

ry. We know the case of a Christian woman who had encountered heavy domestic trials, among the last of which was the death of her husband, who returning to the church in the city to which she had formerly belonged, but from which her removal to the country had disconnected her, waited upon her pastor and with a cheerful countenance said, "I have just returned to the city with five helpless children to struggle single-handed for a living. I brought with me ten dollars, my only store, and five of that I have just paid in advance for pew-rent, for I expect the blessing of God only while in the way of my duty." What folly! some will exclaim. What true wisdom! we reply. The energy of that lone and conscientious widow was attended with the blessing of heaven. She labored assiduously and prospered, and she had the satisfaction of seeing, before her death, her children growing up respected and members of the church. Unless we entirely ignore the existence and providence of a just and merciful God, we must believe that he regards with peculiar favor those who honor him and the ministry which he has consecrated.

The personal bearings of this subject are too often overlooked and slighted. It is no trifling matter to embarrass any of God's ambassadors in their high and holy work, by withholding from them the necessities of life. Not only will it be an alarming item in the after account which every man must give to God; but it will, by necessary consequence, react in this world upon the spiritual well-being of those thus criminal. A pleasant and successful ministry can never be expected, when a congregation wounds the feelings, and alienates the sympathies of their pastor, by contributing to his support in so grudging and niggardly a manner, that he can scarcely live. With what feeling must he present himself before those who, as he well knows, do not appreciate his ministrations, and actually withhold from him what is honest and right? He must know why his salary is so scanty and so reluctantly paid. He must know that this one has refused time after time to pay his quota; and that one, with ample means, contributes the least possible sum; and that a third one has been guilty of some pitiful meanness unworthy of a man, much less a Christian; and although he may have grace to submit, it is impossible, in the nature of the case, that he can have towards such, that cordial, genial, glowing friendship which would impart life and energy to his ministry. He is hindered in his work, and if his own comfort is sacrificed, the spiritual interests of his people must severely suffer. They will not contribute their carnal things, and God in judgment refuses them spiritual things. For this reason so many are sickly among us. The niggardly ones are after all the chief sufferers. They suffer in the barrenness of their own souls, and they suffer in

the persons of their children. God is a righteous God.

We believe the religious press and the pulpit should deal more plainly with this subject than is common. Earnest expostulation is demanded; and if that fails, other means should be resorted to. Covetousness is idolatry, and is as marked a sin as theft or falsehood. If rich men, or persons amply able to gratify their own worldly desires, and even ostentation, will not contribute their just proportion to the support of religion, they should not participate in the ordinances of it. A stricter discipline on this subject might diminish the number of visible communicants, but it would make a purer and holier, and therefore a more efficient church. The grace of benevolence is an exalted one; no Christian character is complete without it; nay, as we have already said, there can be no Christian character without it. There is no greater mistake than that a man has a right to give or withhold, as he pleases—that his money is his own, and he can do with it as he will. The primitive Christians sold all they had, and formed a common fund, because the state of the Church then demanded the sacrifice; and is it to be supposed that such a change has since occurred, that those whom God has provided with the means can become notorious for their closeness and meanness, without forfeiting their Christian standing? Never was reform more imperatively called for than at present. We have only touched on the surface of the evil. A deep work is to be wrought in the Church, to bring Christians of all classes to a juster sense of their duty, and to a profounder conscientiousness.

The *Presbyterian Herald* thus exposes another phase of this kind of meanness:—

"I preach twenty miles from here, and you will think it strange when I tell you that I have paid over seventy dollars, within two years, to hire horses to ride to my appointments, and have not received one cent to remunerate me for my labors or expenses."

"So writes a very worthy minister, in a business letter, apologizing for not paying for his paper. What sort of people does he preach to? are they heathen or are they Christians? Are they honest, or do they repudiate their other debts, as they do those which are due to him? We suggest that the next time he preaches to them he take the text, 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.' Perhaps he has not been faithful in teaching them their duty. The text is a part of the whole counsel of God, which he should not shun to declare to them, whether they will hear or forbear. If they rebel against it, it will be their sin, and not his. Duty is his: results are with God."

We have known many instances of meanness similar to the above, in which poor ministers have been invited, at both inconvenience and expense, to preach to vacant churches; and, as a reward, found it difficult to ob-