

bath of life which Chalmers so much desired and was denied. That blessed decade of restful years is ended now; but it has been crowned and consummated with the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

W. D.

SUSTENTATION FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—Now that I have read Mr. Patterson's long letters I feel more disposed to acquiesce in the editorial judgment of Mr. Croil. Why Mr. Patterson should think it needful to assume the bitter tone so apparent in his letters I am at a loss to understand, as he is quite a stranger to me, but I hope to be able to answer him without indulging in such courtesies as might be expected to pass between rival political partisans, but which are utterly unbecoming in Christian ministers discussing a question of great importance to the welfare of the Church. I am sorry that it will be impossible for most of your readers to compare Mr. Patterson's letters with my papers which appeared in the "Record" more than a year ago, but any who take the trouble to do so will find that he does them but scant justice by his quotations. These papers were necessarily brief and general statements, not detailed statistical reports, and were written with the understanding that the readers had some knowledge of the subject, and would be able to supply what was omitted. Of course had I then been acquainted with Mr. Patterson, I would not have assumed so much, but would have carefully explained that when I said that twenty-nine years after the Disruption a dividend of £150 was reached for every minister of the Church, I meant every minister on the equal dividend platform, not ministers on the retired list, or ministers of Home Mission and Church Extension charges. I am sure your readers will agree with me that it would be a waste of time to follow Mr. Patterson in his detailed comparison of the working of the two schemes in Scotland, for the circumstances of the Churches are so different that no decision to help us in this country can be drawn from the result. I will content myself therefore with noticing some of the statements which require to be looked into before being accepted by your readers.

1. Is it the case, as Mr. Patterson affirms, that the members of the United Presbyterian Church are poorer, man for man, than the members of the Free Church? Mr. Patterson says everyone who knows Scotland is aware that it is so. Well, I profess to know Scotland, and I entirely differ from Mr. Patterson. While there may be on the one hand more wealth in the Free Church, it is certain that on the other hand there is deeper poverty. Mr. Patterson gloats over the fact that the United Presbyterian Church has no congregation of over 400 members that is not self-sustaining, and that the Free Church has some with 600 members which have not reached that stage, and concludes that these facts are to be accounted for, simply by the greater liberality of the United Presbyterians. Now, sir, when Mr. Patterson mentions the congregations he refers to, I will undertake to prove that, in proportion to their means, they are doing as much as their United Presbyterian neighbours. It is easy to make a vague statement such as that referred to, which may turn out very far from the truth when carefully examined. For instance, here is a church planted in one of the wynds of Glasgow, and attended by the very poorest of the poor, and in a street not very far away is a church attended by tradespeople and mechanics, and an upper middle class. Mr. Patterson might refer to these as situated side by side, and draw comparisons very much to the discredit of the poor man's church, but we know that such comparisons would be very unjust. The true state of the case is, that the United Presbyterian Church has occupied the towns and cities rather than the rural districts, and that though it may not number in its ranks many of what are called the aristocracy, it has doubtless a larger number of well-to-do people than any other denomination in Scotland. There are whole counties in the north of Scotland where the United Presbyterian Church has no hold whatever upon the population, and only an isolated congregation here and there, while the Free Church for years has been supplying the spiritual wants of the people—a people in many instances utterly unable to do anything for the support of the Gospel. If Mr. Patterson had lived in the Highlands, and attended any of the large Free Church congregations, he would be at no loss to account for the low rate of giving per

member, for he would see that those devoted Highlanders were not withholding through disloyalty to the Church or covetousness, but through their absolute poverty. Again, as I shewed in my last letter, the Free Church has planted ninety new churches within the last ten years. Where have these been planted? For the most part in the midst of the poor, among a class unable to do much for themselves, and yet prizing the means of grace. As a student I laboured in a Church Extension charge in Edinburgh, and can speak from experience of the poverty of the people, and at the same time their loyalty to the Church. I have known of old women who were receiving parish relief laying past their threepence per month for the Sustentation Fund, and I venture to say the success of the Sustentation Fund has been owing to the self-denying gifts of such poor people, rather than to the great donations of the rich. Here then is not only the explanation of the difference of giving per member, but also of the large number of aid-receiving charges in the Free Church. Mr. Patterson says that "former committees considered the large number of aid-receiving congregations in the Free Church as a good reason for recommending our Church not to adopt a sustentation fund. But I am very sure no impartial observer of the history of the Free Church will agree with that committee. As long as the poor outnumber the rich in Scotland it will be the glory of the Free Church that her aid-receiving congregations outnumber the self-sustaining. If Mr. Patterson will take the Blue Book of the Free Church and examine its statistics he will see that the greater number of those aid-receiving congregations are in districts unknown to the United Presbyterians, and which they have never attempted to reach; and that while there are, doubtless, exceptional cases in which the congregations are not so well worked as they might be, the mass of these aid-receiving charges are giving with a liberality that leaves nothing to be desired.

Would Mr. Patterson not be pleased if we as a Church were able to plant fully organized charges throughout our Dominion, wherever there were people ready to come and hear the Gospel, and would he consider it a reproach that the proportion of aid-giving to aid-receiving, were the same as in the Free Church? I think we would all be too apt to boast of such an achievement. But is it a fact that, taking contributions for all purposes, the United Presbyterian Church is more liberal than the Free Church? I answer, it is not. The total income, for all purposes, of the Free Church exceeds that of the United Presbyterian Church by at least five shillings per member, and notwithstanding the pressure of the times the income of the Free Church last year exceeded the previous year by the sum of £40,000, and any previous year by £13,000. In my previous letter I have answered Mr. Patterson's statement about my "profound ignorance" of the Supplementing Scheme of the United Presbyterian Church by giving him some information which he evidently did not possess concerning the working of that scheme. I will content myself therefore with a single quotation from the "United Presbyterian Magazine," which will shew that intelligent men in that denomination are not so sure about its perfection as Mr. Patterson evidently is, or so doubtful about the effects of a central fund. "That scheme therefore which maintains the central idea of one ministry and one Church which supports it, is the scheme which is most in harmony with the great principles of the New Testament. The only system of ministers' support which is in harmony with the Christian Statute Book and the spirit of its Author is a central stipend fund which in one way or another secures the support of all the pastors of the Church. But we go one step further and add that it is the only system that can ever secure the Christianization of a whole nation. We are not quite satisfied that we have reached the true goal in our present augmentation fund, but whether changes come sooner or later we hope they will be in the direction we have indicated."

Mr. Patterson objects to my statement that the tendency of a supplementing fund is to destroy the principle of Presbyterian parity, and says that I do not inform him how it has this tendency. Is it no degradation to a sensitive and high-spirited man to be compelled to go before a committee of brethren once a year and expose his poverty before them, and answer them queries as to the reasons of his making such application? I have had testimony from brethren in the United Presbyterian Church in England, before their union with the English Presbyterians, of the

humiliation they suffered in going to Edinburgh to plead for help from a committee who knew little or nothing of their circumstances, and could not sympathize with their difficulties. I have heard brethren whom I respected required to give an account of themselves and their work, which was as painful for us to hear as for them to tell, before their Presbytery would consent to make application for a grant. Of course Mr. Patterson will say that these difficulties apply to a sustentation fund as well as to a supplementing fund, but I can answer from the experience of brethren who have laboured under both plans, that a well regulated sustentation fund preserves the self-respect and dignity of the ministers as the other method does not.

Again, Mr. Patterson becomes witty over my statement that it puts the patronage of our weaker charges *virtually* into the hands of a committee. All that I meant by that was that a supplementing committee had necessarily larger powers than a sustentation committee, and that the ability of weak charges to call a minister depended entirely upon the grant voted to them by the committee, and that grant was liable to change every year or to be suddenly withdrawn, whereas the regulations upon which a sustentation committee work prevent such sudden and arbitrary changes, and protect the rights of the congregation as well as the rights of the minister.

But now I come to the case of the Presbyterian Church in England, about which I ought to know something, as I was a minister of that Church when it adopted a sustentation fund, and took a humble part in advocating its adoption. Mr. Patterson says she "used all the eclat of the union for its promotion." Will it surprise Mr. Patterson to hear that the Sustentation Fund was an accomplished fact two years before the union with the United Presbyterians in England? And further, will it surprise Mr. Patterson to be informed that, of the 100 ministers who then united with the English Presbyterians, not one objected to the Sustentation Fund, and many of them became its most ardent supporters. But again Mr. Patterson says it is too soon to speak of that fund as a success. Does he know that it is *exactly* the same age as the surplus fund of the United Presbyterian Church? Mr. Patterson has his doubts about the prospects of that fund, but the Church itself does not share his fears. They have passed through several years of terrible commercial depression; they have had a large additional burden thrown upon them by the union, only partially lightened by the help received from Scotland, and with all that they have still secured to their ministers £200 per annum, and have no intention of reducing the equal dividend. Mr. Patterson refers to the fact that he has been for thirty years connected with a supplementing scheme in the eastern Provinces. Will he tell the Church his experiences? I have before me the minutes of 1877. Here is the report of the Supplementing Committee. "Of the 170 congregations in the Synod 94 sent no contributions to the supplementing fund. Not a few of the congregations that made no collection are themselves supplemented." The reports for the following years are very much in the same strain, and they present anything but a bright prospect for the future if the whole Church should come under the working of such a supplementing fund. Mr. Patterson has wasted a great deal of ink in seeking to prove that my statement, that a supplementing fund would call forth the liberality of the Church, was altogether wrong. Why did he not correct my error from the experience of his own Supplementing Committee. For thirty years a scheme has been worked by Mr. Patterson and his committee, and what has come of it the Assembly minutes make very plain. But would it not be better for us, like sensible men to discuss the plan now before Presbyteries, and see whether we cannot take advantage of the experiences of all the Churches and raise the standard of ministerial support at least to a minimum of \$1,000 per annum.

P. MCF. MACLEOD.

THE Burials Act has been brought into operation at Epworth, John Wesley's birthplace, under circumstances which deserve special notice. An aged Roman Catholic died, and the Rev. Canon Gurdin, of Crowle, in accordance with the wishes of the deceased's relatives, took steps to have her buried according to her faith. Although the notice required under the Act had not been strictly given, the vicar, Rev. Mr. Dundas, at once consented, and the interment took place. It is 320 years since a Roman Catholic priest officiated at a funeral in Epworth churchyard before.