

You asked them for L.150 to meet my share of the "John Knox," and with the most pleasing promptitude they poured L.370 into your treasury.

There are also some large and prolific wastes of expenditure in ours as well as other Churches, that might, and, I trust, will, be extensively, if not completely, reclaimed for the benefit of missions. I shall refer to only two of them, viz *to-bacco* and *alcohol*. Even in our own small Church with so much that is praise worthy and commendable, these are useless and pernicious indulgences. Tobacco, like moth and rust, silently and imperceptibly eat away hundreds; and alcohol, like a daring and desperate thief, breaks through and steals thousands of pounds, that might probably find their way into the treasury of the Lord's temple.

I am however extremely delighted to observe that the temperance question appears to be engrossing much more of the attention of our Church than it did some years ago. Since the formation of the Temperance Society in 1829 down to the present time our Church has stood prominently forward in this reform. A larger proportion, I believe, both of our ministers and people have been members both of the temperance and total abstinence societies than of any Church in Scotland; and could the entire membership of our Church be brought to abandon the use of intoxicating drinks, and devote the savings thereby effected to missions, the thirty or forty missionaries would be easily maintained. But admitting a much smaller advance than this, we can hardly doubt but that before another quarter of a century elapse, the temperance reform will exert a most favorable influence upon our mission funds.

But the most important question to ask is this—Are our people, with all their liberality, contributing up to that proportion of their substance which God requires of them? The Scriptures nowhere, either by precept or example, seem to indicate that less than a tenth of our income should be devoted to the service of God. It is of course only an approximation that can be made to the solution of that question. Still in these days, when the science of statistics is so carefully studied, and when such important lessons are gathered from its teachings, very close approximations can be made on such points. I am glad that the Sy-

nod is paying so much attention to the statistics of our body. You have counted your members, and you annually register all their contributions; and could you estimate their annual incomes the matter would be easy, but here a rude approximation is all that can be attained. Dr Hanna, in his life of Dr Chalmers, assumes the average income of the families in connection with the Free Church to be L.50 per annum. If our Church has a less proportion of wealth, she has also a less proportion of poverty in her membership, so that as a whole we may perhaps safely affirm that the average income of the families in our Church is fully equal to the average income in the families of the Free Church. Dr Hanna further states that "the revenue of the Free Church, at the time of her greatest pecuniary efforts, did not exceed three per cent upon the income of her members" or L.1, 10s. for each family. I am uncertain how many members each family is supposed on an average to contain; but if we say two, this will be fifteen shillings each per annum. I am not certain of the exact amount of the annual contributions of our Church but if we say L. 6000, I believe we shall not be far from the truth; quite near enough for my present purpose. The membership of our Church, is about 6000. This will give L 1 each per annum, as the average contributions of our members; and assuming the other statistics to be correct, will be L 4 per cent on the total income of our entire membership. This is considered a high rate of contribution for religious objects; indeed by some it is looked upon as quite a model state of things in a Church. But if our statistics are correct, and our interpretation of Scripture sound, our people are not yet half up to the millennial or scriptural condition of the Church as regards the grace of liberality. They are still 6 per cent below the requirements of Scripture in their annual contributions to the service of God. And is there no likelihood that the average liberality of our Church can be raised to something approaching the Scriptural standard? I think there certainly is. Our Church is small, and hence her financial concerns can be easily superintended, and efficiently wrought out. Our membership is much more select than in the larger Presbyterian Churches; and hence there is a greater amount of scriptural knowledge and Chris-