

despised the Lord [Jesus] which is among you?" If such an expurgation should be inflicted upon the visible Church of the present day the ranks would be sensibly diminished.

This Church of Christ enjoyed the presence of the Lord Jesus. "By faith" they "ate of the spiritual meat" and "drank of the spiritual rock" (1 Cor. x. 3-4). They believed in Christ (Ex. xiv. 31; 2 Chron. xx. 20). They had ordinances and sacraments of God's own appointment. They had a Church organization, officers and service, ordered according to Christ's direction. The Holy Spirit was there by His ordinary and miraculous effects. They were a spiritual Church as we learn from Heb. x. 1 and 1 Cor. x., but all the individual members were not spiritual, as we learn from 1 Cor. x. 5. And yet in this visible Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the infant children of God's professed people were recognized as members, and made subjects of its discipline, from the tender age of eight days. The objection that infant females were incapable of circumcision, is of no consequence. They were as capable of that rite as adult females.

God manifested His wisdom and sovereignty when He commenced the sacrament of circumcision. It had a spiritual meaning and import. It signified that the "body of sin must be cut off" (Col. ii. 11). That there must be a separation between the soul and sin. It pointed to the work of the Spirit in the soul, as may be clearly seen from Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Rom. ii. 28-29; Phil. iii. 3.

It is in vain that the Baptists say that the Church of Christ under the Old Testament dispensation was nothing but a "political institution." For during a period of nearly 800 years, that is from Abraham (Gen. xvii.) to Saul (1 Sam. viii.), there were no laws but Church laws, no rules but Church rules, no duties but Church duties, no privileges but Church privileges, no discipline but Church discipline. All the pains and penalties were of an ecclesiastical nature, and were inflicted under the direct supervision of Jehovah (Jesus) Himself. Away with the Baptist unwarranted talk about a "politico-ecclesiastical" commonwealth! The whole nation was a visible Church. Those baptized in their infancy at the Red Sea turned out to be the most faithful in the whole Church, as the history shows. As the Lord Jesus Himself "disciplined" this whole nation, He would have His apostles and ministers do likewise, as He tells us in the great commission (Matt. xxviii. 19-20). In this Church, "disciplined by the Lord"—the best governed and disciplined on earth—we find infants recognized as members, and treated as such, by the express command of the Lord.

When was that law of the Blessed Redeemer abrogated? When did the Lord put the infant children of His people out of the visible Church or authorize any one else to do so? Please give us chapter and verse.

Please publish the above extract from pages 111-114 of "A Short Method with the Dipping Anti-pædobaptists." Perhaps the author of the "Questions on Infant Baptism," recently published in your valuable paper could answer some of the questions in this extract. If so let him give some of the "chapters and verses" called for. T. GALLAHER, V.D.M.

La Grange, Mo., U.S., Oct. 26th, 1880.

A GENERAL SUSTENTATION FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—Some months ago a series of letters appeared in the "Presbyterian Record," from the pen of the Rev. P. McF. McLeod, on the subject of a General Sustentation Fund. Many brethren did not agree with his views, and considered his remarks, in some instances, offensive. By so much of these I was urged to reply to them as they had known that I had given some attention to the subject, having served on three committees which had considered the question, one before and two since the union. As the subject is soon to come under the consideration of Presbyteries, it was thought that the present was a suitable time for a discussion of the subject. Further, as so much space in the "Record" has been occupied with the one side of the case, it was deemed only fair that a reasonable amount of its columns should be afforded for the presentation of the opposite view. I therefore prepared the following, and submitted it to Mr. Robert Murray, the sub-editor, offering, if he thought it too long, to omit the introduction and some sentences through it which did not materially affect the argument. Mr. Murray, however, was satisfied with it as

it is, and forwarded it to Mr. Croil. The latter, however, returned it, requiring that before publishing it in the "Record" all references to Mr. McLeod should be eliminated from it, and secondly that it should be reduced one half in length. As to the first, if there was anything in what I had written that could be construed as personal I would most cheerfully have omitted it, but as my references were solely to Mr. McLeod's arguments I did not see how the request could be complied with; and as to the second, it would simply be to omit one half of the facts adduced. In these circumstances, and to avoid further delay, I have concluded to ask its publication in THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, and will be ready to follow the subject further, should this be deemed desirable by your readers. GEORGE PATTERSON.

New Glasgow, N.S., Nov. 1st, 1880.

The question of a General Sustentation Fund will soon come under discussion in all our Presbyteries, and I presume also in all our sessions. Considering that the policy of the Church is now likely to be determined for some time to come, as well as looking at the importance of the interests involved, it is desirable that the subject should be viewed from all sides, that all proposals should be thoroughly canvassed and the fullest information afforded to our people, so that our General Assembly may be led to that measure best suited, in our circumstances, to promote the object in view, and our members be prepared heartily to respond in support of whatever scheme may be adopted. I know that the space of the "Record" is limited and in demand for missionary intelligence, but no other periodical so reaches the whole membership of the Church, and as without their cordial and united support no scheme can be successful, it is becoming that reasonable scope should be afforded for the discussion of the question in its columns. Besides, its pages have been largely occupied by Rev. P. McF. McLeod, in advocating a particular view, and it is only justice that some space, I do not ask as much, should be given to a statement of the views of those who differ from him.

In what Mr. McLeod has said regarding the imperfect support of many of our ministers, and the importance of means being adopted for the improvement of their circumstances, I fully sympathize, but I deem it unnecessary to dwell upon this point as it is one on which we are all agreed. At the same time, I deem it proper to remark that every one who is able to look back upon the state of the Church twenty-five or thirty years ago will see, in the progress made in regard to the support of the ministry, reasons for thankfulness and encouragement rather than for despondency and complaining. I may add, speaking for that part of the Church with which I am best acquainted, that if the same energies had been employed where the duty is most neglected, that have been employed in other quarters in bringing congregations up to their duty, the state of matters would have been still more favourable. It may be said further, that in the best organized Churches there will still be cases of hardship, and not less so under Mr. McLeod's scheme, where ministers whose congregations do not pay \$500 into the fund will not receive even the minimum dividend.

Further, so far as the object of a sustentation fund is concerned, the providing for the adequate support of the ministry, there can be among all right thinking men only the one feeling of cordial sympathy; and where Churches have deemed that plan the best suited to their circumstances, and are working it out, we can only wish them God speed. The only question is, whether, in regard to the points on which it differs from a stipend-supplementing or augmentation fund, it is the plan best fitted, in the existing situation of our Church, to gain the end. The points on which they differ are as follows: Under a sustentation scheme, aid-receiving congregations, and those able to contribute only up to the rate of dividend, pay all their funds (with the exception of what is necessary for church expenses) into a central fund, and aid-giving congregations pay into the same fund all that they raise by their congregational associations, and in other ways raise a sum for their minister as supplement, and then both share in the central fund under certain regulations. Under the augmentation scheme, the aid-receiving congregations pay directly to their minister, an amount fixed according to their ability, while the strong congregation pay their own ministers in full and then contribute according to the liberality of their hearts to the augmentation fund, all of which

is divided among the ministers of aid-receiving congregations.

Since the union in 1875 two committees have fully considered this subject, besides committees and synods of the respective bodies previous, and they have arrived at the conclusion that the latter, separate from a Home Mission or Evangelistic scheme, is the one best adapted to our Church. Mr. McLeod sets aside their conclusions, as if they had either not considered the subject or were incapable of judging of it. As, however, it will take a good deal more than his *ex cathedra* utterances to change their views, I must review his objections. As the third is the most important, and involves the whole question, I shall consider it first. He thus states it: "Such a scheme would never command the liberality of the Church in a degree to make it a success."

Now, had Mr. McLeod made the least inquiry regarding the working of such a scheme in the United Presbyterian Church, he would never have made such an assertion, for it is known and admitted, that under such a scheme that body has raised the support of its ministry to a higher level than that of the Free Church. At the Assemblies, both of 1879 and 1880, Dr. Wilson, Convener of the Free Church Sustentation Fund, adverted to this fact. His words in the former year, were: "It should be kept in view, that while great progress has been made in the Free Church, in the scale of ministerial income, other denominations have made yet more rapid advances in this respect. The United Presbyterian Church has done so in an eminent degree." But more particularly in 1880, he says: "Both the United Presbyterian Church and the English Presbyterian Church are making a more adequate provision than the Free Church for maintaining the ordinances of the Gospel."

(To be continued.)

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

The following extract from a paper lately read before the Baptist Union, by Rev. D. A. McGregor, is interesting to Christians generally and evoked a very lively discussion among the members of the Union:—

"The various elements which, in their combination, constitute a regular Baptist Church, are (1) the essential character of its membership, consisting of believers only, who have been regenerated, and who, upon a profession of their faith, have submitted themselves to Christian baptism by immersion; and (2) the doctrinal basis of its unity, rendering a definite form of doctrinal belief requisite to Church existence."

On the second point we offer here no comment beyond remarking that it naturally leads to a more extended view of the Church than Independent or Congregational principles seem to warrant, and necessitates a "union" of individual churches bound by a common creed well understood, although unwritten, and this union it appears even goes the length of seeking to be a corporate body by human law, with corporate rights, distinct from the rights of individual churches. But let this pass.

The first point is the important one. It is the assertion of a theory which never is nor can be reduced to practice. It is this confusion of thought which mixes up the visible and invisible Church in one definition, and which does not distinguish between the ideal and real, that forms the chief ground of separation between Independents (whether Baptist or Pædobaptist), and other Churches. Let us look at it for a moment. "The essential character of the Church's membership, consisting of believers only, who have been regenerated." This is a definition of the invisible Church of God, from which no Presbyterian will dissent. But where is there a Church of this kind? Mark the word "only." Regenerate believers, all of them, are members of Christ's invisible Church, no matter whether they ever are baptized or partake of the Lord's supper, or meet with other Christians for fellowship and worship. But no Church on earth consists "only" of such, and some believers are not embraced in any Church on earth. While, therefore, we can heartily subscribe to the definition as applied to the invisible Church we must refuse to assent to it as applied to Churches now existing, visibly, as corporate bodies, among men.

Further, we may ask: Who can judge the "essential character" of a man and say infallibly that such a one believes and is regenerate, and that such another does not believe and is not regenerate, and in view of this infallible judgment of "essential charac-