

importance of securing more adequate support for the ministry in these congregations. To give that support was felt to be the Church's duty. To provide it much more liberally than in many cases it had hitherto been given, was seen to be intimately connected with the reputation and the progress of the denomination. A conviction was thus produced that some energetic and united action should be taken, to impress on the members of the Church at large their obligations in reference to the support of the gospel ministry; to show them that it is the Christian privilege, not less than it is the Christian duty, of the congregations which are strong in numbers and resources to render seasonable and necessary aid to those which are weak; and to stimulate them to that earnest and generous discharge of duty in this respect, which, while on the part of the weaker congregations who might receive assistance it should abound 'by making thanksgivings unto God,' would also secure for those who were constrained by the promptings of Christian love to impart the needed aid, the greater blessing of which the Lord Jesus spoke when He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Various considerations tended to deepen this conviction, and to carry it forth into action. An extending commerce was, by the increasing diffusion of wealth, enlarging the general ideas of comfort, and occasioning increased expenditure among all classes; so that those who reflected on the subject could not fail to perceive that, if the incomes of ministers remained nominally the same, the inadequacy of ministerial support must be increasingly experienced. The negotiations for union with other Presbyterian denominations, into which the Synod had entered, also tended to the same result. If they did not reveal the fact, they at least brought it out into clearer light, that while in the United Presbyterian Church the spirit of independence and self-reliance had been more successfully cultivated in the weaker congregations, and was more fully manifested among them than in similar societies in some other denominations, the spirit of brotherly consideration and generous aid towards these weaker charges had been much less developed, than it was in some sister Churches, in those congregations whose membership was more numerous and influential. The inquiries which these negotiations originated clearly showed that, if in regard to the efforts and the sacrifices of weaker congregations to maintain ordinances among themselves, there was something to which the United Presbyterian Church might point as worthy of praise and imitation, and which it behoved that Church to foster and preserve,

there was, at the same time, not a little in regard to the large-hearted generosity of Christian congregations towards those who were weaker than themselves in pecuniary resources, in which that Church came behind some other Churches, and had need to be provoked by their example to larger and more liberal manifestations of love and of good works.

In the *Missionary Record* for January, 1866, the subject of stipend augmentation, the importance and urgency of which had in various ways been increasingly apparent to the minds of many earnest friends of the denomination, was brought directly under the attention of the Church. This was done in the belief that the time for united action had fully come, and in the hope that the call for increased liberality for the support of the gospel ministry would be cheerfully responded to by all the Church, and especially by those congregations on which, from their greater numbers and resources, the movement contemplated would necessarily be most dependent for its success. Nor was this expectation falsified by the event. The duty was pressed on the attention of the Synod when it assembled in May, 1866, as one which must be performed, and in the performance of which promptitude and energy were demanded alike for the honour and the safety of the Church. A Committee on Stipends was consequently appointed, and in conjunction with it the Home Committee earnestly applied themselves to mature, and carry into practical effect, a scheme of operations, by which local efforts for the better support of the ministry might receive a healthy stimulus, while these efforts should also be adequately assisted by liberal aid from a central fund, to be placed at the disposal of the Church by the generous contributions of its more influential congregations. The appeals issued by these joint committees met with a liberal response from many districts of the Church. Without any diminution of other funds connected with the home department of the Synod's operations, the sum of £5274 was contributed, chiefly, but not exclusively, by a few congregations, for stipend augmentation; and after careful consideration of the claims of the congregations requiring aid, the aggregate Committee were enabled to recommend, in most of the cases submitted to them, an increased scale of supplement, under which the first half-yearly payments were made in April last, and by which a very large proportion of those stipends in the Church which had previously been under £150 per annum, were at once raised to that *minimum* standard for the year commencing on the 1st April, 1868.