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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MAY 23, 1879.

In the absence from the country, for a few months, of the Rev. Mr. King, persons having to correspond in any matters connected with the supply of mission stations and vacancies in the Toronto Presbytery will address their letters to the Rev. J. M. Cameron, who will attend to this business in Mr. King's absence.

A SUSTENTATION FUND.

NO more important subject will come before the General Assembly than that of providing an adequate maintenance to the ministers of the Church so as to secure and continue in our land an educated and efficient ministry, whose services, by the blessing of God, may be the means of turning men from darkness to light, and of establishing them in the way of holiness. For some years past the question of a General Sustentation Fund has from time to time been mooted, but till very recently it never seems to have taken much hold upon the sympathies of the ministers or office-bearers of the Church.

We are glad to observe that an impetus has of late been given to the subject, and that at the recent meetings of the Synod of Hamilton and London, and of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, overtures were adopted and ordered to be transmitted to the General Assembly in favour of the establishment of such a fund. This ensures that the subject will be thoroughly discussed by the Assembly, and, we trust, some definite action taken in furtherance of the scheme. At present a large number of our ministers are very inadequately remunerated, their salaries in many instances being much less than the wages of skilled mechanics, and in not a few cases below the average of day labourers.

The scheme in connection with the Home Mission Fund for supplementing the salaries of ministers of weak congregations has been most advantageous in the past, but with all its advantages it has not succeeded in providing an adequate maintenance for even those ministers who derived assistance from its funds, and it never can accomplish that which is sought to be done by a sustentation scheme. Apart from this, it is well known

that the method at present pursued is year by year becoming less popular, and that many of our ministers have strong objections to settle in supplemented charges.

So far as we know the mind of the Church there is no difference of opinion as to the principle involved in a general Sustentation Scheme, and the only obstacle in the way of instituting such a scheme is the doubt as to its practicability in our Canadian Church. On this point Mr. P. McF. McLeod, of Stratford, has done good service in his recent communications to the "Record" and the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

We have with considerable care gone over the statistical tables of last year and are strongly impressed with the practicability of a general Sustentation Fund for our Church. We are satisfied that a judicious scheme—devised with a view to stimulate the liberality of aid-receiving congregations and to secure the sympathy and hearty co-operation of the aid-giving Churches—would if vigorously and judiciously worked result in untold good. We believe that from the very first an equal dividend of \$750 per annum would be secured without affecting injuriously the salary of any minister in what is now a self-sustaining charge and without harm to any of the other schemes of the Church.

Ministers could then plead with their people to contribute to the Sustentation Fund as they cannot possibly plead now for their own salaries. Systematic giving would then necessarily be introduced and practised in every congregation, and the power of little would be illustrated as never before in our Church. The fear of man would not be so strong a temptation as it now is to some ministers, and resignations would be of much rarer occurrence than unfortunately has been the case in the past. We have before us the experience of other Presbyterian Churches that have for years tested the Sustentation Fund Scheme. It is not something new and untried or something that having been tried has proved a failure. It has been a great success in all churches where it has been adopted, and we know of no reason why it should not be equally successful in our own Church.

We know that many of our ministers and people will watch with interest the discussion of this subject at the ensuing meeting of Assembly, and we but give expression to the mind of many of these when we express the hope that action will be taken in the way of instituting a General Sustentation Fund.

FRANCIS L. PATTON, D.D.

THE English Presbyterian Synod, which consists of upwards of four hundred members, has unanimously elected Dr. Patton to the chair of "Apologetics and Pastoral Theology," in the Theological College, London. This election marks an important departure from use and wont, as the schools and colleges of the old country generally show a preference for their own men in the matter of professorships. This is not however the first call which the Synod has addressed to a foreigner to become one of its theological staff, the Rev. Dr. Christlieb having not long ago

refused an invitation to this very chair. It cannot for a moment be supposed that the Synod comes to America for a professor, because the ministry of the English Presbyterian Church does not contain such scholarly divines as would be fitted for professional duties. The fact of this chair of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology having been supplied for a considerable time by ministers of the Church, shows there are not wanting those who are well qualified for the work. But the English Presbyterian Church was constituted by the union of the Free and United Presbyterian ministers in England. There might be difficulty arising through feelings of courtesy in making choice either of a Free Churchman or a United Presbyterian. The Synod cuts the Gordian knot, on the same principle on which an Episcopalian, a Baptist and Methodist, who had resolved upon building a church for the good of the village in which they held property, agreed that the church should be Presbyterian: it calls the new professor who is wanted from America.

Dr. Patton, to whom the chair in question has been offered, is not an American by birth, being a native of Bermuda. Still he is the product of this side of the Atlantic. Canada has some interest in him, as he was in part educated at Knox College, Toronto. He completed his theological studies in Princeton, and entered upon the work of the ministry some thirteen years ago. He was ordained by the Presbytery of New York to the pastorate of the Eighty-fourth street Church, and after a brief service was translated to the Presbyterian Church at Nyack on the river Hudson. He remained there for a few years. At this time he was known simply as a hard student. There was little or no brilliancy about him. He appeared rather to be a plodder than a genius. But he soon gave proof of the stuff that was in him, by a number of philosophical and theological articles which were published from time to time under his name in the New York "Observer," "Evangelist" and "Independent," in the Philadelphia "Presbyterian," and in the "Interior" of Chicago. The fame acquired by his pen brought him to the surface as a preacher. It was noised abroad that a star of considerable magnitude had been discovered on the Hudson. A call was addressed to him by one of the Brooklyn churches, which was accepted. But Dr. Patton had just reached eight months of his new pastorate, when he was invited to be one of the Professors of the Theological Seminary of the north-west. He was very soon afterwards urged to accept the editorship of the "Interior." He continued for some time fulfilling the duties of his double office as professor and editor to the satisfaction of all concerned. Nor were his preaching talents allowed to lie latent. About two years ago he resigned the editorship in order to become pastor of one of the churches of Chicago, and since then he has united successfully the offices of professor and pastor.

Dr. Patton was a member of the Pan-Presbyterian Council and distinguished himself in it by a learned paper. Since then he has contributed valuable articles to the "Princeton Review," the "Catholic Presbyterian,"