

cept upon the minds of the people. Let parents teach and train their children to practise it. Let prayer go up continually that God may bestow upon us an abundant measure of the grace of liberality. So shall we best honour God, most clearly manifest our gratitude for His unspeakable gift, and fully test the truth of the inspired declaration, that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work."

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Committee,  
on  
Systematic  
Beneficence

TO THE SESSIONS, DEACONS' COURTS,  
AND BOARDS OF MANAGERS OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOW-  
ER PROVINCES:

*Dear Brethren,—*

In order to illustrate one method by which the change proposed in the above Circular may be effected, I have been authorized by the Committee to submit to you the following facts bearing upon the course pursued by one of our congregations which has adopted the system of weekly collections for maintaining gospel ordinances among themselves, not for the purpose of holding it up as a model, but as suggesting some hints which you may find useful in your efforts to carry out the system recommended by the Synod. The statement has been prepared by a member of Committee, who took an active part in bringing about the change, the progress of which he narrates.

As bearing on the best method of effecting the change from the pew-rent system to that of weekly collections, it will not be inappropriate to narrate the experience of a congregation in which, for the last two years, the latter plan has been in most successful operation. Previous to the change, the necessary funds had been raised by pew-rents, supplemented by the ordinary Sabbath collections, and others, taken on the first Sabbath of every month. This system made it difficult to find room for a collection for any special object; and it was found that some of the pew-holders were constantly in arrears,—that a part of these arrears was annually lost,—and that the congregation was often indebted to their Treasurer, and sometimes failed in fulfilling their obligations to their pastor.

In arranging for the change, the sum required for the annual expenditure was divided into forty-eight weekly parts,—the remaining four Sabbaths of the year being

omitted from the calculation, because it had always been the custom to appropriate to the relief of the poor the sacramental collections taken four times in the year. The forty-eight weekly parts were then apportioned among the pew-holders, on the basis of the rent paid by each for his pew: that is to say, it was estimated that the man who paid \$20, annually, would be able and willing to pay twice as much, weekly, as the man who paid \$10. This calculation having been completed, every pew-holder, and every other person from whom a contribution might be expected, were visited, the system fully explained, and each was asked to promise that he would deposit in the plate every Sabbath the amount fixed upon as his fair proportion. Nearly the whole congregation, with the exception of a few persons, who desired time for consideration, and who soon gave in their adhesion, cheerfully acquiesced; and the larger part, indeed, offered more than was asked. Where, for instance, 1s. 9d. was asked, 1s. 10½d. would be offered; 2s. 6d. would be promised instead of 2s. 3d.; 3s. 1½d. instead of 2s. 10d.; and so on in other cases. And when the whole sum thus pledged was made up, it was found to exceed the required amount by nearly \$250. Two or three persons represented that they had been paying a larger sum than they could afford. They were requested to name an amount that they considered fair, and in every instance this was accepted.

The preliminary arrangements having been thus satisfactorily made, Circulars were issued, announcing the time when the new system would come into operation, and reminding each person of the amount he had to pay, and also of the fact that, as the name of the donor was not to be given, success would depend altogether on the faithfulness of the contributors. On the first Sabbath about \$48 were collected; and during the two years which have since elapsed, the average has equalled, if not exceeded, that amount. There have been no losses of arrears, no rendering of accounts, nor any dunning for money. All obligations have been promptly met, and a part of the debt due on the building has been paid.

The experience of this congregation shows what may be accomplished by adopting the only Scriptural plan,—that of Sabbath collection. As thus described, the system is indeed essentially imperfect; for while it provides so successfully for congregational expenditure, it does nothing for the Home and Foreign Missions, and other schemes of the Church.

Hoping that the above statement will prove suggestive, I remain, &c.,

E. A. MCCURDY, *Sec'y of Com.*