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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Support of the Christian Ministry.

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THE CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE CHURCHES COMPOSING
THE CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

Dear Brethren,

A sense of delicacy often prevents the minister of the Gospel from explaining and inculcating in the Pulpit the duty of congregations to afford their pastors an adequate temporal support. The subject is fraught with deep interest, not only as being essential to the Pastors temporal comfort, but as affecting to a very great extent the prosperity of our churches. We therefore feel it our duty to make it the theme of our present Letter. We trust that you will not regard it as being too trivial and secular in its nature to be compatible with your spiritual prosperity. When the work of the Christian Minister is viewed in the light of the Bible, as it must be—in order to properly understand what it involves, we cannot fail to perceive that its responsibilities take a much wider range than belong to any other calling.

The great peculiarity in the function of the Minister's work is that its responsibility attaches itself to eternity. If a statesman fail in his administration it may ruin a kingdom. If a minister fail to do his work, it may ruin a soul, which is of more value than a world. Aside from the responsibilities connected with the ministry there is no class of professional men, it is presumed, in the Province, that would be willing to perform the same amount of physical and mental labor for the remuneration which ministers are receiving. The minister does not assume the responsibility, but necessity is laid upon him. He is called of God to the work, and should give himself wholly to it, and the onerous duties connected with it. Impelled from necessity he is willing to forego the advantages of wealth and worldly emoluments, for the sake of preaching the gospel to others. Were the Ministers of Christ at liberty to bow at the shrine of Mammon, and to lay their talents on his altar, no doubt many of them would display a shrewdness and adaptation to acquire wealth equal to that which is possessed by the most thrifty members of our Churches. Prohibited as they are, by virtue of their calling, from gathering by their own industry, to what source are they to look for a supply?—The Bible readily furnishes us with an answer, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." When a Church calls a minister to labor with them they do it with the distinct understanding yea more, with a solemn pledge given that he shall receive from them a remuneration which, if not equivalent to his toils shall at least be equal to his necessities. The Church having thus voluntarily bound herself if not legally yet morally this should be regarded as tantamount to a legal claim, and hence to violate with impunity such an obligation is impossible, while the Church or any portion of its members have the ability to redeem the pledge. It evidently then becomes the duty of the Church to pay their Pastors according to agreement, whether expressed or implied, and to do it from the high obligation of moral and religious duty. That which a Church promises to pay their Pastor may be said to be a debt of honor due to God which he requires them to pay, and for the neglect of which he will not hold them guiltless. While the Minister is the servant of the Church he is in a higher sense a servant of God. He has called and qualified him to the work of instrumentally preparing a people to serve him in this life, and to enjoy him forever. And it does appear to us that there is no liability which a Church can assume that should be met with greater promptness than the Pastor's salary. The reasons why are very cogent. He has no other source, as a general thing from which he can derive a supply for his daily wants. The Pastors of our Churches with few exceptions are poor men, and here we may be allowed to say, that, as a general thing, God does not call the sons of the rich to preach his gospel. There is not necessarily any disgrace connected with poverty but it is very oppressive and inconvenient, it disturbs our quiet and impedes our activity. And it may be presumed that there is no class of public men that feel all this more than ministers.

Dependent then as they generally are upon their salaries which, if they were all promptly paid, are scarcely adequate to the necessities of their families, there are in addition the claims of benevolence to which they are expected to respond cheerfully and generously. The poor require their sympathy and aid. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked is a Christian virtue, and hospitality is an essential Scriptural qualification in a Minister. Unable to pay promptly for the indispensables of life he is compelled to buy on credit at a disadvantage, and this he does with faith in the fidelity of his Church. Failure on the part of the Church causes the Minister to fail; his credit suffers, his spirit is chafed and depressed, his thoughts trouble him, worldly cares press heavily upon him, and his energies wax feeble through the accumulating financial difficulties which he sees clustering around him. But however great may be the Minister's losses and trials under such circumstances, he is not the only loser. There is a reciprocity just here, the existence and extent of which the Church may not fully estimate. If one

member suffer all suffer. If the head is affected the whole body must of necessity feel it. The Church loses infinitely more than she is aware of. She loses the full benefit of the Pastor's talents and powers of mind which it is her privilege to enjoy.

He cannot come before the people with matured thoughts and a mind laden with the rich gems drawn from God's word as he could under more favorable circumstances. And is it a small loss to the Church that the Pastor's spiritual vision is beclouded, and his perceptions of Bible truths are meagre? If his faith in those great truths which he preaches is weak and trembling? If his hopes are low, and his mind desponding, and if his prayers and sermons lack that holy unction which is indispensable to the Christian's comfort all this and much more the Church may expect to lose if she fails in her duty towards her Pastor. Only reaping what she has sown, receiving in measure in religious joy and privilege according as she has measured to the man of God. It is no less true in spiritual than it is in temporal things "that he that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty." The philosophy of this mode of gathering is not rightly understood by the Church, and hence she is afraid to scatter lest she may fail to gather again. And is it not just possible that retributive justice is standing at this very time between neglected pastors and their people, between the Christian Church and a perishing world, intending to teach the Church the salutary truth that to withhold more than is meet tends to poverty. The Pastor gives the Church the best he has, or can gather under his circumstances, and the Church is satisfied with it. But just change his position, free him from worldly cares and embarrassments if he is laboring under them, give him an opportunity of enriching his mind with study and you will soon find your labor amply rewarded for all the care and attention you have given him.

Persons who do not care to sympathize with ministers accuse them of preaching for money. Such a charge is as unjust as it is untrue. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," is the language of every man whom God calls to the work. Preach he must although it should entail upon him the deepest poverty. But we ask, is it fair, is it just, is it according to the Gospel, and in harmony with the genius of our holy religion to deprive a man of his just rights because he is not in a position to demand them or to avail himself of them? The Scriptures of Divine Truth herald forth no uncertain sound in reference to this point, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." "If we have sown unto you spiritual things is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the Gospel."

We plead for Christian ministers because they are God's servants; because of their comparatively helpless condition; because they are doing a work in the world, and for the world which no other order of men can do; and the world is under everlasting obligation to God for having established the Christian ministry in it. Churches of the living God, for the sake of the Great Master, and in his name, we ask you to care for his servants, and to esteem them very highly for their work's sake. Sympathize with them in their toils. Pray for them in their labors. Defend their reputation, for it is a tower of strength to them, and deal gently with them as the Servants of Christ, and he will reward you at his coming.

Benevolent Funds.

Report of Committee on Union Societies to Nova Scotia Central Association:

The Committee on Union Societies beg to report that, judging from the Letters, few churches in the Association, have, during the past year, contributed to our Denominational objects to the extent of their ability—that as a reason of this, they apprehend either that the scriptural duty of giving is not felt as it should be, or that no proper system has been devised for its expression—that no system, in their opinion will be found to answer the desired end that does not rest on a well defined sense of Christian obligation, or that leaves the work of raising moneys to the last week before the meeting of the Association, and to the impulse of the hour—hence, the great importance of ministers seasonably bringing this whole matter to the notice of their Churches, and of our S. Schools being indoctrinated in the principles, and initiated in the practice of Christian benevolence. As a good system of collecting funds for our benevolent objects, your committee would recommend that printed slips, properly headed, be prepared, and that in each church a committee be appointed to call on all the members of the Church and Congregation, asking them voluntarily to say what sums they will agree to pay, quarterly or half yearly, to the different objects named on these slips, and such sums having been entered under their respective heads and a slip left with each individual or family as the case may require, that duplicate copies of these slips as thus filled up, be then placed in the hands of efficient collectors who shall, quarterly or half-yearly, at the regular time agreed upon, call upon the parties whose names they hold. In this way, your Committee believe that our missionary operations

might be enlarged, and more adequately sustained, and Acadia College, in a few years handsomely endowed. Let the Churches try the experiment, and under the divine blessing, success will follow.

Finally, your committee recommend that the heading—*Benevolent Funds*—be substituted for *Union Societies*.
D. M. WELTON, Chairman.

Little by Little.

Facts in Nature lead to discoveries in Art. And this is only saying that man can learn from God. For Nature is God's Art. From the way God does a thing men may learn most important lessons about doing analogous things. Every invention in the arts is but the discovery of a mode of imitation of processes in nature. Every application of forces either mechanical or chemical, and every modification of physical compounds, by which new and frequently revolutionary ideas are introduced into machinery, has its prototype in the natural world.

The discovery in architecture that tubular columns are stronger than solid cylinders, is an idea borrowed from the tubular structure of a stalk of wheat and of animal bones. The discoveries in mechanics concerning the best application of power for velocity, are ideas borrowed from muscular insertions. Discoveries of the best draught and model in ship-building are ideas borrowed from the shapes of fish and water-fowls. And what is the electric telegraph but an idea borrowed from the nervous system, in which the nervous threads and volition, tremulous with the same elements which speed along the telegraphic wires, transmit their despatches to the sensorium and back again in an instant to the farthest extremity of this microcosm of the human body? The telescope and microscope are optical instruments modelled after the eye; and the daguerrean, ambrotypic, and photographic arts are imitations of the formation of images on the retina. These are illustrations of an almost boundless store of facts; and if any man wishes to turn inventor, let him study nature and look there for his hint. God sets a copy in his own productions for every mechanic to work by.

Nor are the improvement and perfection of the physical arts the only design of the prototypes in nature. God would teach us lessons in morals as well as mechanics. He would make us inventors in the application of spiritual and evangelizing forces as well as of physical. And this he would do mainly. There is a certain large class of facts in nature which no mere cursory observer can possibly overlook. They show that *God does great things by littles*. Little by little, line upon line, precept upon precept—this is God's plan.

The myriads of tons of water which float over our heads so harmlessly in the clouds were pumped into those upper cisterns atom by atom, in particles so minute as to be invisible. And the vast floods which sluice the earth, and roll oftentimes in such immense torrents, do not drop down in a mass as it out of a broken cistern, but they come down drop by drop, as if tenderly sifted through a fine colander. All the sap needed by a plant is not sucked up at once by a great effort of nature; but innumerable little ducts and absorbents in the roots open their little mouths and take in less than the millionth part of a drop at a time.

All the wheat which ministers bread to the ester and seed to the sower does not hang in one vast aggregated mass on one immense stalk; but every little stem can bend with its little thimbleful of golden treasure, and that little is subdivided into scores of smaller grains. Man does not inhale enough breath at one inspiration to last him like a toad, for a year or a lifetime; but he is breathing a few cubic inches twenty times a minute. We do not take food in one solid mass, but we mine it by bits, mouthful after mouthful. And the blood does not with noise and confusion drench the part where it contributes to nutrition, but silently threads its way into the microscopic capillaries, and deposits its little atoms.

Now these are models for the evangelical worker. The way God works we must. These are not simply hidden hints where Gospel enterprise may work out a true theory of the philosophy of successful Christian effort, but they are clear revelations, as clear as light, as old as truth, and as broad as humanity. *Little by little*, brother; this is God's plan: it ought to be yours.

Bible reader! *Little by little*. You may not have time in the press of business to read much. Take it, then, as you do your food little by little.

Christian worker! *Little by little*. You and I cannot do "some great thing." We have small abilities, and we cannot work beyond them; but if we do little by little, in the end it may not be such a small thing after all. Even a little effort every day to save some soul may reveal at the judgment marvellous results.—N. Y. Methodist.

Not qualified.

When John Brown, D. D., had settled in Hadington, the people of his parish gave him a warm and enthusiastic reception; only one of the members of that large church and congregation stood out in opposition to him. The reverend doctor tried all the means in his power to convert the solitary dissenter to the unity of feeling which pervaded the whole body, but all his efforts to obtain an interview proved abortive. As Providence directed, however, they happened one day to meet