

qualified for the work. Under their present arrangements our theological seminaries are not prepared to receive men who wish to pursue a training in English literature and the English Scriptures to be missionaries among the irreligious people of our large cities and in the neglected neighbourhoods. We need, as a denomination, training schools for this class of men, and such schools should be suitably endowed, placed under the control of men thoroughly competent for their trust and loyal to the doctrines of our Church, and should be supplied with teachers adapted to secure this special training. In view of the present condition of affairs in the large cities of our country, the Assembly is not likely to be called to give its attention to a matter of greater moment than that suggested in this overture."

We shall watch with interest the discussion and disposal of this important overture.

#### THE AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—There is no fund of our Church in such a poor condition. The invested funds amount to very little, and last year the interest was not sufficient to pay the miserably small amount due to the large number of ministers now on the fund—and several more being yearly added to the list.

Why is it needed at all? Because of the utterly inadequate salaries of the great majority of our ministers. Many of those men have devoted their hearts and lives, their whole time and strength, to the service of the Church after a long and expensive education of from eight to ten years, and then have barely received enough to pay current expenses. Some even of the hardest and most successful workers, who willingly devoted not merely six months but more than a year to the mission field, refusing every call, because the fathers of the Church thought it desirable—gathering together groups of people, travelling thousands of miles on foot or on horseback along the worst of roads—preaching and expounding from house to house incessantly—content with the poorest accommodation such as the new settlers could afford—many of the groups thus formed being now large and flourishing congregations—and yet have not had even their current expenses paid, but often having to eke out their salaries from their private means till all their means were exhausted, while helping to pay for several new churches for the benefit of our Presbyterian cause. Some of these gave one-fourth of their small salary of \$400 to this object, while at the same time their health was broken down from overworking, by which they incurred heavy additional expenses. In some cases they have had to spend several thousand dollars of private means, besides many years of excessive toil and care in the service of the Church, and have nothing left for old age but poverty and privation. And then after all this toil and sacrifice, during forty or fifty years, all that is provided them is about \$200 a year, besides the retiring allowance they may receive from their congregations. Is it right that such a state of things should be allowed by the wealthy members of our Church? Has not the King and Head of the Church laid the duty of advancing His cause equally on all His people? Why, then, should the chief burden be allowed to fall on a few, or ministers be expected to make all the sacrifices? Should not all Christians realize that all they have belongs to Christ, and should be used in such a way as will best promote His glory? He says: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." If some men are called to devote their whole time to the work of Christ, surely they should be properly sustained by their fellow-Christians who devote themselves to making wealth. Now the Great Head of the Church made ample provision for His servants under the old dispensation, and He has commanded His people properly to sustain the Gospel ministry as well. (Luke x. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 11-14; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 18). Some may ask what might be a proper support. The late James Leslie, many years ago editor of the *Toronto Examiner*, when discussing the question of an Established Church, to which he was opposed, yet stated that owing to the many calls upon a minister, and the expenses necessary to maintain his position aright, that he should receive a salary "three times as large as the average income of his people." If this reasonable principle, set forth by an intelligent layman, not belonging to any leading denomination, were acted on, it would greatly increase the salary of

many of our ministers. Many of those ministers by giving the time and effort to business which they have given to the Church might have accumulated wealth. But when they devoted themselves to the service of the Church they did not expect wealth. But they had a right to expect that their expenses would be met, and that they would be enabled to lay up a modest competence for old age. But in many cases this has not been realized. Only a few ministers are so fortunate as to have wealthy members, and spirited, generous leaders, who see that they receive a proper salary—according to their place and position—so that they are not only placed above privation, but are enabled to lay up something for old age.

Years ago regulations were made by the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund Committee that at least \$10 per year of service should be paid to ministers on the fund; that is, that after forty years of service or more, each annuitant should be entitled to \$400 per annum, but the want of funds has prevented that being carried out. Even the \$400 would not do much more than pay house-rent, fuel and water rate in a city, and those that during the greater part of their lives have been accustomed to town or city life would be compelled to reside in some country district, in order to live at all. But what shall we say of an aged minister having to depend on the highest amount now paid, namely, about \$200 a year? Let educated men who spend their thousands imagine if they can the misery thus caused.

That justice demands that at least such a provision should be made for disabled ministers as was contemplated by the committee becomes more evident when we consider the generous provision made by the Civil Service for servants of the public, they being generally allowed about half of their ample salary when superannuated.

Even policemen, who only require the merest elements of education, are yet far better provided for than ministers of the Gospel after long years of the most expensive education, as well as requiring large and expensive libraries, to properly discharge their duties. Thus, the Toronto police force, after fifteen years' service, are entitled to one-third their salary, or over \$200 per year, and after twenty years to one-half, or from over \$300 to \$500 of a retiring allowance. Thus they are more than twice as well provided for as ministers of the Gospel. Now, in order to insure that small annuity to ministers of \$10 per year of service, we require a fund of \$100,000, and that to be supplemented by the yearly collection throughout the Church, and by the ministers' rates. Many ministers will be willing to increase the amount of their rates if only assured of such provision for old age. Some say, why not invest in an insurance company, and thus provide for old age? All very well for the few who have large salaries, but how can this be done when your salary barely meets your current expenses, or does not meet them? The American Presbyterian Church has a fund of \$1,000,000 for the same object, and one gentleman left a bequest of \$20,000 to this fund of our Church in the Maritime Provinces, thus setting a noble example to our rich Presbyterians of the Western Provinces. It would be much better for the wealthy members to raise such a sum, rather than to fall back on the general constituency of our Church, so as not to interfere with the contributions to the other Schemes. Now, ten of our wealthy men each giving \$10,000 would provide this fund, or five giving \$10,000 and ten \$5,000 each, or even one hundred giving \$1,000 each. And, as the endowment of Knox College is now safe, this Scheme would not need to be delayed any longer on account of it. We hope, therefore, that the General Assembly will give its sanction to this Scheme, and that measures will be taken to call forth the liberality of our wealthy members toward it. We read of members of our Church giving large bequests to relations already well off. Should not such men while still in active life dedicate a goodly portion of their wealth to the service of Him from whom they received power to get wealth, in order to make this necessary provision for His servants? (Deut. viii. 18.) Does not the Master identify Himself with His servants, and declare: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"? Let the wealthy members, then, show their gratitude to Him, and honour Him in the way that He expects. What will be the alternative if this be not done? That the

servants of Christ will have their old age embittered by privation and sorrow, after having spent their lives and their whole strength in doing the work of the Church. Some of these, with their sensitive feelings, which have been increased by their education and prominent positions for many years, where they were wont largely to provide help for others, would rather die than be dependent on the cold charities of the world or on private aid. But let there be a public fund out of which they are entitled to draw for services rendered the Church, and they will feel no hesitation in accepting their annuities as a right. Some of these men might have made money had they gone into speculation with their private means. But they feared that their usefulness would be impaired thereby, and were more anxious to promote the divine glory, and to avoid everything that would hinder the cause of God, than to make money for themselves. And are they to be allowed to suffer because of their conscientiousness? If no proper provision be made for ministers in old age their energies will be greatly weakened, and their power to do good greatly hindered by care and anxiety how to meet the many claims upon them while in the work.

Another result of the want of proper support and provision for old age is that an inferior class of men will be likely to succeed the present generation of ministers. The sons of ministers are driven away from the work by the straitened circumstances and anxieties with which they have been too familiar. Rev. David K. Guthrie some time ago said at Glasgow that it was difficult to get parents to dedicate their sons to the ministry, or to get talented young men to give themselves to that work, because the prospect before them in life is genteel poverty. In America the difficulty is greater than in Britain. The interests of the Church in securing an adequate supply of able ministers are bound up with the proper support of this fund, for, while men of great devotedness may bear a great deal while able to work and barely live, the prospect of no proper provision for old age is too much for educated, sensitive men to bear, and should not be required by a Church having ample means in the hands of its members. Let them give even a tenth to the Lord (Gen. xxviii. 22; 2 Chron. xxxi. 4, 6), and all our funds will flourish. In the "Disruption Worthies" we find that several of the leading lawyers, etc., elders of the Free Church gave a fourth or fifth of their income, besides a great deal of time, to the various enterprises of the Church. The men of means set a noble example to the entire people, which they followed, and thus we find the secret of the wonderful success of that Church, which in a few years covered Scotland with hundreds of churches, manse and schoolhouses, besides raising a Sustentation Fund that secures an average salary far higher than that of our ministers. Finally, the divine blessing cannot be expected by professing Christians who fail to do their duty to the servants of Christ. He has promised His special blessing to those who honour Him by properly sustaining His servants. (Isa. xxxii. 8; Prov. xi. 24, 25; Mal. iii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 9.) It is vain to expect this blessing while His people allow His servants to suffer, for He declares that the best test at the Great Day will be whether they have helped and honoured Him in the persons of His servants. Many men of means who do little for God's servants are thus dwarfing their own spiritual life on earth, and lessening their spiritual attainments and enjoyments in the future world. If, then, we are to look for the blessing of the Great King of Zion on our Church and people, and for the success we desire, let means be taken to put this fund in a better position.

May, 1886.

A LOVER OF THE CHURCH.

#### CHRISTIAN WORK IN GENEVA.

MR. EDITOR,—A short time ago I received from the Rev. Mr. Dardier, Director of the Colportage of the Evangelical Society, Geneva, a letter and a copy of the last report on Evangelization by means of the mails. In his letter is the following passage, which leads me to address you at present:

"I have sent you a report on Evangelization by means of the mails. Write an article in the papers on this work, and try to get us a little help. Our financial position is not good, and there is some talk of sending me to America toward the end of summer, if that appear to be according to the will of God. Should the proposal be carried out, I may go as far as Canada."