

themed around the fireside, who presented it to her father, and simply asked him to read it. He took it and read it with fixed attention. Every word was an arrow that reached his heart. He finished the Tract, paused, remained in thought a moment, and looking at his daughter burst into tears and said, "Daughter, bring me the Bible. I have neglected my duty too long: henceforth I will pray in my family." He kept his resolution, and every morning and evening witnessed a group of worshippers gathering to the daily sacrifice. From that day a new and brighter light shone into that dwelling.—*American Messenger*.

JOKES UPON SCRIPTURE.—It is very common with some persons, to raise a laugh by means of some ludicrous story connected with a text of Scripture. Sometimes it is a play on the words, a pun; at other times, a blunder; and not seldom, a downright impiety. Whatever be its form, even when lightest, it is no venial offence, leading as it does to profane contempt of God's word. Those who practise this, have never been celebrated for genuine wit. The laughter which they call forth is provoking solely by the unexpected contrast between the solemn words of Scripture and some droll idea. There is no real wit in the case; and the dullest persons in society are most remarkable for these attempts.

The evils arising from this practice are greater than appear at first. It leads, in general, to irreverence for Scripture. No man would jest with the dying words of his father or his mother; yet the words of God are quite as solemn. When we have heard a comic or vulgar tale connected with a text of Scripture, such is the power of association, that we never hear the text afterwards without thinking of the jest. The effect of this is obvious. He who is much engaged in this kind of false-wit, will come at length to have a large portion of holy Scripture spotted over by his unclean fancy.

Beware of jesting with sacred things. Shun the company of any one who practises this, as you would shun a loathsome disease. Frown upon every attempt to provoke your smiles by such means.—*American Messenger*.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT VIEWED IN CONTRAST WITH PRESBYTERIAN.

A paper bearing the foregoing title has recently been sent to us, and we have read it with interest and satisfaction, not only on account of the soundness of the views it inculcates on the important question with which it deals, but also, and we may add mainly, because of the peculiar circumstances of its author, who, although trained up in Congregationalism, and, until a recent period, holding the position of a minister in a Baptist Church, has been led by a careful and deliberate examination of the ground on which he stood, to seek a connexion with the Presbyterian Church. In the paper to which we refer, we have a statement of the considerations by which he has been convinced of the Scriptural authority of the Presbyterian Church Government. He first of all adduces various portions of Scripture, bearing on this question, setting forth the impression they had made upon his mind, and bringing out the conclusions to which they seem to him necessarily to lead, and which he regards equally incompatible with Congregationalism and prelacy in the Church. He then proceeds to exhibit the practical working of Congregationalism and its effects on the condition and usefulness of pastors, and on the order, purity, and peace of the Church. In this part of the argument he has his own personal experience to guide him, and his observation of

the course of things in the Christian community with which he was originally connected. The unfavourable results, both as to purity and peace which came under his notice, seem to have awakened his first doubts and to have prompted him to the investigation of the subject, and he evidently expresses himself with peculiar feeling and emphasis when referring to the difficulties, under the Congregational or Independent system of Church government, of preserving in a right and healthy state the relations between the pastor and people, of guarding against internal factions and divisions among congregations, and unseemly jealousies and bitterness in one congregation towards another, and especially of maintaining any standard of doctrinal soundness and consistency among the pastors themselves. But however interesting and satisfactory it may be to trace the course of thought, investigation, and reasoning by which the writer has been conducted to his present position, and of which we gladly present the foregoing outline to the Church, we do not think it necessary to insert the original document, which is somewhat too long for our limited columns, while its contents are mostly such as are quite familiar to the bulk of our readers.

WIDOWS' FUND.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA.

BRETHREN,—That the Widows and Orphans of our Ministers are entitled to support from the Church is now universally admitted, it would, therefore, be a waste of time to prove the justice of their claim; in order, however, to show how necessary for them such a provision is, it may be observed that, with the exception of some six or eight congregations, chiefly in the cities, whose stipends range from £200 to £400, the average income of our Ministers does not exceed £90 to £95; so that, taking into consideration the irregular mode of payment, the average income of the Ministers of this Church may be fairly stated as not exceeding £65 or £70 sterling. It is thus plainly impossible for them to lay up anything for their families; and if it be the eternal ordinance of the Lord, the Head of the Church, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," that "living" most assuredly must include a provision for their families.

The recent painful bereavements, brethren, with which it has pleased the disposer of all events to visit the Presbytery of Hamilton, added weight and solemnity to the charge devolved on this Committee by the Synod; and we felt pressed in spirit to give it our most serious consideration at the earliest possible period at which a meeting could be assembled. We thought it desirable also to obtain the counsel and co-operation of as many gentlemen within the Presbytery of Hamilton and the adjoining Presbyteries, as distance would permit to attend. A full committee was thus assembled, and only one feeling pervaded all—a determination to place the provision for the families of Ministers on a solid and permanent basis, and that *immediately*.

It appears to us that there were but three ways by which this could be effected:—

First—We may continue in our present position, and provide for each case of bereavement individually as it occurs.

Secondly—We may adopt the suggestion of the Synod and insure the lives of all our Ministers.

Thirdly—We may effect our object by means of a Widows' Fund scheme.

With regard to the first it will be easy to show that it is of all the modes the worst, the most ex-

travagant, and the most inefficient. From a calculation founded on the Carlisle Tables, it may be assumed that in four years there will be six deaths. The sum sufficient to purchase an average annuity of £10 for each is £350 to £400—say, £350; thus in four years you will have expended £2,100, only six individual cases will have been provided for, and you will have the same average sum of £350 to £400 to raise at each succeeding death. But how is the sum of £350 to be raised? if it be on the principle that each Congregation shall provide for the family of its deceased Minister, then in the case of seven-eighths of our Congregations this would be impossible; the Congregation, therefore, being unable to raise the sum necessary, must, in addition to the stipend of the living minister, raise the average annuity of £10 for the family of the deceased; and in the case of a large majority of our Congregations the alternative must be—destitution to the family of the deceased, or deprivation of Divine ordinances to the Congregation. If you say that each case ought to be met by the Church collectively, then even this mode will turn out to be most inefficient and unequal. One case will present features which will deeply awaken the sympathies of all, and the call for aid will be liberally responded to; another presents no such peculiar features, arouses no extraordinary sympathy, and the provision will be inadequate. One or two cases may occur in a time of great prosperity, when every one can afford to be liberal, and the provision will be superabundant; the next two may happen in a season of great adversity, when every one is straitened, and the contributions will necessarily be very deficient. One case may be that of a Minister well known to the Church, living, it may be, in the neighbourhood of one or two large and wealthy Congregations, and the provision will be adequate; another may be that of a Minister but little known, living in a remote part of the backwoods, yet serving God faithfully and peacefully in the sphere in which He has placed him, and his family will be left to penury. Continuing as we are, then, it is plain that the minds of our Ministers must still remain unrelieved from harassing anxieties on account of their families. Besides all this what can be more degrading to his feelings as a man, or to his office as a Minister of Christ, than to know that the only means of support for his family after his decease, is a Synodical call for the eleemosynary contributions of the Church? If, therefore, we would discharge the great duty justly, efficiently, and in a manner consistent with the dignity of the office of the sacred ministry, we cannot continue in our present position; we must adopt some scheme by which a sufficient support for Ministers' families may be insured; and be it kept in mind that, by so doing, we shall, at the same time, *insure ourselves*—seven-eighths of our Congregations at least—against a burden too heavy for them to bear.

The second method of making this provision is that suggested by the Synod—to provide for Ministers' families by Life Assurance Societies. To this method there can be no objection but its expense. The number of the Ministers of this Church is at present 65, whose average age may be about 40 years. The cost of these so as to obtain an average annuity of £10, would be £900 to £1,000. This we unanimously agreed was beyond the means of the Church; nor, indeed, had it been within her means did we consider it either desirable or expedient. Instead of £900 or £1,000 a year, place at our disposal the cost of one and a half years' insurance as the capital or nucleus of a fund—say, £1,500, give us an ordinary annual collection of £250 or £300, and this with the Ministers' payments, will form a sure and permanent provision for all the families of our Ministers.

The third mode of performing this great duty is that of a Widows' Fund Scheme. This is the plan which has been adopted by most Protestant Churches of any note in the British Empire—the