

ising. Its increase has been very considerable during the past few years. The congregational machinery is in an efficient state. The various agencies employed by modern congregations are adopted and used systematically. If there was any ground of blame or complaint in reference to the doings of this congregation, it was in the matter of liberality towards the support of Gospel ordinances. The increase in the giving is by no means in proportion to the increase of the families and members who have connected themselves within the last half dozen years to this congregation. Surely this is an anomaly. We would reasonably expect something different. It must be that those who have lately joined the congregation contributed little or nothing out of the prosperity God has granted to them for the support and advancement of His cause, or that the grace of liberality in the older members and adherents is not so vigorous and fruitful as it once was. Without any further remarks, conjectural or explanatory, we would merely say that all congregations, members and adherents, should bear in mind that the *grace of liberality* is as indispensable a sign of true religion and piety as the *grace of faith*.

In the case of Roger's Hill and Cape John congregations, the Presbytery was not troubled with that *thorn of arrears of stipend* which is so painful to ministers and Presbyteries, and which is the shame and weakness of congregations. It was most gratifying to the Presbytery to hear, in the case of all the congregations visited this winter, with the exception of two, that the question, "Are there arrears of stipend due to the Minister?" was answered by a clear, manly No. It is to be hoped that the one or two who had to answer it in ashamed and bated breath, by a yes, shall at the next Presbyterial visitation be in the honest and honourable position to answer it by an independent No! Why not? Is there any reason why all the congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pictou should not be free of this arrearage stigma? Is there any congregation that promises to pay a stipend beyond its ability? Let us see. The largest amount promised by any of our congregations embracing 100 families, is \$600. There are some congregations with this

number, yea, more, who pay considerably less. But let us consider the case of one paying \$600. This gives an average of \$6 per family a year, or 50 cents per month for the religious and moral benefit of each family. This sum looked at in any light is small, but especially when viewed in the light of the Scriptural rule of giving, which enjoined on Christians to support the Gospel in proportion to the measure of temporal prosperity God has granted them. We may look at this matter in another way. Suppose that each family consisted of 4 persons—which number is less than the average commonly allowed by statisticians. At the rate, then, of \$6 a family, how much for each person? It amounts to something less than three cents for each a week! Who of our farmers, tradesmen, or merchants would consider such a sum to be too heavy a burden?

Like all other Christian graces, the grace of congregational and individual liberality is slow of growth. We know that to make it vigorous, what is required is more self-sacrifice and self-consecration to Christ. Let the spirit of Him, who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor," take possession of a man, and he will become rich in all divine graces. No matter what secondary helps he may have, or hindrances may oppose, his character will bear in rich abundance the heavenly fruit of this spirit.

The grace of liberality, like the other graces of the Christian, is tender and delicate. The rude breath of miserliness is apt to cause it to droop and to stint its growth. And this breath is blown upon it too often by the selfish and grasping. In too many congregations are to be found the small-souled man who would be thrown into convulsions almost if asked to undo his purse strings for a charitable or religious purpose. Such an one may be found by going from family to family, from individual to individual, with whispermings and looks of feigned regret, setting forth congregational and individual inability to fulfil pledges and promises. Beware of these grumblers and talkers. Whatever be their motive, be it meanness or spite, heed them not. They are in congregations what the flies are in the apothecary's ointment. Resist them by the