

they have the "benefit of clergy" or not, these two warm-hearted friends will be in themselves a host, and at Woodstock, London, and the "far west," others will not be wanting. The Perth friends wonder that we have not come their way; but the truth is, they were represented to us long ago as the "advanced guard" in the cause, and as an example to the laggards. On the whole, the prospect is hopeful.

I lately wrote to my friend Dr. Eagles, at Philadelphia, for information as to the Widows' Scheme of the Presbyterian Church of the United States; and he has kindly sent me the printed scheme of "the corporation," dated 1841. It appears that so early as 1759 a number of gentlemen were associated together by an act of "the proprietaries and governors in chief of the Province of Pennsylvania," with dependencies; a charter granted and duly sealed, with the cognizance of the crown of Great Britain; for the purpose of providing a fund for superannuated ministers, and the widows and families of ministers within the province. The fund thus created has been kept up to the present day, and its range has extended beyond Pennsylvania to the whole of the States. In regard to that part of the plan with which we have to do, it appears that the scheme for widows is arranged on ordinary assurance calculation, and that it embraces *five* plans. The first is, by the payment of a sum of money at one time on the part of the minister, or for his behoof, an annuity for life is provided for his widow, and in case of her death, to the family, for the period of thirteen years after the decease of the father. On this scale, a minister at the age of 31 would require to pay 363 dollars at once, to secure an annuity of 100 to his family. The second plan is, by an annual payment on the part of the minister, or for him, to secure the same objects; thus a minister at 34 years of age pays 27 dollars a-year to secure 100 to his widow and family. The third is—by the deposit at once of such a sum as, if put to interest at 5 per cent., would annually produce the amount of the annual premium; the deposit to remain during the minister's life. The fourth is, by the deposit of a similar sum, to remain for ever in the hands of the Corporation, for the benefit of a succession of ministers. You may, from this slight sketch, form an idea of the plan embraced in this scheme; but my information does not extend beyond the scheme itself. No statement is given of the numbers who have embraced it, or of the present state of the fund. Indeed my impression is, that the scheme has not turned out so prosperously as could have been wished, and there does not seem to be any compulsory principle embraced in it. Some further information, however, I expect to obtain, and that I shall take care to communicate.

A very interesting fact in regard to the history of the rise of this fund, I must, however, make known. In 1760 the Rev. Charles Beatty, a zealous minister in Pennsylvania, was sent over to Scotland to collect for the fund. He was favorably received by the General Assembly of the Church, and collections were ordered to be made in the Churches, which amounted to upwards of £2000 sterling. It appears, however, that this sum was applied by authority of the Assembly of Scotland to that part of the scheme which applied to ministers requiring help during their lives; and no doubt the aid thus given went substantially to the same end, although the widows' fund did not share in it.

The success of Mr. Beatty was greatly owing to the letters he carried with him, from the Rev. Samuel Davies, afterwards president of Princeton College, who had been in Scotland some years before, and kept up regular correspondence with the leading evangelical ministers of Scotland. Mr. Davies took the opportunity of sending, by Mr. Beatty, to the Rev. Dr. Gillies of Glasgow, a M.S. work for publication in Scotland, in reply to President Stith, of William and Mary College, Virginia, who had published a sermon on "the

nature and extent of redemption," containing sentiments akin to those of the "new school" at the present day. Mr. Davies requested Dr. Gillies to shew the M.S. to Mr. McCulloch of Cambuslang, and left these gentlemen (along with Dr. Hamilton of the High Church of Glasgow) to publish it or not, as they saw cause. Whether from the fact of President Stith having died soon after, or for what reason, I cannot learn, but so it is, that the M.S. remained in the possession of Mr. McCulloch, and in February, 1845, it was presented to me by Mrs. Coutts, the grand-daughter of that eminent minister, and a lady of rare Christian excellence, now with God. The work has been placed by me among the "rare M.S.S." of Knox's College; and it is really a gem. I have it now on my table; and I read the title thus: "Charity and Truth united; or, the way of the multitude exposed; in six letters to the Rev. Mr. William Stith, A. M., President of William and Mary College; in answer to some passages in his sermon, entitled 'the nature and extent of Christ's Redemption,' preached before the General Assembly of Virginia, November 11, 1753; in which is also contained a survey of the moral character of mankind in all ages; an Inquiry into the nature of true religion and virtue, and a Vindication of the divine perfections in the infliction of future punishments. By Samuel Davies, A. M." Mr. D. was then a missionary at Hanover in Virginia, and the work is dated from that place, "July 4, 1755." It is a quarto of 130 pages, beautifully written; and the work is valuable for its theology and its learning. Of the sound theology, and impassioned eloquence of Davies, I never had a doubt; but I must acknowledge that this interesting M.S. of that estimable man has greatly raised my impressions of his talents as a logician, and his attainments in the literature of theology. If Mr. McLellan, our worthy friend, thinks of publishing it, I doubt not that the "College authorities" would cheerfully permit him the use of the M.S., and I, as the original proprietor, will cheerfully concur.

My dear Sir,
Faithfully yours,
ROBT. BURNS.

[FOR THE RECORD.]

REMARKS ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERS—ADMISSION TO SEALING ORDINANCES—CHURCH DISCIPLINE, &c.

It is now seven years since the Presbyterian Church of Canada declared itself "Free," and entered on its present career, with only twenty-three ministers—a number now increased to about eighty. The building of churches, and the setting up of other ecclesiastical machinery, have kept pace with this ministerial increase. Outwardly, at least, this fact indicates no ordinary success, especially when we consider that those from whom we are separated have done little more than keep the ground they occupied at the disruption, notwithstanding the advantages of a state endowment for their ministers and professors. Let us hope also that our Church has made corresponding progress in spiritual things. This is the most important consideration of all: for the number of ministers and churches, however extensive, is no criterion of the amount of godliness in any religious community. The design of the present remarks is, not to furnish statistics of our spiritual progress as a Church of Christ, but to stir up one another by way of remembrance, especially our brethren in the ministry and eldership, to a constant, if not greater, watchfulness in the discharge of our unspeakably responsible duties, as rulers in God's house.

And, in the outset, let us congratulate ourselves that the scriptural form of our government is such as to afford every facility for evangelistic advancement and faithfulness. What is the mean-

ing of an "Exeter Synod," and a "Congregational Union;" but the felt want of, and an homage (however unwittingly) done to *Presbytery*. But even Presbytery is not infallible, and does not *per se* secure a converted ministry or eldership; and yet where these are wanting, there can, humanly speaking, be no spiritual progress.

To maintain a pure communion, is one of the most difficult, while it is one of the most important duties of the Christian Church. Who then should communicate? In theory, all will agree that none should, but true saints. But is this constantly realised or felt by us in practice? Are we not liable to lose sight of this truth, under the plea that it is impossible to ascertain with certainty who are real saints? While, in reality, this fact ought rather to make us tenfold more watchful, in the admission of members. Uniformity of standard by no means insures uniformity of practice in this matter. The degree of faithfulness here will invariably correspond with the amount of prudence and piety of individual ministers. But in practice, who should be admitted to sealing ordinances? We answer, none but *visible* saints. There are two ways of discovering who are such, namely, *profession and life*. A professor, in relating his experience may mistake his own condition, and his pastor may also be misled by it; yet such a dealing should on no account be dispensed with. The life or external evidence again, should not be a mere negative, but of a positive kind. Not only should the candidate be chargeable with nothing inconsistent with the Christian profession, but the Christian society in which he moves, should have something to say in his favor. If he has a family, he should be known to keep family worship, and to bring up his children in the fear of God; he should regularly attend the means of grace; his speech should be always with grace seasoned with salt; and withal, if his circumstances permit, he should be known to contribute to the support of gospel ordinances.

Parties coming from a distance, should invariably produce written certificates of membership; and yet, ordinarily, even in such cases, a pastor is not warranted to dispense with his usual method of dealing with candidates. A great proportion of communicants become so immediately after entering into the married state. Why should this be so? Of such cases, office-bearers cannot be too jealous: for it is to be feared that, in the majority of these, the parties are influenced by mere prejudices. Even the desire (laudable in its own place) to have a numerous roll of members, may be a temptation to ministers and sessions to relax a due zeal for the purity of God's house. This is especially to be guarded against in the admission of influential or wealthy individuals. Communicants' classes, as they are called, may be made serviceable for instructing catechumens; but mere attendance at these should never be regarded as a passport to the Lord's Table. And it is questionable if such classes should be different from, or any other than, the ordinary bible classes, which no minister should want. Every thing should be avoided which has the appearance of forcing the young, like so many hot-house plants, into a form of godliness; a signal illustration of which is frequently seen in the system called *Episcopal confirmation*. The indiscriminate admission of the unconverted to Church fellowship, has probably been the occasion of sealing the doom of thousands, by confirming them in pride and presumption.

In the present state of society, the ordinance of baptism is still more liable to abuse. Many seek it for their offspring, who never dream of communicating; nay, who state, unhesitatingly, "they do not think themselves prepared for it." Such statements have been made to the writer in countless cases, with the *semblance* of humility, but, in reality, (he fears) with callous indifference. These parties, we need scarcely say, are full of vague views upon the subject; and many of them, alas! seem much more concerned if their children are unbaptized, than if they are graceless. It is