

schemes of the Church, and a considerable number the ministers of which speak very hopefully of its speedy adoption. One thing is very noticeable. While the Committee have had expressions of doubt and fear as to the working of the proposed system from those who have not attempted it, every congregation which has adopted it, whether located in town or country, is pleased, and the results so far have been invariably satisfactory—in some cases most encouraging. From returns received we learn that it is known that in 13 of our congregations some of the office-bearers, members and adherents are laying by them in store from week to week for religious and benevolent purposes, and that in few others most of them are following the same course. Only 3 congregations have formed Associations, but it must be remembered that these are in addition to those who by adopting the general principle at once felt that associations were unnecessary.

Thirty-five of the ministers heard from have, since it was issued, attended to the injunction "to endeavour to elevate the standard of Christian beneficence by faithful Scripture teaching on the subject."

Upon the whole your Committee feel much encouraged by the progress which has been made; and as they have every confidence that the system will be found to work satisfactorily where it is fairly tried, they believe that every year additional congregations will adopt it, and that in a short time even those which are now most timorous may find their fears rebuked by the success with which God crowns the adoption in its purity and simplicity of His own appointed method.

SUGGESTIONS.

The Committee are well aware that there are difficulties to be contended with, and they have considered with sympathy and respect those which have been suggested by the brethren in their answers to their Circular. One of these which many of our people feel is the fact that their receipts are mostly limited to one or two seasons of the year. In order to obviate this difficulty as far as possible the Committee would make this suggestion: let persons make their appropriations from week to week in the measure prompted by gratitude and love regulated by their ability; let them keep a memorandum of the same; let them, when they do receive their income, or a part of it, put the aggregate amount at once into the Treasury of the Lord, and thus, as in the payment of any other honest debt, fulfil the obligations under which they have come, and so, "honour the Lord with their substance and with the first fruits of all their increase."

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Another difficulty which seems to be still more widely felt, and one which by implication at least involves the last, is that while the system may be very suitable for congregations in cities, towns, and villages, it is not at all adapted to those in the country. The committee submit that it ought to be a sufficient answer to this objection that the inspired Apostle in urging it enjoined it not only upon the Christians and congregations of wealthy Corinth, but also as we learn from the inscription with which he begins his epistle, 'upon all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.' But as if to render doubt and fear utterly inexcusable, the facts reported by our own country congregations which have tried it, demonstrate, so far as such a short trial possibly can, its superior excellence. In every instance the report is most favourable. One brother, whose congregation is strictly rural, says, "We collect stipend by voluntary contributions received in the plate at the door of the church. We commenced that method three months ago, and have since obtained a considerable more than the quarter's salary. In the corresponding months of 1870 we received only about \$50, so that what we have done is not only encouraging to ourselves, but also a proof of the beneficial results to be obtained by the system."

Another tells us that as the result of the old system during the pastorate of a very few years, arrears had accumulated to some hundreds of dollars; that soon after the last meeting of Synod subscription papers were abolished, and the method recommended adopted in all its simplicity, and that not only has there been no increase of arrears, but the congregation have paid their minister for the time which has since elapsed more than they had promised. One fact reported in both these cases is exceedingly suggestive, and worthy of the attention of every member of Synod. Both these brethren inaugurated the movement in their congregations by a series of sermons in which they discussed the subject fully, and commended it to the adoption of the people.

One further reference and we are done. By the dispensations of God's providence we have been impressively reminded that what we wish to do in this as in every other matter we should do promptly and earnestly. One of the members of your committee—the one, indeed, who felt the deepest interest in the subject entrusted to us—has been suddenly stricken down at our side. We refer to the late Roderick McGregor Esq., of New Glasgow. We believe that it was largely owing to his advocacy that the practice which we are recommending was introduced into the congregation which