

the apostles are laid, on the foundation, but which lieth by its own spontaneous act on the foundation Jesus Christ." Dr. Eadie, of Glasgow, one of the ablest writers of Scotland, says on Ephesians ii. 20: "The foundation of the apostles and prophets means the foundation laid by them. Such also is the exegesis of Calvin and a host of the most learned writers." Dr. Eadie says the apostles and prophets of the New Testament Church laid the foundation broad and deep in their official labours. In speaking of the formation in other epistles, the apostle never conceives of himself as being the foundation, but only as laying it. He stands in his own idea as external to it. He designated himself as a wise master builder, and adds: "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ was the chief corner stone upon which the apostles and prophets both rested themselves and built others by their instructions (Ephesians iv. 11-13; Acts xix. 6; Romans xii. 6; 1 Corinthians xii. 10). The chief corner stone is that principal foundation which was carefully laid at the angle of the building and on which the connected walls rested. While the apostles and prophets placed the foundation, the primary stone on which the structure mainly rested was Jesus Christ (cf. Isaiah xxviii. 16; Psalm cxvii. 22; Matthew xxi. 42; Acts iv. 11 etc.). The change from the masculine to the feminine gender in the inspired original is very marked, and was evidently designed. The words are quite different. Petros means a stone, small and movable. Petra means a rock, stable and immovable. Had Christ meant the Church to be built on Peter, the inspired text would have been "Thou art Petros, and upon this stone [petros] I will build my Church," or "Thou art Petra and upon this petra I will build my Church." Besides the Vulgate, the Roman Catholic standard version, gives it just as in the original Greek, "Supra Petrum," not "Supra hanc Petram," as it would otherwise have been. It would have been a violation of grammar, as well as an obscuration of the sense, as several writers have shown, had Peter been meant, to alter the word and use the feminine gender. Jesus evidently meant to hint a contrast between Peter the movable stone and Himself the immovable rock. We were lately told by Rev. Charles Doudiet, of Montreal, that the pupils at Pointe-aux-Trembles School, when asked what Petros, Peter, meant, replied that it meant "a rolling stone." And is not this a fit emblem of at least the earlier period of Peter's history? None of the disciples so often offended the Master as Peter. In the context, we are told that our Lord, after fully declaring Himself the promised Messiah and Saviour, informs the apostles that in order to save men He must suffer and die in the room of his redeemed. Peter, annoyed at this as running counter to his ideas of the Messiah's work and kingdom, had the presumption to rebuke our Lord for this saying, imagining that it arose from despondency, or from a wrong conception of the nature of His kingdom. Our Lord instantly recognizing the approach of the tempter, who would fain turn Him aside from the grand purpose of His mission, instantly says to him: "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto Me, for Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that are of men." It does not seem likely that such a one whom our Lord counts an adversary, as doing the devil's work, in seeking to turn him aside from the very purpose of His mission, and who was soon to deny with oaths that he knew his Master, would be made the very foundation on which Christ would build His Church.

CANDIDATING.

MR. EDITOR,—It must often have seemed to you very strange that so many ministers of our Church should occupy their time in writing about the evils of the present system of bringing ministers and congregations together if no evils exist. If candidating is the best and fairest way, the quickest, the surest and, shortest way of securing a settlement, if the Probationers' Scheme, under which so many good servants and true lovers of the Presbyterian Church are allowed to wander up and down, to and fro, in the often hopeless search for steady, settled, definite work is, after careful and prayerful consideration, acknowledged to be the best—in every sense the best—for our wandering ministers and vacant con-

gregations; if it is the decided opinion, belief, conviction of the wisest, humblest and purest fathers of our much-loved Church, that no other plan or scheme or system or mode of settlement can equal candidating or probationing, then how is it that you allow so much of your valuable paper to be taken up with letters on evils that are only imaginary?

There must be "something rotten in the state of Denmark" when such things are permitted. Yes, truly, there is rottenness somewhere, but echo answers, Where? It cannot be with the ministers who complain of evils connected with the Probationers' Scheme or with candidating; for I find that they write of things which they themselves have seen and felt. The evils are said to be humiliating, injurious, grievous, ruinous, etc., and are described by men who have had a practical acquaintance with them. I am satisfied that the "rottenness" is not to be found with the candidate, probationer or minister without charge, for I here solemnly declare that nine out of every ten of our candidates would accept calls to-morrow, or settled, definite, steady work. I know many of these men, and they are weary-hearted, lonely, disappointed, sad, soured men. They are men, notwithstanding, whom more than twenty vacancies have described to me as "excellent preachers", "the best we ever had", "we have no fault with the supply", "any one of them would be good enough for us", "we have had some splendid men, but our people cannot agree."

These are only a few of the expressions used by vacant congregations regarding the probationers of our Church. No, in all seriousness, and as one of the most profound truths, the "rottenness" does not belong to our probationers. Yet there is "rottenness," and again echo answers, Where? Does it belong to the vacancy? Well, from a year's experience with vacant charges; from an intimate acquaintance with the internal condition of a large number, from considerable thought on the question, "Why are congregations so long vacant?" I have arrived at the conclusion that one-third of the "rottenness" belongs to the vacancy. No more common expression can be heard from members of vacant churches than this: "The ministers we have had were excellent men, and any one of them would have suited us, but unhappily our people have got divided up, and we are as far from a settlement as we were twelve months ago."

Then we ask for the cause of this increasingly injurious condition of vacancies? and the answer usually is: "Well, you know, the Presbytery is very good to us, and gives us all the time we want wherein to make a choice, but this unlimited time is injuring, scattering, killing our congregation. We want, if possible, to give, when we call, a unanimous one, and so we put off and put off in the hope of securing the desired unanimity, but our experience is that this unlimited time does us more harm than good. If we knew we had to come to a decision in four or six months there would be no difficulty in doing so; but the more ministers we hear the more numerous become the divisions, wranglings and disorders."

I could mention congregations—intelligent at that—so torn up with internal dissensions that the settlement of a pastor had to be placed in the hands of the Presbytery. Sometimes one meets with a vacancy decided to remain so for some time till a certain debt is wiped off. Or a vacancy has its "eye" upon a spring graduate, and quietly waits for him, meanwhile making the time as pleasant as they can for the ministers who preach to them. But the large majorities of vacancies would rejoice were a definite time, reasonable time, granted them in which they must call, or the Presbytery will take the matter in hand. The majority mean business, and are anxious for a settlement. No; all the "rottenness" is not found with the vacancy. With regard to the remaining two-thirds echo answers, Where? Well, the second third belongs by right to our Presbyteries.

I believe there is a law passed by one of our General Assemblies to the effect that vacancies are to be visited by their Presbyteries should they not call within six months. These Presbyteries, through their deputations, are to ascertain the causes of delay as well as to assist them out of their difficulties. Do Presbyteries do this? Is this law not, to all intents and purposes, a dead letter? I would like to hear the name of the Presbytery west of Montreal that does it. On the other hand, I can name Presbyteries

that have granted time unlimited to vacancies on the most trivial excuses. They have also refused to supply self-sustaining vacancies with ministers, and sent, for six, eight and twelve months, first, second and third-year students, on receipt of the most puerile reasons. Thus the wire-pulling, favouritism, partiality and other mean things exercised by those in brief authority in the Church of God, where brotherly kindness is taught and supposed to rule, with other things which have been and could be mentioned, make the proof as strong as it is possible that the second third of the "rottenness" belongs to our Presbyteries.

Now, Mr. Editor, one third remains. Where shall we truthfully and justly place it? and once more echo answers, Where?

Has candidating really received from the wisest, purest minded and clearest headed of the fathers and scholars of the Church that thought and consideration which it certainly demands and requires? Who are the men that have really interested themselves in this question? Who are the writers of the letters that appear at almost every issue of your paper, pointing out, complaining of and deploring the evils connected with the present mode of settling ministers and congregations? Certainly not the Fathers of the Church. Certainly not our city ministers, and certainly not those who say that candidating and the Probationers' Scheme are the very best for our Church and for its ministers. The third part of the rottenness certainly lies at the door of these men. What a stirring of the dry bones there would be were the coming Assembly to request the views of say twenty probationers on candidating and the Scheme for Probationers! It seems to me that the Assembly could not do a wiser act than to appoint a commission having this object in view. Who is able to describe the peculiar sensations caused by toothache if not the man who has had it? Is not the proof of the pudding tested by the person who partakes of it? So, in like manner, the only persons capable of intelligently and truthfully explaining and describing the evils inseparably connected with the present system of settling ministers without charge, and congregations without pastors are our ministers whose names have been and are on the Probationers' List.

In my personal judgment, Orangeville Presbytery is moving in the right direction, and though it be small it is worthy of all praise. Will our fathers and larger Presbyteries take hold of this most important question? ALIQUORUM.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR,—In reply to Mr. Houston, whose letter in your issue of the 29th ult. has just been received, permit me briefly to say that I am not aware of anything in my former position, as expressed in your issue of December 28, from which I need to shrink. I have declined to follow up all the unwarrantable influences and false constructions Mr. Houston may have put, however unwittingly, on my utterances, because to do so would make this discussion necessarily degenerate into one more of a personal nature than of public interest. I have no right to ask the use of your columns except for the good of your readers.

If Mr. Houston will refer to my letter of December 28 again, and point out what I have said there that "smacks of a persecuting spirit," I shall deal with it or withdraw it.

With regard to withdrawal of Government grant, I said nothing. Does Mr. Houston understand that Government grant is to be withdrawn where the present mandatory regulations are not carried out from any cause?

As to require the Bible to be taught by agnostics, will Mr. Houston quote from my letter where I said so?

His corrections of my quotations of the School Regulations anent the Selections are not now necessary. He might have known that I referred to the Education Report of 1885, and that when I wrote, the report of 1887 was not before the public. As a matter of fact the first book of Selections was ordered to be read to the exclusion of the Bible. We are quite ready to acknowledge and appreciate the change.

As to the new Selections, they will stand or fall on their merits—not because of the names of Rev. Prin-