

believe that it is otherwise with the young men who are coming forward to the Church from the Divinity Halls, of Aberdeen, St Andrews and Glasgow. It seems to me, indeed, that the man must be blind who does not see, that the Church has been recruited, more particularly of late years, with many really zealous ministers. But suppose the complaint were well founded, I ask if it would justify the apathy of which it is made the excuse? At a time when the harvest was great and the labourers were few, was it not the solemn injunction of the Redeemer himself to his disciples that they should wrestle in prayer with the Lord of the harvest, that he would be pleased to send forth labourers into his harvest? Only let this solemn injunction be now obeyed by all of us who call ourselves by the Christian name, and if there is truth in the word of God, and if history bears faithful testimony to God's dealings with his Church in ages that are past, a rich and remarkable blessing will assuredly follow. Taking up the question upon the principles of reason, I know nothing that might be expected so powerfully to influence for good, the aspirants to the office of the ministry as a conviction that it was the fervent prayer of the whole Church that God would give its pastors according to his own heart. The ministers of religion spring from yourselves, they are trained up in your own families, and they naturally partake of your own spirit. You cannot reasonably expect them, therefore, to be zealous and self-sacrificing, while you yourselves are apathetic and selfish. As well might you expect from a field sown with the same quality of seed, of the same richness of soil, and treated in all respects in precisely the same manner, a certain proportion of ears full and good, while the crop around them should be withered and thin and blasted with the east wind. If you would have pious and devoted ministers therefore, let them see, while they are yet in the tenderness of youth and members of your families, a bright example of piety and self-sacrificing devotedness in your own walk and conversation. But the effectual fervent prayers of righteous men avail much, and besides what shall be effected by the force of your example, you may confidently expect, if you offer up such prayers on behalf of the Church, that a blessing from on high will be added, which shall give you workmen in the offices of the ministry—men that need not be ashamed, because "rightly dividing the word of truth." Only let us bear in mind that there can be no effectual fervent prayer if we fail to act in the spirit of our prayers. How should the man who refuses to glorify God with his substance, by shutting up his bowels of compassion from his perishing fellow-men, presume to think that his prayers would be otherwise answered than with indignation and scorn? To obtain the increase of heaven, we must act as well as pray. The husbandman who would secure a plentiful harvest, must apply himself with diligence to the labours of spring. If I may presume, then, that you are willing to engage with your whole heart and soul in the work of reclaiming the waste places of the land, it only remains that we consider by what means this work may be most successfully prosecuted. The plan at first followed by our committee was, to provide a central fund of such an amount as should enable us to make grants in aid of the erection of new parishes, to the extent of from one-fourth to one-third of the endowment capital required. We cherished the hope that, encouraged by such grants, the proprietors or other wealthy individuals would come forward, in the several chapel localities,

and supply to the congregations the further aid that might be requisite for accomplishing the object in view. Our hopes have not been disappointed. Within the last few years, forty new parishes have been erected on the plan which I have now briefly explained—our committee giving from one-fourth to one-third of the requisite endowment capital, the balance being made up in each case by parties connected with the locality. In the case of one or two additional chapels the erection of which into parish churches, has not yet been completed, the required amount of endowment capital has been provided. Four out of the forty parishes that have been erected are within the bounds of the Synod of Aberdeen, viz Enzie, Savoch Deer, and New Pitsligo, to which munificent subscriptions were made by your Grace, the Earl of Aberdeen, and Sir John Forbes of Pitsligo, and Portlethen, to the endowment of which various smaller heritors contributed with much liberality. It was found, however, that for many chapels—the erection of which into parish churches, was most desirable—the large proportion of three-fourths, or even two-thirds of the capital required for endowment, could not be raised in the locality. If the committee then were to proceed with their task, it was necessary that they should find means of providing a larger proportion of the requisite funds ab extra. It was felt too that it was unfair, for an object of general interest, to throw almost the sole burden on the proprietors and other persons of substance connected with chapel localities. It seemed right that for the common good, in which the inhabitants of all parts of the country had an interest proportionate to their means, the burden should be as widely and equally diffused as possible. These considerations led the committee to adopt what has been called the provincial plan of subscriptions. They found omitting the chapel or royal bounty stations in Argyllshire, and the western and northern isles which it was hoped might be provided for by the royal bounty 150 chapels or royal bounty stations still remain to be endowed, in addition to the 40 chapels already erected into parish churches. These 150 places of worship were divided into 5 nearly equal groups, according to their several localities, each group containing from 28 to 30 or 31 chapels or places of worship. As some of the chapels are less important than others, it was thought that the object of the committee would be accomplished for the present, if endowments were provided for 20 out of each group. The success with which the provincial plan of subscription has been already prosecuted affords, it is conceived, a sure ground of hope that a triumphant issue will soon be obtained. For each of the first 20 chapels that shall be endowed in group first, upwards of £700 have been subscribed, or from £14,000 to £15,000 in all; in group second about £500, or in all £10,000; in group third about £1100, or a gross sum of £22,000, and in group fourth much the same sum as in group second. As regards these four groups, if subscriptions shall be made by the parishes that have not yet reported on nearly the same scale with those already intimated, there cannot be a doubt that the sum required will be completed with probably a considerable surplus. I cherish a sanguine hope indeed, that we shall be able to report to next General Assembly the accomplishment of this part of our task, or a gross subscription for the group above named of £160,000, or £2000, for each of 80 chapels. If we have not made the same progress in the case of group 5, it is not that our efforts have failed in respect of it, but that it is only now

that we have been able to bring them to bear on it. I feel assured my Lord Duke, that the munificent example of liberality which you have been pleased to set before the friends of the church in the north will not be lost upon them, and that example, has but to be zealously followed to insure triumphant success.

I cannot bring these remarks to a conclusion, my Lord Duke, without adverting in two or three sentences to the very peculiar responsibilities under which we are laid to exert ourselves in the cause we have now been considering, to the utmost of our strength. How can we hope if we fail in this work of God and our fellow-citizens, to have continued to us the inestimably precious privileges that we now enjoy? Where, if we look around us in the world or back upon the records of the past, the people to be found, or did the people exist, that has been blessed as we have been blessed of the Lord our God? Did we obtain for ourselves the privileges we now enjoy? Is it not, on the contrary, clear as day, from the history of our country, and but lately set forth in terms of the most impressive eloquence, the pages of a still living historian, that we owe to God alone the admirable order of things amidst which our lot has been cast? The great temple of our civil and religious liberties, the work of many ages, can never be regarded by us as a work of human forethought. But for many unforeseen interpositions of Divine Providence, some of them bitter for the time though they have since been of happiest consequence, its erection was obviously impossible. And what do we not owe to our possession of this sacred structure? It has been to us, I desire to speak with reverence, nothing less than the oracle of God. We have been taught in utterances, which we have heard within its sacred precincts, to convert into sources of strength and blessing literally all by which we are surrounded. Our climate has thus been made to develop the human frame in the highest state of perfection that it has ever reached; the ocean around us has been raised up into an impenetrable girdling wall to defend us from foreign aggression—our soil has been made to produce by handfuls—and the very bowels of the earth have been constrained to disclose to us their hidden treasures. By means of these treasures, of which we have learned from the same source the right application our commerce is borne on the bosom of every sea on the globe independently of wind and tide. Our country is netted with rods of iron, supplying facilities for travelling and traffic, such as no generation preceding us ever so much as dreamed of, and we have been enabled to make the lightning of heaven itself the means of conveying intelligence from one end of the earth to the other, I may say, in a single moment of time. And the crowning blessing of all is—a blessing, too, which is peculiarly ours—that every advantage we enjoy is possessed by us under the sanction of a well-regulated, and, at the same time, elevating liberty—a liberty which both maintains perfect order, and the necessary subordination of the members to the head, and yet holds forth every possible encouragement to independent manly exertion. Surely, my Lord Duke, all these blessings were not bestowed upon us merely that we should accumulate wealth, and increase in only material greatness, and still less could they have been bestowed upon us that we should make riches our idol, and set up on the banks of the Thames, of the Mersey, and of the Clyde, golden images to prostrate ourselves before them. Thus abused, it is impossible in the very nature of things, that our privileges should be continued with us.