

but hostility. If you begin to reason with some of those in opposition, you will speedily discover professed willingness to help weak congregations; but why do you help such a man to wear out a congregation, and not give them opportunity to change, and here we find a difficulty which must be met.

The complaint comes from neighbouring congregations that Mr. — gets supplement. He has only one station, possibly one service; does not need a horse for Sabbath, and keeps his people from doing anything for outside work, and yet he must be supplemented as high as other ministers close by, who are preaching three times, and whose people are struggling to make ends meet. And when a minister in such a charge as we know one in a Presbytery boasts over his more industrious neighbours that his people built a new church, and paid for it in two years, is it any wonder that the question should be asked, Why give such a congregation supplement?

But immediately some one asks, Why does not the Presbytery deal with such a congregation? Ah! there is another difficulty. Let me give you a little experience. Such a state of things really existed in one Presbytery. A brother minister was appointed to visit and investigate. He proceeded as directed, preached, and after service enquired as to membership, families, who were giving up to the minimum, etc., etc., when the careful pastor interfered. It was not right to be personal, etc. (Of course the visit had some effect, but was practically a failure. Next year another attempt by another member of Presbytery results somewhat similarly: the careful pastor is annoyed because his people are disturbed, but some advance is made. The next year care is taken that another be sent, and the report is, "Visited, and we had a delightful meeting, the best for several years." "But what did you do?" says the Convener. "Oh, we did nothing." And thus from year to year these Presbyterian weaknesses are allowed to hinder the developments of Church life and afford excuse for refusal to help Augmentation.

Again, there is want of uniformity in dealing with congregations—that is, lack among individual members; some are faithful, and some are not, and lack of uniformity among Presbyteries.

If the question prominent with a Presbytery be that "the Church exists for the ministers," then in all probability good reason is discovered why the Presbytery should continue to ask for supplement for the congregation.

If the idea be prevalent that "the minister exists for the Church," then the Presbytery gets down to its work as overseeing the Church, and finds whether the congregation is doing all it can, and if not, whether the minister is just influencing the people in such a way as to lead them up to the point of duty, and, if he is not, does not hesitate to tell him so.

Will you now allow me to suggest a remedy for the evil, and a means of doing good to that fund which well worked may become our strongest and most thoroughly Presbyterian fund?

Select eight members of the Augmentation Committee, or others—the very best, most faithful and most fearless men—appoint them for eight weeks each; let them meet to consider a uniform plan, then early next summer visit supplemented charges and, as far as possible, mission stations, in other Presbyteries than their own. Examine carefully into needs, ability, what is being done for Schemes, etc., and let the eight men meet again, carefully prepare their report and submit it to the Committee.

Now, what about supply for the pulpits of these men. We say take eight of the best students for the eight weeks, and let them supply the brethren's places, and if this were done between the time of close of college and the Assembly the result would have a rousing effect.

One other thing must be done to a larger extent at present. There must be some such discrimination as lies at the bottom of the equal dividend of the Free Church of Scotland. It is very obvious that where a minister has two or three stations, and must keep a horse with all its attendant expenses, he needs more than where a man has only one station, and is not at all under the same necessity of keeping a horse. We say let the one always get the minimum, but the other so much less. And when a man could not show that he was doing something according to his ability to lead his people on to give, even less still should be given him.

M. S.

CANDIDATING.

MR. EDITOR,—It is a matter of regret that "Equity" did not give us the benefit of the few valuable suggestions found near the close of his letter without those uncalled-for insinuations against "Dido." Why suggest that he has been an unsuccessful candidate? It is with his statements we are concerned, not with the person; and they cannot be easily disproved. "Equity" says he has always thought that it was according to reason and common sense for the people to choose their spiritual guides as they do their doctors and lawyers. Does he mean that they should pay the preacher for his sermon or his visit, as they do the doctor for his visit or prescription, and be done with him in the same way? The people have not that freedom in the Presbyterian Church. There is no Protestant Church in the country that has less freedom of choice than ours. It is true they are called upon to vote for or against a minister before he is settled over them; but after having heard him only once or twice, as the custom is, they know little more of him than if they had never seen him. I knew a case where less than half the congregation knew the name of the candidate when he was nominated. A friend of the candidate had recommended him and spoken to the Moderator of Session (patron), and the people had to go it blind. When a minister is inducted over them and saddled on them, it is no matter how unacceptable he may be, the people have no choice. The minister is at liberty to choose another congregation if he can find one willing to accept him. The people have no such choice. What is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander. They must grin and bear, and the work of the Church must languish, or they must buy him off. I have known \$1,500 paid to buy off a minister. A minister once confessed to me that, while his people were raising only \$400 for him, they would raise \$800 for a man that would please them. He kept his place fourteen years after that, and then had to be bought off for \$1,500. During these fourteen years, the membership of the other Churches in the town were largely increased, at the expense of this one. It is sad that such a large proportion of the new congregations in our towns and cities and populous districts are established as places of refuge, to get clear of unacceptable ministers. If there was any way of removing those ministers whose usefulness is gone to other fields, where they would have an opportunity of being useful in many places, we would have one strong congregation where we have two or three weak struggling ones.

"Equity" suggests that settled ministers should not be allowed to preach in vacancies, while probationers are available. If this could be carried out, the greater part of the evils complained of would be redressed; but as our rules allow any congregation to call any minister in the Church, meaning that every minister, whether in or out of charge, is open to receive a call, making an induction, an empty form as far as the minister is concerned. I fear that there is not enough of self-denial among our ministers to pass a law which would be so much against their own interests. He further suggests, that when a congregation has heard twelve different ministers within a year, if they do not choose one there must be something wrong, and that the Presbytery should take the matter into its own hands and settle a minister over it for one or two years, until they cultivated a Christian spirit.

I heard of a doctor who gave a costly and complicated prescription to a patient and then added "If that does not cure you, take a little baking soda and it will be sure to do so." The patient decided to dispense with the costly composition of drugs, and use the simple and effective remedy at once. Why not use "Equity's" prescription in the same way? If the Presbytery, by choosing for a refractory, divided congregation, can cultivate a Christian spirit in it, should not the same mode of treatment work even better in a united, harmonious congregation? Why not adopt the most effective mode at first, and dispense with the doubtful and more difficult? This is old-fashioned Presbyterianism, and to adopt it would be simply to return to the good old way.

"Dido" and "Equity" appear after all to agree on the best remedy, and if the Presbyteries would use the power vested in them, which they should never have delegated to the congregations to the extent that they have, it would be as great a boon to the Church as Commercial Union would, in the eyes of Goldwin Smith, be to the State.

AMOR JUSTITIÆ.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR,—It is an invariable sign of the weakness of one's case when the views of an opponent in debate have to be misrepresented, or sentiments attributed to him that he has not expressed, or may have directly disallowed, in order to establish it. To "deprive the people of freedom," "a persecuting spirit," "enforcing the law by penalty—withholding the school grant," etc., etc., are deduced by Mr. Houston from my former letter. I incline to the belief that if Mr. Houston had felt that he could deal fairly and successfully with any position I really assumed in that letter, it would not have been necessary for him to have set up so many men of straw.

I cannot presume to take up the space in your crowded columns necessary to deal in detail with all the dreadful "would-be's" that Mr. Houston prophesies would follow on such action of the Government as would make religious instruction in the public schools something more than the present farce it is. They are for the most part pure assumptions that no one has a right to make, unless he can prove their great probability by reference to acknowledged facts. I say, moreover, that they are imaginary difficulties that only suggest themselves to the minds of men otherwise opposed to the general principle of religious instruction in public schools. As a general rule the school sections of this Province have never "become a bear garden" over any action of Government or Council in the direction of encouraging religious instruction. We have had something like that, however, arising from what appeared to be a contrary policy.

Will you permit me to add a few words that may tend somewhat to allay Mr. Houston's fears. He has told us what he is sure our legislators will not do in the direction of making religious instruction compulsory. ("Mandatory" is thought by some the preferable word.) I cannot boast of the intimate acquaintanceship with our legislators with which he is favoured. Perhaps I may be able to look at this subject with all the less bias on that account.

Now, as a matter of fact, our legislators have made "compulsory" what religious instruction they have provided for. Is not Mr. Houston aware of that? Read the following from the Minister's report:

"In order that the present position of the question of religious instruction may be clearly understood, I might point out (1) that, under the present regulations, the reading of the sacred Scriptures is not left to the mere discretion of the trustees. Their duty is clearly pointed out, in order that there may be no misunderstanding of the responsibility under which they are placed. (2) There is a distinct declaration on the part of the Department that religious instruction is an essential factor of our system of education, and both pupils and teachers have daily presented to them, as a standard by which their conduct is to be regulated, the sublime ethics of the Bible."

Now there is expressed a grand fundamental principle, and there is also a compulsory law based upon it, and we have had as the outcome of both a Book of Selections placed in all public schools with the mandate that they shall be read (with the ordinary conscience provisos), and we have heard nothing of "persecutions" or "tests" or "penalties" and all the rest of it.

It may now be asked what more then do we want? The answer, for which I hold myself alone responsible, is (1) Let the Bible take the place of the Selections in the regulations. It is "unsectarian," it is "pure" as "silver tried," and needs no expurgation by anybody. If the reading of a book of selections may be made mandatory, without concussing the conscience or causing any cry of persecution, much more should the reading of God's word as He has given it. I know of no possibility now of preparing any Book of Selections that will not by implication dishonour the Bible. (2) Delete the regulation which prohibits all "comment or explanation," and substitute what the late Hon. A. Crooks allowed in his memorandum of 1878, that such "explanations only shall be given as are needed for a proper understanding of what is read." It is a disgrace to our school system, and no less a libel on the teaching profession to say that full liberty should be given the teacher in treating of the history of King John or Henry VIII. but the moment he comes to the history of Jesus Christ he must be gagged. I deny that there is any known thing in our circumstances as a province to call for any such prohibition as this.

Now Mr. Houston may, if he pleases, declaim against this position I have taken in common with many others, as "gigantic," "dangerous," "useless" and "senseless." Any fishmonger could do that. But if he expects his correspondence to receive any respectful attention it is to be hoped he will condescend calmly to try to reason us out of our error. The interests at stake are too momentous to allow of trifling.

A. HENDERSON.

Hyde Park, Jan. 30, 1888.