

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

Extracted from a New and excellent Work, entitled "THE POWER OF THE PULPIT," by the Rev. Dr. Spring of New York.

"We have no hesitation in saying, that the voluntary principle is the true principle; not only is it more in keeping with the spirit of our free institutions, but with the spirit and genius of Christianity. The great Head of the Church has thrown the support of his ministers upon the unconstrained liberality of those who attend on their ministrations; or rather upon their rectitude and justice; thus putting to the test their loyalty to him, and their own views of the value of a preached Gospel. It is the revealed law of his kingdom, that 'they who serve at the altar shall live by the altar.' This is indeed but a republication of that great law of nature, that 'the laborer is worthy of his hire;' yet is such a law, distinctly published, no unnecessary statute. If God did not see fit to leave the question of the temporal support of his ministers to the discretion of the people; by that very decision he expressed his own judgment of the dependence of his ministers, and of the duty of the people to furnish them a competent and generous supply. This is the spirit of the Jewish law. And nothing is more obvious, than that the great principle of this statute is embodied in the teachings of the New Testament. When the Saviour sent forth the early teachers of christianity, he directed them to 'provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in their purses; nor script, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.' They were not to provide them, because they were to be provided by others. If they possessed them, they were not to provide them; they were to be provided by the people among whom they labored. The expressive reason which he assigns for this injunction is the law to which we have referred, 'the workman is worthy of his hire.' The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, devotes a paragraph to this subject. 'Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not 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 plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things. If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

"It is no unnatural exposition to regard this passage as indicating the duty of the Church in respect of her temporal maintenance of the ministry. It is the ordaining of her great Head, that 'they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.' It is certainly a fair question, too. What are we to understand by the phrase, 'shall live of the Gospel?' The answer to this question must be found in the kind and liberal spirit of christianity, and in the bosoms of those in whom that spirit dwells. The amount of support to which every faithful minister is entitled, is one of those relative duties which falls within the comprehensive precept, 'whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so to them.' It is no extravagance to say that it is the duty of the people to elevate their ministers above want; to enable them to be honest men, respectable men, charitable and public spirited men. They ought to have the opportunity, not only of being employed in the appropriate duties of their office, but of discharging its functions advantageously. And is it too much to say, that they ought to be enabled to educate their children, and make some provision for old age; or, should they be cut off in the midst of their days, some provision for the widow and fatherless when they themselves sleep in the dust? From the divine appointment in reference to the support of the Levitical Priesthood, and from the nature of the case, it is quite obvious that the christian law on this sub-

ject cannot be interpreted to mean anything less than a comfortable support for the situation in which the party is placed by the Divine Providence. As great diversity exists in the location of the ministry, so this circumstance must give rise to diversity in the amount of their support. It is only some general rules that can be adopted in regard to it. And the general law, beyond controversy is, that it should be sufficient to enable those who preach the Gospel to live 'of the Gospel.'"

"This is the law of God's House. It is a revealed precept which men have no more right to transgress than any other precept in the Bible. It has no specified penalty; it is one of those laws which the Great Lawgiver will enforce in his own way, and by the penalties that are executed in the dispensations of his observing and searching providence. He has put in his claim for such a portion of the property of his people, as shall furnish a comfortable support to his ministers; he claims this portion of their property, just as he does the Lord's Day, as his portion of their time. It does not belong to men; it is God's, just as truly as were the tithes under the Levitical Law. Ministers are his ambassadors; and the terms on which he employs them are, that they shall receive a competent support from the people to whom he sends them. They hold his draft upon them for this indefinite amount; and it is for them to honour, or dishonour, the draft of their redeeming King."

"To what extent he is honoured in this claim, is an inquiry which will not endure the most rigid scrutiny. It is no uncommon thing for congregations who stipulate to furnish their minister a stated salary, to put his own delicacy to the test, by imposing the duty on him of begging it from the pulpit. Such arrangements are degrading to the ministry, and cannot fail to be injurious to the influence of the ministry."

"There is also a most dishonourable failure on the part of many congregations to meet their engagements with their minister; they meet them as suits their convenience, or do not meet them at all. They treat their minister as they dare not treat a hired servant, and deny him his rights, because they know that he would be slow to enforce them by legal process."

"Ministers not a few, also there are, not in new and poor districts merely, but in those that are well cultivated and rich, who have not a decent maintenance; and who, without some unlooked for interposition of Providence, must in their advanced years become the burden of the public bounty. Many a pastor has loved his flock as his own soul, and was slow to serve them with unwearied diligence, and strained to accuse them before God, for withholding what he gives to the fowls of the air."

"We are not pleading for a wealthy ministry; we should be sorry to see ministers wealthy, unless they happen to become so by inheritance or by unlooked-for domestic alliances. And even then, it requires more self-denial than the most of ministers possess, under such circumstances, to make full proof of their ministry."

"The ministers of the Gospel in this land are not much exposed to enter into the service of the Church from the 'love of filthy lucre.' We do not solicit for their wealth; but we do solicit competence. We don't desire them to be independent of their people; but we do desire to see them raised above the dependence of paupers. They are a divinely appointed instrumentality for accomplishing the most important and glorious work which God is accomplishing in this apostate world; and their qualifications and their circumstances ought not to be a matter of indifference either to themselves, or to others. Taking human nature as it is, the extremes of wealth and poverty are alike unfriendly to their intercourse. Anxious cares and bitter temptations are the growth of both; and they agitate the heart. Wealth perplexes; poverty discourages, and by it the spirit of a minister is depressed and broken. A minister may be pitted as a poor man; but so long as he is the object of compassion, he is not respected as a servant of the Most High God."

"I cannot help regarding this subject as one of great importance to the Church of God. It is not easy to account for this reluctance to support the Gospel. If it were nothing more than a sense of justice, one would think this alone sufficient to rescue the ministry from this depression. Men are slow to admit that they are indebted to their religious teachers. They acknowledge other claims; they do not hesitate

to allow a full and fair recompense to their legal or medical advisers; yet feel little compunction withholding a suitable recompense from their spiritual guides. There are narrow views on this subject. Men there are who live in the enjoyment of every convenience, who grudge their minister what they do not refuse to the operatives in their manufactories, or the laborers in their fields."

"The radical difficulty would seem to be, that there are so many in the community who regard the Gospel as of little value, and the instructions of the pulpit of little importance, either to themselves, to their children, or to their fellow men. Yet if the Bible, and universal experience, may be relied on, there is nothing which can be less safely dispensed with than the stated ministrations of God's sanctuary."

Deacons.

The importance of a faithful discharge of the office of deacon, is truthfully set forth by John Angell James, in his 'Churchin earnest.' We quote from the chapter on 'Diligence as Church Members.'

Next to this, the deacons in our churches should be looked to for much more efficient assistance than they are in the habit of rendering. I allow that the original appointment of these went no further than for the care of the poor; but the customs of our churches have thrown many other things into their hands. These, or some other spiritual and experienced persons, should be found to help the pastor in the spiritual, more private, and individual duties of his office—such as conversing with inquirers, comforting the distressed, and guiding the perplexed. Unhappily our deacons are usually men much immersed in business, and who have little time for anything but their own concerns; and more than this, some of them are men much called out for the business of the town in which they live.—But considering how solemn and responsible a thing it is to bear office in the church of Christ, and how momentous a community the church of Christ is, they ought either to resign their office as deacons, if they cannot discharge its duties, or else withdraw their attention from public business. A deacon, next to the pastor, should be the most earnest member of the church. He should be all energy and devotedness, breathing by his words, and inspiring by his conduct, a spirit of love and activity into the souls of his fellow-members. He should be ardent, without being rash—active, without being obtrusive or officious—taking the lead not merely by choice, but by request—stirring up the liberality of the church by being first in all pecuniary exertions, and setting others on fire by the warmth of his own zeal. He should be his minister's counsellor, without being his dictator; his comforter, without being his flatterer; his helper, without being his master, and his friend, without being his partisan."

Still, as we cannot in all cases expect so much as this, or find all we could wish in deacons, there might be found in most of our churches a few spiritual and judicious persons who would be of essential service in the way of teaching some of our inquirers and young converts 'the way of God more perfectly.' It is painful to think how much religious impression is allowed to pass away, and how many deep and pungent convictions to be extinguished, for want of their being watched and cherished. There are many persons who would gladly avail themselves of the assistance of a kind-hearted, able, and willing instructor, guide, and comforter, though he were not an official. It is perfectly clear to any attentive student of the New Testament, that there was much more of division of labor in the primitive churches than there is in ours. If we refer to Rom. xii. 7, we find mention made of 'ministering,' 'teaching,' 'exhortation,' 'ruling;' and it would seem as if these functions were severally discharged by different persons. So again in 1 Cor. xii. 28, we read of 'governments,' and 'helps,' as of something distinct from 'teachers.' The meaning of the word 'helps,' is of very wide latitude and as no hint whatever is given to its precise application in this instance, we cannot determine to what function it refers. It was not probably a designation of an office in the usual acceptation of that word, but merely a description of persons whose zeal and ability rendered them of great use in a variety of ways to the regular officers of the church. Why have we not more of these 'helps' now?—we certainly need them. And if we do not think it proper to revive the supposititious office of deaconesses, why may we not have a band of matronly females, eminent at once for their piety and prudence, who shall be employed, without the formalities of office, but under appointment by the pastor and deacons, to visit the sick members of their own sex, and to aid in the way of Bible classes, the in-

struction of the young female inquirers. Perhaps the blame lies in the pastors, that more collateral help of this kind is not obtained and employed.—We are not wise in our generation, by not finding out, and calling out, the help which must be contained in every large congregation. I never will or can believe that among those hundreds of enlightened minds, and renewed hearts, which are in our churches, there are not many who could, in various ways, be our assistants; and who would not rejoice on being solicited to give us their help."

Grande Ligne Mission.

Three converts were baptised by the Rev. L. Normandeau, at St. Pie, on Lord's day, the 8th instant.

Several members of the Church at St. Pie are actively engaged in the work of colportage and are much encouraged by the results.

In one parish, fifteen Roman Catholic families have commenced reading the scriptures, and appear to be earnestly desirous of understanding and enjoying the truths of the gospel. They have repeatedly visited, for the purpose of imparting instruction, and confirming them in the faith. Ere long it is hoped, they will be convinced of the duty of separation from a corrupt church. The priest is greatly excited by the event. He has attempted to get possession of the New Testaments which have been circulated in the parish; but in the majority of instances the people have refused to surrender them and boldly avow their determination to read the word of God."

At another station, several persons have recently determined to quit the Romish Church, and declare themselves Protestants.

In the district around the Mission House at Grande Ligne there are many encouraging indications. The number of inquirers is increasing; the preaching of the gospel is listened to with serious attention; and many opportunities of usefulness are continually presented, which cannot be embraced, partly for want of suitable labourers, and partly for want of funds.

Madame Felles is now in the United States, soliciting contributions. The friends of truth, of all Protestant denominations, it is earnestly hoped; will lend their aid. Baptists are particularly called on to be liberal, for to them the Mission more especially belongs.—*Montreal Register.*

Endowment of the Irish Roman Catholic Priesthood.

The London Correspondent of the *New York Recorder* writes thus on the Subject;—

"But we are likely soon to have an endowment measure of far greater magnitude against which to protest. The conviction is strong, in the best informed circles, that our ministry are about to bring forward a project for giving state pay to the Romish priesthood in Ireland, and that they will be supported by the leading statesmen of all parties. Lord John Russell has repeatedly avowed that he should be glad to do this if public opinion would allow it, and it is believed that he has determined to attempt it. A meeting of nearly twenty ministers of different denominations was held last evening to consult respecting the course to be adopted in consequence. The names of Baptist Noel and Bickseth, of the Established Church; Binnie and Massie, of the Independents; Bunting and Alder, of the Wesleyans; Cox, Groser, and Steane, of the the Baptists; all of whom were present, with Sir Culling Eardley as their host, will give a general notion of the character of the assembly. There was no question but that any such measures should be sternuously opposed; but the chief subject for discussion was, whether it were desirable that the different bodies should act unitedly or separately. Of course the opposition of some would be based on the principle of hostility to all state patronage, while others maintaining the propriety of the endowment of truth from the public purse, are opposed to the endowment of error, especially of Romish error. The general opinion was in favor of separate but harmonious movement, the different bodies taking their own ground, but maintaining a good understanding with each other, and some degree of co-operation. A larger meeting will, however, be convened in a few days, when the subject will be again discussed."

In 1669, the constables in the Colony of Plymouth were ordered to look after all persons who slept in church, and report their names to the General Court.