

III.—THE BREAKING OF THIS COMMANDMENT.

This is admitted, confessed to, by Christian people, that the support of these workers is a just due, enjoined by the Lord, earned by hard, exhausting and invaluable service; yet their hire is kept back in part; as a general thing, they are not at all adequately paid; the average of pay is decidedly below a proper standard of compensation. This I may safely assume; no Christian mind will question it. There is no time to array facts in confirmation of this. They abound; are everywhere: they are humiliating; are positively disgraceful to our Christianaity.

In some instances, this inadequate support arises from the *inability* of the people to do more. These discharge themselves from blame by doing what they can; *all* that they can. In other instances, and these probably the more common, the inadequate compensation for service grows out of *a prevalent low estimate of the value of the service*. It is service in the department of religion, which, as many conceive, if not wholly without cost, is proximately so. And men of this way of judging justify themselves in crowding all estimates in the direction of a cipher. The very economical argument is—The Master opened by giving himself. And then his salvation is put without price. And the men sent to dispense it are supposed to be above all self-seeking; bound to be mortified in all their desires; the whole living they aspire to is simply a partial deliverance from starvation. There is here furnished to the people a promising field for cheapening; and the minister's work is sometimes cheapened with a vengeance. If it were some other branch of service; stood in some likely or prolific connection with increase; had to do with hoarding money, rather than garnering souls; the standard of compensation and expenditure would be set higher at once; a larger price proffered and paid, because greater *value* is assigned to the service.

All the causes of depressed pay we cannot run over or even hint. *This low appreciation of the things of God* may be clearly set down as prominent among them. That there is ever downright *fraud*, the hire of *these labourers* kept back of fraud, we like not to think; we recoil from making so grave a charge: yet the eye that sees through all *may* see even this. We choose the rather to assume that the people do not consider; and that they will do better when they perceive the obligation in its true light,—will be disposed to do what is equitable and just, when they see what that is.

IV.—WHAT IS A SUPPORT FOR A MINISTER?

And what is it? What is the just measure of a minister's compensation or support?

This is a quantity we can state in no fixed formula of figures. It is a variable quantity; changes with times, circumstances, places. It is not pay for his work, as men in other callings are paid. It is not of course the highest pay his measure of talent is capable of commanding,—not the most liberal pay he may win by consenting to be the tool of competing churches, and swayed by their bids on his coveted gifts. He degrades the office, shows himself not worthy of the office, if he consents to forsake a place where God has put him; where he is largely useful; where generous hearts surround him, are ready to give him, actually *do give* him, all he needs; and attempts the perilous grade that promises to take him higher in the scale of emolument or notability.