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AGED MINISTERS' FUND.

THE ideal of a Church system of course would be that which would secure to every working minister such a fair reasonable income during his days of active service as would enable him to make such a provision for those dependent upon him and for his own old age as might appear to himself most reasonable and proper, and which would at the same time save the Church from all reproach and opprobrium in case such provision should not be made, and cases of suffering and destitution be thereby brought into prominence and discussion. Were this done, then Widows' Funds and those for the special benefit of aged and infirm ministers would either not be known at all or be managed on the simple basis of private insurance or benefit societies for the mutual support of those who might choose to become members, and those only.

Unfortunately this arrangement of universally adequate stipends has not yet been brought into operation in any of the different sections of the Christian Church. Every one is only too painfully aware of how different has been and is the state of matters in this respect. We are not saying whether or not the social status which ministers of the Gospel are called upon to maintain is a reasonable and proper one, though had there not been a certain recognized fitness in it we do not see that it would have been so generally insisted upon. Be that as it may, however, ministers are not responsible for its existence, and cannot be blamed if they seek to meet the exigencies of an all but universal popular opinion and pressure. It is quite possible that preachers of the Gospel might manage to exist on the humble wages of day labourers, but the most niggardly members of the Church would be the first to cry out against the appearances thus made, and in opposition to the reproach which in this way they would affirm was brought upon the cause of Christ.

It is just here that the painful anomaly in the condition of many ministers of the Gospel comes in. They are expected to occupy becomingly a certain social position for the due accomplishment of which the adequate income is not generally supplied. In most instances all that they can do even by rigid economy is to meet current expenses, without making any provision either for those dependent upon them or for the days of personal sickness and old age. This may be both a painful and discreditable state of things, but about its being a fact there can be no doubt whatever. As a result of this, Widows' and Orphans' Funds have come to be more or less supported as indispensable parts of Church machinery, not as if this were the best arrangement which could be thought of but the best which, in the present state of the Church, was found to be practicable. To speak of such funds as charitable institutions is very wide of the mark. They are so far in the way of reparation—but of a very imperfect and unsatisfactory description—for the inadequate stipends paid and the unreasonable expectations cherished as to what ministers ought

to be and do during the days of their active services; but *charitable* they are not. Sometimes the harsher and less considerate members of the Church will object altogether to collections or subscriptions for the support of these funds on the plea that these are matters with which the Church as such has nothing to do. But the more liberal and the more devout will recognize in their necessity the proof of the Church having so far forgotten the apostolic injunction to those who are taught in the word to communicate to them that teach, in all good things. What is true of funds for the support of the widows and orphans of ministers is still more so of those devoted to the support of ministers themselves in the days of their old age and infirmity. Without the former the Church might get along with little practical injury except that which arises from a loss of self respect, and from the depressing influence thus exerted upon the minds and hearts of active labourers. But the absence of the latter in full and efficient operation necessarily entails a manifest and measurable injury not so much upon individuals as upon the Church as a whole.

Age comes on, and with it impaired energies and growing inability for the proper and efficient discharge of ministerial duty. It is very easy to say that the worn-out labourer ought in such circumstances to retire. But to retire is in very many cases only very much the same as to starve. Congregations are frequently either unable or unwilling to support two ministers and the result is that either the old and infirm pastor persists in retaining his position till the congregation is reduced to a shadow or he is ignominiously dismissed to a condition of which none concerned can think either with comfort or satisfaction. With a properly organized aged ministers' fund many a deserving and most honourable servant of Christ might have been saved much anxiety and humiliation, and many a congregation have been preserved from years of weakness, heart burning and spiritual decay, which have been caused by necessities which could not be met, or by the repudiation of obligations which, because they were those only of Christian honour, could not be got quit of except by a peculiar amount of discreditable chicanery or a heartless display of unchristian indifference.

We have not a doubt but that a good number of congregations have been actually dissolved and a good many more reduced to a permanent condition of sickly inefficiency simply from the want of an aged ministers' fund, and the consequent inability of the worn out labourer to retire to much needed rest after having handed over his trust to a younger and more vigorous hand. That ministers should so far contribute to this fund is all very right and proper. But that they ought to maintain it altogether is neither reasonable nor prudent. Congregations have fully as much interest in its maintenance as the ministers have, and the more enlightenedly selfish they are, the more they will see to it that it is kept in proper and permanent working order.

For any of the ministers of the Church to plead as an excuse for not contributing *pro rata* to this fund that they may never receive any benefit from it or that they never mean to avail themselves of its provisions is as foolishly short-sighted as anything well can be, and withal somewhat offensive.

They will all along have protection from the fund, so that they can always be well assured that if ever they need to avail themselves of its provisions, they have it to fall back upon not as a matter of charity but of right. It is, besides, not for any one to say that he himself shall never need, or that his congregation shall never need, any such provision. How can any one be sure of that? Many have in this way very presumptuously calculated on the future. Besides, the whole plan is based on the principle of taking away the very appearance of charity and making it all rest on equity and Christian prudence; while there is the additional consideration that if the Church as a whole is to reap the full benefit of the scheme all must be in it, both ministers and congregations, in order that, by a wise and blessed and encouraging and Christian communism, distribution may in due time be made to every one according to the individual need.

THE FAMINE IN EASTERN TURKEY.

WE are sorry that the crowded condition of our columns will not permit us to give *in extenso* the letter from the Rev. Mr. Chambers to Principal

Grant, which appeared in last Monday's "Globe." The details given in that letter have a strange, saddening interest and we are quite sure that now when the destitution, instead of passing away, grows in intensity and extent, many more will heartily and liberally respond to the appeal for assistance so urgently, and yet so becomingly, made by Mr. Chambers. We can well believe that assistance sent from Canada is regarded with peculiarly grateful feelings by the missionaries who hail from our Dominion, and that it is literally true, as Mr. Chambers remarks, that "ten dollars from Canada does their hearts more good than one hundred from any other quarter of the globe."

We find it very difficult to make selections where the whole might so properly be re-published. The following must suffice:

"During two brief tours lately I witnessed many distressing scenes. I saw the fields dotted over with men, women, and children in search of roots and green things, upon which many have sustained themselves for weeks, and the roads crowded with refugees wearily toiling along, many of them from Persia or the Van district. Imagine such a group as this: a father carrying the youngest child of about three years; a mother supporting a grown up daughter, who is too faint to walk alone; four other children, with scarcely an excuse for a rag upon their bodies, in the group, followed at a distance by a full grown lad scarcely able to drag himself along. I give a medjidie (eighty cents) to the mother, who with clasped hands exclaims, 'God sent you! God sent you!' I throw another piece of money to the lad, who staggers forward, and seizing my foot kisses it passionately. Such scenes are so common with us now as scarcely to invite comment. Meanwhile the Government is powerless and the officials inefficient and corrupt. Our Vali Pasha would not believe there was any distress, and was on the point of so telegraphing to the Porte. His Council, however, enlightened him, and he telegraphed for immediate aid. The answer was in the first instance a demand for more money for the use of the Porte. Afterwards a telegram came ordering the Vali to use 500 sowars of grain for seed, to be returned at harvest. This went largely to those who least needed it, and amounted to only about one and one-half bushels per family. . . . Dr. Lauzan, chief of the medical quarantine staff at Erzurum, who, until the tour of inspection, pooh-poohed the reports of famine, writes under date of May 5th, from Alashgird district: 'All along the road are the skeletons of cattle, sheep, and horses. I found a young Kurd of twenty-four years lying dead by the side of a stream. I have found no instances of violent death, but many from exhaustion, induced by prolonged want of sufficient nutrition. From the village where I now am eleven heads of families have fled, being unable to support their children. One-tenth the usual acreage only is under seed. It is unsafe to pass from village to village without a large escort on account of hungry Kurdish robbers. Here it is not want, but famine. I have only as yet reached the borders of the famine district.'

"We are busy at present making 'tezek,' the native fuel. By 'we' I mean the inhabitants of Erzurum. The contents of the stable yard are thoroughly soaked, then pressed into moulds and dried on the house-tops in the sun. The air is redolent with the odour, and every roof and hill-side is plastered over with the unclean thing. Those who have no stables roam the pasture lands after the city flocks, and thus provide against the winter's severity. Yesterday, on a distant hill-side, in the vicinity of tardy snow banks, I gathered several kinds of rare and fragrant flowers, which, it seems, are not ashamed to bloom in this land of sorrow. Happy omen may it prove. The English elections afford great satisfaction to the Christians here, who consider Gladstone their warm friend and Beaconsfield their enemy."

These extracts shew very clearly the deplorable condition of affairs in that ancient, wretchedly governed country. A very creditable response to Mr. Chambers' appeal has already been made, and a good many hundreds of dollars have been forwarded from Canada, but we have no doubt that in view of the increased destitution, much more will be added to what has been already sent.

We need scarcely add that we shall be happy to continue to acknowledge and forward to Mr. Ward, as heretofore, any sums sent to this office.

OTTAWA LADIES' COLLEGE.

The closing exercises of this institution were held on the 23rd of June in the College hall, which was filled to overflowing, and the deepest interest was taken by the large audience in the whole proceedings of the evening. The young ladies acquitted themselves in the various literary and musical exercises in a manner that left nothing to desire. The music was of the highest order; and the readings in English, French, and German were accurately and effectively given. There was one graduate in literature, three in instrumental music, and one in vocal. The Directors' gold medal was awarded to Miss Jennie Pritchard of the senior class. The Governor-General's massive and beautiful silver medal fell to the lot of Miss Maggie Robertson. Miss Annie Edmison was gold medallist in the graduating class in music. Silver medals were awarded to the first in general proficiency in each of the departments of instruction.