

tion foremost stands the Sacred Desk. The priest's lips should teach knowledge. Speaking here generally, it will be enough to say that true, enlightened piety, will cheerfully and satisfactorily support divine institutions. A true christian is liberal. "A grasping, avaricious christian is as much a contradiction of terms as a lying or stealing christian." The fact that the piety of Israel—devotion to God and His cause and institutions—really constituted the foundation of a liberal support for the Levitical priesthood, was a wise arrangement, and fraught with lessons of instruction to all who would deal with the subject now in hand. God, who, as the King of Israel, "laid claim to the tithes as His own right, resigns them to the Levites"—(Calvin). Compare Lev. xxvii. 30, with Num. xviii. 20, 21. When there was no meat in God's house, there was little piety in His people's hearts—Mal. iii. 8-10; and the Levites were forced "to flee every one to his field," because the *"whole nation robbed God in tithes and offerings."* In particular, let Elders in our church imitate the zeal of Nehemiah, who, in his day, remedied the evil of which we now complain, and "contend" for the rights of God's house and his servants. And let ministers of the gospel exhibit the Divine will on this subject as well as on others. The law of truth must be in the faithful ambassador's mouth, and he must be as free from iniquity in his lips as from impiety in action. A corrupt and venal priesthood in the days of Malachi were afraid to rebuke the people for withholding tithes, and presenting what was improper, and the doom which fell on the original defaulters, also crushed them in common ruin.—Mal. iii. 9. Because there was none among them, like Phineas, so fired with zeal for Jehovah's honor as to close the temple doors against the inbringing of the blind, and the lame, and sick, and torn, for sacrifices; but in vain, or to no purpose, as to Jehovah's acceptance, laid them upon the altar: thereby virtually saying that these *"corrupt things"* were good enough for offering; and thus polluted the table of the Lord, and rendered it contemptible in the eyes of the people, Jehovah in his retributive character, shaped his punishment after the example of their sin, and rendered them contemptible and base before all the people!—Mal. ii. 8. Thus, in addition to a common state of woe, there is a peculiar element of degradation in the case of the priesthood. Brethren, we must be faithful, because of the fear wherewith we must fear Jehovah of Hosts, and be afraid before His name. Paul was faithful, as on other subjects so on this, even though encompassed with great difficulties: Brethren, none of these press upon you. You labor among those who enjoy not only the blessings of

civilization, but these to a high degree. They know the inestimable benefits of the gospel, social, civil, as well as religious; they are just, and willingly confess that the laborer is worthy of his hire; they are wise, and will therefore receive instruction in the path of duty. See to it, that love of worldly praise, or discretion over-discreet, has not deterred you from exposing a very sore evil, which exists on the fair face of our Zion, marring its beauty and retarding its usefulness. You are bound to declare the whole counsel of God—this is part of what He has revealed. Are you ashamed or afraid to carry out your Master's orders! If young men are driven from the ministry; if the character of christianity, of churches, of Christ, is injured, because the Levite is forsaken,—in whose behalf God hath given charge, saying to his people, Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth, for he hath no inheritance;—if liberal men—professors, are kept from joining a people whom, to some extent, they despise as persons illiberal; if injustice is done to man and evil to society, because the ministry is not supported as it should be; what right have you, from the narrow and selfish consideration introduced by the pitiable fact that you might be frowned upon by some of your own people, who Demas like, love this present world above duty to God or man, to religion or society, to withhold the judgments and statutes of God on ministerial support from the notice of His subjects? You have no choice in the matter; the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophecy! Brethren, do *your* duty. It is to be viewed as a sad reflection on any people who will not hear a wise and prudent, faithful exhibition of God's mind on this very important part of christian duty. I would not dare to say that any of our congregations are so dead or indifferent to *whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are honest, *whatsoever* things are just, *whatsoever* things are pure, *whatsoever* things are lovely; *whatsoever* things are of good report, as not to take such action kindly, and think on this subject, and act too.

One more practical remark and I have done. An evil of the same kind as that of which we now complain existed in the church in the time of Nehemiah. How did that reformer,—that man of God deal with it? He first exposes the sin of this neglect, meets the objections which might very naturally be made by the people:—such as their poverty, that they had not risen above the evils consequent upon a long and grinding captivity; that much has been given to rebuild the temple; that they had just erected the wall about Jerusalem in troublous times: that their land too was desolate and uncultivated; that they were, from these