

the congregation shall be continued as a pastoral charge or not. And if it is, they deal with it anew as to the amount which it is to contribute to the Sustentation Fund. Thereafter it must go through the same regulations as before. I am aware that in some of the cases the final decision is with the supreme Court, as it is under the other system. At the last General Assembly the Committee reported against receiving on the platform of equal dividend two congregations, one of which had been erected into a pastoral charge in 1859 and received a minister in 1860, and the other had been erected in 1865, and received a minister in 1868, and they were accordingly still left out in the cold. But I do not recollect of a case in which the decision of the Committee was overturned by the General Assembly.

Now, I do not find fault with any of the powers here entrusted to committees. I do not share in the jealousy sometimes manifested regarding these important bodies. In this case I believe that in the efficient working of a Sustentation Fund, scarcely one of these regulations can be dispensed with. As to the first, for example, if a Presbytery have a right to erect a pastoral charge, it will be seen that they would have the power of taking a step which might affect the interest of all the ministers on the fund. Or again, take the fifth. If the large and wealthy congregations begin to expend their liberality on their own minister, instead of on the Sustentation Fund, what will become of the latter? And here I may observe, that without such a state of order and discipline in a Church commencing a Sustentation Fund, that such regulations would be not only submitted to but carried out with energy and zeal, success would be hopeless. But the point to be noted at present is, that the above statements shew that under a Sustentation Fund committees have not only all the powers which they have under a supplementing scheme, but a great deal more, and such powers as the members and congregations of bodies adopting a supplementing scheme would be very unwilling to yield to them. How much simpler the whole system, under a supplementing scheme, as that of the United Presbyterian Church, where, in the first place, the committee have no power to interfere with congregations paying their minister £200 per annum, except to get as much money out of them as they can, and in regard to the other 230, all they have to do is to distribute the money according to a few simple rules, which gauge the earnestness and liberality of congregations, special cases being decided by the Synod.

But the most astounding statement in Mr. McLeod's letters is his second objection, where he asserts that "a supplementing scheme really puts into the hand of a committee the patronage of all our weaker charges, and gives them, therefore, a power liable to abuse."

I hope, Mr. Editor, that you will give the benefit of your largest capitals to this amazing discovery. I have been thirty years a minister in the Lower Provinces, and during all that time familiar with the working of a supplementing scheme, first as part of the Home Mission, and again as a separate scheme, and never knew before that the Committee had "put into their hands the patronage of all the weaker charges." Indeed I never heard of a case in which anybody supposed that they had. Strange that not a minister or congregation ever discovered the fact till informed of it by Mr. McLeod, and actually believed that all the congregations of our Church had full liberty to call the minister that they pleased. I fear that in the Upper Province you were in equal ignorance. Confess, Mr. Editor, that you never knew till Mr. McLeod told you, that the Church had "really put into the hands of Dr. Cochrane and his Committee the patronage of all the weaker charges." And then, there is the United Presbyterian Church, which has been through all her history protesting against patronage, and professing to guard most carefully the freedom and purity of election of ministers by all her congregations, yet has been for years working a system which "really puts into the hands of a Committee the patronage of all weaker charges." And not one of her ministers or congregations ever knew of it, until the light was flashed upon them from across the Atlantic in the letters of Mr. McLeod. I hope that no person will be so presuming as to ask him to prove his assertion, or to shew how it is really so, when neither ministers nor people have ever perceived it. Has not Mr. McLeod said it?

But Mr. McLeod waxes triumphant on a view of

the operations of the Presbyterian Church of England, and regards all objections to his scheme as "wrecked" upon this rock. I so deeply sympathize with that Church in all her operations, and so heartily wish her success in the object, whatever plan she may adopt, that I am reluctant to say a word that might seem depreciatory of her work. But I must say that it is too soon to boast of her success in that respect. She started her Sustentation Fund very wisely by collecting a large reserve fund, and used all the eclat of the union for its promotion. But in 1878, the third year of its operations, they used up the most of a reserve fund of £2,300 with which they began the year, besides £500 of a grant from the United Presbyterian Church, although the whole sum required in aid of congregations was only £7,000. In 1879, the rest of the reserve fund was consumed, and before the end of the year the Committee were borrowing money to pay the dividends, and this year they intimate that unless friends come to their relief they will not be able to pay at the ordinary rates. I hope they will overcome their difficulties, but must say that the result hitherto does not encourage us to follow their example. And even if they were it would still remain a question whether their plan was the one best suited to our circumstances.

GEORGE PATTERSON.

PRINCIPAL GRANT AT THE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

MR. EDITOR,—Having been a visitor at the recent Council in Philadelphia, I read to my congregation a lecture upon the Council, in course of which the following passage occurred:

"Leaving out the orthodox brother who vouched for the orthodoxy of Professor Flint, of the remaining six only two gave 'an uncertain sound,' and their sound was not uncertain. It was too broadly certain. One of them began by expressing his entire concurrence with the Edinburgh Professor in the two points in which he had left the lines of orthodoxy. He pleaded for the widest liberty of thought within the Church. The cream of his statement is gathered up in this sentence, 'I believe that no true minister of Christ should secede from the Church if he believes himself faithful to the One to whom he took his ordination vows, the Head of the Church.' This is broad enough. I do not know if it would quite satisfy Dean Stanley, but it would at least go a considerable way towards that goal. It was spoken in response to a statement repeatedly made, and as often as made received by the Council and the attendant assembly with enthusiastic applause. Dr. Armstrong, the first disputant, had ended his statement with this sentence, 'a preacher cannot honestly remain in the Church while teaching doctrines which its members do not believe, but abhor.' Dr. Boggs eloquently declared that it was the duty of such a preacher, 'To come forth like a man and say that he could no longer accept the faith as he had signed it.' The defender of Mr. Flint's orthodoxy began by saying, 'I rise to speak as one who, feeling bound by the Confession I have signed can remain in the Church to which I belong only so long as I can honestly stand by and defend that Confession.' And Dr. De Witt said, 'Whenever a teacher propounds theories contrary to his subscription it is not only the privilege, but the duty of the Church to proceed to the exercise of discipline.' It was in the face of such sentiments as those, sentiments that carried to a remarkable extent the sympathies of the brilliant assembly that listened to them, that the speaker to whom I have referred without, or almost without approbation, said in the sentence I have quoted, 'I believe that no true minister of Christ should secede from the Church if he believe himself faithful to the One to whom he took his ordination vows, the Head of the Church.' Let us put the gentleman through his catechism and see what will come of that sentence. We ask him first, Are you aware that there are men holding the doctrine of universal salvation against the teaching of our Confession? He replies cheerfully, Yes! We ask him again, Do you think that a minister holding this opinion may believe himself faithful to the Head of the Church? 'O that he unhesitatingly replies, Yes! We ask him a third time, Then you think that a minister preaching Universalist doctrine ought to be retained within the Church? Most certainly! is his answer. Ah! is it so? we reply. We again approach him, You are aware, sir, that there are men who hold that there is no Holy Spirit, that that is merely a name for a divine influence? The

reply is immediately given, Yes, I am aware of it! Do you think we respond that one of those gentlemen can believe that he is faithful to the Head of the Church, while so holding and so teaching? Why, yes! says the Doctor, although this time there is some little sign of hesitation about him. Thank you, we say, then of course you think that a minister who holds and teaches that there is no Holy Spirit, ought to be retained in the Church? With an increase of hesitation the Doctor says, yes! and he is forced to do it. He cannot help himself; his sentence compels him to say it. Recognizing the Doctor's confusion, we return to the attack. It is delightful, we say, in those days of despicable equivocation to hear you speak so plainly, and your frankness encourages to ask you one more question. You know, Doctor, that there are some preachers who deny that Christ is truly God as well as man? You are, of course, aware of that fact, and besides, your extensive, profound erudition has of course made you aware that the denial of the true Godhead of our Saviour carries with it the denial of the orthodox doctrine of the atonement and the orthodox doctrine of justification by faith? Yes! replies the doctor, by observation and study I have arrived at the knowledge that it is as you say, that there are preachers who deny that our Saviour is truly God as well as man, and who as a consequence reject the orthodox doctrines of the atonement and justification by faith. It is observable, as the Doctor thus replies, that the hesitation of his manner increases, and he gives unmistakable signs of uneasiness. At the risk of being reckoned uncourteous we again ask him, Have your extensive study and observation convinced you that those who so hold and teach will say, 'We believe that we are faithful to the head of the Church.' We wait for a reply. The doctor pauses, evidently unwilling to give a reply, but at length under the pressure of his sentence he says, Yes! I know that they do so believe. Thank you, Doctor, we again reply, for your frankness. You will permit us to put one question more. It is your opinion that a person who so holds and so teaches ought not to secede from the Church, and that it would be an impropriety to exercise discipline upon him, that he should both remain and be retained within the Church? This, Doctor, is your opinion? You will please reply with the same frankness that you have hitherto shewn. But the Doctor does not reply. He looks flustered. He then mounts upon his high horse, and with great vehemence makes a long declamation of the vaguest kind. When he has exhausted himself we reply: My dear sir, all that is very indefinite. I have been able to extract no meaning from it. But your sentence is not vague. It is transparently clear, and if you refuse to say what your sentence implies you should say, then you will permit us to say it for you. By the glaring light of your sentence, you, sir, a teacher in the Presbyterian Church, occupying one of her most responsible positions, in violation of her Confession and your own subscription thereto, have declared in the most solemn and responsible circumstances in which the declaration could be made, that it is your opinion that a teacher may enunciate within her the doctrine of universal salvation, that there is no Holy Spirit, that there has been no incarnation, that the Church doctrine of the atonement is an absurdity, and the doctrine of justification by faith a delusion, that it would not be proper to exercise discipline upon him, and that it would not be consistent with his duty to secede. This is your reply. It is a reply wrung from you. Your sentence compels you to give it, and with this reply we dismiss you to your office to discharge the duties of your position with that measure of faithfulness to your ordination vows which the holding of such an opinion renders possible."

Mr. Editor, anyone who was at the Council or who read attentively the report of it, will recognize that the speaker alluded to in the preceding extract is Principal Grant, of Kingston. I have retained the extract for some time beside me, but the longer I retained it the more I felt the importance of the Church becoming aware if one occupying so important a position as the Principal really holds the views which his sentence implies that he holds. I can inform the Principal that his retraction of the sentence or a reasonable modification of it will be accepted with gratitude to the great Head of the Church by a larger constituency than possibly the Principal is aware of, and by none more sincerely than by him who has the honour, as he thinks truly, of signing himself

PHILALETHES.