

quence he was refused a certificate to the Knox College Board. It appears that the student in question, who had finished his second year in the Theological course, had appeared before the Committee some time previous and had read a discourse which was sustained, and also had satisfied them as to his conduct in the field which he was occupying for the summer. Having complied with these requirements he considered himself entitled to be certified to the College Board in accordance with the rule of the Assembly in this matter, and hence when an examination in Theology and Greek was required of him he declined, thinking it could not properly be demanded of him. As there appears to be some doubt as to what examinations Presbyteries may require of students, I would like to see the matter, discussed in your columns. The Church very properly requires Presbyteries to exercise a supervision over students either labouring or residing in their bounds. Now, the wisdom of this requirement must be quite evident to all. It is not only important that, on the part of the Presbytery, they should know exactly the nature of the doctrine taught by the student engaged in mission work and that he is conducting himself in a way becoming in one looking forward to the ministry. But also, on the part of the student, it is encouraging and helpful to know that the Presbytery is directly interested in his work, and that in any case of difficulty which presents itself, he can come for counsel to men of practical experience in the work of the ministry. Each session a certificate is required, and thus the College authorities have a guarantee that the student, when under control of the Presbytery, has been conducting himself in a becoming manner. All can see the justice of such a supervision, and no student will be found to complain of it. But when the Presbytery assumes the functions of an examining Board, and prescribes literary and theological work for examination, the case presents quite a different aspect. The rule of the Church is clear enough on this point. In chapter xi., section 133, of the Book of Rules and Forms of Procedure, the general statement is made that Presbyteries shall exercise a kind and faithful supervision over students and intending students resident within their bounds, etc., and then in section 135, which evidently is intended to specify and define the general clause, we have the work which may be required from a student clearly laid down. It reads: "It is required of Presbyteries to prescribe to students whether in Theology or in the Preparatory course, resident within their bounds during summer, a written exercise; and if satisfied therewith, as also with the deportment of the students, and any mission work done by them, to certify them accordingly to the Senate of their College." There can be no doubt as to the meaning of that clause. The Guelph Presbytery, however, argues that the general instruction as to supervision, gives the right to prescribe any work and demand any examination which it may see fit to impose, whereas it seems clear enough that the fact that what Presbyteries may require is definitely stated limits them to what is laid down. If this is not so, of what use is a positive rule at all? It is strange reasoning to say that although there is a positive rule which says we shall demand certain work from students, we are not forbidden to go beyond that and impose whatever else we please. But, altogether apart from the positive rule, which is so clear and distinct, that the large majority of the Presbyteries are quite agreed as to its meaning, there does not seem to be a single valid reason that a literary and theological examination should be required from a student who has a certified college standing. Such a course might be defended at one period in the history of our Church, when our colleges were poorly equipped with professors and the training was necessarily inferior to what it is now, when our students have the best literary advantages, and our Theological Chairs are occupied by the most gifted and scholarly men in the Church. It might formerly be a very proper and useful thing that Presbyteries should supplement the meagre stores of information which could be acquired, but no such reason can be urged now, when a long and thorough course of study is carried on under the guidance of a learned and efficient body of men upon whom the Church has set the seal of approval.

It is, however, stated by the Committee that they do not wish to assume the functions of an examining board; that they do not wish to exact a severe test examination from their students, and that they have no distrust of the value of the college examinations,

but that they simply wish to be assured that their students are not neglecting their studies during the summer. It is possible that some of the students are delinquents in this respect and require some wholesome stimulus to keep them to the mark, but even if they are, their inattention to their studies can scarcely be guarded against in this way. The student is sent to do mission work, he is responsible to the Presbytery for the faithful discharge of that work, and if he be at all faithful in the preparation of his sermons, his Bible class and prayer meeting addresses, it is quite impossible for him to neglect his reading altogether, unless indeed he is gifted with a far greater originality than most of those at present studying in our colleges for the Church. The fact that he has been faithful in his ministerial work is a tolerably safe guarantee that he has not been neglecting his reading, whereas the mere fact that he can pass an examination on a prescribed piece of his work is no proof that he has been faithful in the discharge of his duties to his congregation. It is also quite evident from the fact that a college vacation is allowed that the Church does not intend that her students shall keep up a regular and systematic course of study throughout the whole of the seven years' course; and further, if it were intended that during the summer the college work should be pursued, it is no depreciation of the scholarly attainments of our Presbyters to say that the college authorities themselves are best qualified to conduct the examinations upon that work.

But still further, the fact remains that these examinations, as they are actually conducted by Presbyteries, are no real guarantee that the student has not been neglecting his studies, and thus they fail in what is claimed to be their chief object. The only guarantee which they furnish is that the prescribed work has been read, and it is rarely the case that a rigid examination is held even on the limited work which is prescribed. The amount of work prescribed is such that it can usually be read by a student of average ability in a few days, and thus if he be disposed to fall into the vice of idleness, against which the examination is supposed to guard, he can comfortably pass away his time until within a few days of the examination, he can then apply himself to the work, come before the Committee, pass a brilliant examination and be certified to his college as an exceedingly faithful and diligent student.

While we can all hold strongly the right of the Presbytery to exercise a supervision over students there does not seem to be a single valid reason in support of the examination required by the Guelph Presbytery. It is not required by the laws of the Church, but on the contrary is a transgression of the limits clearly laid down; it is valueless as a supplement to the teachings of our college professors; it is no real guarantee that the moral and spiritual qualifications of the student are such as are requisite in a minister of the Gospel, it is not any real test of scholarship, and as it is in practice conducted it is not a reliable evidence that a regular course of reading has been kept up.

The true statesman is he who will seek to conserve all that is good in his system and eliminate all that is superfluous and useless, and so it should be in the Church. If this system is necessary to the well being of the Church, and good reasons can be given in its support, let it be retained, if not let it be discarded at once.

Hoping to see this subject discussed in your columns, I am yours,
Knox College, Toronto.

STUDENT.

THE LATE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

MR. EDITOR,—Kindly allow me to make two or three observations on your article on "The Late Pan-Presbyterian Council" in your last issue.

You say: "It is the easiest thing in the world . . . to maunder about 'breadth' of view and with evident satisfaction to take credit for 'superior' culture and greatly advanced and very admirable thinking." No one, so far as I know, did these things at the Council.

You say: "Of course it is no difficult matter to cry out against creeds and to insist upon their being shortened to the very point of annihilation." No speaker, so far as I know, advanced such a view. To propose the shortening of a creed so as to embrace only the essentials of the Christian faith is not to propose its annihilation.

You say: "Honest reformers . . . are not content with a few vague generalities about keeping the essentials and letting all else go. They have ever condescended on particulars." Thanks for the courtesy implied in the opening word of this sentence. Please remember that speakers were limited to five minutes, and that it might have required more than that time to deal with any one "particular." Bear in mind also that the Council had no right to revise the creed of any of the Churches composing the alliance. As Dr. Calderwood pointed out, the Council could do nothing in the matter, as each Church must deal with the revision of its own Confession. It was beyond the province of the Council even to *advise* any particular Church to amend its creed. All that could be gained was an expression of opinion on the general question; and I freely admit that the majority of the Council seemed to be of the opinion that none of the creeds of the Churches represented in the alliance needs any alteration, though some of the confessions are, as a matter of fact, far shorter than others.

D. J. MACDONNELL.

St. Andrew's Manse, Toronto, Oct. 19th, 1880.

"HYMNS WITH MUSIC."

MR. EDITOR,—A Subscriber, in your last issue, "cannot understand the idea of the Assembly's Committee in issuing a new Hymn Book without music." It seems to me that the idea is simply this: A uniform Hymn Book was a felt want, and the Committee was appointed with a special view to supplying the want. Furnishing music for the Hymn Book was a later thought, and is altogether much less important. For my part I do not see the need for it at all, as there are plenty of good collections of church music already published, and while uniformity in the hymns used is both *important* and *practicable*, uniformity in the tunes to which they may be sung, is neither the one nor the other. All this may safely be left to the individual choice of congregations. ANOTHER SUBSCRIBER.

October 18th, 1880.

THANKSGIVING COLLECTION.

MR. EDITOR,—Allow me, through your columns, to solicit the attention of the ministers and congregations of our Church to the state of the work of French Evangelization. The mission is prosperous in every department and capable of indefinite expansion; but funds for this purpose are not forthcoming. We are now in debt \$3,000. The Colporteurs of the French Canadian Missionary Society, which is now closing its work and retiring from the field, desire to enter our service. We must, in a week or two, decide to accept or decline their offer, and unless liberal contributions flow into our treasury very soon, we shall be unable to employ them. Many pupils are pressing for admission into our schools at Pointe-aux-Trembles, asking to be taught the way of salvation, that they may carry back the good news to their homes which are scattered over all parts of the country. Shall we receive or reject them? This depends upon the response made to our appeals for help by congregations, Sabbath schools and friends.

In these circumstances I venture to ask that offerings be made in aid of this mission, in as many of our churches as approve of it, on Thanksgiving day—Wednesday, Nov. 3rd. These will of course be in addition to the annual collection appointed by the General Assembly, and should be sent without delay to the Rev. R. H. Warden, 260 St. James street, Montreal.

D. H. MCVICAR,

Chairman, Board of French Evangelization.
Montreal, Oct. 19th, 1880.

OLD, inbred habits will make resistance; but by better habits they shall be entirely overcome.—*Thos. A' Kempis*.

TRUTHFULNESS is a corner-stone in character, and if it be not firmly laid in youth, there will ever after be a weak spot in the foundation.

I THINK I would rather rot, or feed the crows, than earn my daily bread by the pence of fools, the hard earnings of the poor man stolen from his ragged children and his emaciated wife.—*Spurgeon*.

THEY all knew that the brain was directly affected by alcohol; and, as the brain was the organ of the mind, there was a strong presumption that mental disorders would be frequently caused by its excessive use.—*Dr. Harl Tuke*.