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Contributors and Correspondents.

[For the Presbyterian.]

THE SUSTENTATION OF THE MINISTRY.

The sustentation of the Gospel ministry is the great problem which the Christian church is called upon to solve at the present time. On its solution depends the prosperity or decline of the church—the success or failure of the kingdom of Christ. It is a subject of vital importance to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as well as to all uncerlowed churches. The system of leaving each congregation to shift for themselves, to support their own ministers, and supply themselves with gospel ordinances, while it is in accordance with the Word of God, has yet many drawbacks, and the church ought not to rest satisfied with it alone. The whole church ought to be concerned for the sustentation of all its ministers, and should institute a *General Fund* for that purpose. As the ministers are employed in the service of the church, and are subject to its government and discipline, they ought, therefore, to be paid out of the church funds. Under the Mosaic law the whole church, as a collective body, cared for the sustentation of its pastors; and when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Christian church, on the day of Pentecost, immediately "they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." According to the Presbyterian theory, each minister belongs to the whole church; therefore, the church is responsible for his doctrine, his character, and his ministerial labour, and should be also responsible for his maintenance. To accomplish this, a general scheme ought to be adopted, to which all the congregations should contribute according to their ability. There are two forms under which this principle may be exhibited, and which, for the sake of convenience, may be called, 1st, The Supplementary Fund, and 2nd, The Sustentation Fund.

I. SUPPLEMENTARY FUND.

The Supplementary Fund, as the name imports, is designed to fill up the deficiency of those stipends which are less than the amount considered to be sufficient for the support of the gospel ministry. This fund exists in the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and in the Presbyterian churches throughout the Dominion of Canada. Out of this fund poor and weak congregations receive aid as a matter of *charity*, rather than as a matter of right. Each congregation, according to its ability, pays the principal part of the stipend, and the church supplements what is wanting; in some cases more, and in some cases less, according to the poverty or weakness of the aid-receiving congregation. This scheme, as at present administered in our church, is a weak and beggarly element, a poor and shabby method of supporting a gospel ministry. It is given as a premium of poverty, because the minister is poor, rather than as a matter of right, because he is a preacher of the gospel. There are ministers in the church who would hesitate to accept of aid thus given, on account of the humiliating position in which it appears to place them. The scheme was far superior which existed in the branch of the Presbyterian Church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, before the union. According to that scheme, out of funds collected over the whole church, the sum of \$200 was given to each minister who did not participate in the benefit of the Temporalities Fund. They received this amount as a matter of right, because they were ministers of the gospel, and not because they were poor, or happened to have poor congregations. The General Assembly ought to institute a scheme of this kind, to which all our congregations should be urged to contribute according to their wealth, and out of which a certain sum, say \$200 or \$300, should be given to each minister of the gospel, without asking whether he is poor, or rich, or whether his congregation be poor, weak, or wealthy. The Assembly should also make it imperative that no minister should be settled or allowed to continue in any congregation where the people do not pay the amount of \$400 at least, besides providing a manse or free house, and a glebe, for the use of their pastor. All stations under this figure should be mission stations under the superintendence of the Presbytery.

II. SUSTENTATION FUND.

The idea of a Sustentation Fund originated with the Wesleyan Methodists, in England, from whom it was borrowed by Dr. Chalmers, under whose management the scheme was developed and expanded, until it now exists in its greatest perfection and in the highest degree of improvement in the Free Church of Scotland. Out of the general sustentation fund each minister having a congregation receives an equal share, as a matter of right, and not as a favour. The principles on which the sustentation fund are formed are these:—

- 1st. The money raised in any given place is sent to the general treasury of the church. The whole amount collected for sustentation, in all the sections of the church, must be remitted to a large central fund, out of which the stipends of all the ministers shall be paid. To this fund each individual contributes according to the measure of his ability and the degree of his liberality; the rich according to his wealth, and the poor man according to his slender means.

2. Again, it is a fundamental principle of the fund that all the ministers share and share alike; the ministers of the large towns and of the most wealthy congregations equally with the ministers of the poorest congregations in the church. This principle binds together the rich and the poor, and develops the unity of the church by their united action; for the rich do all in their power for the cause of Christ in the poorest localities as well as in their own congregation, and the poor do what they can to raise their contributions as near as possible to the sum received by their minister for his equal dividend.

3. Furthermore, as inequalities must exist, from various causes, such as the cost of living, &c., in towns and in country congregations, whereby the stipends of ministers are affected, so that a stipend which is quite sufficient in one place will be totally inadequate in another, it is provided that a separate effort be made in each congregation to supplement the stipend of its own minister, according to the wealth and ability of the congregation and the requirements of the case.

These are the principles of the sustentation fund of the Free Church of Scotland. By means of it, the church provides a minimum salary for each minister, or the principal part of the minister's stipend, and the congregation supplements according to its ability. If this mode were adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Canada it would place it upon a vantage ground, for it is undoubtedly the best plan to supply ordinances to every congregation belonging to the church, whether they be poor or wealthy. The super-abundance of the one makes up for the poverty of the other, according to the Apostolic rule, "By an equality that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be an equality."—2 Cor. viii. 14. A poor congregation may be rich in grace, while a wealthy congregation is rich in gold; if the rich are made partakers of the spiritual things of the poor, it is their duty also to minister to the poor in carnal things, for they are debtors to them. There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care for one another. We fear, however, that the colonial churches are not yet ripe for taking up this plan and acting upon it. Some other plan, therefore, must be devised, by which, while the congregation provides the principal part of the stipend, the General Assembly shall provide the supplement, and do it in such a way that it will be given as a matter of right to each minister of the gospel, and not as a matter of charity or favour to the ministers of poor and weak congregations.

D. B. B.

B. R. N. S., May, 1876.

Home Mission Work.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Will you give me space to enter a suggestion in regard to the question of Home Mission Work, which is to come before the present Assembly?

I have carefully considered the proposed plan, and although I do not wish to pre-empt the question or to enter on a criticism of the scheme to be submitted, I am convinced that it does not contain, except by remote implication, the element necessary to success. I have, several times, called attention at length to the radical defect of the present method of work, and I pointed out, three years ago, the inevitable results. These results have come in the form of a heavy and embarrassing debt, and a widespread dissatisfaction among those on whom the church must, to a great extent, depend, for the actual accomplishment of the work in this field. They have come in spite of careful and zealous management by the Home Mission Committee, and earnest and repeated appeals to the liberality of the church. And, one of the most important questions which can come before the present Assembly is, how this state of things has been produced, how it can be removed and its recurrence prevented?

As has been stated, these facts with which the church has now to grapple, were predicted several years ago, as the inevitable consequences of the mode of work which we had adopted, and unless the scheme to be submitted to the Assembly be very materially changed, I am afraid the improvement will be far from what is anticipated. The real difficulty in this question is to be found at the point where the *mission scheme comes into direct contact with the mission field.*

The mistake has been that we have been like a man who should spend much care and attention on the handles of his plough and leave the plough-share in such a condition that it was out of the ground half the time. Large committees or small committees, agents or not agents, may all be serious questions for consideration, but they are all arrangements, church-wards, the handles of the plough; what we want besides that, is to have the plough-share well set, sharp, and kept in the ground. This is one of the gravest questions in its effects and influence, and as the decision arrived at will be looked on as something like a final settlement, at least for a time, I would respectfully suggest that a small committee be appointed for the sole purpose of collecting information, and devising a simple scheme to be presented at the next Assembly. Yours very truly,

G. BRUCE.

St. Catharines, June 6th, 1876.

The Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Duff's Church, McKillop, has not accepted either the call to Brucefield or Rodgerville. His people are rejoicing over his action, and have presented him with an address and a purse.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—It is done! *The debt! 'Eist fait! Factus est!* Tell it in all tongues! Celebrate it in songs! Chime the bells in honour of the fact! Let the raters proclaim it in orations of celebration! Let the press re-echo it! Clap your hands, ye people, and shout aloud for joy! I believe the angels of heaven celebrated the deed! and God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit superintended the work and had joy in its accomplishment. I mean "THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA." *The unanimous feeling and spirit* that prevailed at that UNION MEETING in MONTREAL, was most striking, and that among so many, and coming from all parts of the Dominion, and from the different bodies uniting, and when so many were personal strangers to each other. This was testified by social intercourse and conversation, and by the psalms sung, and portions of Scripture read in public and family worship, and by the prayers offered and by the speeches and addresses made and the action taken.

How different speakers seemed to vie with each other, in claiming a share of having had a desire and a hand in bringing about the Union, was remarkable and touching. And also, how the feelings of others, who had not the same chance to express it, responded and corresponded, as they had been seeing the need and want of it, and had been praying, and hoping, and looking for the Union!

Now what does this indicate? What does it prove? Is it not that the bringing to pass of the union was the work of God Himself? Is it not that He designed and purposed it, and overruled matters in His providence till those bodies united into the Presbyterian Church in Canada? Did He not seal the union by the Holy Spirit of promise when he so operated on the minds of those who were engaged in bringing it about. Therefore the great glory belongs to God, and it behoves us to praise Him and to bow before Him in acknowledgment of His goodness in bringing about the union. And we owe this because of the great good we hope and expect to flow from the union naturally. Regarding the good that is to follow from this union, we are first to observe that union in the Church is fulfilling the law of Christ. And then notice, in this case the end that is expected to be put by it to unseemly strivings about home mission fields. Third: That an end be put to the keeping up of two weak, where united there can be one strong, congregation.

Fourth: That from the union is expected to follow the doing away with the spirit of bigotry, jealousy, disparagement and enmity of each other that so much existed between the two principal parties in the union that sprung out of former separation, and these causes, and which originated on the other side and came across the Atlantic, and which is and shall be well to have an end put to in Canada. We have the Bible, and by its light let the Church be established here on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, and freed from all inherited evil.

If the union will not do away with that spirit at once, it will at least hinder it from being further fostered and handed over as a cursed heritage to future generations in Canada. It is sad, most sad, that so much of that spirit of bitterness still remains, but the very existence of it proves more and more the need of the union as soon as possible, that it might be checked at least.

Fifth: That there be a stronger Presbyterian Church in the Dominion, to uphold the revealed truth of God in purity, and to press forward the kingdom of Christ by hastening on mission work at home and abroad.

Sixth: It is enough at home to contend with powerful Popish Church and other forms of error in Canada; though different bodies of Presbyterians themselves would not be wasting their strength upon each other in unseemly and destroying contentions. And it is a grievous cause of regret that so much hard feeling still exists as shown especially in antiunion feeling and action in some parts.

It is no uncertain sound that is given when Popery is affirmed to putting forth, but too effectually, endeavours to gain the chief power in this Dominion, where our United Presbyterian Church professes, even by her assumed name, to have her home on earth and her principal field of labour.

All honest, conscientious and true Presbyterians hold and believe that the Church so denominated hold the closest of all others, *theoretically* at least, to the doctrines and principles of the true Church of God as founded upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, and as taught in the Word of God. All true Presbyterian members hold this by the simple fact of being members, even, and all members whether true or false, profess it by the same fact. Wherefore inasmuch as they do thus hold and profess the Presbyterian Church to be the most scriptural, and themselves to be Christians believing in the Scriptures it is clear that they are in duty bound, to advance her interests in upholding the truth of God in this Dominion. Even as citizens who love and desire the

poity of the Dominion as their country, it is their duty and interest to advance the cause of the church which they believe to preach most clearly the truth of God that imparteth "the righteousness which is called salvation." We believe that the uniting of all Presbyterians in the Dominion is a great step towards the advancement of the cause of Christ and prosperity of the Dominion spiritually and temporally. And if this belief is rightly founded, which we leave open for investigation, it clearly follows that it is the duty of all Presbyterians—who are also citizens of this, might and should be, and to a great extent, is prosperous and happy Dominion—to join in the Union.

Now Mr. Editor, having said this much regarding the union which has already taken place, and is to be more confirmed at the approaching Assembly, I will now close, fearing that I have already trespassed too much on your space. I have here spoken more especially regarding the principles involved in the union, and the advancement of the cause, and the duty devolving upon Presbyterian members, as members even theoretically. But perhaps I may have a future opportunity to make reference regarding the practical and practical works of the Church, especially the Home and Foreign Mission work, and the vexed vacancies and probation work. Yours truly, FACTUS FACTENDUSQUE.

Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—At the recent meeting of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, a memorial to the General Assembly from the Presbytery of Whitby sent the administration of "The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund," was refused transmission to said Assembly on the singular ground that the published Report of the Committee appointed at last Assembly to mature measures for next Assembly had not yet been presented. According to this decision no Presbytery can approach the Assembly through the constituted channel, the Synod, in regard to any matter dealt with in the published recommendations of the above named Committee till after it reports to the Assembly, when it will be too late to take Presbyterial action for presentation to the Supreme Court at this year's session. As the principle on which The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund is henceforth to be dispensed concerns the Church as a whole as well as her ministers who are more especially interested, I beg leave, through the Presbyterian, to call the attention of the members of Assembly to the subject. I know not that this can be better done than by quoting the words of the memorial, which are explicit enough assuredly.

Your memorialists strongly disapprove of the principle on which it is proposed to dispense 'The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund,' as set forth in the Report of the Committee appointed to mature measures for next General Assembly. According to that Report ten years' of service in the ministry are requisite ere an aged or infirm minister can obtain aid from said Fund, except at the humiliating cost of having his poverty paraded before the General Assembly. And your memorialists also disapprove of the further recommendation of said Committee, viz.: that the amount of aid be increased with the increase of years in the ministry over or beyond the enfranchising number, ten. Your rev. Court is hereby entreated to prevent said Fund obtaining a place in the category of those funds that are disbursed on the commercial principle of *quid pro quo*; and that you stamp it with a purely benevolent character, by enacting that it be dispensed according to actual need on the part of God's ministering servants, and not according to length of service,—that it be dispensed as God dispenses mercy to men, where merit has no place, and demerit exercises no restraining influence. Your memorialists believe that the Christian people, whose contributions constitute the fund, would be disappointed and grieved were aid withheld from 'a brother in need,' however brief his terms of service may have been. That you may be divinely directed in all your deliberations is the prayer, etc."

The foregoing document contains suggestions that deserve the solemn consideration of the members of Assembly. They will be very much helped to a Christianlike course in the matter by observing the manner in which the Apostles dealt out the funds placed at their disposal for the poverty-stricken believers in their day. We learn that "distribution was made unto every man according as he had need," and not according to the number of months or weeks during which he had professed faith in Christ.

It may be stated that the present writer has been upwards of 40 years in the ministry, and according to the recommendation of the Committee, would, were he laid aside, have a claim to the largest amount in the graduated scale of annuities. But he takes this opportunity to say, in no spirit of boasting, however, that should infirmity and need overtake him in the providence of God, his conscience would not allow him to accept of more from the Fund than what was awarded to his youngest brother disabled for work and in equal need.

The memorialists should have gone more fully into the subject and shown that the fund is not designed to be shared by those aged and infirm ministers who are possessed of means sufficient for their support. The fund is constituted when it is dealt out in pensions to the affluent in proportion to their years of service. SKXXX. Ontario, 2nd June, 1876.

Read Sermons.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—As I heard Dr. Taylor's lectures on preaching, let me say a few words in regard to his doctrine of the "paper." In speaking on this topic he very candidly admitted that "preaching without the manuscript is the normal way." Just let us look at his two main arguments in support of the confessedly abnormal way of preaching.

The use of the paper gives the preacher strength. Sure to keep to the point. No fear of breaking down. If used right it adds to the fire instead of throwing cold water on it. Very well. In this connection he referred to his own case. He preached for ten years *memoriter*, and found no difficulty in committing a newly-written sermon in an hour and a half. Memoriter preaching is the best for the majority. One day he took a notion to read, and ever since his memory doesn't work, and he can commit now only with great difficulty. He is very sorry for having giving up his former method; but after much hard, persevering work he has trained himself so that with an hour and a half studying of his sermon he can read it with effect. Now, if he could commit his sermon in an hour and a half—if he is sorry for abandoning his first method because he had more power that way—if it took a long, hard course of training in order to bring himself to be able to read with effect by spending an hour and a half with his sermon after it is written, surely all this is in favour of preaching without the manuscript instead of using it. And yet just here he said, "by perseverance you can bring yourself to use the manuscript so that it will be a help instead of a hindrance." But, if memoriter is the best method for the majority—if the newly-written sermon can be committed in the same time that it takes to prepare a newly-written sermon for effective reading—if it takes a long time, with hard work, to get into the way of thus preparing and reading, doesn't it stand to reason that it is better to use this *extra energy* in writing and committing more perfectly? In a word, if Dr. Taylor himself had expended this extra labour in the way just indicated, he would have grown more and more effective than he was when he left off memoriter preaching; but as it is, he has according to his own avowal, not the power he had then. Last winter I heard him deliver an "off-hand" address, and notwithstanding the difficulty of memory already alluded to, he had twice the power which he has when his eye is directed to the paper instead of the people, and when he stops when the last word is read because his "paper's out."

The other argument was a reference to a few men who read and were powerful preachers. Two in particular he mentioned—Chalmers and Jonathan Edwards. Now, his most glowing and impressive passages were delivered by Chalmers without being read; and it was the exception for Edwards to use his manuscript, and while he was powerful with it, he was much more so when he was free. Besides all this, these men were exceptions. Theirs was "fell reading." Why didn't Dr. Taylor take his examples from the common run of readers of the present day. In the Presbyterian Church of the United States reading is almost universal; and strange to say is also becoming quite common in the Methodist Church in some places. Now, I have only heard two or three good readers, Dr. Taylor being one of them, and I have heard read sermons by the score. Not one in a hundred reads with effect. If all who read would do like Dr. Taylor, or at any rate try and do their best, it would be a different thing. It is all very well to pick two or three men out of a century who have been powerful with the manuscript—all very well to grow eloquent in describing the ideal reader, but just take the reality, and as a general thing what is it? The old lady's description of her minister will apply to more than one, "he's a weel-meanin' man; but he has an awfu' delivery—like a crow pickin', up an' down, up an' down."

"O wad some power the gifts gie them To see themselves as others see them;" or rather, would that the Holy Ghost would wake those lazy readers up! "Without the manuscript is the normal way of preaching," says the champion for the manuscript. Now, those abnormal preachers can be normal before any other audience but the "congregation;" and many of them can speak with effect. It is a shame to draw out the glad news with nose down to the paper while the hearers are asleep, (excuse the solecism), and to deliver a worldly speech with all the power and magnetism they possess! It is worse than a shame—it is an awful sin! Looking at it thus it is easy to see that nothing but laziness and indifference make many read in the way they do. What they need is a good waking up. It is a fact and a blessed one that Mr. Moody is revolutionizing, to a great extent, the preaching of America. It would not be a bad thing if Moody held a special meeting, for a while, in some central place, for all the lazy and indifferent readers, and extemporizers too, to see if he could get a little new life infused into them. Then you would see hundreds of congregations giving big "purses" to their ministers and sending them off to the meeting. I must stop. Just take examples nearest at hand—take half a dozen of readers, and the same number of normal preachers, and which of them is the more powerful? H. Ontario, June 5th, 1876.