

circumstances, for the regular and systematic ingathering of the contributions of the people, scope being always allowed for the full and free outgoing of Christian principle and love, for the bringing of every man and woman, young man and maiden, to realize their own individual responsibility, and to act according to their own conscientious convictions. In the devising of this plan or scheme, much, of course, must depend on the external position and circumstances of the Church, and it is the part of true wisdom for the office-bearers of the Church to accommodate themselves to these circumstances. It is our decided opinion that for the Sustentation of the Ministry, whether we regard the competent support, and comfortable independence of the Ministers on the one hand, or the cherishing of a spirit of catholicity amongst the various congregations on the other, a common central fund, out of which all may receive a proportionate dividend, is the best mode; and that for Missionary objects, congregational associations, when vigorously worked, are more likely to secure a larger revenue than congregational collections. But whatever views may be entertained on these points, that some plan is indispensable, no one will question for a moment. Better, vastly better, some system, however clumsy and unwieldy, than no system at all—provided that system be well worked, be vigorously carried out.—And here an important duty devolves on the office-bearers, and especially on the Elders and Deacons, namely, seeing to it that the collectors and agents of districts, or of a certain number of families, do the work assigned them, regularly and steadily. Attending to this would mightily encourage the collectors themselves, and excite a deeper sympathy in the hearts of office-bearers, on behalf of these Agents, in their arduous and delicate undertaking, as well as serve to show the people that the giving of their substance unto the Lord is not to be regarded in the light of a mere financial affair, but of a sacred obligation, authoritatively imposed upon them by Him whose they are, and from whom they derive their all.

But if the office-bearers of the Church have high and important duties to discharge in this matter, so has the private Christian; and to these we must now briefly advert.

1st, They ought to give to this duty,—the duty of supporting divine ordinances, a priority of claim, in the disposal of their worldly means. It is not much to be feared that in a great majority of instances, even of those who give with commendable liberality, this is made the last instead of the first subject of consideration in the appropriation of the means that a bountiful Providence hath committed to them. Whatever is required for the supply of their bodily wants, or the temporal comfort and