

In a matter which hitherto has been left, wisely, to a great extent out of reach of the interference of Committees. It is very easy to have too much government, and this, I fear, is just what we will get from this Sustentation Scheme. So much power is to be given to this Committee, and such opportunity to interfere with the affairs of congregations, that what this Scheme proposes is nothing less than a complete revolution in a most important department of our Church's work. Let this be clearly observed. Before noticing this point more fully, it might well be asked, and a very full and satisfactory answer insisted on, if the working of our Church in the past has been marked by such an amount of friction, such a want of smoothness and harmony, as to call for such a violent and sweeping change. It might well be asked further if this is an opportune time, when the Home Mission work proper of the Church is calling upon us to strain every nerve to overtake it, to distract the attention of the Church by inaugurating an entirely new departure on such a vast scale? Is it wise at this particular juncture to enter upon an experiment which is not only large, but hazardous? I do not press these questions, but they deserve the most serious consideration.

Let us notice now the powers proposed to be conferred on this Committee, and how they are going to affect congregations. 1. Before an aid-receiving congregation can pay anything to its minister it must deal with this Committee, and, except what is needed for congregational expenses, send up to it its whole revenue, or the minister's receipt. 2. If it has debt, this Committee will deal in some special way with the congregation. 3. If a congregation becomes vacant, the very first thing to be done is to enter into negotiations with this Committee about a re-arrangement of salary; and if in the neighbourhood of another congregation, this Committee will confer with the Presbytery about a fusion of the two. 4. If a congregation's engagements with this Committee in any respect are not kept up to, it may pounce down upon it instantly. 5. Congregations that cannot pay the minimum stipend of \$500 per annum will also be specially dealt with by this Committee. 6. An aid-giving congregation will be told by this Committee how much it will be expected to contribute to Sustentation. 7. If a congregation fails to send up to this Committee its quarterly contribution before the end of the quarter, or its minister's receipt for it, then its quarter's stipend will be at once withheld. This is most likely to happen, let it be noticed, in weak congregations, where this action will inflict the greatest hardship upon the minister. This is as I understand the Scheme, and the above list is not complete. This may be Presbyterian. I can only say it will give a great number of our congregations a new idea of what Presbyterian government is. All this is largely urged because of its tendency to promote in ministers a feeling of independence and dignity. It does appear to be a most curious method of securing that end. A minister might well pray to be allowed to fall into the hands of his own congregation rather than those of this Committee. It is said the other Scheme may leave a minister at the mercy, possibly, of only one rich contributor. Suppose this to be so, all the congregation or minister would then lose would be that one contribution; but under the Sustentation plan, if the loss of this one contribution made it impossible to remit to the Committee the whole quarterly amount before the end of the quarter, not only the one contribution, but the whole quarter's stipend, is for the time being lost. A minister would feel very independent in such circumstances.

If this powerful Committee is to do its work to the satisfaction of the whole Church, it must represent the whole Church, and so be large; if it is to do all this work well, it will require to meet as a whole or in sub-committees often, and must necessarily entail considerable addition to the working expenses of our Church, without any adequately corresponding advantage whatever. Such are some of the difficulties and objections which appear to me to be in the way of the successful working of the Sustentation plan. These lie upon the surface, and besides them there are others by no means small, which close inspection at once brings to light.

W. D. BALLANTYNE.

Pembroke, Feb. 27th, 1882.

A MAN in antagonism with himself can have victory only in Jesus Christ. The tempted soul can find safety only at the cross.—Alex. Clark.

THE SOJREE EVIL.

MR. EDITOR.—The touch by the "forty-foot pole" on the subject of sojrees, or as now more commonly called "Church Socials," "wasn't very good as far as it went." In the first place, "sneers" in regard to them are generally founded on conscientious principle, and as far as my experience goes the disapproval comes from those who have a right to have at least an opinion. It is true these good folk may be in the minority, since the votes of boys and girls count up fast; still, it is on just such as those (humanly speaking) the Church is leaning for support, and cannot afford to set a small value on their conscientious convictions. Oh! how the feelings of hundreds, yea thousands, of Bible Christians are wounded every week in view of the deplorable means to which recourse is had in order to raise money to carry on the Lord's work! and how often young folk, aye, and old folk too, go home from these gatherings, where they have been entertained in a style anything but in keeping with the object named, fancying they have given the Church a great start (financially at least), and wondering when these balking Christians who hold back in the traces, or lag in the march of civilization, will have done croaking about "former days," when Church meant the House of God, and money raised for His service did not come through the unsatisfying process of first being handled by the devil. Now, that there should and does exist in the Church a desire both among old and young to meet together socially at set proper times, in order to grasp the friendly hand, and become the better acquainted as fellow pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan, is not singular; in fact, such a desire could not but be heaven-born; and instead of a minister "lessening his dignity," as has been said, in attending such gatherings, he might well lend his influence, not only by his presence, but in concentrating some of his best thoughts in his effort to indeed "make a suitable speech" for the place and the occasion. In fact, a minister would be far from imitating his Divine Master should he lose an opportunity of addressing "four or five hundred;" for we know the Saviour lost no such opportunities—nay, at a social gathering, did He not provide for the wants of the body by multiplying the loaves and fishes? while He embraced the opportunity of healing "those that had need of healing." But about the "Presbyterian taste for nonsensical entertainment"—that is just where you and I differ especially. Thousands of us Presbyterians feel aggrieved that we must, in connection with our Church work, listen to what our consciences cannot indorse, or be classed among the oddities—balking, or at least those whom young people are led to avoid or even disrespect, simply because we have a conscience, and cannot go all the length that the Church not only permits, but encourages.

I know I am taking too much space, but hope you will bear with me a little longer while I explain. Take almost any daily paper, and you will see flouted in the face of God's true people, advertisements such as the following: "On such an evening there will be held in connection with St. Paul's, St. Andrew's, St. John's, or some other Saint's Church, an entertainment for which an excellent programme has been arranged, viz:—" and this "namely" consists of everything but any acknowledgment that God is to be honoured in the so-called work for His cause. Now, what would these good old Apostles think to hear their very names insulted in being thus associated? But worse; read this: "In Christ's Church" (think of it, oh! Christian, and weep as did the blessed Saviour over Jerusalem; sneer, oh! Scoffer, for well you may), in connection with the Church named for the blessed Redeemer, will be played in so many acts," etc. etc. etc. And the best musical talent will not be wanting to insult the Saviour, and "wound Him in the house of His friends." This, Mr. Editor, is what many Christians to-day are weeping over, and longing and praying that the Church may soon be delivered from.

That there is a time for innocent amusement none is more ready to admit, and that young people enjoy even the hilarity of youth is but natural, and I would not only encourage but enjoy with them the cheerful secular song, recitation, and especially elocution in fine style, and in the proper time and place; but oh! surely while we have so many opportunities for all this, let God have the Church and its influence, not only on Sabbath but on every day of the week, and the money will not be wanting in carrying on His own

cause. And, lastly, I do know ministers who have refused to take money raised in this way, but I know of too many more who could not afford to have their small salaries fall short that much, and so had to submit not only to humiliation, but to make sacrifice of real conviction in order to meet family wants. Awake, daughters of Zion; lend your influence in guarding the portals of God's house. "Keep your feet lest ye offer the sacrifice of fools." And now, if I am wrong, will not some good Christian set me right in this matter? But if I am all or in anywise right, will not many of God's people have the courage to say so, lest by their silence they give consent to this great evil existing in the Church?

February 22nd, 1882.

ONE IN EARNEST.

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH.

MR. EDITOR.—Permit me very briefly to supplement the statement in my former letter regarding Samuel. In order to justify the vow of his mother, and vindicate Samuel's right to perform, as the assistant and associate of E. I., the duties in which we find him engaged at Shiloh, all that is requisite is to prove that Samuel was of Levitical descent. But the case can be made stronger than even this; for we find that in the genealogical lists in Chronicles, his descent is traced from Kohath, the grandfather of Aaron. The other two branches of the family of Levi—viz., the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari—occupied an inferior position. The Kohathites, during the journey in the wilderness, had the charge of bearing the ark and the sanctuary. Further, we find from 1 Chron. vi. 54 66 67, that Shechem in Mount Ephraim was one of the cities given to the Kohathites.

Professor Smith has not told us what he understands to be the meaning of "Ephrathite," the designation given to Samuel's father. But if it does not prove that Samuel belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, then it fails utterly to serve Professor Smith's purpose. That it does not mean this has been already proved; and in view of the circumstances above mentioned, may it not, instead of militating against Samuel's claim to be reckoned of "priestly family" in the stricter sense, rather serve to connect him with the sons of Kohath in Shechem in Mount Ephraim? The disposition of Professor Smith to make mountains out of molehills betrays itself in the significance he gives to the "little coat" (*meil*) which Samuel's mother made for him, and which the Professor declares was the high-priestly mantle! Then if it was, Job wore one, and so did each of his three friends (Job i. 20 and ii. 12). The name of the high priest's coat is *Kethoneth*. But on the endless task of exposing the inaccuracies of Professor Smith I shall not enter. He might as well attempt to prove by the corruptions of the Church prior to the Reformation that the books of the New Testament could not have existed in written form till about the time of Luther.

W. T. McMULLEN.

Woodstock, Feb. 27th, 1882.

THE MINISTER'S POSITION.

MR. EDITOR.—As a divinity student of our Church, I am naturally taking a deep interest in the discussion at present going on in your columns anent the Sustentation vs. the Supplementing Scheme. In your issue of the 17th inst. you publish two capital letters on the subject from Messrs. D. D. and P. McF. McLeod, with whose sentiments I entirely agree. I was very much struck with a quotation of Mr. P. McF. McLeod's from some speech of Dr. Caven's on the subject, where he is made to say: "In the Methodist Church the minister is the servant of the whole Church; in the Presbyterian Church the minister is first the servant of the congregation." Now, sir, I cannot get over this statement. Of course it must be true, or Mr. McLeod would never have written it; and I now write to ask through your paper if the statement is correct. I cannot believe it. It is against all my past teachings as to Presbyterianism. I always thought the minister's primary duty was to his great Head and King, then to the Church; and if loyal to both, that he could not be *disloyal*, but faithful in the highest degree, to "the congregation calling him" to be *over them* in spiritual matters, and not *under them* in any way. If our ministers are to be *under* their congregations—i.e., their servants—then goodbye to their usefulness. We do not look for an example from our *servants* in secular affairs; and if our clergy are to