

Church to use that gift in giving the Gospel to those who need it, receiving back from the Church what itself requires, the surplus being at the Church's disposal for the support of the Gospel elsewhere." Now, it is obvious that the first and the most important part of this definition, extending to the word "purpose," underlies equally both Schemes. No one, so far as I know, would hesitate to accept the truth which it affirms. The latter part of it, in which each congregation is said to receive back from the Common Fund what itself requires, would surely need to be modified considerably to make it strictly accordant with what is proposed; otherwise what need for the provision in the Scheme empowering aid-giving congregations to add "whatever Supplement they may be able to give" to the equal dividend as the salary of their pastors? The idea, however, is obvious enough: a Common Fund, to which all contribute, to provide Gospel ordinances wherever needed throughout the country. The idea is a noble one, but to realise it in its integrity two things are requisite: first, that all the ordinances should be sustained by the Common Fund, and for that matter, the buildings also provided in which these ordinances are to be dispensed; and second, that those who dispense them should derive their whole ministerial support from this Common Fund. But so far from these conditions being met under the proposed Sustentation Scheme, no provision is made for the support of ordinances from the Common Fund in the most necessitous districts—those in which there are not regularly called and ordained pastors. This is left dependent on another Fund, the Home Mission Fund, and in the case of the larger and wealthier congregations only a part, in some instances a fractional part, of the salary of the ordained minister is to be derived from the Common Fund, while the ministers of the weakest charges are to participate in it only by grants in aid.

I have, however, very little quarrel with the principle of the Sustentation Fund, though I prefer, even as a matter of principle, a mode of sustaining the ministry in which fuller effect is given to the apostolic rule, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to Him that teacheth in all good things." There are many, however, who, preferring on the whole the principle of a Common Fund, believe it to be unsuitable to a Church circumstanced as ours is, and not likely to be successful, and therefore disapprove of its adoption as fitted to imperil the very interests which it proposes to promote.

Mr. McLeod makes this strange statement in his last letter: "That (the Supplemental) Scheme has no principle in it of any kind to commend it to the Church." This may either mean that it has absolutely no principle in it, or that it has none which ought to commend it to the Church. Now, surely there underlies it, obviously enough, the principle that the strong should help the weak. Is this a principle to which any Church should be ashamed to conform its action?

Another statement, which is meant to bear hard against the adoption of the Scheme, is still more surprising: "It has been adopted by no Church in the world but one (the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland), after deliberate examination." Now, so far as this from being the case, that the Supplemental Scheme, or the plan of assisting weak congregations by grants in aid, is at present in operation in the Presbyterian Churches (North and South) of the United States, in the United Presbyterian Church of North America; in the Methodist, Anglican Baptist, and Congregationalist Churches of the Dominion, as it is in our own; in fact, in the large majority of Christian Churches on both sides of the Atlantic. Of course, it is open to Mr. McLeod to say that this has been done without "deliberate examination," though it would not be a modest charge to bring against the good and great men who have been guiding the past action of these Churches. Dr. McCosh was not likely to act unthinkingly on a matter of this importance; he was certainly not unacquainted with the Sustentation Fund of the Free Church of Scotland; and yet, when some years ago he endeavoured, along with Dr. Hall, of New York, and other distinguished men, to find a solution of the problem now before us, while giving to it the name of the Sustentation Fund, the plan adopted, and still in operation in the Presbyterian Church of the United States, was to give grants in aid, so as to make the salary (if I am rightly informed) \$1,000 where the congregations were supplied by fixed pastors. If, therefore, the

Presbyterian Church in Canada is led to express its preference for the continuance of the Supplemental Scheme, with such modifications as may render it more efficient, it will simply be acting on the plan once all but universally followed, and still in operation in the large majority of Christian Churches.

I cannot but regret to find in both Mr. McLeod's communications, but especially in the latter, what looks so like an attempt to prejudice the fair consideration of the Supplemental Scheme by connecting it *exclusively*, and, as I have shown, without any good ground, with one Scottish Church. What can be more remote from "the candid and patient spirit" in which Mr. McLeod invites the Church to discuss the subject, than the statement that the Scheme is one "whose only one commendation, as far as I can see, is that it is in use in the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland." Fortunately there is the evidence on every hand, that whatever the decision arrived at, the Church will not take it in any sectional spirit. In the Presbytery of Toronto, if I may be allowed to refer to it, at its late meeting, the motion which looked disapprovingly on the Supplemental Scheme was seconded by a minister who belonged to the United Presbyterian Church, while that expressing approval of the Scheme was supported by all but two or three of those present, embracing representatives of all the sections of which our happily united Church is composed.

In conclusion—for neither the time at my disposal, nor your limits, will allow me to look at all the statements to which exception might be taken—Mr. McLeod once more deprecates haste in coming to a final decision on the point before the Church, and on the ground that there has been very little time given to study the question. What are the facts? The question of a Sustentation Scheme in one form or another will have been before the Church three years at the date of the next meeting of Assembly. The Supplemental Scheme has been in operation for many more years. The changes proposed, while very important—the institution of a Separate Fund—and the graduating within certain limits of the aid to be given by the degree of liberality exercised, are not such as should require a very long time to examine. The details, indeed, require a good deal of attention, and I notice with pleasure that several Presbyteries have referred the whole subject to Committees to consider and report with a view to final action. It is scarcely in place, however, to attempt to determine at this stage what action the next General Assembly should take, or to counsel it to take no decisive step. The duty of Presbyteries, as laid down by the decision of last Assembly, is to indicate their preference for the one Scheme or the other, and to make suggestions in regard to either. The question of taking final action or delaying it is one which may surely be left with the Assembly.

JOHN M. KING.

THE NEW CHURCH AND MANSE SCHEME FOR THE NORTH-WEST.

Though I had the privilege of visiting the North-West, and spending some seven Sabbaths there, in October and November last, I did not intend writing about it after my return, as I came to the conclusion that your readers knew all about that country that could be known or was worth knowing. The report of the New Church and Manse Scheme, published in your issue of the 3rd inst., makes me desirous, however, with your permission, of saying a word on that subject. I may state that of the seven Sabbaths spent out there, two were spent in Winnipeg, one in Portage la Prairie, and the other four in various mission fields to the west, in all of which I conducted two services each Sabbath. My object was to see the country for myself, and form my own conclusions regarding it as a place to live in, and especially as a field for ministerial work. I consider I had a fair opportunity of seeing how the ministers and people live—in their homes when they have any, and in what for the time being supplies the place of homes when they have none.

I will pass over the thousand and one things that might be referred to, and most of which have been written about already, and confine myself to the matter above mentioned. With regard, then, to the New Church and Manse Fund, it is certainly one of the most needed, and likely to be the most useful Scheme that could at the present time be devised to meet the wants of our Church work in the North-

West. The minister, as well as the settler, who seeks to establish himself in a new country, has everything for himself and his work to provide. The people, while they are thankful for his services, are seldom in a position to give him much help, as they have enough to do for the first two or three years with themselves. There is for the minister a place to live in, and for the people a place to meet in, both wanted, and the first is wanted the most, and its want most severely felt. There are no spare houses in the North-West, as every one knows, and but little spare house-room that he can share with some one else. If the minister be married, to obtain a house for himself and family is, in most districts, out of the question. If he be unmarried, it is often equally difficult to get a suitable boarding place. There is nothing, therefore, he feels the want of so soon or so much as a suitable place to live in, and by a "suitable place" I do not mean a capacious and comfortable house such as most of our Ontario manse are, but in the meantime such a place as will afford him shelter, and also that measure of convenience and comfort that is necessary for the proper discharge of his duties. This is of more importance to begin with than a church building, because the houses in which the people live are, in present circumstances, tolerably suitable for that, and ought to be sufficient till the centres of population are better determined, and the proper location for the church more accurately known. These houses are mostly oblong structures of one or one-and-a-half story, built of logs or boards, and fifteen to twenty feet wide by twenty to thirty long. Sometimes the whole is in one apartment, with the cooking stove in the centre and the beds at the sides or in the corners, or perhaps in a loft above. More frequently, however, a part is partitioned off for a family bedroom. The "living" apartment, which is used for all general household purposes, does very well for a meeting place. With extemporized seats it can accommodate from thirty up to fifty or sixty people, and larger congregations than this in the country settlements are not usually met with. It is hardly necessary to say that these houses do not offer to the minister who boards in them opportunity for meditation and study, and these, in due measure, are of course essential that he may keep his heart and mind in proper tone for his work. Then, there is not only the feeling that the family are in his way, but that he is also in the way of the family, and this certainly does not add to his comfort. I met with a good brother in Portage la Prairie who labours very acceptably in a charge a few miles from that place. He had come in to look for a boarding place in the town. He was wearied staying in the house of one of his congregation, where he was an extra weight to the already heavy burden of the housewife, and could not obtain the needed facilities for study himself. And he stated that no other family in the congregation, which was some years established, was in different circumstances. A man cannot well prepare sermons beside the cooking stove, with the family around him preparing the meals or attending to other household duties; and a stove of some kind is a necessary companion for the greater part of the year, and the cooking stove is often the only one in the house. Of course this state of things may be expected to improve as the country progresses, and no doubt it will; but in the meantime the first and most important requisite for doing the Church's work is the *worker*, and it is simply a matter of economy in administration that he should be provided with all the facilities for the discharge of his duties the circumstances will admit of. Our Methodist friends, with their usual practical wisdom, see the importance of this, and endeavour, first of all, to provide a parsonage, which, however humble, secures for their representative "a local habitation and a name." It is to be hoped that our own Church, though a little behind in this as in some other respects, will come to the front—her proper position in the North-West. This the Church and Manse Fund, so auspiciously begun, will help much to secure, and it certainly deserves the sympathy and support of all who wish to further the cause of Presbyterianism and the kingdom of Christ in Manitoba and the North-West. Mr. Robertson and the Church are to be congratulated on the successful beginning already made, and surely, considering the great prosperity of Winnipeg, and the interest felt in the North-West country by the Eastern Provinces, there should be little difficulty in securing the sum required for such an object.

Feb. 6th, 1882.

JOHN ANDERSON.