one particularly demanding the interest and effort of all, the weakening of the church's hands by their means in doing its work this year makes them specially chargeable with unfaithfulness and guilt.

THE SEMINARIES.

THE following article from the *Chicago Interior* upon a subject which is just now under the consideration of the Presbyteries of our church, namely, the relation of our Theological Colleges to the General Assembly, will be of interest and use to all our readers, especially to those who are members of Presbytery.—ED.

"All the older theological seminaries, so far as heard from, are willing to turn over the control of their franchises to the General Assembly. We suppose that not one of them would object to such a transfer if they believed it would be good for the institutions and for the church, but they do not think so. On the contrary, they are fearful of consequences that might result which would be injurious to both. The theory of Assembly control has much in its favor. A good illustration of one advantage is seen in Andover Seminary. There is an institution that was anchored, so far as it was possible to anchor it, to an immovable past, to a type of theology which the churches, which the institution serves, have long since abandoned. Then the seminary, ostensibly complying with its bonds, suddenly came out with a theology that was far in advance of its churches, and a conflict arose which was finally determined by the surrender of the conservatives in the American Board. Now if the Congregational Churches were organized with a representative body, and the seminary had been under the control of that body, it would have moved forward *pari passu*, with even steps, along with the theological progress of the churches. So if our seminaries were controlled by a body correctly representing the churches they would move forward with it, or stand still with it—at all times be in harmony with it. The seminaries ought to be willing for this, and doubtless would be if they were sure the theory would work as well in practice as it appears upon paper. Unfortunately the wise heads among them do not implicitly trust the action of the Assembly. They would trust it if it were

always a deliberative body, if its members could always fully consider all the facts, the surroundings and circumstances, and take time to render mature judgment. But everybody knows that this is impossible. The result is that the seminaries would not always know what to expect. They fear that the Assembly would become a body similar to the Methodist General Conference, under which every one who holds a position or wants one, has to begin his fine work three years ahead of its quadrennial meeting. It is certain that the seminaries will never consent to absolute Assembly control. Our own McCormick Seminary had an experience which ought to last it a lifetime. The Assembly undertook to take possession of and use property in a way that would reverse and defeat the purpose of its donor. He was a loyal Presbyterian, if ever one lived, but he said, "Non possumus." He established his position in right and reason, held it firmly, and won. A less able and determined man would have lost.

"Now what is the real object which the church desires to attain? It is very simple. It is that the seminaries shall teach sound doctrine and that they shall not be able to carry off the property and deposit it outside of the church. That is all that is desired and nobody will say that it is an unfair or unreasonable desire. The only question is what is the wisest method of securing this object. There are additional guards which are available under the existing control of the seminaries. The controlling body, be it called trustees or directors or commissioners, can be required to subscribe an agreement or contract, an inaugural condition, that while the property is in their charge it never shall be perverted to the teaching of doctrine contrary to the system of doctrine of the church, and that it shall never be alienated to other uses, purposes or control. This can be so drawn as to give the Assembly a right of action at law for the recovery of alienated property. But the seminaries must have guaranties. No one knows what the future may bring forth—excepting that it is certain to show progress in thought. No one knows that a future Assembly may not take such actions as were taken in 1837, 1845 and 1866—and we should not omit 1878. The church now would be overwhelmingly against any of those several acts and decisions and deliverances. They did not at the time represent the even and steady and stable sentiment and character of the church. All representative government needs a balance wheel. Power everywhere must be put upon limitations, not limitations upon the matured will and judgment of the people, but such limitations as will secure maturity of judgment. The mature judgment of the church is that the seminaries shall not be able to assail the system of doctrine nor alienate property. As this is the judgment of the seminaries as well as of the Assembly, it can be secured by measures which will secure all rights and guard all interests."

PARLIAMENTARY BLUE BOOK AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

THE following article on this subject by Dr. J. G. Paton in *Word and Work*, will be read with great interest by our readers who bless God for the noble work our missionaries have done in the New Hebrides. [It refutes a vile slander, which shows how ready a certain sort of government officials is to take up and spread anything against missions and missionaries, and it also shows their profound and wilful ignorance of what is being done for degraded heathen peoples by means of Protestant missions.—ED.] Dr. Paton says: "I am exceedingly sorry to hear that in a Blue Book lately published in Britain, under sanction of the Colonial Secretary, there is an attack upon our devoted self-sacrificing missionaries in the South Sea Islands for 'selling rum, beer, and firearms,' and for being so much 'away from their stations' on holiday pleasure-seeking, while the Romanist 'fathers' are praised. In reply I say, there is not a shadow of foundation in truth for such charges. The father of lies could not have invented anything more false. Not a missionary of the New Hebrides has ever been engaged in trade of any kind on the islands, or in any mercantile pursuit whatever. It is against the laws of our mission for any of our missionaries to engage in any trade with the natives, and if any one did so he would certainly be expelled from our mission. Each missionary by solemn engagement is bound to spend his whole time and energies in the spiritual work of the mission.

And now as to the second count, that our mis-

sionaries are much away from their stations on holiday pleasure-seeking. This is equally false. From the unhealthy, debilitating nature of the tropical, damp climate of the New Hebrides, and the ague and fever to which we and our children are all there exposed, every missionary is allowed three months leave of absence every five years, and twelve months at the end of every ten years he is on the islands. Not, however, for pleasure seeking, but under the Mission Committee of the church supporting it. As they arrange, he conducts daily meetings, pleading the cause of the mission in their congregations and Sabbath schools, and raising money for the support and the extension of the work—not pleasure seeking, but a change of work, climate, and society in continuous work for the mission till his furlough expires, and he and his return to the islands.

Third, as to the "fathers," Roman Catholic priests on our islands, whom the age at praises in the Blue Book. It is an historical fact that Frenchmen and their Romish priests did not try to come and settle on our New Hebrides Islands while their lives and property were in danger. With covetous eyes they looked on at a safe distance, and left us British Presbyterian missionaries to struggle on, doing the pioneering, difficult, dangerous work, in which six of our members lost their lives, and a number of our first converts and native teachers were also murdered by the savages, and station after station broken up and plundered by them, and in which work the sainted Bishop Patterson, of the Church of England Mission, was also murdered in revenge for the wickedness of the Kanaka labour traffickers, who, to deceive the islanders, personified him. But when by continued perseverance in God's work by us, through the teaching of Jesus Christ, He had made life and property safe on twenty islands, and comparatively safe on the whole group, and given us about fifteen thousand converts, the French followed, hoisted their flag, saluted it, placed armed soldiers and marines in charge of it, and virtually took possession of the group. And for what? To make it a great penal settlement at the door of Australia. The French Senate had resolved to place one hundred thousand of France's most degraded criminals on the New Hebrides as free men and women, to live as they could and go where they would, on the one condition that they did not return to France. Australia was alarmed at this, as she had hundreds of French convicts already in her prisons for crimes they had committed since coming from New Caledonia to Australia. At last by united Australia's protest and British influence, the French had to give up their scheme for a time and withdraw their soldiers from our islands.

But I hope the honour of Britain and the zeal and faithfulness of our British Protestants will not allow such false accusations to remain uncondemned in a Blue Book. I defy the writer to produce one reliable witness to prove his statements to be correct, whereas from the best sources I can produce hundreds, yes, thousands, to prove they are utterly false; yet, false as they are, appearing in a Blue Book by a Colonial Secretary, they have been, and no doubt will be, used by many enemies of the Lord's work, and by periodicals unfriendly to it, to shake the confidence of people in our mission and curtail its support, and to damage Protestant missions generally.

AT the meeting of the Presbytery of Toronto on the 2nd of January, the Rev. Dr. Robertson superintendent of our North-west Home Missions, delivered an earnest and most forcible address, the substance of which he has put into the shape of a leaflet, and which is to be scattered broadcast over the church. He set forth in clear and strong language the causes which have this year led to such great pecuniary difficulties among our people and ministers in the North-west, and that unless these can be met by effort put forth in other parts of the church real suffering must result to our missionaries and their families. The self-denying character of the men who occupy these new fields, the difficulties they have to encounter in their work, the zeal and liberality of the people in helping themselves, all unite in presenting the strongest claims upon the help at this juncture of all who can lend their aid. Mr. Robertson gives the most encouraging accounts of the success of the work in the past so that the communicants from 1,153 in 1881 have risen to 15,091 in 1893, and revenue in the same time has risen from \$15,100 to \$239,273. The future progress of our church, both at home and abroad, he plainly shows, depends upon our nursing now this portion of our church which has in it the potency and promise of such resources and strength in the time to come.