

of the progress of the church at large and the condition of other congregations. These are our spiritual misers and niggards. There are still others that have to struggle hard for a precarious existence. They feel barely able to pay their ministers, but they try, and, with a little aid from the church, they succeed. The most unsatisfactory position of all is occupied by congregations that are large and wealthy, and yet are so thoughtless, so mean-spirited, so unchristian as to leave their ministers to suffer want, while but little is done for any of the schemes of the church.

While some weak congregations have done and are doing their part faithfully and well, we believe that few if any now receiving aid from the funds of the church but could do without it were every man to live up to the Apostolic rule and give in proportion to his means. While this is admitted, yet we have no hesitation in affirming that in general our weak congregations are far more liberal and make much greater sacrifices than our wealthier congregations.

The apostolic injunction was, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." The early Christians would not for a moment imagine that when they had supported their own teachers they had discharged their whole duty. The whole body was bound together by the mighty bands of Christlike love. It should be so with us.—This congregation is morally bound to help other congregations: other congregations are bound to reciprocate. The church as a whole is under obligation to every part; and every part is bound to regard the interests of the whole.

Dr. Hodge, (the greatest Theologian on this side the Atlantic, if not the greatest now living) says that the ordinary mode of supporting ministers in America "is radically wrong in principle, contrary to all Divine appointments and to the usage of the church in all ages except our own. Our whole theory of ministerial support is founded on a denial of the unity of the church. It resolves itself into congregationalism. The minister is the servant of the congregation and they only are bound to support him.—Against this system we have written and

protested for years; and some of the best men of our church have argued and laboured to subvert it; but to no purpose. In this, as in so many other points, Presbyterianism has been congregationalized (i. e., adulterated and weakened by the introduction of the principles of Independency) in this country (the United States) to such a degree that the public mind has become fixed.—The people are set in their present way of thinking. They will acknowledge that they are bound to support their own minister, but what have they to do with supporting the ministers of other congregations?" Dr. Hodge adds:—"Let the brethren, clerical and lay, think of these things. viz., 1. The obligation to support the ministry so far as it rests on the law of Christ, *that those who preach the Gospel shall live by the gospel*; or, on the general principle of moral and religious duty, binds the whole church and the church as a whole. 2. Under the old dispensation, the obligation to sustain the temple, its services, and the priesthood rested on the whole people. It was a lien on the property of the whole land. 3. The same principle has been the general law of Christendom. 4. Throwing the support of the clergy on the particular congregations to which they minister, is very much an Americanism. It is one of the new principles which have sprung up among us, some of which are good and some evil. 5. It works great injustice to the people. *It imposes on the few and the poor the same burden which in other places rests on the many and the rich.*—6. It works grievous injustice to the ministry. Hundreds of them are labouring on a salary which does not afford them even the necessities of life to say nothing of its comforts."

Sentiments such as these from such a quarter are worthy of careful consideration. We are glad to say that to some extent our church has been acting on the Scripture rule. About one-third of our settled charges have been, or are now, receiving assistance from the stronger congregations. Hitherto the Home Mission Board has had the disbursement of the aid granted to weak congregations. A change in this arrangement is inevitable and will probably be brought about