

custom than as the performance of a solemn duty, and the exercise of a sacred privilege. Some congregations have recourse to half-yearly or yearly subscriptions to meet expenditure, or to make up deficiencies. This is a most irritating, disheartening, and hurtful practice. Why not do it weekly? If an individual knows that he will have to give £2 or £3 of a subscription yearly, would it not be more simple, and scriptural, to give an *additional shilling* weekly? and would not his liberality in this way be more beneficial to the church, and comfortable to himself? Besides, there would be then no keeping back of the stipend *weeks and months after it is due*, a practice by which in many congregations an inadequate stipend is rendered less valuable, and the annoyance of the minister greatly increased.

All should give proportionately. Proportionate giving is the solemn duty of every individual; and proportionate giving among the members of each congregation according to their respective means, is as truly a righteous and incumbent duty. But such is not the present practice. The very reverse is the fact. The poor give in proportion the most; the rich, least.

This is the most important, but the most neglected duty connected with the support of gospel ordinances. But we forbear to enter upon its consideration, seeing it will form the subject of a future paper. We only remark that it is the sheet anchor of our hope; and were it practised, we feel assured of complete success.

111. *Firm confidence in the goodness of our cause.*—It has often been remarked, that no one had ever occasion to rue his liberality in religious matters; for to every duty is annexed a promise, even to the giving of a cup of cold water. And though the acting out of proportionate liberality involve considerable additional giving, it is on the part of those who can well afford it; and even had it called for sacrifices instead of proportionate subscription, they would scarcely have reason to complain, having voluntarily subscribed to the ancient and unalterable test of christian membership,—"Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple;" and having professed their acquiescence in the truth of the saying,—"It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and having taken on them the name of "Him who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." Our religion requires in

us self-denial as an essential grace, and at the same time FAITH in our Lord's declaration,—that we will get an hundred fold for all that we give up for God. Were this believed, would there be any difficulty in sparing the sum required? Were a banker on earth, on whose stability reliance could be placed, to offer such a per centage, would not each member have a much larger sum in his hands than he is required to give as his proportion to the church? And is God's credit worse than the richest banker's on earth? It is want of faith in the Almighty's stability, in the faithfulness of the God of Truth, that lies at the root of all our parsimonious giving. If we trusted him as much as we do the wealthy of the land, there would be no difficulty in raising funds to any extent for religious purposes, and soon there would be no complaining of poverty. That scripture would be fulfilled,—"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst forth with new wine."

We must now draw this paper to a close. We have seen what should be the minimum, and how it should be raised. One remark remains. It is suggested by the heading of this article,—"The minimum to be aimed at." It would never do to enforce it by Synodical authority, and it would be vain to expect our congregations to come up to it all at once. They must be enlightened, and exhorted on the subject, and the great majority will gradually, and we hope rapidly, attain it. In the case of some it could never, perhaps, be expected; but if the comparatively strong would first do their duty to themselves, they would next do generously to their weak brethren. If once it were generally seen that it is absolutely necessary for a minister to have £150 before he can live with much comfort, or discharge his duty with full efficiency, there would not long be any stipend in the United Presbyterian Church, under that sum.

We know what great things the church has done for missions, and we fear not she will yet do great things for her pastors. And be it remembered that every approximation to the minimum of £150 will confer great benefit on the ministers. £120 or £130 will be reckoned a great boon in comparison with £100. Let individuals and congregations, then, immediately bestir themselves and commence the good work. Let no member longer defer to