

circular or otherwise respecting the advancement made.

III. That the Synod recommend to Sessions and Boards of Managers the extensive circulation of tracts and other literature bearing upon the subject throughout our congregations.

Exercising the authority conferred upon us we would again address you briefly upon the subject entrusted to our charge, in the line indicated by the Synod.

Besides those recorded above there are three Synodical recommendations of which it is necessary to remind you. These are:

First: That all persons under the oversight of the Synod should adopt immediately the practice of weekly storing in proportion to means and income.

Secondly: That where necessary to the accomplishment of this object, Sessions should form congregational associations for the purpose of exciting and deepening an interest in the subject.

Thirdly: That all ministers should earnestly and faithfully preach upon this important subject.

The principles underlying the Scriptural doctrine respecting Systematic Beneficence which we are required to reiterate, are few and simple. They are all either implied or directly stated in that precept addressed not only "to the Church of God which is at Corinth," but also to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." They may be briefly stated as devotion, system, universality and proportion—devotion, because Scriptural Christian Beneficence is worship, prescribed by God, rendered by grateful loving hearts, and practised for the most part on those occasions set apart for sacred service; system, because it requires for the performance of the duty set times, frequently recurring, the first day of every week—universality, because it is binding upon all who hear the gospel, "Let EVERY ONE OF you lay by him in store,"—and proportion, because it determines the amount to be appropriated, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

To point out the progress which has recently been made throughout our own Church in the adoption of these principles, and of the practice which is founded upon them, is an easy and very pleasant task. We do not indeed undertake to indicate the number of those who have been induced to adopt the system in its essence by making their weekly appropriations, and casting them into the Treasury of the Lord in their own homes; but in reference to the public action of a considerable number of our congregations we have been furnished with de-

finite information which has greatly cheered our hearts and strengthened our hands. When we addressed you last year, only three congregations had adopted the practice of weekly collections for any purpose beyond the defraying of more incidental expenses. Since that time nine have been added to the number, some of them situated in cities, towns and villages, but others in strictly rural districts. At the present time there are no fewer than twelve of our congregations which are wholly dependent upon their weekly collections, for the support of gospel ordinances within their own bounds. Besides these there are some others, sections of which have accepted the Synod's recommendations for the raising of all the funds required, either for strictly congregational purposes, or for the support of the general schemes of the Church, and it is a most interesting fact that every congregation, whether located in town or country, which has tried the experiment which we are urging, is so far, well satisfied and in some instances the results achieved have been most encouraging.

In obeying, therefore, the instructions of Synod to urge you to continued and increased efforts in carrying on the work, so happily inaugurated, as rapidly and effectively as possible, we appeal to you under the animating influence of confidence and hope. We are so fully convinced of the stability of the foundation on which our plan of systematic beneficence rests; we have found it so generally commend itself to thoughtful men who have fairly considered its advantages; we have observed with so much satisfaction its beneficial influence in relieving some congregations from their financial embarrassments, and we find it gaining favor so rapidly, not merely in our own Church, but also in others, that, with the utmost earnestness we press upon every individual whom our words may reach, the speedy adoption of the practice of proportionate weekly storing, and upon every congregation the cordial acceptance of the recommendations of Synod.

Brethren, let the current year be marked by a still greater advance than the past. Let those congregations which have made the desired change carry on the work with increasing energy and zeal that they stimulate others to imitate their example. Let those which have hitherto shrunk from the adoption of the proposed system, be persuaded to try the experiment. Let all our elders, deacons and managers endeavour to master the principles involved in the Scripture measure and method of Christian giving. Let them discuss them freely with the people. Let them endeavour to circulate widely throughout their respective congregations, books and tracts bearing upon the question, such as "Gold and the Gospel,"