

loss of \$9,600 of capital, and an annual reduction of \$5,000 of revenue that landed the Church in a crisis altogether unprecedented in its history. Most true, the crash served to arouse enthusiasm, and we have been able up to the present time to continue the reduced scale of payments to all the ministers; but, that this high pressure under which we have been working is unsatisfactory and dangerous to the machinery of the Church is undoubted. We have had pastoral letters, special appeals, private appeals—a perfect “spate” of appeals, and we know enough of the mind of the Church to say with confidence that to trust longer to these, is to trust to a broken reed. It is no use crying over spilt milk. We must look the situation fair in the face and adapt our policy to the altered circumstances, and to the present requirements of the Church. The first step to be taken is to affirm one or other of these alternatives:—Shall the interest derived from investments and the Annual Church Collections be henceforth regarded as a “Sustentation Fund”; as a Missionary Fund, proper: or, as a combination of these two? In the first case, of course, there is implied the payment of an equal sum annually, to each minister, without reference to the ability of congregations. In the second, the principle is recognized that the larger and wealthier congregations should support their own ministers, and that the Synod’s Home Mission Fund should be used only for the purposes of Church extension, for the aiding of weak congregations, and for providing retiring allowances to aged and infirm ministers. A combination of these principles would assume this character.—The annual proceeds of the invested Fund shall, after satisfying the claims of commuting ministers, be employed in the payment of £50 a year to each minister, without any deduction, in the order of seniority, as far as it will go, and that the sums annually contributed by congregations shall be disbursed with reference to the ascertained financial ability of each congregation whose minister is not on the list of Recipients from the Temporalities’ Fund.

It will be for the Synod that is to meet next June to decide which of those general principles is to mould the future policy of the Church. The Presbyterian Church of Ireland, which, as affected by recent legislation and the discontinuance of the “Regium Donum,” is placed in a position

very similar to our own, has, by a majority so overwhelming as practically to amount to unanimity, agreed to adopt the principle of a Sustentation Fund. The amount received from Government in commutation in their case will yield an annual allowance of £69 to each minister, and it is proposed that the Irish Church shall contribute £30,000 annually, so that each minister may receive a stipend of £100 a year, in addition to whatever his own congregation may contribute further. The Sustentation Fund of the Free Church of Scotland, which is entirely dependent upon voluntary annual contributions, has for its aim the payment of £150 a year to each of its eight hundred ministers, and that high aim has been reached. On this side the Atlantic, however, the endowment principle is regarded with less favour, and hence we find the American Presbyterian Churches acting on the missionary principle—extending their field of operations—supporting the weak—allowing those who are able in all cases to take care of themselves. This, so far as we know, is also the invariable practice of the Methodist Churches.

The object of this paper is not to pronounce an opinion upon this or that plan, but rather to direct attention to the fact that some method, other than that now followed, must be devised, and in a matter of such moment it is extremely desirable that the members of Synod when they meet should come together with the knowledge at least that this question will be discussed. It will be remembered that in June last, a committee was appointed to consider this whole question, and to report to next meeting of Synod. That this committee have given much time and thought to the subject we know, and that they will be prepared to submit a matured plan at the proper time, we have reason to believe. So far as we can learn, the last of the three above mentioned principles is that which the committee will recommend for adoption, namely, a Sustentation and Home Missionary Fund combined.

The following are understood to be the leading features of the proposed new arrangement:—

1st. That the Temporalities’ Fund shall remain intact, and that the interest accruing therefrom shall be applied in the same manner that it now is, excepting that the full sum of £50 per annum, instead of \$150, shall be paid to all non-privileged ministers, as far as the funds will go, in