

the cause everywhere, earnestly and perseveringly.

2. Let there be a commission appointed, of the wisest and best men in the Church, of ministers and elders, from town and country, from the East and West. Let this commission take evidence, first as to what is the actual stipend paid our ministers, and secondly, as to what is done in other countries and Churches. Then let it commend to the Church a full and comprehensive plan, fitted to raise the average stipend, to encourage the formation of pastoral relations, and the raising of mission stations into churches.

I do not believe that at this present time, ministers enjoying large stipends themselves have fully realized the condition of their poorer brethren, some of whom are not inferior to them in abilities, character, and piety. I am sure the wealthy congregations are entirely ignorant of the struggles which congregations less favorably situated have to make. But when an impartial commission brings out its good report, with its startling revelations as to the privations of ministers, the Church will be roused, and contributions will flow into the Fund.

I know that I have no weight in the Church, and that I have no claim to have weight. All that I ask is that suggestions be judged on their own merits, and not be rejected because they have come from me.

WHAT SHOULD NOW BE DONE WITH SUSTENTATION.

By Rev. James McCosh, D.D.

I have done with controversy. I am not to inquire who are to blame, or whether any one is to blame, for the present state of the Fund. I am in this, my last appeal, to restate briefly the grand ends contemplated by the Sustentation Scheme, and then inquire what should now be done. The Fund is meant to meet several very clamant evils.

I. Its grand aim is to provide a decent maintenance for the Gospel ministry. It was shown by the statistics gathered by the committee of the General Assembly in 1870, that the average stipend of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church was somewhere between \$600 and \$700, certainly under \$700. This has been declared, by all who have considered the subject, to be a disgraceful state of things in a country like this. It has improved, I believe, since 1871, owing in part to the discussion of the subject, and the appeals of the Sustentation Committee. Still it is very far from being what it ought to be. The command is "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. vi. 6.) We give to the majority of our ministers, who have had to spend ten years of severe study in preparation for their work, less than we give a common clerk or a skilled workman. How humiliating the position of a married man, who has to provide for and educate a family on such a sum. Nor is this the worst effect. The minister who has such a weight upon him, has not the influence which he ought to have in the district. I can testify from my college experience, that no temptation allures so many pious young men from the ministry as this.

The history of all churches shows that this state of things cannot be remedied by leaving every congregation to pay its own minister. Let every congregation be required to show that it is doing its duty as a condition of help, but when it is so doing let it be aided according to the Scriptural principle that when one member suffers "all the other members suffer with it." Acknowledging this, a great many of the voluntary churches in the Old World and in the New have set up, and are seriously proposing to set up, some sort of general Sustentation Fund. The aim of our Church has been to make the minimum stipend \$1000 a year, and as soon as possible \$1200.

II. Every one feels that in our Church there are far too few fixed pastorates in proportion to the number of congregations. It may be safely said that more than one-half of our congregations are without fixed pastors. A Sustentation Fund, wisely regulated, helps to reduce this evil by inducing and enabling congregations to call a pastor.

III. There is a great need of some plan of inducing zealous Christians to raise new congregations in destitute districts, both of town and country. There are always and every where good men and women willing to lead in this work. How often has a Sabbath-school issued in a congregation? Then it is extremely desirable to have our mission stations raised to the status of churches as speedily as possible. This can be done most effectively by having a fund to assist them in providing for the pastors called by them. By this means the funds of the Home Mission will be relieved, and it will be enabled to start new stations, which will be more easily raised when there is hope of the people having a pastor within a year or two. The Home Mission and Sustentation so far from injuring will powerfully aid each other. This, too, is the practical way of raising new churches in our large cities. Let a congregation or a few zealous men and women start a mission station, let them sustain as best they can till a nucleus of a congregation is gathered; and then let them put it under the Sustentation Scheme. This will be found to be the expedient way of extending the Church in the far West; it is the plan which the Methodists have taken—as a Methodist explained to me—and which has been so successful. Begin with a Sabbath-school, go on to a mission station, and then as speedily as possible to a fixed pastor-

hope that the Church will not lose these grand ends. We all know that there are men—conscientious, no doubt—who have ardently wished to make this scheme a reality, but the Church has stood by it in successive Assemblies, and certainly did not mean to abandon it at the last Assembly. I cannot but think that it has so little spirit to allow what was sanctioned deliberately to be defeated by men who have had no heart or zeal for it.

It is asked; do you propose? To propose, first, that there are hundreds of congregations more than I am to recommend a Sustentation Fund. But I may offer two suggestions.

1. The Sustentation Fund have a secret committee, or sub-committee, to be composed of those men who approve of the scheme, and are ready to stand