

the Home Mission field, each Presbytery appoint a deputation consisting of say not less than two ministers and a larger number of intelligent laymen, conversant with the management of congregational affairs, whose business should be to visit each congregation and preaching station, at the season of the year most convenient for the people to meet—to enquire into the nature, extent and working of the organizations found to exist—to collect information that might be of service to other congregations—to suggest improvements where the system is defective, and especially to aid in arranging the necessary machinery in places where it is wanting. It will produce a good effect in directing attention to a matter, which although it may be utterly worthless as a substitute, may be of the uttermost worth and importance as a help to the life of God in the souls of men—deriving in fact its principal, if not all its value from its subserviency to this high and noble end."

With respect to the settled charges which have no congregational machinery, and are consequently low in funds, it were perhaps ungenerous and unfair to say that the Minister was to blame; and yet there is a backwardness, or rather a feeling of restraint, in declaring the whole counsel of God in reference to the duty of liberality in supporting ordinances. Ministers feel a delicacy in speaking on the subject, lest unworthy motives should be imputed to them, or it may be "lest the expense of a self-sustained Church should deter the people from adhering to it." Dr. Chalmers, from whose "Earnest Appeal to the Free Church of Scotland, on the subject of its Economics," we copy the last objection, says,

"This is very like the invention of enemies; and, at all events, the apprehension which they would fain ascribe to our respected friends and fellow-labourers is one which we do not share in.—say, even though we did, we should utterly refuse it as an element of slightest influence upon the question. We have no wish that our Church should be otherwise expanded than by the accession to it of pure and well-principled members. We have no ambition for mere numbers; and should regard it as a disgusting spectacle to see thousands and tens of thousands congregated at sacraments, who were persisting in the neglect of a plain duty, and not only inflicting a disability on the general cause of our great Home Mission, by taking as much to themselves and giving as little to others as possible, but even doing nothing to alleviate the penury and privation of their own immediate ministers. To talk of a people's thirst for ordinances, in conjunction with such an apathy or sordidness as this, is to palm on the face of the world a most hideous and revolting combination. But we again repeat our conviction that the people are not in fault; and if hitherto any of them have been living in the neglect of a plain duty, it is because they have not been plainly told of it. Were their eyes once opened to the state of the case, they would no longer remain an incubus or dead weight upon a cause in which their affections are so thoroughly engaged."

The contributions to the schemes of the Church have not been generally and systematically taken up. Where they have been attended to, the result has been satisfactory, without imposing an unreasonable tax upon any. Were all the collections observed at their proper time, one would not interfere to the prejudice of another. There are cases in which several collections have been omitted. When an effort is made for them all

together, the result is little more than would have been realized for each in its proper course.

With proper congregational officers to attend to the secularities such cases would not occur. The affairs of individual congregations would be free from the embarrassment which is so adverse to their prosperity, and the Church at large would have the means of engaging with vigour in that work which, by the Divine blessing we believe she is destined to achieve.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

In lately looking into the memoir of Dr. Payson, we were very much impressed by the following passages. They refer to the period of nine or ten months which immediately preceded his receiving license as a preacher. Having resigned the charge of the Academy at Portland, which he had held for about three years,—he retired to his father's house and gave himself with characteristic devotedness, during the above mentioned period, to special preparation for the work of the ministry. It ought to be remembered, that besides the Theological attainments he made during his residence at Portland, he had enjoyed a regular course of University education in Harvard College, in every department of which he distinguished himself. Our youthful candidates for the ministry may profitably ponder the following passages—

"This period of his history is memorable, and highly instructive to the student of theology.—Having, after much deliberation and prayer, chosen the ministry of reconciliation as the business of his future life, he gave himself up to the work of preparation with an exclusiveness and ardour perhaps never exceeded. From every study and pursuit, whatever its charms and attractions, which was not directly subsidiary to his grand design, he resolutely divorced himself—at least till he had acquired the art—analagous to the supposed properties of the philosopher's stone—of turning all to gold. He seems to have concentrated and directed all his powers to the acquisition of scriptural knowledge and the cultivation of Christian and ministerial graces in obedience to the apostolical precept, 'give thyself wholly to them.' A decision once formed, was with him usually final; and in executing his purpose, whatever his hand had found to do, he did it with his might. These, his permanent characteristics, were eminently conspicuous at this period, while learning to

* Negotiate between God and man
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy."

With the most exalted views of the holy office, to which he was looking forward, and of the qualifications requisite to its competent and successful execution, he sought them with a proportionate zeal, devoting himself to the study of the sacred pages, if man ever did, with all the heart and soul and strength and mind."

"Most men, however discordant their principles, profess to have derived them from the Scriptures; but, with Mr. P. this was something more than pretence. The Bible was with him the subject of close, critical, persevering, and, for a time, most exclusive attention, his reading being principally confined to such writings as would assist in its elucidation, and unfold its literal meaning. In this manner he studied the whole of the Inspired Volume, from beginning to end, so that there was not a verse on which he had not formed

an opinion. This is not asserted at random. It is but a few years since, that, in conversation with a candidate for the ministry, he earnestly recommended very particular and daily attention to the study of the Scriptures, and enforced his counsel by his own experience of the advantages which would accrue from the practice. He observed, that before he commenced preaching, he made it his great object to know what the Bible taught on every subject, and, with this purpose, investigated every sentence in it so far as to be able to give an answer to every man who should ask a reason for it."

"In this way he acquired his unparalleled readiness to meet every question, on every occasion, whether proposed by a caviller or a conscientious inquirer, which, it is well known, he usually did in a manner as satisfactory as it was often unexpected. The advantages hence derived, were, in his view, beyond all computation. It secured for him the unlimited confidence of people in the common walks of life, as "a man mighty in the Scriptures." It gave him great influence with Christians of other denominations. It enabled him to confound and silence gainsayers, when they could not be convinced, as well as to build up the elect of God on their most holy faith. It furnished him, too, with ten thousand forms of illustration, or modes of conveying to ordinary minds, the less obvious truths with which he was conversant in the exercise of his ministry. He believed 'all Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness'; and he was himself a most striking exemplification of its competency to render 'the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.'"

CHURCH FINANCE.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR SIR,—

For several months past I have been looking for some reference to the financial interests and arrangements of our Church in your columns. I was given to understand, some time ago, and I can honestly assure you the information gladdened my very heart, that a decided movement in this matter had been made by influential parties in your city,—and these parties not ministers, but leading members of the Church there. It is with such parties that any new movement ought to originate. You will confer a favour on many of your readers, as well as on me, if you will tell us what, if anything, is doing in the matter. Is there any measure in preparation for the meeting of Synod, in regard to our Church finances, and especially the sustentation of the ministry?—Surely the intelligent and influential men connected with our Church in the larger cities and towns do not know the difficulties experienced in the country congregations, in making a regular and adequate provision for their ministers, otherwise they would not be so slow in taking up this

"It is not here alleged that Dr. Payson comprehended all that is contained in the Scriptures, much less that he arrogated to himself such knowledge; for, though "the word of Christ dwelt richly" in him, he doubtless continued to "increase in the knowledge of God" by every perusal of it, how often soever repeated, till the last, and even then saw as through a glass, darkly, compared with the visions of heaven. Some truths cannot be fully comprehended, and may have various relations which never will be known on earth. Many things respecting unfulfilled predictions can be known by no man till after their accomplishment. But he had made every passage a distinct object of attention, and if, "hard to be understood," he could state to the inquirer the causes of the obscurity, and in the very fact find a powerful motive to humility, diligence, and prayer for divine illumination, thus rendering the darkest texts "profitable."