

Sustentation Fund, .....	£91,469	15	0
Building Fund, .....	36,651	18	3½
Congregational Fund, .....	80,990	17	3½
Missions and Education, .....	48,785	18	2
Miscellaneous, .....	9,380	12	10

Total, .....

£267,281 1 7½

"Total sum raised from 18th May, 1843 to 31st March, 1852, £27,429, 901 4s, 8d."

These general statements will furnish our readers with some idea of the schemes of the Free Church, and will save us the necessity of taking them up separately. We may, however, remark, that the tone of the various reports on the religious and benevolent movements of the church was very different from that of the reports in the Established Church.—The funds, taken as a whole, are in a flourishing condition, and those for missions leave no room for despondency. The Sustentation Fund is that which creates most interest, both among the adherents of the Free Church, and among those who have no connection with it. It has realised this year nearly as much as usual, the deficiency being, upon a sum of upwards of £90,000, little more than £700. The sum divisible among 675 ministers, receiving equal dividend not including forty-nine ministers (who are upon an inferior footing), yields a dividend of £122.—There is much difference of opinion, at present, as respects this fund, among the members of the Free Church; and every aspect of it is encompassed with difficulties. The reason is this: There are not 200 congregations who are self-supporting—that is, there are not 200 congregations who pay in as much to the Sustentation Fund as they take out of it. Hence, there are about 500 congregations who, to a greater or lesser extent, are a burden upon this central fund. Again, one-fourth of this Sustentation Fund is contributed by about ten congregations. This is a state of things which cannot continue. The more liberal congregations say, that their exertions are only encouraging others to neglect their duty; and that they cannot be expected to increase their efforts, from year to year, to augment the dividend, while others continue inactive. Hence, a committee appointed at last Assembly, presented a report to the commission of Assembly, at its meeting on the 3rd March. The following principle was laid down:—"That as the aforesaid principles of an equal dividend cannot be either permanently or justly maintained, save on the footing of equitable contributions being made by all the congregations of the church to the fund from which the equal dividend is derived, the particular sum shall henceforth be arranged which each congregation is to be expected to contribute; and that with this view the General Assembly shall appoint a special sub-committee, selected from the committees on the Sustentation Fund, who shall be instructed and authorised, upon a careful view of the numbers and resources of the several congregations, as indicated by the statistical and other information upon the subject that is, or may be in possession of the committee, to adjust the sums to be contributed by the congregations, respectively, to the Sustentation Fund." The circumstances of each congregation are to be examined into, in order to ascertain what should be contributed to the Sustentation Fund; as it was notorious that many congregations were not self-supporting who ought to be so, and that, even among those who were self-supporting, some did far less than they ought to do. This proposition occasioned much dispute, as, in the opinion of some, this was imposing an assessment upon the congregations, and bringing them all under the unbending rigour of an income tax. The commission remitted the matter to the office-bearers of the church, with instructions that they should consider it before this Assembly. It was argued in the Assembly, that the returns from the presbyteries show that the scheme was substantially approved of by the presbyteries of the church. This was, however, denied, but, on account of the difference of opinion still existing, the committee reported, "that they are not prepared to recommend its immediate adoption, without further confirmation and explanation with deacons' courts, and congregations. The debate upon the subject was important. The idea seems to be, that this Sustentation Fund supplies to the Free Church the want of a Government endowment, and keeps the ministers more independent, and consequently more faithful in censure and discipline than they would be, were they supported directly by their congregations.—With very questionable taste, Lord Panmure mentioned the case of a minister of some Voluntary church, who could not give his vote to some candidate for parliamentary honours, because this would displease his congregation. And hence the danger of allowing a minister to be supported immediately by his church. According to this theory of independence, a minister of the Established Church, being completely independent of his congregation, should be more faithful in rebuke and discipline than a minister of the Free Church, who is partly dependent upon his congregation, and still more so than a minister of the United Presbyterian Church, who is, generally speaking, always dependent upon his congregation. Such "vain babblings" cannot be suffered to pass unquestioned. They are opposed to all facts, and if the ministers of the Free Church be placed under more temptations to be lax in their discipline, than they were when they were connected with the Established Church, the sooner they go back there the better for themselves and the cause of truth.—And most assuredly, whether the statement be made with tongue or pen,—whether upon the platform or in the pulpit,—we shall denounce it as a falsehood, that the United Presbyterian Church, or the Independent Church, or the Baptist Church, is less scrupulous as to the admission of members, and less careful in rebuking offenders, because their ministers are supported, as a general rule, directly by the churches of which they

have the oversight. And though we make no pretensions to the prophetic faculty, we tell our friends of the Free Church, that if their sole hope of preserving the purity of God's house rests in the Sustentation Fund, continuing to be the first source from which ministerial stipends are to be paid, they are building upon the sand. The Sustentation Fund, in its present form, cannot stand very long. And the Sustentation Fund, despite all exertions to prevent it, will become, in course of time, a Supplemental Fund. We have not any wish that the change should take place soon, for the Free Church is not prepared, as yet, for such an extensive alteration of this scheme; but every year is bringing it nearer,—and the clear-sighted men in the Free Church will speedily arrive at the same conclusion. It gives us pain to make these remarks, but a railing accusation like this must not pass unnoticed.

**Committee on Education.**—Though the annual collection was abandoned last year, the returns had enabled the committee to pay the teachers, last Martinmas, the same sum they had received the year before; and at Whitsunday, even a somewhat larger sum. Of Government grants, £5794 had to be paid in by apprentice teachers, and £1861 by teachers in connection with the schools; the largest amount (7658 in all) given to any ecclesiastical body in the country. These sums do not include the grants to two Normal Schools.

**Sabbath Schools.**—There are 1800 schools, above 9000 teachers, and above 100,000 scholars.

**Union with the Original Seceders.**—Probably, the most interesting part of the proceeding was the union with the Original Seceders,—to which reference was made in our last number. The union took place upon two conditions, principally. First, the Original Seceders were allowed to retain their opinions on the unchangeable obligation of the covenants; it being of course understood that they do not annoy the courts or pulpits of the Free Church with this harmless abstraction.—Second, they were not to be placed upon the Sustentation Fund; but a committee was appointed to consider what pecuniary aid could be given them—a door was also widely open for the admission of the minority, should they desire it.

When the deputation from the Original Secession Church appeared before the Assembly of the Free Church, craving admission to its bosom, there was no lack of laudation. This was natural enough; and every man of sense makes considerable allowance for innocent exaggeration, on occasions of this kind. Among other topics of felicitation dwelt upon by Dr Candlish, the astounding fact was mentioned, that the absorption of those fifteen small struggling congregations had extinguished secession in Scotland. The statement was received with loud and enthusiastic cheers. It is the privilege of great men to be occasionally mysterious and oracular; and there may be some room for the suspicion, that among the large number in the Canonmills of modern Athens, who applauded to the echo the death and burial of the Secession, without any prospect of a resurrection, there were very few who were not in the condition of the idolaters of ancient Athens, who worshipped they knew not what. What are we to understand by this declaration? We confess ourselves scarcely competent to settle its meaning. We know that a distinction is sometimes made between Secession and Dissent. A Seceder is one who, while holding its principle, has left an established church because he disapproves of its corruptions. A Dissenter is one who disapproves alike of the principle and practice of an Established Church. A Seceder is a separatist in practice, but not in theory; and he would go back to an Established Church, if the evils which occasioned his original separation were removed. A Dissenter is a separatist both in theory and in practice, and he would not go back to an Established Church, though the evils which occasioned his original separation were removed. According to this distinction, a Free Churchman is a Seceder, and a United Presbyterian is a Dissenter. Now, Dr Candlish may mean that the United Presbyterian Church has passed from the ranks of Secession to those of Dissent. This is true as a practical question—most assuredly, that Church is too much enamoured of its spiritual liberties to go back to bondage. That Church has long had its eyes open to the fact, that state-support without state-control is a delusive imagination; and that the Free Church theory of an establishment—food and shelter, without the collar and the chain—has never been realised in history, and is a thing absolutely impracticable in the present condition of society. And when the auspicious union took place between the two bodies, now called the United Presbyterian Church, the names "Secession" and "Relief" were abandoned. This was deliberately and wisely done, for "Secession" has reference to something from which you have seceded, and "Relief" has reference to something from which you have sought deliverance. A new name, a name of freedom, was adopted, which had no reference to an established church, as if we did still remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely—the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." And, in assuming that name, we took up an independent position, and in substance, "What have we to do any more with idols?" But, even supposing that the United Presbyterian Church has ceased to be a Secession Church, and has become a Dissenting Church by its change of principle—the Free Protestant Church is surely a Secession Church. It is a Church out of communion with the Established Church by necessity, not by its own free choice. The necessity and the free choice, it is admitted, were spiritual, but this does not alter the question. It is ever lauding the Church Establishment principle, and ever condemning the Voluntary principle. It is thus a Secession Church, according to the same theory which makes the United Presbyterian Church