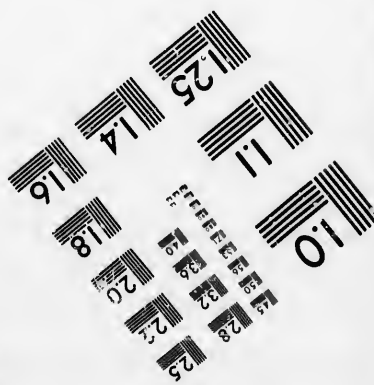
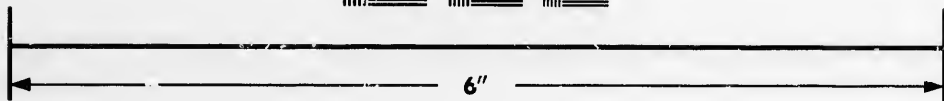
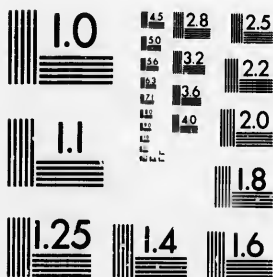


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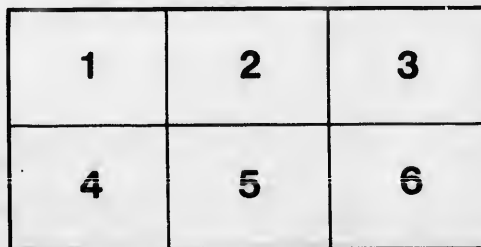
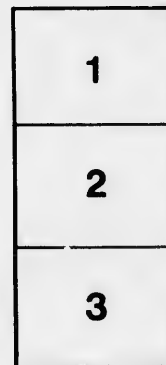
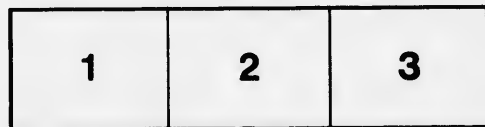
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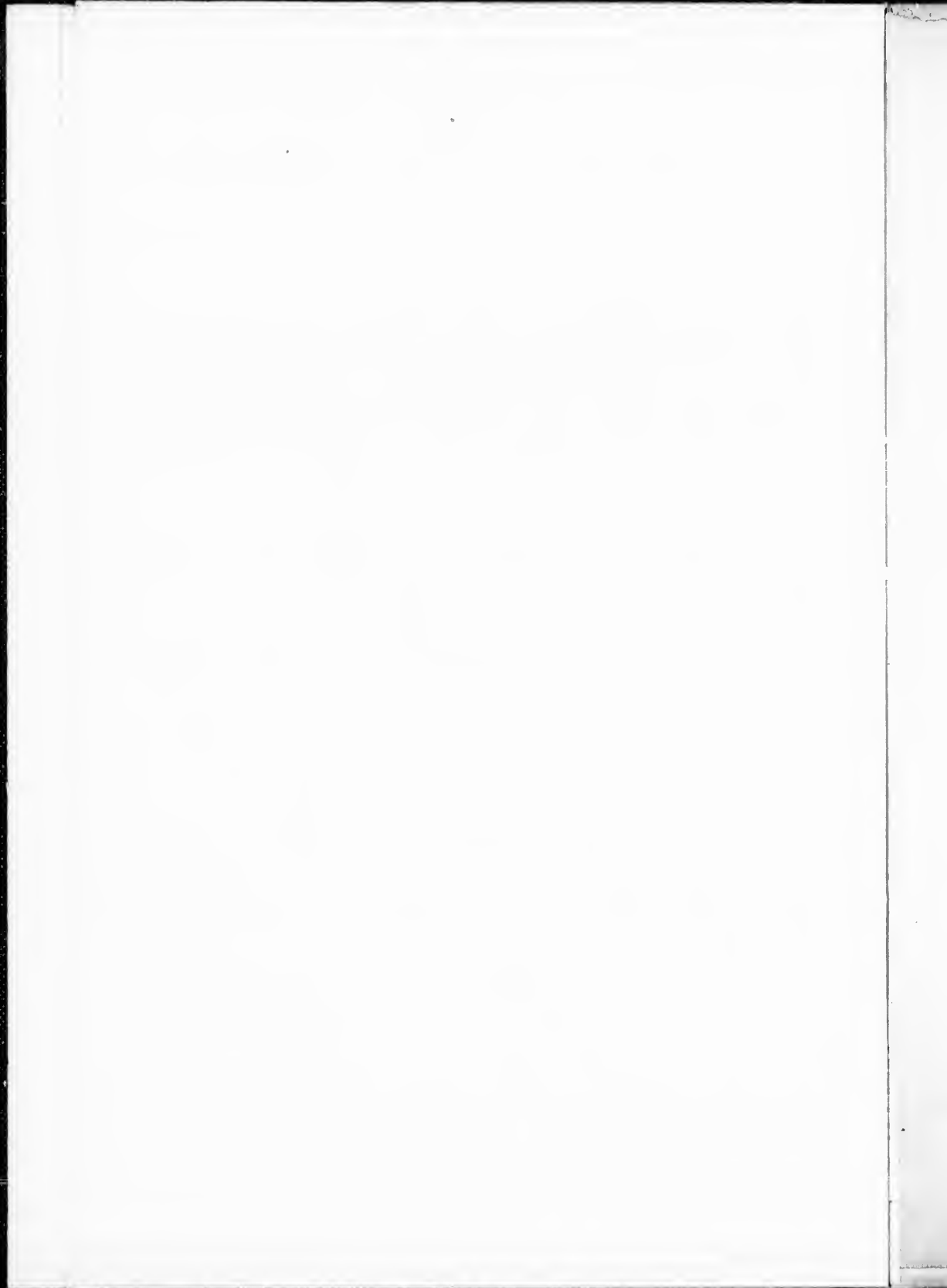
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ADDRESS

TO THE

SESSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS,

UNDER THE INSPECTION

OF THE

United Presbyterian Synod in Canada,

RELATIVE TO THE

TEMPORAL SUPPORT

OF THE

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

BY A COMMITTEE OF SYNOD.

CAYUGA :

THOMAS MESSENGER, PRINTER, "SACHEM" OFFICE.

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1854.

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JUN 7 1935

**ADDRESS**  
TO THE  
**SESSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS, &c.**

CHRISTIAN BROTHERN,—

The United Presbyterian Synod in Canada, at its meeting in Hamilton, in the month of June, 1854, entrusted a Committee of their number with the drawing up of an Address to you on the subject of ministerial support; and it is in obedience to their instructions, and with a view to present their sentiments, that we now offer a few remarks on this important subject. In doing this we shall express ourselves with all plainness and seriousness; and from the opinion we entertain of your candor and conscientiousness, of your respect to the divine authority, and to your own obligations as christians, we are persuaded that we will not make our appeal in vain. "We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say."

We turn your attention to the subject under a very few particulars.

I. Let us, by way of putting you in remembrance, exhibit your duty in this matter. For although we might suppose this to be unnecessary, as it is so fully presented in scripture, and although with many of you it is practised conscientiously, yet there are not a few, we fear, who from inadvertency or otherwise, are not doing what they ought.

Over much of the Christian Church the duty of its members directly and liberally to support the gospel has been for many ages superseded by the human invention of a civil establishment of religion: nor is christendom yet free from this deteriorating and degrading imposition. But the eyes of the great proportion of honorably minded professing christians are now open to the injustice and impolicy of such establishments, and their zeal is aroused for their final extinction; and just in the same proportion is it to be expected that the church at large will return to Christ's own prescribed method for its support and extension by the abundant free-will offerings of the christian people.

Surely as a matter of equity those who devote themselves to the work of the ministry have a claim on their people for competent and liberal support; and perhaps there is no denomination of christian ministers whose claim is stronger than your own, as they conscientiously refuse all compulsory provision. Those of you who are properly enlightened on this subject will, we doubt not, discharge your obligations by striving to place them far above the feeling, or even the fear of want.



Besides, in common with those of most other churches, your ministers have made many sacrifices in preparing themselves for their sacred work; and, having passed through a course of education, both expensive and tedious, a small part of which would have qualified them for lucrative and honorable situations in the world, they are surely entitled to something like a liberal return for the invaluable services they are called to discharge. It should also be remembered that they are obliged to mingle in society of every kind, and to keep up a style of living corresponding, in some degree, with the dignity of their calling. Their office, too, is one of active labor, which none need choose, either for securing bodily ease, or freedom from exhausting exercise of the mind. If they are not properly sustained they are in danger of losing their mental and bodily vigor, and thus becoming unfit for prosecuting their duties.

What proportion of your means should be devoted to God we shall not pretend to determine. But the general rule is plain from scripture that each should give "as God hath prospered him." Under the ancient dispensation the Levites, who ministered in holy things, were to have "the tenth of all" from their brethren of the other tribes. Under the gospel this duty is enforced with obvious reference to ancient institutions. "If," says the apostle Paul, "we have sown unto you spiritual things is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do you not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ORDAINED that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

There is one peculiarity of the christian church which will rather suggest the necessity and importance of even greater liberality in its maintenance and progress than was required of old. Under the Mosaic economy it was merely to the support of ordinances among themselves that the Israelites were called. They were not commanded to propagate their religion among other nations. But under our dispensation it is the duty of christians not only to sustain the gospel among themselves, but to extend it to others. Each individual should do his part, and a combined effort should be made to sustain and spread the gospel. Truly devoted and conscientious christians have been heard saying,—“Let us fully and spontaneously meet all the wants of our ministers, let us give our first and our best to the Redeemer’s cause.”

From these and other considerations it must be admitted that the ministers of Christ are entitled to the support of the christian people, not as a matter of bounty, but as their just right,—as that which reason, and gratitude, as well as the word of God, all unite to inculcate.

II. Let us enquire how far this duty is observed. Notwithstanding the dignity of their office,—the great ends which it is

intended to serve, and the actual good to society at large of which the faithful ministers, both directly and indirectly, are the honored instruments, it must be acknowledged that in general, they meet with very different outward recompense from persons of other learned professions. The skilful physician is well remunerated. The lawyer's profession has been said to be "a coining of money." But the minister is often doomed to live on the very scanty provision which those for whose everlasting happiness he labors are contented to raise. And this is sometimes a mere pittance. In general, it may be fairly asked,—Are ministers supplied with money and means at all equal to their necessities, not to say corresponding with the ability and obligation of their people? The truth cannot be concealed. It is not so. It is far otherwise. In many cases that God who, caring for the inferior creation, has said,—“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,” sees that his far greater care for his ministering servants is not responded to by those whose duty it is to sustain them,—so that their mouths are often muzzled,—their external reward is not given,—They plant a vineyard and eat not of the fruit thereof, they feed a flock and eat not of the milk of the flock. How many of the laborious and deserving servants of Christ have occasion to say with the apostle Paul,—“Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place!”

There have been Congregations so dishonorable as to take advantage of their ministers, if they happened, as is rarely the case, to have something of their own, which is not only injustice to them, but a robbing of their families of their patrimonial rights. We have also heard of individuals, and these in circumstances of growing wealth, excusing themselves from contributing their proportion for religion because, as they alleged, they must be just before they are generous, and this because, though living at ease, they had some instalments to pay on their houses or lands. But these people mistake entirely the nature of their duty in supposing what is given for the gospel,—what is given to Christ, an act of generosity. There is no generosity at all in it. It is as much a matter of justice as the strongest of those claims against them which can be enforced by civil law,—nay it is the first and the highest claim, and their refusing to discharge it on grounds of this description, which are mere evasions, is a robbing of God.

There is one serious fact, of which not all, but many of you require to be reminded. It is that money has materially depreciated in value during the few years that are past,—perhaps to the extent of one-half, and probably during the past year to the extent of one-third; or, in other words, the price of articles has increased in this proportion;—so that what was fixed as the minimum stipend should at least be increased one-third, if not doubled, to be considered a proper minimum now. No stipend should

be less than £150, annually, to be equal to what it was before, and to enable a minister to live at all with comfort, or in freedom, as he should be able to do, from harrassing care. The church generally should aim at this as the least to offer.

Men in general,—the merchants and traders of every kind, are paid for their commodities by what is reckoned an equivalent. In commercial transactions the profits are often large, and yet where is the man who does not consider the returns he realizes as due to his accuracy, diligence, and enterprize, in conducting business? But how is it with the minister of the gospel, who is a spiritual merchant selling goodly pearls? He is the honored instrument in giving what is "more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold;" and yet he receives in return, so far as the things of this life are concerned, only the most paltry sums, and these are often given with irregularity and a grudge.

III. Consider with what ease this duty might be performed. Many of the duties of the christian people are difficult. It is difficult to remember all the instructions of a minister, and to reduce them to practice. It is difficult to banish all worldly thoughts on the Lord's day, and to spend it wholly in the exercises of religion. Yet these are incumbent duties, the neglect of which is sinful. But where is the difficulty in liberally supporting the ministers of Christ? This part of christian duty is perhaps the easiest of all; and yet it is the most neglected. To discharge the former duties grace is necessary. But it requires no grace, one would think, for the latter. Even without the slightest inconvenience to yourselves you could furnish double or triple the amount to which some of you are accustomed, and thereby make your ministers, not affluent, but only comfortable. Grace, indeed, may be necessary to enable you to contribute in the christian spirit,—to do it freely, cheerfully, and in faith, and as a duty you owe to Christ. But so far as the amount of means or money is concerned, a sense of common justice should be sufficient. And yet this duty is performed, in many cases, tardily and inadequately. If professing christians, generally, were actuated by a right spirit in this matter there could be no difficulty whatever. All true christians in right exercise will be disposed to give a fair proportion of their annual income for religious purposes,—partly to support their ministers, and partly for extending the means of grace by missionary efforts, and for other objects of christian benevolence. Were it not the worldly spirit that prevails among many professors, the want of faith in God's promises, and the want of love to Christ, it would not be difficult to find an agreement as to what this proportion ought to be. The most of our members are living at ease, and many of them in affluence, and all of them are ready to welcome their minister to their houses as often as he is able to go, and to lavish their hospitality in contributing to his comfort. Cases do exist where a few wealthy individuals in the

flock, whilst the others did their part, might, without overstraining themselves, or even doing more than they ought, not only sustain their minister in easy and comfortable circumstances, but do much besides for the spread of the gospel around, and over the whole earth. We have known cases, too, where what is the mere waste in the domestic establishment of some gospel hearers, is more than the fulness of their minister's provision, and where without a sacrifice, which they never thought of making, they might have literally done what Paul enjoins,—“ Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth *in all good things.*”

If the people were to act systematically, contributing by a stated plan, and with something like enlightened judgment and conscience, all real and apparent difficulties would vanish. It is chiefly because so little is required for this object that seeming difficulties arise. Were it an amount for which you had to exercise foresight, and lay up by degrees, as for the payment of your instalments, or the rent of your houses, it would be much more easily realized. But such small sums are thought sufficient, that no necessity is felt to provide beforehand. On this account the plan of monthly payments to ministers, made up chiefly by Sabbath days collections, has been found in some localities to work well. But, here we must advert to a great error, and we may add a great sin, in many congregations, by the generality of the members and adherents considering not how much but how little they can give,—so that the collections on Sabbath, which should at least form a prominent item of revenue, are a mere trifle, and have often appeared to us to resemble a solemn mockery of the Church's Head. Now if only silver were to be substituted for copper in this department, it would, in most cases, meet all the expenditure of the Church. This suggestion is valuable, as it is surely within the reach of all to practise: and were it adopted it would save an immense amount of vexatious trouble. Sabbath day collections, on a liberal scale, appear also to have the sanction of the word of God—where the apostle says,—“ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye:—Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.”

After all, where is the difficulty in a hundred persons, we shall suppose, making their minister comfortable in all respects? It is a mere imagination that suggests any: and if this number move for an augmentation of stipend, let them only think that one dollar annually from each, which none would miss, would be £25, a year added to the minister, by which it is evident he would gain a hundred times more than each would thus contribute.

As to the practicability, we should rather say the facility, of doing all that is incumbent, both for supporting and extending

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the gospel, little need be said. In this Country there are few Congregations which have not a hundred worshippers with comfortable incomes,—incomes which, all things considered, far exceed those of their ministers. Suppose these professors to give as they ought for their own congregational objects, and for domestic and foreign missions, and other purposes of christian beneficence, the result would be at once effective in making every difficulty vanish. If this were done (and where is the difficulty in doing it?) the strong Congregations, besides honorably defraying their own expenses, would aid in supporting the weak; and the destitute places of the land, and of the whole earth, would be speedily supplied with divine ordinances.

But alas! although all this seems to be practicable and easy, yet such is the selfishness of human nature, and such the want of love to Christ, and zeal for his glory, that we are apt to excuse ourselves from its practice. Some will not begin till others are ready. Some will promise to act if the rest will follow. Few are of such independent spirit (which all should be), as to discharge their own duty though all others neglect theirs. In general we find, though many honorable exceptions are seen, that contributions for religion are more grudged than for things of mere worldly interest or amusement. Men in these days pay double for their taxes, double for the wages of their servants, double for articles of food and raiment; but yet for their religion, which ought to be their dearest, as it is their highest interest, they seem disposed, in general, to make no additional exertion,—to give no double portion. In this Country a man of activity and enterprize will often gain by a single commercial transaction more than all a minister will receive for many years. Should not gratitude for such success suggest that a reasonable proportion of the returns of such a speculation be devoted to the God of providence by whose blessing it has been realized?

IV. Let us mark the evident or threatened results of this neglect of duty in ministerial support. There are results of this neglect which often come upon the minister. It has been sometimes said, that if a minister be well paid he is apt to get indolent. This, however, cannot be the effect on those who are conscientious, as all should be, in the discharge of duty. They will rather be more stimulated, as they will be better qualified for their work. But an unsupported minister must have such a continual anxiety about worldly matters as to depress his spirits, waste his energies, and disqualify him in a great measure for the prosecution of his labors. He will be dissatisfied with himself, and not be able to rectify the evil which nothing but his people's neglect has occasioned. The work of the ministry, in which he expected to find delight, will thus become irksome, and although he drags on, through the help of the Lord, yet his mind is crowded with cares, and he becomes incapable of vigorous activity for the

spiritual interests of his flock. He may be obliged, in such circumstances, to betake himself to some secular employment to support his family, and thus much precious time, which would have been devoted to the profit of his people, will be otherwise occupied. Now as you yourselves would deprecate the idea of his being thus depressed, and brought to such an extremity, you should do your part for his consolation and relief.

There are results of this neglect on congregations. You cannot but be convinced that the prosperity of every church must depend, in a great measure, on the respectability of its ministers. Now whilst it is evident that the parsimony of the people must bear down those who are on the field of labour, it is also true that it will tend, as it is actually doing, to prevent men of talent, learning, and piety, from devoting themselves to the sacred office. By this neglect the people are thus practically, though unintentionally, marring their own benefit, and for anything that they can tell they may be defrauding their own children, and their children's children, of their most precious inheritance. But not to look beyond yourselves, is it not evident that whatever prevents ministers from the full and efficient discharge of duty must be injurious to the flock? Where ministers are not sustained, the people cannot be edified. Their spiritual food cannot be of that quality which is best suited to them; and they may blame the minister when the blame is their own: and instead of looking at the real cause, they often increase it by continued and increased neglect. A congregation thus circumstanced can never grow in intelligence, and in christian worth and enterprize. The members of such a congregation, instead of resembling Christ, who went about doing good, present a very opposite character. Perhaps there are some real christians among them, who are doing their own part, and whom God is prospering. But the community at large, neglecting their duty, are, in general, serious losers. Spiritually they are barren and unfruitful. From Sabbath to Sabbath they may sit under a preached gospel, but they derive no benefit. We would fear they are not real christians, although they make a profession, or they would not knowingly neglect their duty in this important matter. They are "robbing God in tithes and offerings," and thereby laying themselves open to the doom he pronounces, "Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

But especially do the leading men of the congregation, who may be supposed to occasion this state of things, bring injury upon themselves individually. Such persons have often been reproved losses in trade or property, perhaps to the extent of a hundred-fold, for all they have kept back from the Lord's treasury. Perhaps they did not trace their calamities to this cause. But others observed it, and were impressed thereby. God often chastises in

this manner; and it will be well if it be found to be in mercy, and that it lead to salutary reformation.

And V. Let us, in conclusion, notice the likely results of the conscientious discharge of this duty. In this case, we remark, the ministry is improved. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is a distressing scarcity of preachers and ministers among us. But the reason of this fact is not considered. It resolves itself into the simple truth of which we are speaking, that the prospects of adequate support are not presented. No youth desiring to be a minister, will, with open eyes, go forward to the work, if he sees he will not be able to sustain himself. Many, indeed, go forward, who, were they aware of the difficulties before them, would shrink from the undertaking. Many of the students and their friends, are inadequate judges of what is necessary for the comfortable support of one in the station of a minister.

It will be said, perhaps, that such calculations, and such attention to the means of outward support, in one who is to hold a spiritual office, would seem to indicate a mercenary disposition, and that those who contemplate the work of the ministry as the employment of their lives, should have higher motives. So they have, we trust. But still as ministers are men of like passions with their people, as they must pay for food and raiment like other men, and must keep up the respectability of their important stations, it is both prudent and necessary, that they should look at outward things as they are, and make a fair comparison between the means and the end. And who can blame the serious youth, whose heart was set on being a minister, if he stops short at the threshold from the visible prospect of inadequate support, and turns his acquirements into another channel?

But let the ministry be well supported, let the people unite in doing their duty, and the evil is removed at once. An ample supply of ministers will be obtained; and these servants of God will not only be elevated in their outward condition, but improved in their fitness for duty, and in their efficiency in discharging it. They will now have the means of procuring such books as are necessary for storing their minds with useful knowledge: and, freed from those perplexing cares which now prevail, they will pursue their proper labours, not only without fear, but with alacrity and delight. They will now be able freely to recommend and encourage pious and talented young men to come forward to "the help of the Lord against the mighty."

We remark, further, that where attention is paid to this duty congregations will flourish. Its performance is a presumptive proof that other duties are fulfilled, and that the interests of the community are prospering. Let the people attend to this duty, and whilst we take for granted they pray for their minister, and wait regularly and devoutly on his ministrations, and the field of the congregation becomes a little emblem of the fulfilment of that

sublime prophecy—"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Christian brethren, we quote the following appropriate remarks of a similar committee lately appointed by a Synod in the United States as furnishing useful hints for yourselves:—"There are trials incident to the pastoral office of which no human agency can relieve it. But those which spring from inadequate and uncertain support are legionary in number, as they are most harassing and painful. These the churches *can* remove: and in removing them they would contribute no less to the usefulness than the comfort of their pastors. What an amount of moral power would be liberated, if the whole time of our entire ministry could be appropriated to their legitimate duties! Not only would they escape the adverse influences emanating from their indispensable secular avocations, and which are so prejudicial to their own spirituality, but they would go about their work with an elasticity and an energy to which they are now strangers. Every one can understand the difference in the comparative efficiency of two pastors, one of whom serves a people who find a happiness in mitigating his burdens, and adding to his comforts, while the other trails after him, from day to day, the heavy drag-chain of pecuniary embarrassment and domestic dependence.

"And this leads to the observation, that even on the low ground of self-interest the churches should provide a more suitable support for the ministry. If the congregations which have tried the experiment should be consulted (and we could name such congregations in our Synod) they would say with one accord that they found it good policy to take care of their pastors; that all the kindness shown them has been returned manifold by the increased freedom and power of their ministrations, and their greater efficiency generally. This is not to intimate that mere financial arguments have a paramount weight with christian pastors. It is simply acknowledging that they have "like passions with other men," and can do more work, and do it better, where they experience sympathy and affection, than where they meet comparative coldness, and are left to struggle with want. It point of fact, it may be doubted whether there is any class of persons who are so much alive to offices of kindness as pastors. The most trivial tokens of affection from their people have often sent a thrill of joy through the entire tenantry of a parsonage, and moistened every eye with tears of gratitude. And next to the supports and consolations drawn from above, they find encouragement and strength in the assured confidence and attachment of their congregations."

In fine, the faithful observers of this duty will themselves be personally rewarded. "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." The very least gift will be recompensed by Christ. "Whosoever giveth a cup of cold water to any of Christ's disciples shall in no case lose his reward."



Nothing done to any of God's servants will be overlooked. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." The small contributions of the poor are as valuable in God's estimation as the larger contributions of the affluent. The poor widow, with her two mites, cast in more into the treasury than the rich with their abundance, for she cast in all her living. The poor are, in general, before the rich in the proportion of their offerings. Let all do as they are able, and God will abundantly bless and reward. You can never do too much in the cause of religion. Go, brethren, and make the experiment: do it in the name of Christ, and under the influence of faith and love; and we can assure you, by the word of the Lord, that so far from suffering loss or inconvenience, by *the sacrifice*, rather we should say *the service*, you will find yourselves, both in a pecuniary view, and in a spiritual view, abundantly remunerated. The Lord's treasury is the best bank, and gives the surest and the largest interest. How few comparatively have hitherto ventured to improve such a depository! Were all to do their duty we are certain that instead of being losers, in a worldly view, they would be material gainers. It is the "blessing of the Lord that maketh rich." Yet, O how little is faith in exercise in giving unto the Lord! How rarely is found the man who will devote an adequate proportion of his substance to Christ! Yet that man is the gainer, whilst others suffer loss. "There is that giveth, and yet increaseth: there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." All that is given for the glory of God, and the interests of true religion, if given in faith, will come back to the donors with an amply remunerating blessing. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." "Bring ye all the tithes into my store-house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, till there be not room to receive it."

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