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OF THE

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CONVENED AT PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1880.

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left with the Church. So are men to give through life, and if, at its end, they have still something left, they may bequeath it to do good when they are gone. It is hard to conceive of a Christian regarding beneficence as worship, and yet dying a millionaire. (8.) The *frequency* of giving. Christians pray when they need to pray, and when the cause of Christ demands prayer. Specially do they devote each returning Sabbath to this end. So should it be with giving. (9.) It settles the matter of *system* in giving. It is to be the same as in the other parts of worship. This is well understood and arranged. No formal service of worship is complete with prayer or praise omitted. No formal service of worship, especially on the Sabbath, should be closed until the worshippers have, with their other acts of devotion, presented their offerings of property. Let all Christians from this time forth believe that giving of their substance is worship, and act accordingly, and there will be at least no longer any necessity for essays on *systematic* beneficence.

May the Lord, the great Giver, add his blessing, and may his people speedily become like him in beneficence!

The REV. BENJAMIN L. AGNEW, D. D., of Philadelphia, read the following paper on

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

In order to have a comprehensive view of the subject of Ministerial Support, let us enter upon an examination of what we find recorded in the word of God and upon the annals of history, as far as our limited time permits, and arrive at such conclusions as the records warrant upon this most interesting and vital subject. It may prove profitable to us to examine the subject chronologically, as it is presented to our minds in the various historic periods of the Church of God. Let us look at the theme before us,

I. During the Patriarchal Age.

This age covers the history of the Church for a period of 2,500 years. During this age we have some clearly defined theologic strata cropping out, which indicate the character of this ecclesiastical period, giving foundation-stones of truth upon which we can rest our judgment.

1. They had their stated times for public worship. Gen. ii. 3, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." We read of the "seventh day" and the "week" in the times of Noah, Job, Laban, and Joseph. Cain and Abel met for worship, and in the days of Job, when the "sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord," Satan came too (just as he does now). In the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when God gave his people manna, the Israelites were reminded that the seventh day was "the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord" (verses 22-26).

2. They had the ordinances of the Church and the means of grace.

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are found erecting altars to the living God, and offering thereon their burnt-offerings. The friends of Job are commanded to offer seven bullocks and seven rams in sacrifice to God: and doubtless all these offerings were intended to teach the vicarious death of the woman's promised seed.

3. They had their ministers of religion, their officiating priests. The father of a family, or his first-born son, was priest of the household (Num. iii. 12, 13). Noah was a preacher of righteousness and offered sacrifices (Gen. viii. 20); Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are seen officiating at the altar of God (Gen. xii. 7, 8; xiii. 18; xxii. 13).

4. These things point to a regular service of religion, and it is plain that they contributed most generously to the support of their public worship in divinely stipulated tithes.

When Abraham returned from the slaughter of the men who had captured Lot, Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of the most high God (Gen. xiv. 18, Psalms lxxvi. 2), met and saluted him; and Abraham, who was the head of the family from which, in after years, sprang God's clergymen, the Levites, gave tithes of the spoils to Melchizedek; and for what purpose, if it were not to support their religious ordinances, rites, and observances? And, mark you, this was four hundred years before the Mosaic ritual and Levitical service.

This tithing must have been a divine institution, for we read in Hebrews vii. 6, that Melchizedek "received tithes of Abraham." The Greek has it, *δέδεκατόκε τον Ἀβρααμ*, (*dedekatoke ton Abraam*). He *decimated*, or *tithed* Abraham.

The ninth verse reads, "Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham," but the Greek presents it more forcibly, *διὰ Ἀβρααμ καὶ Λεὺὶ ὁ δεκάτης λαμβανὼν δεδεδκατωται*, and Levi, also, the receiver of tithes, *was tithed* in Abraham.

Here, then, we have the authority of Melchizedek as High Priest of God exercised over Abraham, and his superiority to the priesthood of Levi clearly shown in tithing Levi in Abraham, and we conclude that Abraham was obeying a divine law in paying tithes to Melchizedek. Thus, we have the administrator of a law, a distinguished subject of the law, and God's approbation upon the authority exercised, and the subjection rendered; and, therefore, we conclude that tithing must have been a divine institution in the earliest age of the Church of God. As the years roll on we see Jacob conforming to the established law and custom, and vowing to consecrate during his life one-tenth of his income to the Lord, for he solemnly declares that "of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

So far as we know they had no ornate and costly tabernacles or temples during the Patriarchal Age, and no costly choirs, or ceremonial observances, such as we see in later periods of ecclesiastical history, and yet they gave a tenth of their income to the Lord in those early times for religious purposes.

Here, then, we see the most ample and generous provision made

for the support of Church ordinances, and the officiating ministers who labored for the advancement of the revealed truth of God, as imparted to his chosen servants of the Patriarchal Age.

There is very strong presumptive proof that this law of tithes was given to man before the dispersion of the nations at Babel, in the fact of the universality of the custom among the nations of the earth of giving one-tenth of their income to their various gods, as witnessed in the centre of civilization among the Greeks and Romans, in the west among the Gauls, on the north among the Scandinavians, in the south among the Carthagenians and Egyptians, and in the east among the Asiatics of the early centuries.

II. Let us examine this subject in the Levitical Age.

A new nation is born at the Exodus, unlike any predecessor or successor—a Theocracy, and the worship of the Great King is to assume a new form in and around a gorgeous tabernacle with an ostentatious ritual. Are the expenses of supporting the worship of the Great Governor of the universe, and of setting the spiritual table for the nourishment of his children, to be diminished in their new national relations?

Who are now to be the ministers of religion? The Lord will make his own selection, and instead of the "first-born," he now selects the tribe of Levi to be his servants, and the sons of Aaron to be his priests, and besides all these, a multitude of Nethenim, or Stationary Men, who were divided into twenty-four classes to serve at the daily sacrifice. 80,000 were hewers of wood, and 70,000 bearers of burdens. (Josh. ix. 21-27; Ezra viii. 20; 2 Chron. ii. 17, 18; 1 Kings v. 16.)

The Levites were very numerous, as compared with the number of people whom they served. When the census was taken the second year after the exodus, they numbered 23,000 males, of whom 12,000 were grown up. (Num. iii. 20, etc.) The people numbered 600,000; that is, 12,000 men, or one to every fifty people, to be supported as ministers of religion, besides the vast army of hewers of wood and drawers of water—and all these for little Palestine!

In David's time they numbered 38,000 for service in that small territory! 24,000 to assist the priests at the sanctuary, 6,000 to act as scribes and lawyers, 4,000 to furnish music for the house of God, and 4,000 gate-keepers, who were required to be vigilant on duty, for if found asleep their clothes were set on fire. It was intended that all should be actively employed during the time of actual service.

The Levites usually entered upon their public duties at thirty years of age, and continued in service until they arrived at the age of fifty (Num. iv. 2-47), although they sometimes appear to have entered upon the discharge of some official duties as early as twenty-five (Num. viii. 24, 25), and even as early as twenty (1 Chron. xxiii. 37; 2 Chron. xxxi. 17; Ezra iii. 8). They were not allowed to enter upon the full work of their ministerial office in the verdancy of their youth, nor to continue in their labors in the decline of their old days.

Now, the question most affecting our subject arises, How was this vast army of clergymen supported by so small a constituency, or so few parishioners? Not by pew-rents, nor by yearly subscriptions. Nor were they supported meagrely, miserly, meanly, on slim, stinted, starving salaries.

1. They had good *parsonages* or *manses* provided for them, for forty-eight cities were set apart to the use of the priests and Levites. (Josh. xxi. 19.)

2. Besides these parsonages they had also beautiful and fertile suburban *glebes*, sufficient for pasture-fields for their cattle, which extended 1,000 cubits from the wall of each city round about.

3. In addition to home and glebe, they had also a most generous yearly income from all the other tribes, in the shape of *tithes*.

The one-tenth of all the incomes of the people was to be given to the Lord (notice the language: to be given to the *Lord*), for the use of the Levites, and it was regarded as deliberate robbery of God not to pay the tithes he commanded!

This one-tenth was for the exclusive use of the ministry; and in addition they gave another tenth for sacrifices; and in addition to all this, large offerings to the poor, and innumerable free-will offerings besides!

They had, too, their schools of the prophets for the education of pious young men for special ministerial services; and all their church buildings, whether tabernacle, temple, or synagogue, were erected by the voluntary contributions of God's chosen people; making their yearly offerings to religious beneficence nearly one-third of their entire income!

The Lord himself ordained the Levitical law, and under this law all ministers were educated for their work at the expense of the Church; and while engaged in active work from thirty to fifty years of age, they were kept free from all worldly cares and avocations, and their families lived as well as the best of their parishioners; when they retired from active service they and their families were magnificently cared for in their retiracy, and in the glory of their old days; and their families, after their decease, were never thrown upon the cold charities of a heartless world.

Thus God taught the people that his chosen priests were not to be regarded as respectable paupers, as many regard ministers nowadays, to whom it is a very kind piece of philanthropy to pay a paltry pittance of pew-rent, or the smallest conceivable salary for which their spiritual ministrations can be secured; and he has laid upon his Church members an irrepealable obligation to provide for his servants in these solemn words: "*Forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest*" (Deut. xii. 19).

Some people seem to have an idea that when a man enters the ministry he, somehow or other, lives in paradisiacal places where he pays no rent; that his clothes, like those of Israel in the wilderness, never wax old; that Providence provides his family with a barrel of inex-

haustible meal and a cruse of perpetually flowing oil, to supply their wants; or feeds them, Elijah-like, through the ministry of ravens; or else on angels' food, and the elixir of life, and heavenly ambrosia; or suspends the animation of the digestive apparatus; or makes them live on promises! never once supposing that a minister and his family should need such vulgar things as mutton-chops, or cuts of beef, or loaves of bread, and they are rather proud of the parson's long, lean face, which they regard as a distinguishing mark of personal piety, when it is only the result of the poverty of provisions!

But, fellow-men, aside from all pleasantries or sarcasm, in the Levitic age there were no students pinched with poverty—groaning under grievous, galling, grinding debt, incurred at the gateway to the gospel ministry; no ministers with aching hearts and burning brains, or spirits crushed with a burden of anxiety about their bread, were ever driven, like galley-slaves, to their daily toil; no desponding hours on the dying bed of priest about provision for the loved ones he must leave behind; no widows and orphans of God's servants were left without a living; no aged and infirm prophets of the Lord left houseless and homeless as they were nearing their eternal rest, to be starved into the gates of glory!

III. *Let us now examine this subject of Ministerial Support under the Apostolic Age.*

Sometimes we hear the cry that ministers are "mercenary hirelings," because they ask to be supported by the people for whom they labor! In the name of an honorable and hard-working body of men, I repel the charge in sovereign disdain! And I ask all who have such ideas to examine the fundamental principles of ministerial support as laid down in 1 Cor., chapter 9, by as honorable and large-hearted a man as ever walked God's green earth—the venerated Apostle Paul.

1. Paul argues that it is the duty of the Church to support her ministry on the general principle that the *laborer is worthy of his hire* (7 v). "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"

Paul insists that it is according to the *general law* of God, nature, and humanity, that it should be so, and not a mere clever piece of human device of church officers to extort money from an unwilling people (v. 8-10). "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses: Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." (Deut. xxv. 24; 1 Tim. v. 18).

2. Paul argues further that the demand for a comfortable support is not *unreasonable*, because those who are ministered unto in spiritual realities are more than repaid for all the temporal tithes they bring to

God for the supply of his servants (11 v.) "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" See Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

3. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the *recognized principle* under the *Levitical* law, which he asserts is of perpetual application; namely: "That they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" and we have seen how magnificently they did live under the ceremonial dispensation!

4. To place the matter beyond all question, and to crown his argument with the highest authority, Paul asserts that it was the solemn *ordination of the Lord Jesus Christ* himself that the Church should support her ministry (v. 14). "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Christ himself said: "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7), and "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Matt. x. 10).

But, says the objector, "Did not Paul earn his living by making tents of goats' hair?" Yes, Paul was, in a good sense, a shrewd politician, and when he went into a new missionary field he went without charge to the people among whom he labored in the gospel, and he said (1 Cor. ix. 12) of his fellow-apostles, that they suffered all things lest they "should hinder the gospel of Christ." The people of a new field had no sentiment, no sympathy, educated in favor of Christianity, and consequently would not pay to listen to a travelling preacher discourse on subjects against which the human soul has a most bitter and diabolical prejudice.

But, mark you, when that same Paul addressed himself to churches already established, he fearlessly and emphatically lays down to them the law of the great King and Head of the Church, and presses upon them their solemn duty to God, their fellow-men, and their own immortal souls, as men who already knew something of the incomparable value of the gospel of Christ.

You see, too, how the early Christians understood this matter, and how they appreciated their exalted privileges, for when an emergency arose they sold their possessions and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, "and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 33-35).

5. And Paul argued that they should *give generously* to the great work of spreading the gospel, because in giving they were but *exercising a gift of God*—the *charism of liberality*, the exercise of which would be an unspeakable blessing to their own souls, as well as to others. I firmly believe that this grace of giving is what Paul denominates the "unspeakable gift," and it is but honoring the third person of the adorable Trinity to make this declaration. I know this expression is generally supposed to refer to the adorable Saviour; but when you read the eighth and ninth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the most natural construction of Paul's thanksgiving is

to make it refer to the grace of liberality, produced in the soul by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost." He calls it "*the grace of God* bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. viii. 1)—a great favor conferred by God in imparting the Holy Ghost, through the mediation of Christ, to create and develop the spirit of liberality; and, therefore, a profoundly proper subject for thanksgiving. Look closely at his argument. He exhorts the Corinthians to "*abound in this grace*," which God had bestowed (viii. 6, 7), because it would demonstrate the sincerity of their love (8 v.); because it is Christ-like in its nature (9 v.); because he would be greatly disappointed if they did not call it into active exercise; because it was only a matter of equality for them to bear their just proportion of the burden of Christian work (vs. 13, 14); because their gifts would be administered to the glory of God (v. 19; because it would be a proof that Paul's boasting of their liberality to provoke others to good works was not in vain (ix. 1-5); because their reward would be proportionate to their liberality (vs. 6-10); and because it would greatly commend the Christian religion for them as Gentile Christians to contribute to the relief of Jewish Christians, between whom there was at that time great alienation of feeling produced by Judaizing teachers (v. 13).

And then, in view of all these most weighty and significant considerations, Paul calls this grace of liberality "*the exceeding grace of God in you*"—*ὑπερβάλλουσαν*, the outstripping, surpassing "grace of God in you," "which causeth through us *thanksgiving to God*," and "the *administration* of this service," he says, "not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is *abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God*;" and he concludes with that burst of praise for this soul-expanding grace of the Holy Ghost: "Thanks be unto God for his *unspeakable gift*!" "Unspeakable," *ἀνεξιτηγῆτο*, extraordinary, incalculable, indescribable "gift!" and the word is not too strong. See how the apostle Peter speaks of other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The joy of the believer, for example, he characterizes as "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" and this charism of liberality is most assuredly an "unspeakable gift." "Unspeakable," because it is the mysterious unction of the infinite Spirit of God; "unspeakable," because of its marvellous triumph over the idolatrous covetousness of our selfish natures; "unspeakable," because of the immeasurable blessings it confers upon our revolted race; and "unspeakable," because of the revenue of glory it brings to the grace of God, as under this heaven-born power the apostles were enabled to go everywhere, preaching the word, making the conquests of the Church like the triumphal march of invincible legions flushed with ever new and increasing victories! Well might the enraptured apostle say: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift"—the gift of the Holy Ghost in this priceless charism of liberality! Therefore, *for their own souls' sake*, as well as for other reasons, Paul would have them generously exercise this "unspeakable" grace.

If an exact exegesis can make this burst of thanksgiving refer

directly to the second person of the adorable Trinity, then I would say, in view of this unspeakable gift, and all the unspeakable blessings flowing from and through this gift, all Christians should give generously, sufficiently, magnanimously, warm-heartedly to the relief of the poor, the support of the ministry, and the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

IV. *Glance for a moment at what we shall denominate, for the sake of distinction, the Involuntary or Compulsory Age.*

Succeeding the days of the apostles on down to the opening of the fourth century, all Christian contributions were purely voluntary; but upon the accession to the imperial throne of Constantine, property-holders were compelled to pay a tax for the support of the Church, and here began what we have denominated the Involuntary or Compulsory Age.

In the eighth century, when Charleimagne was crowned with imperial honors by Pope Leo III., he conceived the idea of establishing a universal Christian monarchy, and he bestowed upon the pope large temporal possessions; and also ordered one-tenth of all incomes to be paid to the Church under severe penalties for failure, or refusal to pay, and the hierarchical system was for centuries afterwards impregnably intrenched behind these monied munitions, and through personal, political, and prelatical corruptions unutterable evils crept into the Church of God.

In the thirteenth century there were two classes of the clergy: the secular order, the cloistered and corrupt Benedictines, which had office and salary; and the mendicant order, which had neither settlement nor salary, and which were Prædatores instead of Prædicatores, depending upon mendicity and mendacity for a miserable living, as they travelled up and down the earth, seeking whom they might devour.

V. *Let us briefly consider the Age of the Reformation.*

At the time of the reformation Professor Pond says: "In Germany it was computed that the ecclesiastics held more than half of the national property."

Luther, Calvin, Zuingle, Melancthon, and other Reformers opposed all union of Church and State, and as a consequence nearly everywhere that the Reformation prevailed the churches were disestablished; but many good men, however, in different lands favored the union; and the Episcopal Church became established in England, under Henry VIII., in 1534; and under the influence of Knox the Presbyterian Church was established in Scotland in 1578; the Lutheran Church prevailed in Germany and became established there; the Reformed Church was supported by Napoleon in France; after the French revolution of 1780, some States recognized the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Churches; and thus, in these and other countries, we have presented to us almost every variety of national ministerial support.

Soon, however, perplexing troubles arise. Non-Conformists, Dis-

senters, and those who were dissatisfied with the difficulties of manipulating the best-ordered schemes through imperfect political, self-interested executors of law, increase in numbers, and organize their churches on the voluntary plan; and then we see again churches disestablished starting on a new career; and churches established side by side; each earnest in its own way trying to accomplish the work of the Master.

This brings us down to consider—

VI. *The present Complex, Experimental Age.*

On this broad Presbyterian platform we have delegates from other lands representing establishments, able and godly men who, perhaps, believe them to be ordained of God, and wise, politic, practicable, expedient; whilst this General Council is being held in a land where the constitution of the government declares "Congress shall make no law respecting an established religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." We, in America, are shut up to the voluntary plan of ministerial support, and we are trying to demonstrate to the world the all-sufficiency of this plan, where the people are made generous by the Holy Ghost, and we have been largely successful in our great experiment, as certain results demonstrate.

A century ago we had in the United States only one in every fifteen of the population connected with our Protestant Churches, and now we have one in every five; and whilst our population is increasing with amazing rapidity, our church communicants are increasing much more rapidly; and it has been estimated that "the increase of the church-membership has been two and a half times greater than that of the population."

Take, if you please, some specimens of our work, *e. g.*, we commenced our general Sabbath-school work just sixty-six years ago, and we have to-day 886,328 Sabbath-school teachers in the United States, and 6,623,124 scholars. These are more than there are in all the world besides!

MISSIONS.

And we have not been confining our labors to our own land. In 1810, when the A. B. of C. for Foreign Missions was organized, all the churches in the United States only contributed \$1,600 a year to foreign missions, whilst now these churches give annually about \$6,000,000.

Of course this is nothing comparatively to what we should contribute for the evangelization of the world. Dr. Godwin shows that Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists only give annually to home missions \$965,000, and significantly adds, "Since it costs, according to Wendell Phillips, \$1,000,000 to kill an Indian, all the evangelical churches of our land contribute as much to evangelize five or six millions of people as the government pays to shoot a single savage!" Notwithstanding all this, the churches are making progress in the development of the grace of giving.

AID TO CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

We realize more and more, as the years roll on, the urgent necessity of an educated ministry, and under our voluntary system all our churches are doing something in the way of aiding worthy young men to enter the holy office, and by so doing we add to their time of active work in the pastorate between four and five years, at an average cost to the churches of a little over \$100 a year for this added time. Reports from the Baptist, Methodist, United Presbyterian, Reformed (Dutch) Church, Reformed Presbyterian (Synod), Reformed Presbyterian (General Synod), Lutheran, Congregational, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian Churches, show that aid is furnished students in amounts varying from \$75 to \$350 per year. Whilst most of these denominations report no falling off in the number of candidates for the ministry, there has been a large diminution in the Presbyterian Church, owing mainly to the false cry of "too many ministers" which we have recently heard so frequently; and partly to the diminished aid granted to our students of late years. Many of our students need more aid than they are receiving. The average age at which our students in America are ordained is twenty-seven, showing a protracted struggle with many of them to reach the sacred office.

MINISTERS AT WORK.

When a minister enters upon his public work he consecrates to the Church his talents, educated at a cost to himself of from \$3,000 to \$5,000; he consecrates to the Church his labors and his time; and he shuts himself out of fields of pecuniary profit. Now, does the Church accept him and his? And if so, are not the people of God under the most sacred obligations to see that he is supported, when he obeys Paul's injunction to Timothy, and gives himself wholly to their service—to the promotion of their present and eternal happiness? Churches oblige themselves to keep their pastors free from worldly cares and avocations, and many of them keep inviolate their sacred obligations, and even do far more than they promise, but how clearly, sharply, definitely, conscientiously, generously, do many others of them keep *their* solemn, binding moral and civil contracts in this particular! Alas! the facts are painful reading.

The average salaries of settled pastors in the United States are far too low. In the Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran Churches, about \$500; in the Presbyterian, about \$600, but under our sustentation scheme, we try to make the minimum \$1,000; in the Congregational, about \$700; in the United Presbyterian, \$896; in the Reformed Presbyterian (Synod), \$920; in the Reformed Presbyterian (General Synod), nearly \$1,000; whilst over the sea in the Irish Presbyterian Church, the minimum is \$500; in the Free Church of Scotland, the minimum is \$1,000; in the English Presbyterian Church, the minimum is \$1,000.

In our various denominations, in the United States, our Home Mis-

sionaries are aided in amounts varying from \$300 to \$1,200, and our Foreign Missionaries sent out from the United States, in amounts varying from \$500 to \$2,000.

The salaries of pastors in the United States are raised by pew-rents, subscriptions, or weekly offerings in envelopes, and the various plans have their advocates and opponents. Those which have lately been trying the plan of "weekly offerings" are meeting with great success, and it begins to look as if Paul's plan of raising money "upon the first day of the week" for Christian work was the inspired and most effectual way of developing the benevolence and beneficence of God's people.

DISABLED MINISTERS.

When our ministers become disabled our churches nearly all make some scanty provision for them, so that, at least, they are not speedily starved!

About one-half of our disabled or superannuated ministers live comfortably on their own private resources. One-tenth of the ministers or their families in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, receive aid from the Board of Relief, and it has given aid, since its organization in 1849, to upwards of 4,000 families, in sums of from \$50 to \$500, amounting in all to more than \$1,000,000.

The Reformed (Dutch) Church has an Endowment Fund for the relief of the disabled, which is supplemented by collections. The Lutheran and Moravian Churches have endowment funds, and other denominations, without any general systematic plans, still, through local organizations, manage to afford some relief to the needy; but there is, nevertheless, wide-spread and heart-crushing distress among our venerable and venerated servants of God and their dependent families.

PRACTICAL WORK.

What are the practical things to be aimed at by our Churches in the matter of ministerial support?

1. Every congregation should endeavor to supply a suitable *manse* or home for its pastor. About one-third of the Congregational Churches in New England, and one-half of the Moravian, and three-fourths of the Reformed (Dutch) Churches of the United States are supplied with manses.

During the first hundred years of the history of Christian Churches in America, a manse, with a glebe of from twenty to one hundred and fifty acres of ground, was almost invariably provided by each congregation, so that, in 1800, the churches and manses were nearly equal. Now, however, the churches twelve times outnumber the manses in the Presbyterian and United Presbyterian Churches of the United States, as shown by valuable statistics gathered within a few years by Mr. Joseph M. Wilson, of Washington City.

One-half of the money paid by the Board of Home Missions in the

Presbyterian Church in the United States to its army of missionaries goes to pay house-rent ; and ministers in the United States pay more money for house-rent than all their churches contribute to Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Education combined !

When congregations had their parsonages in early times, pastors were more comfortable, more free from care, labored to better advantage, and continued in their pastoral charges much longer than they do at present. A parsonage is a permanent investment, which brings a rental revenue or saves a rental outlay to pastor and people for all time, and both are permanently benefited.

2. A plan of *Life and Health Insurance*, which would in no way interfere with present operations, is an entirely feasible project. The Episcopal Church has taken a step forward, and has organized a Clergyman's Insurance League, through which congregations can aid their ministers, but other churches have not followed their example. Various popular benevolent institutions, and numerous societies for mutual aid have already solved the problem of relieving the sick and disabled ; and life insurance companies are doing their work and growing rich with their success, demonstrating once again that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

In this connection consider that the average rental paid by Presbyterian ministers of the different denominations in the United States for parsonages is \$130 per annum. If each church had a parsonage, this amount paid for insurance would make a very comfortable provision for many ministers and their families ; for, remember, our ministers are ordained on the average at twenty-seven, and die at fifty-four, thereby averaging twenty-seven years from ordination until the period of death. Then, as the agents of a reliable company inform me, \$130 a year for twenty-seven years would secure \$8,000 for the family at the decease of the minister ; or it could be invested so as to secure him weekly dues while sick or disabled, and have something handsome left for his family at his decease ; or it could be paid on an endowment plan, and secure the payment at the end of thirty years of \$5,000 to the insured minister, or the same amount to his family in case of his decease prior to that time.

3. *Salaries should be increased.* Henry says, "A scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry." A Sustentation Scheme, efficiently operated, seems to be the golden key to open the door to brighter days. A Parish Endowment Fund in the Established Church of Scotland of \$15,000, yielding an annual income of \$600, has proven successful in raising the salaries of poorly paid ministers under the Establishment, where they have about as many poorly paid preachers as the churches operating under the Voluntary System. This idea of an Endowment Fund can easily be engrafted on Sustentation. Whilst the Sustentation Scheme has not proven a success in the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, because the people had not been trained to give to church support prior to disestablishment,

it has been a very decided success in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, where, in addition to the *Regium Donum* received from the Government, the people had been accustomed to pay pew-rents. At the disestablishment of the Irish Presbyterian Church, in 1869, the ministers commuted their annuities and created a permanent endowment. In addition to this, a Sustentation Fund has been raised by a system of monthly collections through envelopes, which adds £90 a year to each minister's support, so that the minimum salary there of a minister is \$500, and generally the salary approaches or exceeds \$1,000.

Dr. Chalmers successfully worked up the Sustentation Scheme in the Free Church of Scotland, until the minimum salary there is \$1,000.

The Sustentation Scheme of the Presbyterian Church of the United States was bright with promise for a time, but our large new territory operated by the Board of Home Missions presents great and peculiar difficulties where churches are weak and scattered, and it will require time and experience to bring it into successful operation in this country. But it so greatly stimulated our new organizations to contribute to the general benevolent operations of the Church, as well as to self-support, that we cherish the hope that its most excellent features may be soon so improved as to be made applicable to new as well as old mission fields, and successfully operated under our Board of Home Missions, which now has charge of both departments of Home Mission work in the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

4. Our churches all need a *Supply Fund*.

We do not possess the appointing power in our Presbyterian churches which our Methodist and Protestant Episcopal and Moravian brethren possess, or, rather, we do not generally exercise such power, so as to keep our ministers continually employed, simply because we have no adequate provision for the payment of appointees; and we should, by all means, raise a fund in all our Presbyteries which they could devote to the payment of temporary supplies, and thereby bring unemployed ministers in contact with vacant churches; and our strong congregations should contribute generously to this Supply Fund to enable the weaker Presbyteries to accomplish their God-given work.

Few of our churches have any provision made for the regular payment of supplies where ministers without charge preach for vacant congregations. A few of our denominations, however, have a Supply Fund regularly provided. The Reformed Presbyterian Church (Synod) and the Home Mission Board of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (General Synod) send supplies to vacant churches, and see to it that each supply is paid at the rate of \$15 for each week's service.

The Moravian Church have what they call the Provincial Elders' Conference, consisting of five ministers, elected at each Synod, and this board makes ministerial changes; has been in the habit of paying the expenses of the removal of ministers from one charge to another; and pays supplies sent to fill the pulpits of vacant churches; and here we have some practical hints for our other denominations, which may

solve, to some degree, the problem of how to secure employment for our W. C.'s who are able and willing to work.

With some such provisions our Presbyterian Churches, whose communicants outnumber any other Protestant denomination in the world, would all be more efficient in disseminating the gospel; and when all the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world are more bountifully baptized with the grace of liberality, and are able to see eye to eye, and combine their forces in some harmonious plan of consecrated effort as one mighty sacramental host, as the United, Re-formed, Presbyterian Christian Church, what a tremendous power she will be in the hands of the God of Sabaoth!

In the light of the substantial agreement of the Churches forming this Alliance in the "Consensus of the Reformed Confessions," it does not seem to be a Eutopian dream to expect a combination of our ecclesiastical forces on a general basis of union, such as we see illustrated in the union of the Commonwealths of the United States, each sovereign in its sphere, regulating its own affairs, and yet all united under one general constitution, binding upon all, forming a sovereign, free, and independent government. With such a union for the evangelization of the world; our rivalries on new territory discontinued; with an adequately supported ministry in the home and foreign fields, free from all worldly cares and avocations, and their numbers vastly increased; and with the mighty energizing power of the Holy Ghost moving each ambassador of Christ to grand endeavors on behalf of our lost humanity, we shall present to the world one of the sublimest spectacles, and one of the most irresistible, on-sweeping powers the nations of the earth have ever beheld.

But how are our congregations to be influenced to exercise the grace of liberality and make a generous provision for the support of their toiling ministers? Intelligent elders and laymen, whom God has made generous, and we have many of them throughout our churches, must exert their influence, and our Church courts must take more efficient action concerning systematic beneficence, whilst ministers must themselves lay aside their modesty and preach the whole truth of God just as Paul preached it to the Corinthians. Many of our congregations do not sufficiently realize the actual and urgent necessities of settled pastors of churches, and, therefore, do not support them as well as they are able. Pastors ought to have suitable homes—homes on a par with those of their cultivated parishioners; they should have sufficient provision for household expenses and the education of their children, many of whom enter the ministry, for, as it is, one minister comes from each minister's family on a general average. They should have enough to eat, for a good physical basis is an important factor in the problem of success in solid mental labor, and poor preaching is often the result of poor provender! They need money for books, in order that they may keep abreast of the times, and not become intellectual fossils of their early school days, when infidels are flooding the world with heresies and false statements in many

otherwise captivating works on biology, physiology, ethnology, chronology, historiology, psychology, and every department of science.

Ministers should be kept free from worldly care. Oh! if many of our men of means only realized how the inadequate support of most of our ministers is producing all over the land burning brains, and aching hearts, and broken spirits, and crushed energies, and prostrated powers, and physical wrecks, and disqualifying men for the taxing, burden-bearing life of their pastors, they would more cheerfully lay their money on the altar of the Lord for the use of his Levites! How few look upon pew-rents as a eucharistical offering unto the Lord! as a service of thanksgiving rendered to God with great joy, as the Israelites of old looked upon the payment of their tithes to the Lord for the Levites!

Far be it from me to take a gloomy view of the ministerial office, for the servants of the Son of God are engaged in a joyous, blessed, grand, and glorious work, and they have for their reward the sweetest stores of bliss a man can possibly enjoy on earth—the luxury of doing good, the pleasure of an approving conscience, the joy of the Holy Ghost, and the hope of unending glory; at the same time, it is lamentably true that their toilsome service is not fully appreciated, and they are not generally made as comfortable in their great life-work as the people of God, for whom they toil, can well afford to make them.

Let the world but more earnestly consider *the worth* of ministers *for their work's sake*, with all their failings and shortcomings. Let the people be shown more clearly the inestimable value of our churches and Christianity, so that nothing shall be regarded as too much done for God and immortal souls. Let men consider more closely the comprehensive work of ministers, and then estimate their worth. They are educators of the intellectual man, for they present before the minds of men the most stupendous themes of Revelation—eternity, infinity, immensity! They implant the great principles of substantial success in life in the minds and hearts of young men; they are benefactors of the nation where they labor, by the moral restraints of their preaching upon society, and the consequent reduction of taxation rendered necessary by the lawlessness of the disorderly; they inculcate the principles of the best hygienic laws and regulations of physical life; they are cementers of the social compact of government; they are promoters of every form of benevolent institutions; they are filling the world with a good class of literature; they are advocates of the best ways of living; and they teach the immortal man the only way that leads him back to God and glory!

Ah! the ministers of Christ Jesus are engaged in a grand and ennobling work, and are worthy of a generous support; but whether they are paid for their services or not, the truth as it is in Jesus will be preached, and the work of God will be accomplished, and every faithful minister of the word shall receive as his reward a diadem unspeakably more dear than Isthmean crown, and as incorruptible and imperishable as the glory of the Lord Almighty.