

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

REASONS WHY THE GOSPEL MINISTRY SHOULD BE LIBERALLY SUSTAINED.

(Concluded.)

(9.) The health of ministers often suffers through anxiety about their pecuniary affairs, and in consequence their minds are unfitted for labour, and their public ministrations are rendered less effective and acceptable. A writer in the "Free Church Record" says: "Look at the man as we have seen him, oppressed with worldly cares, and crushed it may be by obligations, perhaps by anxieties about bread, professions, and an education for his children. Is this the man whom you expect to appear in the pulpit with calm mien, and with no other burden on his breast, but the care of souls; and no other anxiety but how he should speak in God's name, so as best to win immortal souls to the cross of Christ? If there be a profession, which above all others, requires freedom from worldly distractions, so far as immunity can be obtained from them in this world—it is just the profession of the ministry, and if this do not be secured, it will so far tell upon the services of the minister; his spirit will be weighed down—his brain will become wearied and worn out, and his heart will be broken—his sermons will either be insipid, or else they will have only a freshness caught from his own peculiar experience, and not adapted to the circumstances and wants of the people. The pulpit work becomes deteriorated—the acceptability of the minister, and the hold which he has of the affections of his charge, weakened." The number of those who have been thus crushed, and their usefulness destroyed, will be known only at the great day of accounts. The people thus bring on themselves the guilt of hindering, instead of aiding the usefulness of those who have dedicated themselves to the service of Christ, and expose themselves to the displeasure of Him who has said: "For as much as ye did it not to these, ye did it not to me." A writer in "Hall's Journal of Health," under the caption, "Clerical Health," describes the Rev. Henry Melville, of London, as a stout healthy old man, who is still able to write out his sermons in full, every week, besides Tuesday evening lectures, 277 of which he has published in six years. Besides, he is chaplain to the Queen; etc. These offices involve a large amount of labour, and yield a large income. The writer says—"this is the secret of a healthy and hard-working and enduring old age;" to be employed in a work which is our meat and drink, with a handsome compensation for the same.

Thus the worker is relieved of all care, all solicitude, of that heart-shrivelling, brain-wasting, and soul-destroying anxiety, which attends a high and honorable sense of pecuniary obligation.

A minister in debt, or stinted for means to supply his daily necessities, labours with a mountain weight upon him; and no wonder that many of them sink into invalidism, if not into an early grave. "He studied too hard" is the verdict of the people. He died of want is the verdict of truth,—want of that liberal and sufficient support which would have enabled him to labour with a cheerful heart, and a singleness of purpose, which are essential to high success in any calling. "It is a burning shame, and a living disgrace to Church members of all denominations, that such a niggardly provision is made for those learned, talented, and self-denying men, who are the salt of the earth, and without whose personal labours, in introducing the people into the knowledge of social, domestic, and civil duties—duties to each other, and duties to the state as founded on Bible principles, this government of ours would go to pieces within five years." Thus leading writers both in England and America testify to the necessity of a liberal provision for ministers, in order to health and continued efficiency.

(10.) The minister should be able to dress and educate his children, in accordance with the station in society to which, by virtue of his office, he belongs. This he is generally unable to do unless kind friends come to his aid by their gifts and thoughtful bounty, which however proper in itself—or kind in them—is yet painful to the honourable mind, feeling as it does, "that the labourer is worthy of his reward," and they who minister at the altar, should live of the altar; and should like other men be enabled to provide for their own, "specially those of their own households,"

without being burdensome to their relatives for the means of doing it. It is exceedingly dishonorable for congregations to take the services of ministers and permit others to support them, or to supply the place of that which is a debt justly due by the people to their minister. Let fathers and mothers ask themselves if they had sons in the ministry how they would wish them to be treated by others; and then let them go and act thus towards their own minister.

(11.) Ministers are often compelled to give indirectly from \$100 to \$400 to the cause of God, by not receiving what is justly their due as salary, besides what they give directly by subscriptions to various religious or charitable objects, more than most if not any of the people. Indeed, in many cases, the salary received is much less than the expenses of the minister; and thus each may be regarded as having contributed to the support of the gospel in his own congregation not less than \$100, or it may be \$200 or \$400 a year. It may be that they do not grudge their contributions, because they are willing to spend and be spent in the service of their Master. Still it is not the less true that they have been wronged out of the third or fourth of their legitimate claims by those who profess to respect the will of the Lord.—(1 Cor. ix. 14, 17; Gal. vi. 6, 10.)

(12.) An educated ministry, such as the age requires, and such as our people desire, cannot be maintained properly; so that they can efficiently discharge the duties of their office, and provide for their families with less than \$800 in a country place, \$1,000 to \$1,200 in a town, and \$1,600 to \$2,000 or more in a city. Where the people provide firewood, feed for the horse and cow and other perquisites as they do in some country places, it is a great help.

(13.) Lastly, liberality in supporting the cause of God is a means of grace. Growth in grace is most intimately connected with respect for the divine authority and obedience to the divine will. If professing Christians treat this command of Christ with indifference and neglect, the duty of grateful liberality towards them that minister to them in holy things—they need not expect the smiles of the divine countenance, or the refreshing and quickening showers of grace to descend upon their souls. God will send spiritual leanness upon those who fail in this matter, or it may be while others are converted, edified or refreshed by the ministrations of the sanctuary, they will find them dead services. They will remain dry like Gideon's fleece, while the dew may lie all around, and will go away wondering why they experienced no token of the divine presence, and received no benefit; most likely laying the blame upon the injured minister.—Isaiah iii. 2, 8; Mal. iii. 10, 12; Matt. xxiv. 41; 2 Cor. ix. 5, 8, and 12, 14; Phil. iv. 19; Heb. vi. 10.

The result of a parsimonious spirit is set forth by the Apostles Paul and James—1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. vi. 9, 10; James v. 1, 3. While the liberal soul shall be made fat—he that soweth sparingly in this matter, shall reap sparingly of the divine blessing.

From the earliest ages the people of God devoted at least the tenth of their yearly income to the service of the Lord, and the Israelites in their best times gave about one-fourth. And though no precise rate is named in the New Testament, the same general principles are laid down. God now rests the duty on the compulsion of love—He confides in the sense of justice and grateful generosity which the gospel awakens in the hearts of His people, and not in vain, as the history of the Christian Church at various periods proves. Thus when the love of Christ exercised its proper influence over the first Christians, they manifested it by cheerful liberality.—Acts ii. 4. And for centuries while the spirit of devotedness to Christ prevailed, there was an overflowing treasury at the disposal of the office-bearers of the Church. The same spirit of liberality showed itself again at the Reformation, and during every period of revival in the Church, a free open-handed spirit of liberality invariably characterizes Christians. Wherever love to Christ is really felt it will show itself by liberality in supporting his cause. This is one of the best tests of love. It shows how much we value the Gospel and love the Saviour. It cannot be that Christ requires less under the new dispensation than the old. If Christians may lawfully devote less than a tenth of their income to the service of God, then Christianity has lowered the standard of a virtue or grace in which St. Paul enjoins upon Christians to "abound." The principle laid down by our Lord "is freely ye have received, freely give;" freely ye have received from

Christ pardon, and salvation, and inestimable privileges, civil and religious liberty—you have comforts—the peace and security that attend Christianity, you have present happiness and look for future prosperity. Show then your gratitude to Christ, by contributing freely of the substance which He has given you to the support of his cause.—1 Pet. iv. 10. And the rule or proportion of giving is "according as God had prospered him." Hence, all should give according to their means, and not every one, rich or poor alike, as some think should be done. If the rich man gives 1-40 or 1-80 of his income, and the poor widow gives 1-10, while he could better spare the fifth than she the tenth, he need not expect to be accepted in his deed. The scriptural plan of giving is, to lay aside first for God, a just proportion of our income—1 Cor. xvi. 2; 2 Cor. 8; and at least one-tenth, and hold it sacred as dedicated to religious and charitable objects. The scriptural plan is to pay "the first fruits" or God's share in advance—Levit. xxiii. 14; and if this scriptural principle were acted on, there would be no difficulty in obtaining the necessary amount. But it is too much the custom to place that last which God has placed first, and to put Him off with any payments that are left after we have served ourselves and the world. If all Christians would act upon these scriptural principles, there would be an overflowing treasury in all our churches, not only for the supporting of ministers, but for all religious societies, at home and abroad. All Christians should remember that this duty has a close connection with the manifestation of the divine glory—the advancement of His truth and the blessing of mankind. Amid the crash of a commercial crisis, such as has visited our land—others may break down, but as for the liberal soul who deviseth liberal things, the promise is that "by liberal things shall he stand;" and this is often verified according to the observation of many.

We must endeavour "to get the body of the people leavened with a more large-minded and large-hearted spirit, to bring up the tide of public feeling to the standard of public necessity." The first step is to secure faithfulness on the part of office-bearers, in attending to their duty. They should set an example of liberality to the people, instead of keeping back their liberality by their penuriousness. In this they are bound to be examples to the flock by the obligations of their office. PRESBYTERIAN.

COLLEGE TRUSTEES.

MR. EDITOR,—It must be gratifying to the friends of Queen's College to witness the success of the effort now being made for its more complete equipment, and it is to be hoped that the work will be carried on to a triumphant termination. No doubt there are differences of opinion in the Church on the subject, but as the Church had nothing to do or say in originating the scheme, and has no voice apparently in the application of the money, has in short, only to contribute as much of it as she can, the wise course is doubtless for all to acquiesce peaceably in whatever may be done, and rejoice heartily in whatever success is achieved in so laudable an enterprise.

But the Church may properly feel more interested in the teaching of her students, and no doubt the announcement in a recent issue of your paper, as to the lecturers appointed for the present session at Queen's Theological Hall, was read with much interest by many. The Trustees have no doubt done wisely and well in the circumstances.

But the question will arise with many, Has the Church through her courts any power to say who is to teach her students, or may the Trustees appoint any one they please to that work? May the Trustees in our colleges select for that important duty any one they choose by their own inherent authority? Is there any limit to their power in the premises? Or must the Church gratefully accept whoever they may appoint?

This is an important question altogether apart from the present arrangement referred to. Because very frequently circumstances may arise in which the regular staff may have to go off and collect money, or from some other cause may require assistance, and in such cases have the Trustees the matter wholly in their own hands?

It would be interesting to many in the Church to know a little more on this point, and perhaps you can enlighten them. Probably the Church would appoint every one of these lecturers to a chair in theology if