

ever atone for. A great many defects will be overlooked when there is manifestly a warm heart ; but a church that is only " fair as the moon," without being also " clear as the sun," will never be " terrible as an army with banners." May not the feebleness of this social and religious bond account, in some measure, for our failure to lay hold of the loose and floating elements of the population, as well as for the unpleasant facility with which some of our people fly off when some trifling disagreement arises, and attach themselves to churches of other denominations ?

3. We need a better and more efficient administration of church finances. We have great sympathy for deacons. Their office is a very thankless one. Mr. Spurgeon has somewhat spitefully insinuated that they are very sensitive, and that any interference with them in the discharge of their diaconal functions is rather a delicate operation. We have never found them so, however, and we are quite sure that they will bear with us, therefore, when we say that in many of the churches there is undoubtedly room for improvement in their financial management. The pastor's salary is often miserably small ; often is not paid till the end of the year ; and is sometimes a long way in arrears even then.

This is not so much the fault of the deacons, perhaps, as of the system which is generally pursued. Collecting money for almost any object is at best an irksome task, and it is frequently made more irksome still by the ill-concealed reluctance with which subscriptions are paid. But when it is remembered that the deacons have first to go round to secure pledges to a certain amount, and then go round again, no one knows how often to collect it ; and that this wearisome task has to be repeated year after year, with no earthly recompense but black looks and cross words, (for nobody ever yet thought of *thanking* a deacon for coming for his subscription), it is not to be wondered at that they don't always go to their work very cheerfully !

But is there not a better way ? Ought not those who profess to reproduce, as nearly as possible, the Church polity of the New Testament to try also to do the same thing in regard to Church finance ? Deacons were never meant to be ecclesiastical publicans. Where do we read, either in the Old Testament or the New, of such an annual tax-gathering as takes place in most of our Churches in the present day ? No ! the duty of the Church is to " lay by them in store, upon the first day of the week," that of the deacons is to *receive* and *disburse* their offerings ; and to expect them to collect the amount required for the support of gospel ordinances is to impose upon them an additional burden which only stern necessity ought to make them willing to bear. The other plan works well all round. It is much easier to pay the fifty-second part of a subscription every Sabbath than the whole of it in one sum at the end of the year. What is given easily will generally be given cheerfully. Cheerful giving will tend to liberality. And thus the Church