An earnest appeal to the Free Church of Scotland on the subjects of its economics

by

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AN

EARNEST APPEAL

TO THE

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

ON THE SUBJECTS OF ITS

ECONOMICS.

BY THE

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR.

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE SECOND EDINBURGH EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The Board of Publication believe that they are performing an important service for the Presbyterian Church in re-pub lishing this pamphlet. The topics Dr. Chalmers here discusses with his characteristic ability and energy, are, *mutatis mutandis*, of no less moment to our Church than they are to the Free Church of Scotland. This will be sufficiently evident to every candid reader of the able and interesting Introduction prefixed to the present edition.

A copy of the pamphlet will be sent, through the liberality of a friend, to each of the ministers in our connexion. The Board are unwilling to believe that such seed is to be scattered through the Church in vain. They are convinced that the subjects here presented, demand the most serious attention of our ministers and people, and that they should be *discussed* until some measures shall be devised and adopted at once to augment the liberality, zeal, and efficiency of our Church, and to promote the comfort and usefulness of her ministers.

The management of the Economics of the Church is vested in its Judicatories. With their functions this Board has no wish to interfere. It is not its province even to suggest specific modifications of existing plans. Its office simply is to diffuse light, leaving it to the Church herself, under

the guidance of God's Providence and Spirit, to use the light thus disseminated as she may see fit.

It is taken for granted that many of those into whose hands this Appeal may fall, will be disposed to examine its facts and reasonings in their application to our own affairs, and to lay their views before the churches. If in any instances individuals should choose to send their communications to this Board, the Board will with pleasure receive them, and dispose of them in such a manner as may in their judgment be best adapted to promote the ends contemplated in the circulation of this pamphlet.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

The disruption of the Church of Scotland, the simultaneous secession of four hundred and seventy of her ministers, and of a still larger proportion of her members; the sacrifice by the clergy of an abundant and secure income; the cheerful assumption by the people of the burden of sustaining their own Church, and of creating all the necessary appliances for that purpose, presented an example of fidelity, of self-denial, and of energy, which has few parallels in history. This spectacle has fixed the attention of the Protestant world, and is exerting an influence, the results of which it is difficult to foresee or estimate.

When the Free Church withdrew from the Establishment, it had every thing to do, and to do at once. 1. Churches were to be erected in every parish. 2. Provision was to be made for the support of the ministry. 3. All the missionary and other benevolent operations of the Church were to be taken up and carried on. 4. Parochial schools were to be established. 5. Manses were to be provided for the pastors. 6. A college was to be organized and sustained.

Some of these objects demanded a strenuous effort once for all, and they were taken up and disposed of in order. First, collections were made for the building of churches. This work was prosecuted with so much vigour that within three years and a half after the disruption not less than £400,000 sterling, or $1,800,000 have been expended in erecting from five to seven hundred churches. Then $250,000 were raised for parochial schools. Then, in the space of eight months, $500,000 were collected for building manses. Then, or even before, $100,000 were obtained for a college, designed principally as a theological seminary.

Important as were these several objects, they were still secondary to those which made a permanent demand on the Church. Of these the most pressing was the support of the ministry. The principle adopted was, that every minister who left the Establishment, should receive an equal sum from a common fund, which sum the congregation to which he ministered might increase by voluntary contributions, at discretion. In some places the amount received from the common fund would be adequate to the support of the pastor; in other places it would be entirely insufficient. Every congregation, therefore, after contributing to the general fund, was left at liberty to do what they saw fit for the support of their own minister. To carry out this plan, associations were organized in every parish. The business of these associations is to make collections for the sustentation fund. This is done by districting the parish, and appointing a collector in each district, whose duty it is to apply to every member within his bounds for his weekly or monthly contribution. The proceeds of these collections are remitted to Edinburgh, and twice a year a dividend is declared. To supplement these salaries, collections are made every Sabbath at the door of the churches, the proceeds of which are given to the pastor. The result has been that every pastor has received from the general fund a salary varying from £100, to £140.

It will be seen from the following pamphlet, that Dr. Chalmers is alarmed at the operation of this plan of equal distribution, which he says fosters the spirit of giving as little, and getting as much as possible. He insists strenuously that the rule should be adopted of the congregations "getting as they give." One proposition is, that every pastor shall receive from the sustentation fund, one and a half times as much as his congregational association contributes to that fund. If the association contributes £50, the pastor receives £75; if it contributes £60, he receives £90; and so on until the stipend amounts to £150, beyond which nothing is to be given from the general fund. The reasons for this modification will be found in the pamphlet.

After providing for the support of her own ministers, the next most pressing duty of the Free Church, was the prosecution of her benevolent operations. As all the missionaries connected with the Established Church, took part with the seceding portion, on that portion was devolved at once the burden of sustaining all the enterprises in which the whole Church had been engaged. These benevolent operations are divided into several departments, called schemes, each having its own committee of superintendence and management. These are, Education, Foreign Missions, Domestic Missions, Conversion of the Jews, Colonial Churches. The general plan of raising funds for these several schemes, is to assign a particular day for each, on which the collection is to be made simultaneously throughout the whole Church. The plan or mode of making this collection seems to be left to the discretion of each congregation. There is a schedule in use in some congregations, which seems so simple and so well adapted to the purpose, that it may without impropriety be transfer-

red from Appendix No II. to this place, to render it more prominent as a model.

Rates of Contribution to the —— Fund.

SCALE.	PER WEEK.		PER MONTH.			PER QUARTER.		
	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rate, No. 1....	*							
Rate, No. 2. ..	0	1	0	0	4	0	1	0
Rate, No. 3....	0	1½	0	0	6	0	1	6
Rate, No. 4 ...	0	2	0	0	8	0	2	0
Rate, No. 5....	0	3	0	1	0	0	3	0
Rate, No. 6 ...	0	6	0	2	0	0	6	0
Rate, No. 7....	1	0	0	4	0	0	12	0
Rate, No. 8....	2	0	0	8	0	1	4	0
Rate, No. 9....	2	6	0	10	0	1	10	0
Rate, No. 10....	3	6	0	14	0	2	2	0
Rate, No. 11....	5	0	1	0	0	3	0	0
Rate, No. 12....	*							

On considering the above rates, I agree to give to the . . . . . the sum specified in Rate No. —, for the year commencing at Martinmas, 1844, and request the Deacon or Collector to call for it each . . . . . (Signature) . . . . . .

* Rate No. 1 is left blank, to suit parties who may find that even the Rate, No. 2 is above their ability; and Rate No. 12 is also left blank, to suit parties whose circumstances may enable them to give a higher Rate than any put down in the scale. Some members of the Free Church also give £1 a week, some £2, some £4, and a few even more, to the . . . . . fund.

In proof of the efficiency of these plans and of the energy with which they are prosecuted, it is enough to say that the Free Church has raised in three years a million sterling, by annual contributions of upward of £300,000. It assumed at birth all the functions and responsibilities of a mature establishment. Six and thirty months have sufficed to form a society with all the appliances of self-support, instruction, and extension. A body whose existence dates no further back than 1843, pays £72,000 to its appointed ministers, provides for its widows and orphans, expends £9000 a year on its home missions, and twice as much in building churches. It has a college with scholarships for poor students, with professors and tutors receiving salaries amounting to £4000 a year. It has its normal and general schools, probationers, catechists and travellers. It has six missions in India, six stations in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor for the conversion of the Jews. It has made grants amounting to near £2000 to the Evangelical Societies of Switzerland and Belgium, and the Bible Society of Toulouse and the Gustavus Adolphus Society of Germany. It provides for the temporary support of Hebrew converts in Hungary, and for Hindoo converts in Calcutta; supports missionaries with insured lives in South Africa, and has despatched a philosophical apparatus to the Great Fish River.*

It is obvious that other churches must have much to learn from such a body. Our own church from its various points of contact and affinity with the Free Church of Scotland, may especially be

* Condensed from no very friendly article in the London Times, September, 1846.

expected to take an interest in her operations, and to be disposed to profit by her example. We have the same standards of doctrine and order. Our people have been trained under the same system of truth. We too are a self-sustaining and self-extending church. We have the same kind of work to perform both at home and abroad. What, therefore, a man so eminent and so long experienced in practical matters, as Dr. Chalmers, has to say in his parting counsels to the Free Church, may well be expected to find attentive readers in this country. The republication of this pamphlet is to be referred to the conviction, that the principles here advocated are the very principles upon which we must act, if we would in any measure fulfil our destiny, or emulate the usefulness of a body much smaller in numbers, and much more limited in its resources than our own. There is indeed much in this pamphlet which has reference to the peculiar circumstances of the Free Church, but there is also much which as intimately concerns us as it does them.

I. There are certain general principles which pervade all the practical counsels of Dr. Chalmers, as they do the whole Bible. One is the universal brotherhood of believers; another is, the obligation which lies on every individual and every community to meet as far as possible, its own necessities. From the one principle flows the duty of bearing one another's burdens, of making the abundance of one a supply for the deficiency of others. 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14. From the other, flows the duty of self-support as far as it may be practicable. It is on the due adjustment of these two principles, the proper relative discharge of these two duties, that the well being of every community depends. If, on the one hand, the rich keep their abundance to themselves, multitudes of their brethren must perish. If, on the other, the poor rely upon the rich, without adequate exertion on their own part, the rich will soon weary of a liberality which they see to be productive of evil, or resources which ought to flow out to those who really need them, will be absorbed by those who would be better without such assistance.

Dr. Chalmers makes a twofold application of these principles. First, he shows the impropriety of the poorer members of the Church devolving the duty of giving on their richer brethren. This is unreasonable, because it is as much the duty of the poor to give according to their ability, as it is that of the rich to give according to theirs. It is unwise, because the numerous small contributions of the poor, in all societies, amount to more than the large contributions of the rich. It is injurious, because it is doing the poor a great good, it is cultivating self-respect, self-denial, gratitude to God, and love to men, to call upon them to take their part in the great work of Christian benevolence. In the second place, he applies these principles to congregations. There always will be aid-giving and aid-receiving churches. There is a tendency in the one class to be backward or parsimonious in giving; and a tendency in the other, to rely upon aid from abroad, without making due exertion at home. Both these evils are to be counteracted; the one by impressing on the stronger churches the duty of aiding their brethren; and the other, by urging

on weak churches the duty of doing all they can for themselves. Hence the earnestness with which our author argues that all the benevolent operations of the Church should be conducted with the aim of increasing the number of the aid-giving, and of decreasing that of the aid-receiving congregations; making it the interest of the latter to assist themselves, by proportioning the amount received from abroad, to the sum raised at home.

There is another general principle on which Dr. Chalmers very properly insists, and that is, the perfect consistency of real unity in the Church, both as to feeling and operation, without uniformity. All may be united, though all are not alike. There may be a general building fund, though all the churches are not of the same pattern. There may be a general fund for sustaining the ministry, though all salaries are not equal. It seems in Scotland many suppose that unity implies uniformity, and parity equality, not only in constitutional rights, but in external circumstances. Hence the attempt was made to prohibit the richer congregations building churches more expensive than a prescribed model; and to do away with the right of a congregation adding any thing to the salary its pastor received from the common fund. This our author argues betrays great ignorance of human nature. The money spent in ornamenting a church, is not money taken from the building fund, but money which would never have found its way into the treasury of the Church. Money given to supplement the salary of a pastor, is not so much subtracted from the sustentation fund, but so much added to the comfort of the pastor, which would not otherwise have been given. In some congregations it was the custom to charge pew-rents. These in some cases were abolished, under the impression that the amount paid as rent, would be added in the form of increased contributions to the sustentation fund. The result was, the rents were lost, but the sustentation fund was not increased. The reason is plain. The rents were paid from one motive, and contributions were made to the sustentation fund from another motive. Taking off the pew rent had no more tendency to increase the contributions of the congregation, than a fall in the rent of houses. There is surely wisdom in all this, and it shows that the attempt to reduce every thing to a dead level in the Church or out of it, is just as impracticable as to reduce all men to the same age, or to one uniform stature. There must be free scope left to the people to indulge all right feelings, while they are made to bear in mind that the Church is one, so that if one member suffer, all the members should suffer with it.

II. The principles inculcated in this pamphlet bearing on the best method of raising funds, will be found as applicable to us, as to the Church in Scotland. The most obvious and important of these principles are the following:

1. The necessity of thorough organization. Every portion of the territory of the Free Church is brought within the limits of some association. These associations, organized by church officers, divide every parish into geographical districts, in each of which a collector

is appointed, whose duty it is to go over the ground at stated periods. This is so essential a part of the whole system, that Dr. Chalmers asks, Where should we have been, but for our associations?

2. The necessity of personal application to every member of the Church. Reliance is not placed on general collections in the Church. The name of every member in each district is obtained; and the question is deliberately laid before his heart and conscience, What can you give to promote the cause of Christ?

3. The necessity of ministerial supervision and agency. Dr. Chalmers records it as the result of his experience, that wherever the pastor takes an interest in these associations, and exerts himself to secure their efficiency, there the work is done; and he avows it as his conviction that wherever the plan has failed or languished, there the fault lies with the minister, and not with the people.

4. The necessity of a central committee to give uniformity and efficiency to the financial operations of the Church. This committee should consist mainly of men of business, that is, of men familiar with accounts, rather than of professional men. With this must be connected a system of paid agencies. "There is," says Dr. Chalmers, "a prejudice, I had almost said a low-minded suspicion, on this subject, most grievously adverse to the enlargement of the church's resources and means. The sum of £2000 or £3000 a year, and perhaps more, rightly expended on the right men, would be remunerated more than fifty fold by the impulse thus given to the mechanism of our associations." If this is the testimony of experience in such a country as Scotland, any part of which can be reached in two days from the centre of operations, how much more necessary must be an efficient agency in our country, where every thing is so dispersed, that it is impossible thus easily to transmit an impulse or to secure co-operation.

III. The support of the clergy. This is one of the most difficult and complicated practical questions which can engage the attention of the church. In this country we seem to think we have solved the problem, by making every pastor dependent on his own immediate flock. This however is a very questionable matter. Our system, though it has its advantages, has its serious disadvantages. A system which secures the exclusive devotion of every minister to his official duties, is surely better than one which forces a large portion of the ministry to resort to some secular employment as a means of support. A system which secures to every man devoted to his work, an income adequate to his necessities, is certainly better than one which provides with lavish abundance for a few, and leaves the many to struggle with penury. The plan adopted in the Free Church has these advantages; ours labours obviously and to a lamentable extent under these disadvantages. This pamphlet brings up this subject. It will lead the reader to ask, whether nothing can be done to correct the evils under which our system labours. This is not the place to discuss this question, nor to follow out into its details any plan for meeting these difficulties. But as the subject will suggest itself to every reader, it may not be improper to say what follows.

If the church is one, it is just as much the duty of our wealthy congregations, to see that men preaching the gospel in Wisconsin or Iowa are supported, as that their own pastors are duly sustained. And if the Lord has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel,—if the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire, be of general and not of very restricted application, then does justice demand that every minister devoted to his work should be adequately supported.

These are the two principles, viz. the unity of the church, and the "divine right" (i. e. a right founded on a divine ordinance) of every minister to a support, on which this whole subject rests, and according to which it ought to be adjusted.

Nothing so chimerical as an equalization of salaries is of course intended. This would be both unjust and impracticable. Unjust, because an equal sum from a common fund would be a most unequal compensation, owing to the great difference of the expense of living in different places, and to the demands to which different ministers are subject. It would be impracticable, because if all ministers received the same salary from a common source, the people would still possess and exercise the right of adding to it what they pleased. All that is here asserted is, first, that every minister devoted to his work has a right to an adequate support; and second, that the obligation to provide that support rests on the whole church, and not exclusively upon that portion of the church to whom the preacher ministers.

If it be asked how these principles are to be carried out so as to accomplish the end in view, it may be answered that a great good will be obtained if the principles themselves be recognized as just, and the obligation to act in obedience to them be acknowledged. The best method of giving them effect may well call for the deliberate consideration of the wisest men of the church.

The following suggestions are made in hopes of calling attention to the subject, and of ultimately leading to the adoption of some plan which may meet with general approbation.

1. Let the principle be adopted, that every man who devotes himself to the work of the ministry, shall receive an adequate support. We act on this principle with regard to our foreign missionaries, why should we not do it with regard to those who preach the gospel at home?

2. Let the church appoint a "Sustentation Committee," to be composed principally of men of business, whose duty it shall be to raise funds for the support of the ministry, and to distribute them according to rules to be prescribed by the General Assembly. This committee ought perhaps to be established in New York, as the business centre of the country.

3. Let a maximum be fixed, beyond which no contribution shall be received from the Sustentation Fund. In the Free Church that maximum is £150. If $500 be assumed as the limit here, then it may be determined that no pastor who receives $500 or more from his congregation, shall receive anything from the Sustentation Fund.

He and his people would then belong to the aid-giving and not to the aid-receiving class of churches.

4. All money raised within the churches, connected with the fund for the support of the ministry, should be remitted to the Sustentation Committee or carried to its credit. If this plan were adopted the pastors could more freely urge their people to give, than when pleading for themselves.

5. Let a minimum be fixed to entitle any congregation to be taken into connexion with the fund. The salary then paid to the pastor may be determined, according to some regular scale, in proportion to the amount received from his congregation. For example, if a congregation contribute $100, the pastor's salary may be fixed at $400; if the congregation contribute $200, the pastor may receive $500. Or it may be found best to adopt the plan of fixing the pastor's salary at one and a half the sum, or at double the sum, received from his congregation.

6. Those places whence nothing is received for the general fund, or an amount less than the sum determined as the minimum, must be considered as missionary stations to be supplied by young unmarried men, until they are able to contribute the amount necessary to entitle them to be received on the Sustentation Fund.

Instead of appointing a "Sustentation Committee," it may be deemed expedient to commit this whole subject to the Board of Missions, and to modify the plan of that Board in such a manner as to accomplish the end contemplated.

It may be said that any such scheme as that above referred to, would be liable to great abuse. Men might be received on the fund, who were still engaged in secular pursuits, or were indolent, or inefficient, or unacceptable. This is undoubtedly true. But it is true of any conceivable plan of doing good, that it is liable to be abused. In carrying out such a plan, our reliance, under God, must be on the piety of the men introduced into the ministry, the supervision of the Presbyteries, and on the regular reports of the incumbents on the fund, as to the amount and results of their labours.

If it be asked, where the money is to come from to carry out such a plan, it may be asked in reply, Where does it come from in Scotland? The Free Church raises annually about $350,000 for its sustentation fund. We are far more numerous, and have far more wealth than they. Our people are as liberal, piety is the same thing here, that it is there, we have as great a work to do, and as strong motives for doing it well. The great difference lies in the difference of our plans, and consequently in the objects which we present to the people. If you propose to any congregation the support of their own pastor, or to send a number of missionaries to the west, with a hundred dollars each, they will give accordingly. But if you propose to them the larger object of providing for the adequate support of every faithful minister in our Church, they will awake to new views, and to larger conceptions of their duty and privileges.

It is not expected that these suggestions will meet with general or immediate acceptance. They are to be regarded as mere hints, to

be modified indefinitely, as the wisdom or experience of the Church may determine.

The following remarks, however, seem to deserve consideration, in favour of some such plan.

1. It will be a compliance, on the part of our Church, with the law of Christ, that they who preach the gospel, shall live by the gospel.

2. It will enable our pastors to devote themselves to their ministerial work, instead of giving, as in a multitude of cases is now unavoidable, a large portion of their time to some secular employment, for the support of their families.

3. It will in a measure do away with the undue and unjust disparity in the salaries of our ministers. It has ever been justly considered a great reproach on the Church of England, that while one portion of her clergy have the income of princes, so large a part of her laborious ministers have from £30 to £50 a year.

4. As such a plan presupposes the unity of the Church, and can be successfully prosecuted only under the influence of a recognition of that unity, its adoption and successful prosecution must promote brotherly love. And if it have that effect, the blessing of God will descend upon us as the dew on Hermon.

5. The plan is essentially, (to borrow the language of Dr. Chalmers,) aggressive. It presses the Church continually forward, sustaining the gospel in places, where from the fewness, the indifference, or poverty of the people it could not otherwise be supported.

6. It leaves untouched the intimate relation between the pastor and the people, and the reciprocation of benefits between them, while the minister is not made entirely dependent on his own immediate congregation for his support. A large portion of his salary however must ever come from them, and on their confidence and kindness he must ever be dependent for many of his comforts.

There are many other lessons besides those above indicated to be derived from this pamphlet. But enough has probably been said to explain the reason of its republication in this country. It cannot be denied that we fall short of the example set us by the Free Church of Scotland. The principles on which they act are those on which we must act if we would be equally useful as a church. We must feel that we are one body; that the weakest and the strongest are equally bound to do what they can for the common cause. We must become more systematic in our operations, and devise some plan by which personal application shall be made to all our members for their contributions. Ministers must feel that the chief responsibility in every good work devolves on them. They are the leaders of the flock; if they go forward the people will follow.

While we thus strive to awaken a livelier sense of brotherhood in the Church, and to bring about a more equal distribution of its resources, we must allow the several parts to act freely in their respective spheres. The foot must not say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; neither must the eye say to the hand, I have no need of you. There is no schism in the natural body; neither is there

any alienation of feeling in the Church, so far as the Holy Ghost dwells in it. Indifference, therefore, on the part of the strong, or envy on the part of the weak, is an evidence of the absence of the Spirit, and cause for alarm and humiliation to all conscious of such infirmities. We need, therefore, above all things, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to give us wisdom to know how to act, and to dispose and enable us to act right.

PREFACE.

The body of this little work was printed, but can scarcely be said to have been published, last year. As it contains the most matured views of its author, the fruit of much thought and of some experience, he is unwilling that it should be altogether lost. He therefore presents it anew to the Church, in a form which leaves the main pamphlet untouched, but with this peculiarity in its structure, that each topic which required any further enlargement, or to be represented over again with still greater earnestness and urgency than before, has a distinct place assigned for it in a little section with its own distinct title, which sections are made to compose an Appendix to the work. It is to this Appendix that I would invite the special attention of the reader, as containing a series of final deliverances on the matters which are there successively taken up. I have, at the same time, to apologize for the somewhat absolute and aphoristical style in which they are given forth, as being more like the sentences of a judge who has already got a verdict to found upon, than the pleadings of an advocate who has yet a verdict to obtain. The only explanation which I can give of this peculiarity is, that I have already pleaded long enough, which the reader will find to his cost, were he to reperuse the various reports and other documents which from time to time I have been called upon to prepare on the financial affairs of the Free Church.

This is the last representation which I mean to offer upon the subject; and, such being the case, it is most natural that I should feel the importance, nay, the paramount duty, of stating not only the truth, but the whole truth, however unpalatable, if but salutary, or needful and desirable to be made known. There is a sensitive dread among several of our friends of any thing like the appearance of dissatisfaction or differences amongst ourselves, which really it is high time that we should now get the better of. The Free Church of Scotland is far too strong, too deeply rooted in the affections and confidence of the people, to be easily shaken, at least in any of her essential supports, by those misunderstandings and altercations of sentiment which are unavoidable in so large a body. She is now strong enough to stand the blasts of controversy, and can afford to be told, even publicly and by proclamation from the house-tops, of her faults and her errors. There ought to be no hushing up. The Free Church public of Scotland is far too large to have the benefits and the wholesome influences of frank and open and fearless discussion withheld from it, lest another Scottish public, exterior to ours and apart from ours, should lift up their shout of exultation and

augur our speedy downfall, when they observe that questions are getting up amongst us, or think we are far from being perfectly at one. It will turn out, I trust, that the fears of our friends, and the triumph or hopeful anticipations of our enemies, are alike groundless. It is an old phenomenon, and one which the observation of forty years has now made perfectly familiar to us, that the country brethren should look with a vigilance bordering somewhat upon jealousy to our more conspicuous ecclesiastics in the larger towns; and, in so far as they are actuated by feelings of dislike for aught like the regimen of a metropolitan cliqueship, do we most thoroughly sympathize with them.* But, on the other hand, they too should bear to be told of their short-comings, else I can look for little toleration or complacency at their hands—purposing as I do, in the following pages, to tell with all sincerity, though at the same time with the utmost affection and good-will, wherein it is that I think many of them are deficient, and some of them, I fear, most grievously in the wrong. I hope to be forgiven for the plain speaking which occurs in some of the following passages, as, next to my regard for the moral and Christian good of the people of Scotland, is the personal liking I have for their ministers. But open rebuke is better than secret or silent love.

* A thing, however, may be very hateful, while it remains a question in how far the thing is realized. The jealousy here spoken of may often be as groundless as it is sometimes low-minded. The talent for public business, and more especially for the guidance of so large a corporation as a parliament or an ecclesiastical assembly—itself an ecclesiastical parliament—this talent, we say, may in itself constitute an obligatory call on those who are possessed of it, so as to make it their justifiable, nay, their incumbent vocation, to take the influential and ostensible part which they do in the management of our affairs. If the Church but knew the fatigue and the sacrifices of ease and domestic enjoyment which are endured by these men, and the weight of care which lies upon their spirits, it would view them as the proper objects of gratitude, nay, even of pity, at the very time, perhaps, when they are assailed by clamours, and loaded till they are like to break down with unreasonable, and, it may be, with envious complaints.

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

In announcing my determination now to retire from the public business of the Free Church, I feel confident that it will not be ascribed to any decay of affection for its cause. It is not a matter of choice, but of physical necessity. I have neither the vigour nor alertness of former days; and the strength no longer remains with me, either for the debates of the Assembly, or for the details of committees and their correspondence.

At the last Assembly but one, during the first days of which I enjoyed a health I never expect to regain, I did a very rash thing. I moved the appointment of an extension committee, and accepted of its convenership. I fondly imagined the possibility of weathering one twelvemonth more of such active service as had long been familiar to me; and deemed the object I had in view of such special importance, as to justify the attempt. A few weeks convinced me of my error; and, since the month of August in 1844, my connection with our financial affairs has been little better than nominal. I can still describe, however, what I cannot execute; and the process which I hoped to set agoing will be laid before the reader in the following pages. Its accomplishment by me is now wholly out of the question; and, if judged worthy by the Church of being carried into effect, should be devolved on younger and abler men.

I shall be at all times ready to offer my opinion, and to state the results of my former experience, whenever it shall be required of me.

Egotism is painful, and more especially when it relates to one's constitutional peculiarities. Yet we are not sure if it can be deemed a peculiarity, that one should feel it greatly more fatiguing executively to carry his object over the adverse views and conceptions of other men, than argumentatively, and by following out his own uninterrupted processes of thought, to set it forth in a way that might best recommend it to those of kindred understanding with himself. It surely requires a far more strenuous effort to succeed in the establishment of a measure, than merely to advocate an opinion, even though so advocated as to succeed in the establishment of a principle. The one achievement is a triumph often effected by a leader in the hall of deliberation or debate;—the other is an achievement that might often be effected by a professor in his class-room. My preference all along has been for the latter over the former employment—to operate on the ductile minds of the young, rather than engage in arduous conflict with my fellows on questions of ecclesiastical right or polity. Circumstances have engaged me in the more uncongenial work; and for twelve years the duties of the chair have been sadly encroached upon, throughout no less than three successive warfares—those of Church Establishments, and Church Extension, and, lastly,

Church Independence. I do hope that it will neither surprise nor offend my brethren of the Free Church, that I now resign a general care of the churches, for a more special and intense care of those students who are to be the Church's future guides and guardians. The matters which I am henceforth to give up have now proceeded so far, that, without derangement or inconvenience, they may be left to pass from one hand and one management to another. And, in these circumstances, for me to persevere any longer in the work of a committee, at the expense and to the injury of the far higher work of a class, were something like the monstrous inversion of starving the heart in order to feed the extremities.

Yet I should have been unwilling to relinquish the "outward business of the house of God," without the closing effort which I now make for the exposition and enforcement of my views; both on those matters which I deem to be of most urgent importance, and on those, let me be permitted to say, in which I fear that the Church is most likely to go astray. It is very possible that some of my views will not be found to quadrate with those of men possessing great weight and consideration in our Church. This will not prevent me from stating them, though I am no longer able to contend for them. I have not forgotten the all but universal incredulity wherewith the proposal for Associations was received; and can now ask, in what state of external support would our Church have at this moment been, but for these Associations? The experiment has now ripened into experience; and, with God's blessing, I have the utmost confidence that, on the strength of a few plain and obvious principles, not only might the support of the Free Church be secured, but its extension be indefinitely carried forward. There is enough of evidence, however, even in the brief history of our Free Church, to justify the apprehension that these principles may be forgotten and disregarded. There is a leaven of selfishness, which, if not purged out, might leaven the whole lump; and, should it come to this, we can look neither for stability nor enlargement—when all men mind their own things, and not the things of the Lord Jesus.

ECONOMICS

OF THE

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

Our observations on the Financial System of the Free Church had better be arranged into different sections, with titles expressive each of a separate yet integral department of the whole subject. In our first section we shall treat of the Contributions made or making in all parts of the country for the support of the Free Church. In the second, of the business devolved upon the Board of Correspondence and Management in Edinburgh, or, in other words, on the Financial Committee. In the third, on the principles by which the distribution of the Central Fund, formed chiefly by remittances from the Associations of the Free Church, ought to be regulated. In the fourth, on the distinction, if any, which should be made between those ministers of the Free Church who left the Establishment at the Disruption, and those who have become ministers in it since. In the fifth, we propose to treat of Church Extension. In the sixth, to present a general view of the Schemes and Objects of the Church, so as that its members and friends might be made distinctly aware what the regular calls are upon their liberality, and what the periodical collections which they might lay their account with, and which ought not to be multiplied interminably or at random. We shall then, in a seventh section, conclude with the application of our principles to questions of general interest, and which affect other churches equally with our own. We confess the extent of this plan to be somewhat appalling. We shall, therefore, attempt no more than a mere syllabus, the right execution of which will require throughout a most strenuous effort of condensation.

SECT. I.—ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE FREE CHURCH.

1. The direct individual subscriptions, as was to be expected from the first, are now falling away, though not to such an extent as might be conceived, on comparison of the present with the original list—the greater part of these having merged into the Associations, and being still transmitted to us through that medium.* It is on the regular working and perennial yield, as from an unintermittent spring, of the Associations, that our financial system mainly depends. This lays an onerous responsibility upon the Collectors.

* From the accounts relative to this matter as last made up (May 15th, 1845) it appears that the produce of these direct contributions had fallen from £17,353 0s. 8½d. to £7055 10s. 3½d.; while the produce of the Associations had risen from £50,934 10s. to £70,575 1s. 8½d. We cannot yet present the accounts for the present year.

We do not say onerous in the sense that theirs is a burdensome performance. Generally speaking, a very brief interval of time would suffice for their periodical rounds of visitation. All which is required is, that the duty, a very light one, shall never be omitted—shall be gone through punctually. But just in proportion to the lightness of the duty will be the heaviness of the imputation, if it be found that the Free Church cannot be upheld, because, after all their parade and professions of attachment, not one can be found for every hundred among her friends who will give up half an hour in the week, or two hours a month, in her service.

2. But it is not enough that this duty should be *punctually*, it should be *fully* gone through. On comparing the list of contributors with that of sitters or communicants, it is often found that not one half of these have yet given in their names as members of the Congregational Association. All should be offered the opportunity, and be invited to take a share in the support of gospel ordinances. For this purpose it were well, if, either on beginning anew, or in order to repair the slackness and incompleteness of the operation hitherto, each Deacon, accompanied by the Elder of his district, should call on every Free Church family within its limits,* that each may be made to understand the object and the vast religious importance of these Associations. The reason why we would have the Elder to go round with the Deacon, at least in the first instance, and to set the process fully agoing, is, that though the latter has chiefly to do with the secularities of the Church, it is the part of the former to deal freely and faithfully with the people of his charge on every question in which conscience and a Christian obligation are concerned. Now, the support of an evangelical ministry in Scotland, the great design of these Associations, is pre-eminently such a question. There is in it all the apostolic sacredness of a missionary cause. And what is true of the part which the Elder should take in this matter, holds also true of the Clergyman. No consideration should restrain him, in right measure and on all fitting occasions, from giving his testimony and his countenance on the side of a plain duty.† Otherwise, he fails in declaring the whole counsel of God; and because of a false delicacy on his part, the people whom he should labour to make perfect and complete in the divine life, are suffered to remain beneath the level of their most righteous and incumbent obligations.

3. All the names which have been taken up in this initial survey, by the Elder and Deacon of any given district, should be made over to the Collector or Collectors attached to it. After which, it were well if the Deacon (who might or might not be a Collector himself) were, at least once a quarter, to accompany each of the Collectors, who operate within his sphere, throughout all the families; and by means of conversation, as well as the distribution of tracts and periodicals, to sustain their interest in the cause.

4. In a subscription of this sort, carried over a whole district, and

* In this introductory round I can imagine no better devised schedule than that of Mr. Thomson of Yester, now of Paisley, for taking down the names and subscriptions of all the contributors in the district.

† See Appendix, No. 1.

inclusive of all classes, there will, of course, be a great variety of offerings, from the penny or twopence a week, to the larger contributions of those who are both willing and wealthy. There cannot be a falser principle, than that the poorer offerings should be declined or dispensed with. Under the guise of sentiment, there is in it all the grossness of materialism. To neglect or underrate the mites of our artizans and labourers, because of their insignificance, is to rate the moral value of a sacrifice at nothing, and to make the moneyed value of it all in all. It is a complete inversion of the estimate passed by our Saviour on the humble gift which the poor widow cast into the treasury. Such a calculator as this would gladly forego all the moral grandeur which sits on the face of a plebeian congregation, each doing his little all—if he could but replace their liberalities by the munificence of a single grandee, whose one princely contribution slackened, or superseded the call for a united offering from the people at large. We are not for bearing hard upon the humbler classes; but we deem it no kindness to spare them the expense of what they might, and what they ought, to contribute for the precious blessing of a gospel ministration to their families—and this at the far more grievous expense of inflicting a mutilation upon their Christianity. We are for upholding the integrity of *their* virtue too in all its parts, and in all its proportions; nor can we imagine a more mischievous error in the management of human nature, than to proceed on the idea, that throughout the great bulk and body of the common people, all the graces and high characteristics of the perfect man in Christ Jesus might not be fully realized.

5. But though it be the moral value of these plebeian contributions which claims our highest reckoning and regard, their moneyed value is far from insignificant. The smallness of the individual offerings is made up by the number of them. In a congregation of even only two hundred members, did they average among them 2d. a week—this of itself would there uphold, in being at least, a gospel ministration. The average of 3d. a week would raise the minister above a state of absolute penury, and of 6d. a week would sustain him in decency and comfort.* Let it not be wondered at, then, that we should prize so highly every accession to the number of our contributors, however small our offerings might be. Like every other wholesome habit, we should like if it pervaded the entire mass of our Free Church community. Nor do we hesitate to confess, that every instance of an upshooting liberality above the level of their penny a week, on the part of artizans, or domestics, or labourers, never fails to call forth both a peculiar complacency in the good that is done; and, for the principle in the poor man's bosom from which it flows, the profoundest sense of respectful estimation.

6. We are not unaware of the invectives to which such a sentiment exposes us—often uttered with the semblance, and perhaps, too, with the reality of a generous, although, as we think, mistaken indignation—as if we proposed to grind the faces of the poor, and, for the support of our ecclesiastical system, ravenously to seize on a

* Appendix, No. 2.

portion of their hard-won earnings. These reasoners would be puzzled to understand how it is that the Methodists of England, many of them in humble life, give their shilling a month, even their sixpence a week, for the maintenance of the gospel—why, after all, they form the best conditioned and most prosperous community in our empire. The truth is, that instead of what they give being extracted from the earnings of their hard and honest industry, it were far more correct to say, in reference to the great majority of their converts, that what they give is the spontaneous tribute of but a fraction from the squanderings of their former extravagance. The habit of economizing, should it begin with an offering to the cause, whether of benevolence or religion, will not end there, but be followed up by the other achievements of a reformed and regulated expenditure—when the cost of vain and vicious indulgences will be transferred to higher objects, to the education of children, and such improvements in dress, and diet, and furniture, as betoken a greater fulness and sufficiency than before. There is the operation of natural influences, as well as the guaranty of Scripture promises, to account for the blessing which rests on a habit of plebeian liberality, or self-denial. Were a Savings' Bank to be set up any where in Scotland, it would be no surprise to us if it were found that, for every penny given by the common people to the cause of their Christian education, there were as many shillings or sixpences which found their way to these most useful institutions. We should expect, in fact, our Free Church population to be the largest depositors; and, so far from grudging what they thus retained for themselves, should rejoice in the fulfilment of this expectation. The whole tendency of a popular Association for the promotion of what is good, is to elevate the platform of humble life; and the effect of its payments, so far from being to impoverish or depress, is, through the medium of character and principle, or by the elastic operation of moral causes, to raise and uphold our people in a far higher economic *status*, than even the highest wages, left all to their own disposal, and without one farthing given for religious objects, will ever secure for our careless and dissipated families.*

7. But there is another consideration which enhances still further the mighty importance of the subscription to its congregational Association being made quite general among the members of each of our churches. Once that the people of any particular church get into the unhealthy state of leaning on the munificence of a few of the richest among them, and feeling themselves exonerated, in consequence, as a body, from all care and all obligation, this condition of disease is the sure forerunner to a speedy and final dissolution. The two or three generous supporters of the Association die, and may never be replaced by men in their own likeness. But a popular habit, once it is settled, has in it a principle of endurance, by which it is perpetuated from generation to generation. It descends in families from father to son; and, instead of being only kept afloat for a few years by the rare and romantic liberality of perhaps a single in-

* Appendix, No. 3.

dividual, instead of an ephemeral duration on some precarious and short-lived tenure of this sort, the institute has become a fixture in the neighbourhood, because it has struck its roots in every household of worshippers, solidly based, and tenaciously held together, on the extended platform of the middle and lower classes of society.

8. But while we deprecate the general selfishness that would lead a congregation to do nothing for the cause, because a few of their number have a largeness both of wealth and of good will, which, in as far as money is concerned, goes far to cover their deficiencies—we have no inclination whatever to spare the wealthy, or to relax in their favour the Bible principle, that every man should give *as God hath prospered him.* The pounds of the rich should not supersede the pennies of the poor; but, on the other hand, the pennies of the poor form what ought to be a telling argument for pounds from the rich. The surrender of 2d. or 3d. a-week from a labourer may imply as great a moral sacrifice, as the weekly gift of £2 or £3 from a man of affluence; and we have illustrious examples of such generosity among the friends of the Free Church, of individual subscribers who give their £100, or £200, or £300 in the year, and of one who gives his annual £500, besides some instances of donations to the extent of a thousand pounds, for the sustentation of the ministry. There is room, there is ample room for many, for very many more, of such liberalities; and though they were multiplied tenfold, a most beneficial expenditure could be found for every farthing of it. Let the wealthier friends of the Free Church only bethink themselves of the increased number of its ministers, from 470 to about 650—of the extreme lowness of their dividend raised, with great difficulty and effort, by a small fraction of excess above £100 a-year,—of the yet many unprovided Free Church congregations, in readiness for ecclesiastical labourers, so soon as we can finish their theological education, —above all, of the vast extent of land which remains to be possessed, and from every part of which we receive the most unbounded assurances of welcome; so that with but an adequate enlargement of means, there lies before us the magnificent enterprise of covering the whole of yet unreclaimed Scotland with our churches and our schools; and thus to fill up every deficiency, whether in the amount of Christian or of common education for all the families.*

9. But we suffer from this evil, and far more generally, in another form. Not only does one part of the same congregation often fail in their duty, leaving the whole weight and burden of that obligation, which they ought to take a share in, to the other part of it—but there are many congregations in certain parts of the Church, who, trusting to the more generous or wealthy congregations in other parts of it, fall miserably short in their contributions to the Central Fund. This is far the sorest and heaviest impediment in our way, which, if not effectually made head against, will infallibly run us aground; and put an end to all the fondest anticipations of Christian benevolence on the subject of a universal Sabbath, and universal week-day, education for the people of our land, a consummation quite within our reach,

* Appendix, No. 4.

would the friends of the Free Church but fulfil their plain and practicable, and, let me add, not only their sacred, but to leave them wholly without excuse, their truly light and easy obligations. We do hope that hitherto there has been a great want of understanding in this matter; and that the hardship of which we complain is not altogether due to selfishness. It were a great relief to know of the aid-receiving congregations, that, instead of being chargeable with misbehaviour in the wretchedly small remittances which a great many of them have made, the reason why they have done so little is mainly founded upon miscalculation. We are aware of a delusion too prevalent over the country, that when the hundreds and thousands of pounds raised in the large towns are reported in their hearing, they feel that with all safety they might lie upon their oars, and that any insignificant contribution which they could make to the fund is of small consequence. There cannot be a more grievous perversity, nor one more sure in the end to shipwreck the dearest objects of Christian patriotism. It is no doubt desirable that we should increase both the number and liberality of the aid-giving congregations; but it is of far more vital importance to our cause, that we should lessen the number, and diminish the enormous absorptions, of the aid-receiving congregations. They form a wall of interception in the way of extending the Church to places and people more destitute than themselves; or perhaps they were better compared to an annular belt of sand, which drinks in all the waters that issue from the central reservoir, making it impossible to reach or fertilize the regions beyond it. We should infinitely less value all the additional hundreds and thousands that might be raised from the wealthier congregations, than we should an average elevation of £50 in the contributions that come to us from the lower half of the scale. This were like the opening of a gate that would set us at liberty: and make us free to expatiate, so as that we might find our way both to the most wretched population in towns, and to the poorest and remotest extremities of Scotland.

10. But are the ministers not here in fault? Why do they not lift their free and fearless testimony on this matter, telling the people their duty with all faithfulness; and making it clear both to their understanding and their conscience, that on the extent of their liberalities hinges the extent to which the ministrations of the gospel can be carried in the Free Church of Scotland? What is it that restrains them from making this statement? Is it the paltry consideration that their own maintenance, and that of their families, are bound up with the great Central Fund which is formed out of the offerings of all the churches? One might have expected that the men who, for the sake of principle, had relinquished all their emoluments, would have felt nobly superior to the low-minded imputation of selfishness, when pleading now for the sacred cause of an evangelical ministry, which had been cast by the hand of power an unprotected orphan upon the world. For the maintenance of their families! This truly forms but the veriest bagatelle, a mere speck in an argument, whose high bearing is on the best and highest interests of the families of Scotland. And besides, if theirs be an aid-receiving congregation, or one taking

more out of the common fund than they are giving into it, what should restrain them from telling their people that they should be as little burdensome to others as possible? And, on the other hand, should theirs be an aid-giving congregation, or one sending more into the Central Treasury than is returned to them, what should restrain them from telling their people that it is the duty of the strong to support the weak; and from cheering them onward to larger and higher liberalities, till the whole of our beloved country shall be replenished with churches of a pure faith, and schools of a sound and scriptural education? On the strength of such frank and full explanations, there would be no difficulty in enlisting the people on the side of so noble an achievement. Once that their understandings were enlightened, their conscience and their wills, we verily believe, would be carried, and that well nigh universally. But we have heard another, and, we must say, a more discreditable reason for this *reticence* on the part of ministers—even a fear lest the expenses of their self-sustained church should deter the people from adhering to it. This is very like the invention of enemies; and, at all events, the apprehension which they would fain ascribe to our respected friends and fellow-labourers is one which we do not share in—nay, even though we did, we should utterly refuse it as an element of slightest influence upon the question. We have no wish that our Church should be otherwise expanded, than by the accession to it of pure and well principled members. We have no ambition for mere numbers; and should regard it as a disgusting spectacle to see thousands and tens of thousands congregated at sacraments, who were persisting in the neglect of a plain duty, and not only inflicting a disability on the general cause of our great Home Mission by taking as much to themselves and giving as little to others as possible, but even doing nothing to alleviate the penury and privation of their own immediate ministers. To talk of a people's thirst for ordinances in conjunction with such an apathy or sordidness as this, is to palm on the face of the world a most hideous and revolting combination. But we again repeat our conviction that the people are not in fault; and if hitherto any of them have been living in the neglect of a plain duty, it is because they have not been plainly told of it. Were their eyes once opened to the state of the case, they would no longer remain an incubus or dead weight upon a cause in which their affections are so thoroughly engaged.

11. It has been well said, that neither the duties nor the opportunities of beneficence are confined to the rich. Even the poor man who can bestow nothing upon charity, may yet evince the whole principle and soul of charity, by struggling against the necessity of receiving, or, at least, so that he might be as little burdensome as he can. And he might earn by these noble exertions all the credit of a positive benefactor—for what he refrains from absorbing upon his own wants, is free to be discharged on the wants of others more helpless than himself. In like manner, an aid-receiving Association may never attain to the condition of a self-supporting one; and yet by every pound of upward approximation to this higher level, or for every pound whereby it lessens the excess of its receipts over its

remittances, it leaves a pound free for the supply of localities more destitute than its own. Were this noble principle once to pervade our Church, and be generally acted on, we see no limit to the operation of a Christian philanthropy, that would first people our own country to the full with all the desirable institutes, both of religious and literary education, and then flow over in the might of its exuberance upon other lands.

12. But with all our anxiety to work up the average offerings of the aid-receiving congregations, and all our sense of the vast importance that they should do their uttermost to spare us, let me repeat that we have no desire to exonerate from their present rate of contribution, or to lessen the number of our aid-giving congregations. On the contrary, one main reason of our urgency with the Associations on the lower part of the scale, is to encourage and keep in good heart and exertion the Associations on the higher part of it. There is a pleasure in giving all needful help to parties, who at the same time are doing all they can to help themselves; just as in the work of private benevolence, there is a supreme luxury and enjoyment in bestowing the requisite aid on a struggling and meritorious family. But, on the other hand, as nothing is more fitted to chill and to dispirit our charity to a poor neighbour, than to find that every new benefaction has the effect of making him more reckless and ravenous than before; so, infallibly, will our wealthier congregations become weary of their present well-doing, if they find that it tends but to nourish the apathy and indolence of poorer congregations, leaving their whole weight upon others, and quite satisfied to get as much and to give as little as they can. Let this be the prevalent habit, and the Free Church will to a certainty break up; at least as a national, though it may still keep its ground as a limited and sectarian institute. It will be unable to enlarge the ground which it now occupies, and so cease to be an extending Church. Nay, it will be compelled to surrender most of its present territory; for, in less than half an age, there are hundreds of our congregations which must wither into extinction, if, in the first instance, they will do little or nothing for themselves; and, in the second instance, the more affluent of our churches, revolted by the heartless spectacle of such misconduct, will cease from their liberalities, and do as little for them. Let us hope better things; and that, by a harmonious working between these two classes of Associations, the odds which we now complain of will soon be made even. The only way of getting the two ends to meet is, that the richer congregations shall give as much as they might, and the poorer seek as little as they might. Or, in other words, that the contributions of the former shall rise as high above their dividends, and the contributions of the latter shall come as nearly up to their dividends, as possible. And, beside the moneyed result, there would accrue an incalculably higher benefit in the moral result of such a glorious emulation, reminding us of those bright and sunny periods in the history of Judea, when not only its good kings, but the princes and all the people poured in their offerings for the service of the temple, and rejoiced because God had given them a heart to offer willingly; and the benedictions of the

monarch upon his throne were responded to in gladness and with enthusiasm by the thousands of Israel.

SECTION II.—ON THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE.

1. I do not undertake a complete description of this body, nor of the various cares and duties which should be assigned to them. There is much of what is obvious to, and well known by all, which requires no demonstration, and the statement of which would but swell unnecessarily the bulk of this pamphlet. I therefore confine myself to a very few of those desiderata which have been suggested to me by my own observation, as being of the most urgent importance.

2. There should be a great predominance of laymen in the Committee, which, at the same time, ought not to be over numerous. There might be two or three clergymen for the sake of certain questions which require a sound ecclesiastical judgment to be rightly decided on, whose opinion on these would, of course, be much deferred to by the rest of their colleagues. And it greatly concerns the good of the Church, that of laymen there should be a most careful and judicious and well-weighed selection. It is not to be told what mischief might be incurred by the rash and random appointments of committee-men. Men of greatest eminence as debaters and orators in a popular assembly are not always, I should even say are not generally, the best qualified to be counsellors in committees. They may be profoundly legal, and irrefragably logical, and brilliantly eloquent, yet be very deficient in transacting with men, or on matters of business. It puts to most serious hazard the interest of the Church's business, when such appointments are made complimentarily; and so are laid upon men, who, whatever their excellence in other and perhaps very high departments of usefulness, might utterly fail in that certain tact, or ready and practical discernment of men and things, which accomplishes one for what the French, if I mistake not, call "le savoir des affaires." Or, to illustrate my meaning the more, they may have, in a most pre-eminent degree, the "savoir," in some very noble departments too, of scholarship and science, and professional learning; yet may entirely lack the "savoir-faire" in the department of committeeship. They have plenty of the "savoir," in things of argument; but as to the "faire," in things practical, they have either none of it, or have it in a wayward and wrong direction. I most assuredly would not express myself so strongly, but for my serious apprehension lest these outward matters of our Church should fall into unfortunate hands. Were I to speak the recollections of my own experience, I should say that merchants and solicitors, or writers to the signet, are far the most desirable coadjutors in the work of directing the correspondence, and conducting the various managements which are confided to committees. Or, without specifying the professions so minutely, let me state, in general, the value I feel for the sagacity and good sense of all such as have been schooled aright either in counting-houses or chambers of agency. The education and professional habits, neither of advo-

cates nor ministers, are at all favourable to those business qualifications which I most desiderate for our working committees.

3. The Church cannot adequately feel her obligations to those lay supporters and friends, who so generously lend their time and their gratuitous labours to her service. But it is monstrous impolicy to confide altogether, or in very great proportion, so large an interest as that of her Sustentation Fund, to the discretionary and unremunerated attendance even of her most zealous and best qualified adherents. There ought to be a greatly fuller paid agency, and with all the guaranties for a vigorous and punctual discharge of our business, which obtain in any of the public and national offices, or in any of the great trading establishments of the country. And first, in addition to a treasurer with the proper complement of clerks, there should be a Lay Superintendent, whose business it is, whether by personal visits, or by the emanations of a central correspondence, to keep the whole machinery of our Associations constantly and vigorously agoing—under whom no omission should be left unnoticed, and no letter of inquiry should be left unanswered. I cannot enter at length on the multifarious details of such an office, any more than I am qualified to describe all that passes and repasses between a head bank and its branches, or between a great commercial house in the metropolis, and its dependents or customers all over the country. But sure I am that there is room and application for a business-talent of the highest order in the work of completing and giving full efficiency to the whole system of our operations. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to our financial prosperity, that we should have a Superintendent of thorough business ability and habits, under the control, at the same time, and surveillance of a Committee, mainly composed of business men.

4. But this is not the whole of that central and directing, and presiding influence which I would bring to bear upon the provinces. The apparatus in Edinburgh, to the extent that has been yet described, were far from being complete, at least far short of the point to which we would carry it. Beside the Lay Superintendent, whose converse, whether by letter or by personal visitation, should, in the main, be with Secretaries and Collectors, and the various lay office bearers of our different Associations, we greatly desiderate a Clerical Correspondent, who, beside seeing to the preparation and issue of tracts and circulars, charged with the high matters of principle and religious duty, should hold converse chiefly, if not exclusively, with the ministers of the Free Church. Without an office of this sort, both well filled and well executed, our present financial returns will not be increased, will not even be upholden. If left exclusively in the hands of secular men,* the whole of our financial system will be secularized, after which it will infallibly go to pieces. Ours is essentially a religious operation for a religious object; and if separated from the religious principle by which alone it is kept in healthful and living play, then, as if bereft of its needful and sustaining aliment, it will wither into extinction in a few years. We do not

* Meaning by this to designate not the character, but the profession.

see how this essential vitality can be kept up and circulated, but by an influential ecclesiastic in Edinburgh holding busy and perpetual converse with his ecclesiastical brethren all over the land. Our clergymen, many of whom, I must be frank enough to say, have still much to learn, will not take their lesson from the Lay Superintendent, or submit to any urgencies and remonstrances from him, yet will bear (they at least ought) to be calmly, and christianly, and affectionately reasoned with, when requested, on the high apostolic ground of ours being a great Home Mission, to the fulfilment of which all should lend a hand, when requested, we say, to give his testimony and countenance in favour of the cause; and so as that the agency of his Association might be kept in good heart and good will for the regular discharge of the parts which, whether as Collectors or Contributors, respectively belong to them. This Clerical Correspondent should have free access to all the returns which come from the country, that upon them he, when necessary, may found his communications. And not only so, but it were further well if he singled out those clergymen for his occasional letters, who might prove his most useful auxiliaries, in their respective neighbourhoods, in this great and good work. Such is our sense of the immense practical importance of some such arrangement, that we confess our alarm, when finding, in any instance, that our views of it are not sympathized with. What greatly enhances our conviction of the incalculable good which would ensue from it, is the uniform experience that wherever the matter is undertaken zealously and intelligently by the minister, there we are sure to have a prosperous Association.*

5. But we are yet far short of our *beau ideal* in respect of this central machinery, far short of the optimism after which we aspire. Over and above all that we have yet specified, we would have a number of travelling agents, who might go to work in a far more piece-meal and particular way among the Associations than we have yet been able for. The Superintendent can, in his own person, only deal with aggregates, with the representatives met together of all the Associations in a given district. With the duties of his inner department at Edinburgh, he cannot possibly combine a thoroughly pervading operation over the outer department of the country at large. His wholesale surveys can accomplish no more than what our trigonometrical surveyors would call the triangulation of the territory. For filling up of the intermediate spaces, there must be additional hands. They might not go so often to the Associations that are doing well, excepting at times, to learn particularly of their methods, and this with the view of holding them forth as an excitement and an example to other Associations. But they would be of incalculable use by putting into action and good order all our deficient Associations, and in setting up new ones. The Returns of every month would make mainfest what the Associations were,

* On penning this sentence, there instantly occurred to me the names of Mr. Alexander of Kirkaldy, Mr. Craig of Rothesay, Mr. Bain of Coupar-Angus. I do hope that they will forgive this public notice of them. There are many others who would soon cast up to recollection, were I to dwell longer on this part of the subject.

which would require either the direction or the stimulus of a personal visit from one of our travellers. It were worth his while, even for the sake of a single Association, to undertake a journey of many miles; and especially as along the tract on both sides of it, he could offer his passing respects, and bestow the refreshing influence of his presence on various Associations. He should often spend days in a neighbourhood, even though it were for nothing more than to put one remote and isolated Association into a state of right equipment and activity. He should hold much intercourse with the influentials of the district; be most minutely and kindly explicit in his conversation with the Collectors; and, above all, should, by his piety and intelligence together, find his way to the Scottish heart of our homely and well-principled countrymen, which he will be sure to do when he tells them of the vast religious importance of the errand upon which he has come; and in the success of which there, and in other places, there hangs the mighty interest of churches for all and schools for all. This is the true way of making the life-blood of our cause circulate from the heart to the extremities of Scotland. Hitherto we have greatly too much confined ourselves to the flying missiles of letters, and circulars, and written queries, and such other winged messengers as these, between the metropolis and the provinces. Such a system as I have now pointed out of kindly, domestic, personal visitations, on the part of Christian, and withal companionable men, would be a thousand times more effective. It is the very instrumentality by which to keep every old Association from sinking, and by which to foster into being and activity many new ones. Our little knots of adherents, even in the most sequestered places, could thus be cherished into congregations; and not a spark or embryo of an attachment to the cause of a free gospel needs be suffered any where to expire.

6. We do hope that these mighty advantages will reconcile the Church to the expenses of a larger paid agency. There is a prejudice, I had almost said a low-minded suspicion, on this subject, most grievously adverse to the enlargement of the Church's resources and her means. The sum of £2000 or even £3000 a-year, and perhaps more, rightly expended on right men, would be remunerated more than fifty-fold by the impulse thus given to the mechanism of our Associations. The country would feel an ample recompense in the charm of a ready and punctual service, which as yet they have little experienced; and in being saved from the provocation of those endless delays, which, from the sheer want of men to do the required work, have been really unavoidable. Of course the expense of all that is done for the Financial Committee ought to be laid on the funds of that Committee; and glad shall we be, if protected from the expense incurred by other committees, over which we had no control, the maxim should ever be held inviolable, that the expenses of every committee should be defrayed from moneys of its own raising—a maxim, the violation of which is just that sort of monstrous paralogism in business, which we trust will never be repeated. Yet what has been done once may be done over again; and hence the necessity of a vigilant guardianship and control on the part of men

who have a real knowledge of business, that a popular assembly, ever liable to the impulse of hasty and partial views, may not, by oversetting the clearest principles of right management, bring every thing into confusion.

SECTIONS III. AND IV.—ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUSTENTATION FUND.*

1. There is nothing to be more strongly deprecated, while yet in the infancy of our Free Church, than frequent and capricious changes, and more especially in a matter on which earthly passions and interests come so readily into play, as the parting of money. It is all the more dangerous, that the right principles on which the distribution should take place, can only be gathered from the comprehensive survey of a subject large in itself and variously complicated; as, besides the maintenance of the Church's functionaries, involving in it the far weightier and more precious element of what is best for the Christian good of the country's population. The system to provide for these two objects, and embrace them both, is not to be got at in some spare moment of rapid thought, by one who can wield the pen of a ready writer, and throw off his goodly and well-looking scheme in the heat of a single down-sitting. Neither when once such a system is set up, whether as finally established or as yet upon its trial, should it be overset on some hasty observation by one who but looks at the thing in parts or snatches, without the patient and full study of it in all its consequences and all its bearings.

2. But while thus fearful of unnecessary changes—as giving to the friends of the Free Church a certain painful sense of frailty and precariousness; and fitted therefore to shake their confidence in the stability of our great and growing institution, let it not be thought that the proposal of two years back, so far as adopted, was one of these changes. It was not a change, but a mere expedient to meet a new case or to provide for a new object—the maintenance, not of the ministers who came out at the time of the Disruption, but of such as were superadded to the original 470, whether as successors in the old or as ordained ministers for new charges. Our first care was the support of the Free Church as it stood at the moment of its formation; and we set out on the method of an equal dividend for all the outgone ministers. Our second care was the extension of the Church, which extension will infallibly be crippled, nay, brought to a dead stand, if the method of an equal dividend is to be persevered in. It is obvious that if we are to give the same yearly allowance to every new minister, however little we shall receive from his congregational Association, we cannot hold out long upon such a system, unless by such successive reductions of the dividend as must sooner or later involve the whole Church in one common overthrow. This is an argument, and a strong one; but we confess that it is not ours. Our argument against the continuance of an equal dividend is, that it

* We have blended the two topics of these sections into one, from their standing so nearly related to each other, while we at the same time keep up the distinction between them in the primary announcement of our plan.

would put an end to Church Extension. On the principle that the minister's work is of far higher consideration than the minister's stipend, we have ever regarded an addition to the number of our zealous and hard-working ministers as of paramountly higher value than an addition to their livelihood. Yet we do not object to the more secular of these arguments, which is both a very natural and a very sound one. We are glad to have two arguments instead of one; and shall rejoice if, on the strength of both together, we can succeed in breaking down the figment of Presbyterian parity as brought to bear upon this question; for in truth it becomes the veriest of all figments, when extended, as some would do, to the equality of ministerial income as well as the equality of ministerial jurisdiction. Let it not be imagined that we say aught to the disparagement of Presbyterianism; for it is they, and not we, who would vilify and vulgarize all that is noble in its principle of equality, by making it hinge at all upon money, and not altogether upon the higher standing of constitutional right. For ourselves, we have never felt so profound a veneration for Presbytery, as when witnessing the sublime spectacle of that ascendency which is often wielded in her councils by the poorest of our country ministers, and that on the sheer force of his character and talents; and more especially when some concerted plan or policy of the metropolitan rulers has been overset, as we have sometimes seen in the Old Assembly, by a noble burst of independence from the provinces. But to keep by the matter in hand: whatever reason might be alleged for an equal dividend among the first ministers of the Disruption, its continuance with all the succeeding ministers would be absolutely ruinous. There is no church in Christendom, whether Catholic or Episcopalian, or Reformed, that has ever conducted her Home Missions on a principle so destructive of their progress and prosperity, as this would inevitably be. It would lay such an incubus on Church Extension, as to make it altogether hopeless. We could reclaim this one and that other portion of the territory, with a smaller remuneration at the first to the ecclesiastical labourer; but not if we are to be saddled from the outset with the condition of a remuneration so large as that which issues from the Central Fund on one and all of its ministers. We could even give an ordained minister to a newly brought in locality, and set up a complete parochial economy in the midst of it, on some safe and regulated proportion, between its givings to the Central Fund and the allowances to be received from it. On such a system we could pioneer our way even to the poorest localities both in town and country, but from which the system of an equal dividend would infallibly shut us out. And when we take a survey of the vast extent that remains to be possessed, to the appalling city wastes, as well as to the many outfields of heathenism over the whole of Scotland, we confess our alarm lest an absurd and factitious principle shall, under the venerable guise of a Presbyterian rule or category, put to jeopardy the dearest of Christian interests—and this by oversetting all the considerations of Christian wisdom and soundest Christian expediency.*

* See Appendix, No. 5.

3. And not only would the system of an equal dividend lessen the amount of Church Extension, we also fear that it would greatly vitiate its quality. The prospect of a sure hundred a year might bring an earthly element into play, and call forth the sordid appetencies of the ecclesiastical aspirant. We should vastly prefer, when unbroken ground is to be entered on for the first time, that we saw something like the workings of that self-denying spirit, under the influence of which an affection for human souls bears onward an enterprise of Christian charity, even amid the hazards and uncertainties of aught like an adequate remuneration. That surely is not the most unlikely process for the christianization of an outfield territory, which affords scope for the devotedness and disinterestedness of apostolic times; nor, on the other hand, should we expect that much new land will ever to good purpose be reclaimed under an economy, by which the risk and the privations incident to the vocation, whether of a home or foreign missionary, were all to be forestalled.

4. I have felt the greatest difficulty in penning the above sentences. I am not for underpaid labour, whether it be missionary or ministerial, or professional labour of any sort. Yet we have the strongest persuasion that to set missionary work prosperously agoing, the way is not to lure adventurers into the service by the bribery of its secular advantages. We fear that whenever the mercenary inducement is at all the predominant one, it will act as a damaging flaw on the whole enterprise. The missionary must from the very first be subsisted; but, rather than that at the outset there should be held out the full comforts of a regular settlement, we should deem it infinitely better that he won his way to this by his success, in gathering in the householders of his outfield territory, and forming them into a new congregation. We greatly mistake, we greatly underrate both the capabilities and dispositions of even the poorest congregations thus formed, if we mistrust either their will or their power for such offerings, as would constitute a most important element in the maintenance of their future minister.* There is a mine of productiveness here for the support and extension of the gospel, which has not yet been explored, which has scarcely been entered on. We are quite sure that an *a priori* equal dividend, should it not have the effect of leaving altogether shut, would at least deaden every internal fountain of supply which might otherwise be opened and kept in vigorous play within the bosom of every additional congregation, thus limiting both the revenue of the Church, and proportionally thereto, her power of expansion. We are quite aware of the uncertainties, and perhaps the hardships which, on the system as we would have it, must be encountered at the commencement of every new enterprise. But along with this we have the sanguine anticipation of a prosperous result, prosperous in every sense of the term, with every such undertaking when entered on in the spirit of devotedness and faith. Let the primary and prompting impulse be but an affection for souls, and we have no fear of the consummation. The enlargement of the temporal means will be sure to follow in the train of the spiritual

* For the further details of this process see our Section on Church Extension.

achievements. The commencement and progress of missionary work are like the commencement and progress of the Christian life. There may be sacrifices and sufferings, and self-denial at the first; but we know that there are earthly as well as heavenly promises attendant on these exercises of faith and patience. The life that now is, is not forgotten amid the richer and brighter promises of the life that is to come. Whether it be a private Christian who seeks first for himself, or a missionary who seeks first and foremost for the people among whom he labours, the kingdom of God and His righteousness—the assurance will not fail with either, that all other things shall be added unto them.

5. We trust that we have now said enough to demonstrate the ruinous effect of an equal dividend, or the absolute necessity of a proportional dividend, so that the gettings out from the Central Fund and the givings in may bear some relation the one to the other. The ministers who came out at the Disruption have obtained an exemption from this rule; but it is a rule which ought to expire with their incumbencies, else our Church can never expect to be an indefinitely progressive one. What the proportion ought to be between the yearly remittances of an Association, and the yearly return which should be sent to it back again, is a question that might be decided variously. According to the present method, the more recent ministers receive a half more than is remitted by their Associations, on to the dividend of £150, after which there is no augmentation. At this rate no Association can cost more than £50 a year to the General Fund, a most important limitation, but a limitation which could be secured in twenty other ways, giving rise to as many schemes or scales of distribution, the adoption of any one of which would involve no change of principle, and might lead to no other inconvenience than one that has been already adverted to, and might be as well avoided, a certain painful sense of instability in our system, when thus made to undergo a number of wanton and unnecessary alterations.

6. The great and essential reform needed upon our financial system is some provision, call it either a stimulus or a check, by the operation of which our aid-receiving Associations shall be either made to contribute more, or receive less, from that great Central Fund, which, if but relieved from the present inordinate pressure, could be made so greatly more available for our Church's prosperity and enlargement. We are all the less scrupulous in urging this, because we know that, but for their own intolerable sluggishness and apathy, these Associations could be easily made to contribute more; and so, though thereby less burdensome at head-quarters than they now are, the provision of the minister might be fully kept up, and with this greatest of all satisfaction to every right-minded people, that it would be more honourably come by. Were the 318 Associations, who now give less than £50 a year, brought up by our provision acting in the form of a stimulus, though only to this humble rate of contribution; or, by means of the same provision, acting in the form of a check, were matters so ordered that they should never cost us more than £50 a year each, I think we might answer for our aid-giving

Associations helping up this extent of deficiency. But we cannot answer for their holding out against a larger demand or deficiency than this, and that is ever growing larger with every exertion made to overtake it. They will infallibly lose heart and let down their present liberalities, if they find that, do their uttermost, they, in virtue of a dead weight at the other end of our apparatus, can neither make good a rising dividend for the present necessities of our clergymen, nor an extending Church for the far more serious, because spiritual and moral, necessities of a destitute population. O for a voice of sufficient emphasis and power, to send abroad this lesson with a telling efficacy upon all our congregations!

7. The mere proposal to fix a ratio between the contributions and the return has, we understand, been strangely felt by certain of the aid-receiving congregations, with something like the sense of an injury done to them. Should they give £60, they will get back £90; this is the rate at which we should like to deal with these congregations, up to £100 given us on their part, and £150 sent back to them upon ours. So that, in reference to them, it is altogether a system of dispensation. Nor is there a country in Christendom where we should expect it to be regarded or spoken of as if, instead of this, it were a system of extortion. The aid-giving congregations, by whose generosity it is that we are enabled to do so much, might be the instruments of a great and glorious expansion of our Church over all Scotland, were there but enough of effort, and enough of co-operation, throughout all its provinces. But this career, so full of promise, and of richest blessings to our country, will soon be terminated, if, instead of such co-operation, it become the prevalent habit of our poorer Associations to give as little to the Central Fund, and take or expect as much from it as possible.*

8. Other proportions might be fixed on than one and a half; or other rates of distribution might be constructed, yet, so as to secure the operation of a stimulus or a check, on the aid-receiving congregations. There would in this case, be no change of principle, but still such a change, or such a semblance of change, as might unsettle the confidence of men's minds in the stability or soundness of the system altogether. This were a serious evil, but the evil were greatly enhanced, did the change amount to one of principle, and be wrong after all. Now, such a change has been proposed, and to our apprehension, it is more than questionable, we think mischievous. By our present system, as is known to all, there is an allowance given to every minister out of the common fund, after which each congregation is left to supplement this allowance at their own pleasure. Now, the proposal is, to abolish these supplements, to lay a legislative prohibition of the Church upon them, and to make it imperative that all which is given for the support of our ministers shall pass through the Central Fund in Edinburgh, and be distributed thence in the proportions of a certain regulated scale. We very much fear the consequences of such an innovation, and for the following reasons.

* See Appendix, No. 6.

9. First, It is presumed that what is now given to the Sabbath collection for a supplement to the minister, would then be withheld and given to the Association; but this is a great mistake. That it would be withheld from one quarter, there is every reason to apprehend; but that it would, therefore, be transferred to the other quarter, there is little or no reason to hope. The habits of the people are not so easily moulded, nor can they be so safely tampered with as some would imagine. There might be arithmetic in the argument of those who contend on this ground for the abolition of the supplement; but most assuredly there is not in it a sound or experimental judgment of human nature. We think that those who contend for the abolition of our supplements might be instructed by the results of a former abolition, even that of the seat-rents. The calculation was, that all which might be remitted to the people on the article of seat-rents would be returned by them at the church-door, so as to swell the collections. Has it turned out so? or rather, has there not been a dead loss to the extent of many thousand pounds a-year in consequence? We do not know how many annual thousands would, in like manner, be thrown away by the abolition of these supplements. In keeping with this, there was a proposal sometime ago to abolish class-fees. It would just, as in the other cases, have proved the cause of an additional impoverishment. In short, if we give in to all the proposals of all the abolitionists, the Free Church is on a fair way to become the poorest Church in Christendom.

10. But it may be said that there is no proper analogy between the seat-rents and the supplements. The money yielded by the former is the produce of a compulsory tax; and it does not follow that, because it is remitted, it will therefore be returned in the new shape of a voluntary contribution. But what is given at the church-door for a supplement is a free-will offering, the produce of the hearer's affection for his minister, or of a desire of adding to his comfort, by making over to him a certain amount of carnal things in return for his spiritual things.* Now, it may be contended that we do not extinguish this affection, we do not even weaken the impulse which prompts to any offering at all, by merely shutting up the channel through which it flows at present, and opening for it another channel by which it comes back in equal amount, nay, it may be, in greater amount of good to the minister. It makes no difference, it may be argued, whether it comes to him immediately through the Sabbath collection of his own church, or immediately through the organism of an Association, first up to the Central Fund in Edinburgh, and then back again, in an augmented dividend, at the term of general distribution. We should have given way to this consideration, had it not been for our frequent experience of the danger which there is in substituting the circuitous for the direct, when we want to enlist the popular concurrence in any object of Christian usefulness. It is inconceivable how powerful the effect of it is in placing the object more out of sight, and so more out of influence. You will

* 1 Cor. ix. 11.

get a people to join you for the doing of many things, if to be done at once, which you will not get them to do if to be done by a process. Even the interposal of but one step in the way of a desired accomplishment, will suffice to defer, or to defeat altogether, the impression which a good cause might otherwise have made, so as to open both the hearts and the hands of a parochial community in its favour. The money given at their own church door, with a design and destination to the support of their own minister, will tell far more powerfully on the liberal dispositions of the people, than if the same money should be made to pass out of sight to a great central reservoir many miles off, even though it should all reissue thence with the same or greater amount of home-benefit at the last. To make this home-benefit a sure and a lasting one, it should be preserved, out and out, in the character of a home-operation. We have quite the feeling that many will look on the influence we now speak of as too fine or shadowy for being at all practical. So it might appear, and so it will be spoke of at committees, whether among men of words or men of penmanship. But there is many a shrewd peasant, whose discernment has been exercised among the roughnesses and the realities of life, who will apprehend, and that most readily, the substantial truth of what we now insist upon. And, therefore, we should exceedingly regret if the present arrangement—first, of our Associations for the Central Fund, and then, distinct from these, of our Collections for a Supplement, were at all to be disturbed or broken up. We greatly fear that it would just turn out another example of a suffering and a loss because of our hazardous innovations.

11. But more than this. We have two distinct and separate duties laid before us in two distinct and separate places of the Bible; and surely for the performance of them, there might be found separate places in a man's life, separate doings in the course of a man's varied and successive history. Let us address ourselves to what the Bible makes two separate duties of, by means of two separate operations. We are told in one verse of the Bible, that each should mind not his own things only, but the things of others also; and through the medium of our Associations, and of the Central Fund, instituted for the Christian good of the Church at large, we have a method provided for carrying this duty into effect. We are told in another verse of the Bible, that they who are taught should communicate to him who teacheth in all good things; and for the fulfilment of this more special duty, we have a method provided through the Sabbath collections at the church-door. Leave each of these verses to tell with their own distinct authority on the consciences of men. We shall not mend the matter, by blending or implicating the two into one. We have no right, by some ingenious process of ours, to convert one of these verses into a sort of artificial strainer, through which, and through which alone, forbidding and closing up all other channels, to get at the accomplishment of the duty given forth in the other verse. Both are injunctions of Holy Scripture; and, with but a sufficient strength of religious principle, we shall make good the observance of both. To affirm the incompatibility of two distinct methods—the one for upholding a general ministry in Scotland, the

other for upholding the ministry of our own particular congregation, is to affirm the incompatibility of two duties, which are equally and expressly inculcated upon our observance in the word of God.

12. This proposal to do away supplements by legislation, reminds me forcibly of the disposition that there was two years back to do away, and by force of legislation, too, all ornaments from our churches. The imagination then was, that the money thus rescued from the ornaments, would all take its spontaneous way to the General Building Fund; and the imagination now is, that the money to be rescued from those supplements on which it is at present expended, will be sure to find its way into the Sustentation Fund. Both imaginations betray a like want of that discernment into the real workings and tendencies of human nature, on which all wise legislation is founded. And there is one difference between a law against ornaments and a law against supplements, which makes all the more heavily to the disadvantage of the latter. The one law comes into conflict only with a taste, the other law comes into conflict with a principle. I felt quite secure that the Building Fund would not suffer, though we should leave the friends of the Free Church to indulge their liking for ornaments; and I feel still more secure that the Sustentation Fund will not suffer by the friends of the Church being left to indulge their likings, each for his own minister. This may sound paradoxical; but we are persuaded that, on a very little consideration, there will be no difficulty in admitting the truth and soberness of what we now say. The man who gives a large subscription to beautify and adorn his own church, or who gives a large subscription to help out a liberal provision for his own minister, may do both from an impulse that is altogether natural—in the one case from the impulse of a natural taste, in the other from the impulse of a natural affection. Or beside the natural, nay, without the natural influence altogether, he may do both these things, in part or in whole, under a religious impulse—in the first case, under a sense of what was due to the decency, or the dignity of a sacred edifice; in the second, under the still more direct sense of a palpable and proclaimed duty—seeing that the Bible tells us to give of our carnal things to the man who teaches us Christianity, in return for his spiritual things. In as far as the natural element is concerned, we may by a legislation put a check on the expense that was to be lavished, whether on ornaments or on supplements; but if there be no religion on the part of the giver who is thus thwarted, we shall look in vain for the money that has been thus thrown back upon him, finding its way into our Central Treasury. Or, on the other hand, so far as there was religion in the munificence for local objects, this is the best guaranty for a like munificence in behalf of our general object. At all events, to stifle and repress one religious exercise, is not the way to further, but rather to cripple and infringe on another religious exercise. I should not look on the man who had previously been thwarted and disappointed in some object that *his* heart was set upon, as at all a hopeful subject for an application in behalf of the object that *my* heart is set upon. We have been made to understand that there is a congregation in our Free Church, whose supplement to their minister has been fifteen times greater than

their contribution to our General Fund. Our inference is, that the natural must greatly predominate in that congregation; but not that if this natural, and we will also add, this good natural tendency, were forcibly overborne, there would accrue therefrom any of its now actual produce to our treasury. The right way of proceeding is not to lay an interdict on the natural, but to fan and foment to the uttermost whatever small spark there might be of the religious, both in this and other congregations. We have distinct scriptural duties for both the local and the general; and distinct methods should be provided and kept up for the respective fulfilments of them. They will no more conflict or interfere with each other than do the six Schemes of the Church interfere with each other. Let us but invigorate the religious spirit of our people, and all will be made to flourish. Monstrous exceptions will no doubt occur among our six hundred churches. But they will not long stand their ground against the publicity of their annual exposure; and still more will they be sure to give way before the growth of a right understanding, and of sound and good principle in the midst of us.

13. We can perceive what that is, which sways with the abolitionists. They calculate that the less the money which is given for one object, the more will remain to be given for another object. Their computation turns upon the means, ours again turns upon the motives. It is true that there is a limit to the means; and, on the strength of this consideration, we hope that the schemes and objects of our Church will not be capriciously or indefinitely multiplied. But we are not yet within sight of this limit, nay, so far are we from having come into contact with it, that all which is given—we do not say by individuals, many of whom have really made sacrifices for the cause —that all which is given, we mean collectively, and in the aggregate, is but a merest bagatelle, when compared with all which might and ought to be given. Speaking generally, the boasted liberalities of the Free Church have not told with the least sensible encroachment on the style and expenditure of families. We are yet miserably short of the example of Him, who, though rich, yet for our sakes became poor. We therefore, on the moral estimate, would continue to urge forward, because most assuredly there is nothing yet in the arithmetical estimate that should discourage or keep us back. We are yet a very great way off from the necessity of laying a prohibition, or a retrenchment, on one good thing, for the sake of another good thing. Both might, and both should, be fully provided for. Each minister should amply experience the kindness of his own congregation; and each congregation should, at the same time, cast a wide and watchful eye over the spiritual necessities of Scotland.

14. But, still more grievous than that, in so many instances, the supplements should exceed the contributions to the Central Fund, is it that in so many parts of the country there should be few or no supplements at all. But even for this I would not abandon them. The grand panacea for this and all other deficiencies is the increase of religion. And, besides, at the time of the Disruption our people had all to learn; and yet, in a very great number, perhaps the majority of instances, the habit has still to be formed. There are some who ascribe

the general remissness in this particular to the pressure of other, but these initial expenses—as the debt, for example, upon our new-built churches, which will soon be liquidated. I do not ascribe much to this, or at least so much as to look for the spontaneous rise of supplements, by a movement from the people themselves, after that these expenses have been done away. They need to be plainly and minutely lessoned in what is good; and that they should become fit subjects for such lessons, I look mainly, with the blessing of God, to the efforts of our spiritual men. And, though not on the subject of the Associations, yet on that of the supplements, there are strong and natural delicacies among the clergy which I fully sympathize with. This of all others is an occasion on which the enlightened lay friends of the Church might render an opportune and most important service. There might be agencies of such formed in every Presbytery, who might perform their annual visits to every parish, and take special cognizance, as well as give special instruction, in a matter so indispensable to the requisite comfort of ministers, but from the care of which they ought to be relieved.

15. Lastly, to legislate against these supplements, is to venture on a legislation which we cannot compel, and which certainly would, I had almost said which ought, to be evaded. To enact where we cannot enforce is a most impolitic waste of authority, and must serve to weaken every government, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which attempts it. We should rather follow, in so far, the example of the Building Committee. There was a strong disposition among them to legislate against ornaments; but the method in fact which they wisely adopted, was to institute the check of granting no aid, save in those cases where the church was built so economically as to cost no more than at the rate of 15s. per sitting. They legislated in that where they had the power, and abstained from legislating in that where they had not the power. It were well if the Sustentation Committee had authority for doing the same; to proclaim such a rule of distribution, as that if Associations will give little—whether because they give much for supplements, or from any other cause—they will receive proportionably little. The enactment of one and a half answers this purpose, though there might be other and perhaps better ways of it. It were the removal for instance of a mighty incubus upon our operations, if it could be made law, that in no instance we should give more than £50 to any minister, over and above what we received from his Association; to which, might it be added, that the connexion of an Association with the Sustentation Committee should only commence, when its own contribution came to £50 a-year. Without some check of this sort, I predict with all confidence, but in great heaviness of heart, that sooner or later we must lay our account with a most fearful overthrow; or at least that a sore paralysis will be inflicted on the support and enlargement of the Church, which might otherwise, in respect of both these interests, be made to advance most prosperously.*

* See Appendix, No. 7.

SECTION V.—ON CHURCH EXTENSION.

1. Instead of Extension, the Free Church may be said, in one sense, to have undergone the reverse process. As a proof of this, at the time of the Disruption, it had upwards of 800 Associations. They now stand, at least the paying ones, at 775. The reason of this is, that we were not able to supply all the places where such a palpable manifestation was given of an interest in the Free Church, as the formation of an Association in its favour; we could not supply them all at once with ecclesiastical labourers. We have certainly not been wanting in our endeavours to remedy this defect; and, as a proof of it, the number of our ordained ministers has been increased from 470 to about 650. There still remain to us upwards of a hundred places where Associations exist, but which can only as yet have a partial service rendered to them by means of Catechists or Probationers; and we have some few noble instances where congregations have kept, and are still keeping themselves afloat by the gratuitous labours of the pious and the good among their own members, who assemble our adherents throughout the neighbourhood on the Sabbath, and conduct public worship in the midst of them. Still, however, and it is not to be wondered at, upwards of thirty of our original Associations have gone into extinction; and with them the germs of as many future congregations. So, though in one sense the Free Church has been extended within these two years—that is, in having added about 180 to the number of her ordained ministers; in another sense she has retrograded, by having lost no small part of the ground she occupied at the first, through the dissolution of so many of her primitive Associations. Our explanation of the manner in which we think that these might have been preserved, and each made the nucleus of, and at length ripened into a future church, will at the same time show by what steps I conceive that we might still preserve and forward our Non-ministerial Associations, of which we have yet upwards of a hundred; nay, may not only recover all that we have lost, but make indefinite additions to our territory.

2. We, in the first instance, would have the Non-ministerial Associations made the objects of a distinct management. Of course, so soon as a congregation connected with any one of these was furnished with a regularly ordained minister, it would merge into the general system; and its Association would take a place among those which stood related to the Sustentation Committee, when it would be subject to all such provisions and regulations as might be adopted for the support of the Free Church. In other words, so long as it was in the transition state it would remain under a sort of outstanding management by itself; and thence pass into the hands of the Sustentation Committee, so soon as its locality had been constituted into a complete and regular charge.

3. There is an important difference that we would earnestly recommend between the disposition of the fund raised by the Ministerial Associations and under the charge of the Sustentation Committee, and of the fund raised by these Non-ministerial Associations. The

former fund has been treated as one large aggregate, to be dealt with and distributed according to certain general and prescribed methods. But in the management of the latter fund, we would have separate accounts with each of the Associations; and, instead of merging the contributions of any into a general fund which should be made applicable to the benefit of all the others, we would so proceed as that each contribution should be most distinctly available for the sole and distinct benefit of the locality from which it came. By thus individualizing each, we should put into operation the sense and stimulus of an individual interest, so as not only to keep up their present rate of exertion, but so as to keep it constantly on the tendency towards an increase. And here let me insist on the capital importance of the communications from head quarters to other associations being, to a certain extent, personal. And for this purpose, the agents we have already recommended for the Sustentation Committee should be available for this service; men of intelligence and piety, who might be deputed on every fit occasion to repair to the spot, and, if necessary, to spend days of converse and explanation and encouragement with the friends of the Free Church, who might any where be taking measures for having a regularly served congregation in the midst of them, and who are cherishing the prospect of its soon being realized. Let me unfold my own view of the distinct steps by which this truly interesting process might be carried forward, from these its first buddings, in any given locality, to a final accomplishment.

4. The very first intimation of such a movement in any quarter might form a sufficient call for a journey by one of our travelling agents. If an association have not yet been formed in the place, he could commence and originate one. He can set them on the right way of proceeding, and make the whole progress and ultimate fulfilment of it intelligible to our friends. He can let them understand the difficulties of the Church, as proceeding from the want of ecclesiastical labourers, which meanwhile we are doing our uttermost to supply. He can ascertain if there be any among them willing and qualified for a Sabbath-service, and who might give his gratuitous labours to the cause. If not, he can state for how much a year they might have the services of a Catechist among them; or for how much more, if they wish to have a higher service, they might have the labours of a Probationer. Or, at this initial stage of the operations, the agent might assist them in laying down a scheme by which to partition the services, whether of a catechist or a probationer, between the locality now visited, and other localities in the neighbourhood where there are Associations already established, or on the point of being so. We are quite sure that there is scarcely any district in the land, where Associations might not be so stimulated by a fostering operation of this sort, as to yield enough for their initial expenses; or, in so far as they chose to be satisfied with gratuitous services, where a prosperous beginning might not be made of a fund for the erection of their intended church. Such an object in the distance would have a mighty effect in calling forth the liberalities of the people; and thus it is that a rate and habit of giving might be commenced, which need never be let down; and so prove the guaranty of almost, if not altogether, a

sufficiency within themselves, for both an educational and an ecclesiastical provision adequate to the moral and spiritual wants of their families. These ulterior objects furnish a mighty inducement both to gather the requisite means and to economize them. Beside the prospect of having their church, there should be set before them the advantages of their future connexion with the Sustentation Fund, so that, should they work up the annual produce of their Association to any sum short of £100, they would get, in addition, one-half of what they had received from the Central Treasury; and thus upon reaching the £100, they will secure £150 for their future minister. We are quite sure that by such a particular and piece-meal dealing with each Association, severally and on its own account, we should work up an immensely speedier and immensely greater result than ever will be obtained under a system of mere circulars and written communications; and when, from the very outset, every motive to exertion is superseded by the hope of getting all from Edinburgh, however little they might do for themselves. We cannot imagine a worse education to begin with, or one more fitted to raise an insuperable barrier in the way of aught like a speedy or large church extension. And yet it has been greatly too much the habit hitherto, and from which, if we indeed aspire to the glorious achievements of a great and prosperous Home Mission, we cannot too soon recover ourselves. We are quite sure that if rightly gone about, such a method would obtain the ready coalescence of every little knot of adherents in all parts of the land. They would, if but thus personally dealt with from the first by one of our own visitants, and they had the whole bearings and necessities of the case christianly and reasonably set before them, they would easily be led to make such efforts and sacrifices, as yet we have no imagination, or at least have had no experience of. We could easily, at this rate, have preserved all our Associations, and may still do much in the way of restoring them; besides, that by thus seizing on every intimation of a desire for our countenance and aid from the friends of the Free Church, in whatever quarter of Scotland it might come from, we should, with little or no burden on any of our Central Funds, multiply our additional or new stations all over the land.

5. Such is our confidence of success in this mode of proceeding, and withal so exceedingly genial and pleasurable is the work of carrying it forward, that I fondly conceived the purpose of at least devoting one summer, partly to correspondence, and partly to personal visitation and actual converse with the Scottish worthies in various places of our Non-ministerial Associations; whether already formed, or only yet in embryo—but composing altogether the nursery of our Free Church's future enlargements. To have luxuriated for days in so many little neighbourhoods of homebred and honest piety, would have been a perfect feast of the affections; and to have worked up so many specimens of what can be achieved in the way of liberality and support for the Church which they love even among the rudest and remotest hamlets of the country, would have set the seal of an experimental demonstration on a lesson which we fear has yet to be learned. To my own infinite regret, I broke down in the course of a few weeks after I had begun this charge; which I all the more

lament, as being convinced that to begin aright in the rudimental stages of this process, is the only way by which, in the state of voluntaryism on which we are now cast, to spread and to consolidate a commensurate system of Christian instruction, that might fill up all vacancies, and leave no place even among the poorest of our people unprovided for. But what I could not do even on the small scale in my own person, might still be done on the great scale by our well-selected agents, whose delightful office it should be to fan the embers of philanthropy and piety in every place to which they are called, till matured into the blessed fruits of well-taught schools and well-served churches, throughout the whole length and breadth of our Scottish territory.

6. We have no doubt of the result, should the system we have now sketched so imperfectly, be but fairly and vigorously set agoing. But we have great fears that it will not be set agoing. Our dread is lest the rulers of our Church should be greatly too much occupied with the affairs of the inner department to look abroad on the out-fields of Scotland. We have never been able to command an adequate sympathy on the subject of Church Extension; each congregation being engrossed with the care of its own prosperity, and the Church at large finding ample scope for its attention and energy in the matters of their existing congregations. But what we are most afraid of is the adoption of some such financial measure, as would lay a sure arrest on aught like an indefinite enlargement that might keep pace with the moral and spiritual wants of the community. And should it so turn out, the Free Church must be satisfied with the same limited and sectarian position which is occupied by any other of our religious denominations. Meanwhile, the advancing tide of profligacy and infidelity, both in town and country, will make head against the puny efforts of all the Churches put together; and the horrors of a desolating anarchy will expiate at length the criminal neglect both of past and present generations.*

SECTION VI.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE SCHEMES AND OBJECTS OF THE CHURCH.

1. Let these be fully provided for, but do not let there be an indefinite multiplication of them. It were well if the friends of the Free Church were set at ease upon this matter. They should not be exposed to demands in such rapid and endless succession, as might well awaken the apprehension or the feeling that they are quite interminable. Some of these, even though not of the ordinary and recognized class, have undoubtedly been well selected, and carried at once the assent and willing liberality of the public along with them. The School-Subscription, under the able conduct of Mr. McDonald, forms an apposite example of this. We think a subscription for Manses would form another; and would Mr. Guthrie undertake an object which goes so near to the Scottish heart, we feel that, with his

* See Appendix, No. 8.

powers of command over those national sympathies in which his own heart shares so largely, his appeals carried from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, would be quite irresistible.* There can be no quarrel, but the contrary with either of these objects, which, so soon as proposed, carry an instant and popular acquiesence along with them; and which may be overtaken by one great effort, or at most by such an effort repeated after intervals of many years or of whole generations. On the other hand, there are few things which have gratified us more than that the fabric of our College should have been provided for, and without any appeal to the public at large, by the munificence of twenty individuals;† and by a like munificence, on the part say of fifty or a hundred individuals, we do hope that the present effort which is now making for the endowent of bursaries will be crowned with success.

2. But there are things of perennial necessity which can only be met and provided for by a liberality alike perennial. The rare and occasional objects, or such as can be overtaken by one great effort, and once for all, these might be settled and set by at a single start, and under the power of an impulse. But for the constant and ever recurring necessities of the Church, the thing required is not the excitement of an impulse, but the establishment of a habit; as the Sustentation Fund, which can surely and rightly be upheld in no other way than by a habit of punctuality among the collectors. But there are other, though all of them minor objects to this main and central one, which would require in like manner to be worked into the system of the Church's operations, a thing not to be done by evanescent impulses, but only by enduring habits. And therefore we hold it very fortunate, that, by a mere change in the direction of a habit at least two hundred years old, there seems a patent way for the accomplishment of all which a Christian Church should be most desirous to realize. We mean the good, old, and universal habit of a Sabbath-collection at our church-doors.

3. We would not venture to prescribe, but with all deference would we submit the following suggestion for the consideration of the Church: Might not the first Sunday of every month be singled out for a collection in favour of some specific and understood object, leaving the forty remaining Sabbath-collections throughout the year to take their present course towards the local fund for supplementing the minister's dividend? Out of the twelve monthly and extraordinary collections, six, or one-half their number, might be assigned to the Schemes of the Assembly, leaving the other half, or six more, of these extraordinary collections to the determination of the Deacons' Courts, or to be expended on any such objects as might seem good to that body. In this way there would, from these extraordi-

* Mr. Guthrie has, since this was written (a year ago) undertaken and prosecuted this great work, and nobly has he fulfilled it, having obtained, within the brief space of eight months, the magnificent subscription of more than one hundred thousand pounds.

† Through a process of quiet and influential correspondence on the part of Dr. Welsh. But it is now right to add, that, in virtue of the great rise in the price of labour and materials, this sum turns out to be deficient by several thousand pounds.

nary collections, be six general objects provided for as laid down by the Assembly, and six such local objects as the local authorities of each congregation might choose to fix upon. Let us here specify the six Assembly objects in what I conceive to be the order of their importance, or rather in the order and according to the magnitude of their necessities; First, the Home Mission Scheme; second, the Scheme for School Education; third, for Foreign Missions; fourth, for Colonial Churches; fifth, for the Conversion of the Jews; and sixth, for the Annual Expenses of the College, which, though the last and least in regard to the amount of collections required, is certainly not the least in the order of importance, the object being to uphold the academic education of the Free Church, or the education of students for the ministry.

4. The produce of the other six extraordinary collections should be placed entirely at the disposal and under the direction of the Deacons' Courts. They need be at no loss for objects; and the right determination of these were a fit exercise for their Christian wisdom and charity. Of course, there are the usual congregational expenses, which would require to be thus defrayed; and, when they judged it expedient, there would be occasional collections for the poor of the congregation. It is thus, too, that all the constituents of a right ecclesiastical economy, as school-rents and salaries and repairs, parish libraries, even school-houses and manses, might be helped out, and at length wholly provided for. The spirit and good will of the people would speedily be enlisted on the side of what themselves saw to be right, and would soon experience to be practicable. It were sure to keep up their habit of liberality, nay, to encourage and extend it, did they see that every year their own apparatus of Christian usefulness was rising before their eyes into greater completeness and respectability. There should be nothing in the multitude of the collections to disquiet, for in proportion as these are multiplied, they can subdivide; and no one who understands either the policy or the principle of true religious benevolence, would ever wish them to give more than, under the dictates of conscience and Christian feeling, they are prepared to give cheerfully. But I would not have these objects multiplied at random, so as to be constantly shooting ahead of what the people are laying their account with. In a few years, it would settle down into a regular and unvarying method, the use and wont of twelve special, and forty ordinary Sabbath collections in the twelvemonth; and we feel persuaded, that in the vast majority of instances, these last would grow in amount, when their destination came to be understood, and nothing was made to intervene between the comfort of the minister and the kindness of the hearers among whom he laboured. This needs not supersede, if found necessary, a distinct and supplemental effort, on the part of the officials or leading men in the congregation, doing what in many instances I understand they are now doing; taking measures that the income of their clergyman shall at least not fall short of what they judge to be a decent sufficiency, while, at the same time, they would rejoice, if, as the fruit of a spontaneous affection on the part of the

congregation, the amount of the collective offerings should supersede the necessity of any further care or exertion on their part.*

SECTION VII.—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

1. On the strength of the above explanations, we would earnestly wish the concurrence, the practical concurrence, of all other evangelical communions in this great work. Why should they not adopt, too, the device of a General Fund, so that, instead of confining their efforts in a great degree to the support of their existing congregations, they might have the same principle of expansion which we are labouring to keep in operation among ourselves? We are all the more desirous of this, when we think on the mighty, nay, the yearly increasing spaces of wild and outlandish territory which are still unoccupied. Are there not myriads of immortal, yet perishing because neglected spirits in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and other large towns of Scotland, as well as in hundreds of outfields throughout the country at large, which would require the united efforts of all the wise and good in our land for many years to come? Why put off for another hour, we do not say the fulfilment, but at all events the commencement of this glorious enterprise; for in truth this, though forming the greatest moral problem of our day, has scarcely been entered on. In our city wastes, in our manufacturing villages, in many, very many of our remote and rural hamlets; in all these put together, are there thousands of families who live in guilt and die in darkness, and have never up to this moment been the objects of aught like an adequate effort for their Christian education. Should not all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, form themselves into agencies, and select their respective fields of operation? And though each of these bodies will labour far more effectively when labouring apart from each other, or when not overlaid by the weight of that very usual, but at the same time very useless apparatus—we mean the incubus of a complex and cumbrous committeeship—yet this need not hinder a busy converse and comparison of their several methods on the part of these distinct bands of philanthropists, the individual members of which might often meet together in social party, and there provoke each other to love, and more especially to this great and good work. And another mighty benefit might be expected from such a co-operation as this. A common object of Christian charity, zealously prosecuted by all, will lead to a more general community of thought and feeling betwixt them. It would speed the cause of Christian union at an infinitely more rapid pace than ever will be effected by Synods and Assemblies, labouring in conjunct deliberation to new-model their formularies, and settle their articles of agreement. Let us be one

* In some places where seat-rents have been abolished, the voluntary expedient of seat-offerings has been substituted; and out of these not only are the precentor and beadle paid, but church repairs are provided for, and any remainder of debt upon the fabric is gradually liquidated. The result of the abolition of seat-rents illustrates very clearly the distinction between an impulse and a habit. Where they had been long established, they would never have been grudged; but now that they are done away, they are not compensated, as it was fancied they would have been, by an increase in the collections. The habit of larger collections has not yet been formed.

in well-doing; and this, wherever there is real sincerity and right good earnest, will prove the high-road to being one in sentiment. A oneness in conduct will often lead to an essential oneness of creed—for the reflex influence of the latter upon the former is far greater than perhaps logicians and controversialists in theology are willing to allow. And so may we speed onward the accomplishment of our blessed Saviour's prayer, even that palpable unity among Christians, which He has announced as an indispensable stepping-stone to the world's regeneration.*

2. We find that in this section, which we had devoted to general considerations, we must fall greatly short of what our conception or our aim was at the first, and of what our desire is still. These considerations so crowd upon us, that aught like an adequate enforcement of them would require a great deal more of time and strength than we can afford to bestow. Perhaps some of them will be touched upon in our purposed Appendix, the various articles of which we earnestly recommend to the attention of our readers, and especially such of them as are to be members of the next General Assembly.†

* John xvii. 21.

† See Appendix, No. 9.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

On the importance of the Free Church Ministers giving their Testimony and their Countenance in behalf of the Association. Sec. I. § 2.

It were well if some other name could be devised for our Fund than the Sustentation Fund, and some other name for our Committee than the Sustentation Committee. What we want is the adoption of some such name as will express, not the sustentation of ministers, but the support and withal the extension of a Gospel ministry in Scotland; a name, in short, that will stand related to the work of the ministry rather than to its wages; a name that would light up in people's minds the idea of that public, patriotic, and truly Christian object for which our Associations have been instituted, rather than it should awaken on the instant, as it does now, a personal, and as many feel it, a degrading association with an income to our ecclesiastical labourers for the subsistence of themselves and their families. It is thought that some such change would relieve our clergymen from that embarrassing delicacy by which a number of them feel as if spell-bound, and tied up from any attempt at the furtherance of a most righteous and religious cause.

I am too well aware of the virtue which lies in a name—the power of imposition that may reside in a single word—not to feel the importance of this suggestion. Yet it is extremely difficult to act upon; or to select a title for our Fund and our committee sufficiently brief, and at the same time sufficiently expressive for the purpose of a designation. Our original appellation was, "The Financial Committee;" but this suggested the notion of a fund for all the expenses of the Church —another instance, by the way, of the misleading power of a name. Certain it is that we were exposed for a whole year to draughts and demands from committees over whose expenditure we had no manner of control; and to make our escape from these, we had to find out some more special and discriminative epithet which might announce more precisely the real object of our Associations, as well as protect from all encroachment both the functions and the means of their presiding Committee.

There is an analogy for such a change of name in the Church Extension Committee of the Old Assembly. It was originally the Church Accommodation Committee; and hence (a third example of the mighty influence that lies in mere nomenclature) the inveterate notion that all we meant by that movement was a mere multiplication of fabrics; or, in the derisive language of our enemies, that ours was but a stone and lime reformation. I wished to find a title which might be expressive of an addition to the living agency as well as to the architecture of our Church. I could think of nothing better than Church Extension; and though I was not satisfied with the term as being altogether adequate, yet it has been generally given in to, and the cause is now recognized by no other title either in Scotland or England.

Some may think the topic too insignificant to have been so much expatiated on. We should have thought so too, were it not for our extreme desire to enlist so influential a body as the clergy of our Free Church in the vigorous, unembarrassed, unblushing advocacy of the Associations; the prosperity of which is bound up with the furtherance of a cause, as pure and noble as the loftiest and most disinterested philanthropy ever was engaged with.

It will, indeed, be quite grievous, if they are restrained by any consideration whatever from doing their uttermost for the promotion of a cause so obviously

patriotic and Christian. We do not ask them to solicit contributions in their own person; but we ask them to put forth their legitimate influence on the deacons and collectors. It were surely no great sacrifice to hold a monthly meeting with these, to be present at their reports of progress, to urge upon them the mighty importance of their office, to suggest such directions and details as might aid them in the discharge of its duties, to spirit them on by the example of other places, to state the positive religious obligation which lies upon them of being as little burdensome as possible, to represent the superior blessedness of being givers rather than receivers; and, if plain language be necessary, to tell how odious, how disgustingly odious, for them to be an incubus on the Church, at the expense of other congregations more generous than they, and so as to lay an arrest upon its extension, and keep out the light of the gospel from localities far more destitute than their own. On this subject see a very admirable address to the Presbytery of Linlithgow by James M. Hog, Esq. of Newliston. If such remonstrances as his do not tell in arousing our Free Church ministers to a sense of their responsibilities and duties, I give up in despair what, would they but co-operate as they ought, might be a most easy and practicable attainment, such an augmentation of our means as would enable us to meet both the ecclesiastical and educational wants of all our people. Whenever the minister is in good earnest, and gives himself zealously and heartily to the object, there never fails to be a prosperous association. In other words, should the Free Church fall short of this lofty aim, the failure will lie at the door of her own clergymen.

No. II.

On the Possibility of Supporting a Church, even of National Magnitude and Extent, by the Contributions of the Middle and Lower Classes. Sec. I. § 5.

To demonstrate this possibility, or rather to turn this possible into actual, it is not necessary that each locality should do all for itself; but we utterly despair of a universal result, if each locality, even the poorest, is not made to do something; after which a something more might be done for it, proportional to what it has done for itself. We need never calculate on the endurance of a congregation that looks for all its supplies from without; and unless there be a fountain of more or less yield from within, it will either be stifled in embryo, or infallibly go down in a single generation. It is a sustained effort by the people themselves, first to set up an Association, and then to keep it going, which forms our best guaranty for what may well be called fixity of tenure, whether to the mission or the ministry that has been planted in the midst of them. And here I cannot but record the unmixed complacency and satisfaction I have felt in all my correspondence with the good people of Ellsrighill—an upland, yet pleasing and picturesque hamlet in the neighbourhood of Biggar—where there is a devoted body of adherents, with at most two or three husbandmen, but made up chiefly of labourers and the servants of husbandmen. Their usual Sabbath attendance is 160; and the number of their home communicants at a late sacrament, exclusive of those from a distance, was 85. Their annual contribution to our Central Fund is £41; and by which, in a humble way, they managed to support the catechist who laboured amongst them. On being apprized by us that if, by a slight effort, they could raise about £20 more, by the operation of our rule, they would secure £100 a-year for their future minister—the last and truly most gratifying communication which I received from them was an expression of their entire satisfaction with this arrangement. O, for but two or three pious and intelligent travellers in our employ, under whose influence and care not one of our infant assemblages need be suffered to go down; who, instead of this, could foster hundreds more of them into being and stability, and so multiply these beauteous spectacles of piety and Christian worth all over the land!

Never was a church in a better or likelier position for filling up all the waste and vacant places in our land, than is at this moment the Free Church of Scotland. In the first place, it could make sure of a little nucleus of adherents every where. In the second place, it might form them into an embryo congregation; which, could it only manage to keep up through the successive stages of its advancement, might

in so many months, or say in two or three years, be in a fit state for the services of a full and regular ministry. In the originating, as well as the conducting of such a process, the utmost encouragement should be given to the efforts of lay piety. Without a co-operation from this quarter, we cannot possibly, in the present defect of our ecclesiastical labourers, meet the demands for help which come in upon us from all parts of the country. Anterior, therefore, to the services of a probationer, or even of a paid catechist, the Sabbath exercises might, in many instances, require to be shared as in our ordinary fellowship meetings, by the pious and the good among themselves. Who knows but that in the course of these earlier operations, an able and approved catechist may at length spring up among them, and so raise them to a higher platform in the rank of their now progressive congregations? We know of one such, now large and flourishing, with its handsome church, and highly acceptable minister, which began not three years ago with but four or six individuals.

But we have to speak not only of the demands from the country for help in men, but of their demands for help in money. It cannot be too earnestly insisted on, that nothing effectual and permanent should be looked for in this way, if they will do little or nothing to help themselves. And, therefore, one of the earliest steps in devising for the continuance and growth of a new congregation, still in the smallness and feebleness of its infancy, is to form an Association out of its members, and give them well to understand, that, instead of counting on peculiar supplies from abroad, they should feel their main dependence to be on their own efforts and their own sacrifices. How these should be stimulated and carried onward, till, chiefly by dint of their own liberalities and exertions, their ecclesiastical economy was completed, will be detailed in a subsequent Note. *See No.* 8.

The truth is, that analogous specimens to that of Ellsrighill might be reared every where. And this perhaps is the place for inserting Mr. Thompson's schedule, as a most effective instrument, either for raising new Associations, or for resuscitating such as are extinct, or finally, for reinvigorating old ones.

RATES OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTENTATION FUND.

SCALE.	PER WEEK.		PER MONTH.			PER QUARTER.		
	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rate, No. 1....	*							
Rate, No. 2. ..	0	1	0	0	4	0	1	0
Rate, No. 3....	0	1½	0	0	6	0	1	6
Rate, No. 4 ...	0	2	0	0	8	0	2	0
Rate, No. 5....	0	3	0	1	0	0	3	0
Rate, No. 6....	0	6	0	2	0	0	6	0
Rate, No. 7....	1	0	0	4	0	0	12	0
Rate, No. 8....	2	0	0	8	0	1	4	0
Rate, No. 9....	2	6	0	10	0	1	10	0
Rate, No. 10....	3	6	0	14	0	2	2	0
Rate, No. 11....	5	0	1	0	0	3	0	0
Rate, No. 12....	*							

On considering the above rates, I agree to give to the General Sustentation Fund the sum specified in Rate No. —, for the year commencing at Martinmas, 1844, and request the Deacon or Collector to call for it each . . . . . .

(Signature) . . . . . .

* Rate No. 1 is left blank, to suit parties who may find that even the Rate, in No. 2 is beyond their ability; and Rate No. 12 is also left blank, to suit parties whose circumstances may enable them to give a higher Rate than any put down in the scale. Some members of the Free Church give £1 a week, some £2, some £4 a-week, and a few even more, to the Sustentation Fund.

On the other hand, how grievous, how discouraging, to be told, that a process so hopeful, and which might be carried into effect any where, is utterly impracticable in this one, and that other, part of the country, from the extreme and universal poverty which abounds in it. The thing is experimentally untrue. And so confident am I of this, that I will not let go my expectation of a tenfold greater

produce from the Highlands of Scotland, than we have ever yet received from them, a confidence fully warranted by the following encouraging examples of what has been done, and is doing, in various localities of that region:

Note of Amount of Contributions to the Sustentation Fund from the following Highland Parishes, from 1st April 1845, to 26th March 1846, (nearly a year.)

Kingussie,.....	Presbytery of Abernethy,.....	£91	0 1
Glenurquhart,.....	„ Abertarff,.....	110	9 3
Knockbain,.....	„ Chanonry,.....	102	3 7
Redcastle,..... ...	„ „	84	9 3
Kilmorack, ...	„ Dingwall,.....	£116	5 9
Ferintosh, ...	„ „	107	0 6
Urray, ...	„ „	102	3 6
Callander, ...	„ Dunblane,.....	127	0 0
Lochgilphead,.....	„ Dunoon and Inverary,....	116	16 1
Kirkhill,.....	„ Inverness,.....	152	1 9
Kiltarlity,.....	„ „	96	12 0
Snizort,.....	„ Skye, ...	75	16 3
Rosskeen,.....	„ Tain, ...	95	8 1
Lochbroom, ...	„ Lochcarron,.....	90	0 0

I doubt not that others, if I knew their neighbourhoods as well, would call forth the same expressions of my admiration and gratitude. I feel confident that if Mr. Macrae of Knockbain, would go forth on a mission through the Associations of the north, he would awaken a noble spirit of Christian emulation and liberality over the Highlands of Scotland. "Let us provoke each other to love and to good works."

Truly the Free Church has had sore difficulties to contend against, both right and left. On the one hand, it is cut altogether off from the liberalities of the great bulk and body of the upper classes; and, on the other hand, as if to complete our helplessness, and make sure our speedy and entire overthrow, are there many injudicious sentimentalists among our friends, who would lay their interdict on every attempt to obtain a revenue from the offerings of the great bulk and body of the common people. And yet they will look for dividends all the while. Verily to be placed under such taskmasters is worse than an Egyptian bondage. To make dividends without contributions, I should hold to be a work of greater difficulty than to make bricks without straw.

On the subject of a perpetuity for our system, I have omitted what I hold to be a useful hint for making sure of it. There is a labourer in my own Association who gives 3d. a-week; but, with great judgment and good feeling, he gives it in three names, his own, and those of two of his children. By thus dividing the family contribution, even though to include all the children, you behoved to associate with each of their names a half-penny a week, or say a penny, nay, even a half-penny a month, the good habit, along with its wholesome principle, might be made to descend from generation to generation.

No. III.

On the Offerings of the Common People. Sec. I. § 6.

For my views upon this subject I would refer to a tract published by me more than thirty years ago, in order to repel the objection, that by taking contributions for a religious object from people in humble life, we hastened their descent to a state of pauperism. The following extract forms one part of my reply to the adversaries of all such institutions:

"The single circumstance of its being a *voluntary* act, forms the defence and the answer to all the clamours of an affected sympathy. You take from the poor! No! they give. You take beyond their ability! Of this they are the best judges. You abridge their comforts! No! there is a comfort in the exercise of charity: there is a comfort in the act of lending a hand to a noble enterprise; there is a comfort in the contemplation of its progress; there is a comfort in rendering a service to a friend, and when that friend is the Saviour, and that service the circulation of the message He left behind Him, it is a comfort which many of the

poor are ambitious to share in. Leave them to judge of their comfort; and if, in point of fact, they do give their penny a-week to a Parochial Society, it just speaks them to have more comfort in this way of spending it, than in any other which occurs to them.

"Perhaps it does not occur to those friends of the poor, while they are sitting in judgment on their circumstances and feelings, how unjustly and how unworthily they think of them. They do not conceive how truth and benevolence can be at all objects to them; and suppose, that after they have got the meat to feed, the house to shelter, the raiment to cover them, there is nothing else that they will bestow a penny upon. They may not be able to express their feelings on a suspicion so ungenerous, but I shall do it for them: 'We have souls as well as you, and precious to our hearts is the Saviour who died for them. It is true, we have our distresses; but these have bound us more firmly to our Bibles, and it is the desire of our hearts, that a gift so precious should be sent to the poor of other countries. The word of God is our hope and our rejoicing; we desire that it may be theirs also—that the wandering savage may know it and be glad, and the poor negro, under the lash of his master, may be told of a Master in heaven, who is full of pity and full of kindness. Do you think that sympathy for such as these is your peculiar attribute? Know that our hearts are made of the same materials with your own; that we can feel as well as you; and out of the earnings of a hard and honest industry, we shall give an offering to the cause; nor shall we cease our exertions till the message of salvation be carried round the globe, and made known to the countless millions who live in guilt, and who die in darkness.'"—*Chalmers' Works*, Vol. xii., pp. 143-145.

No. IV.

The Stability of our Means lies more in the Smaller Contributions of the many, than in the Larger Contributions of the few. Sect. I. § 8.

When I was called, in the spring of last year, to address the friends of our Free Church in Glasgow on the subject of their Associations, I believe some were disappointed because I did not address myself so much to the richer as to the general classes of society. I spoke under a deep conviction both of the moral and pecuniary importance of plebeian contributions; and with an anxious desire that this should be felt and acted on throughout the country at large. Perhaps the following official statement will convince the reader of what mighty consequence it were that an elevating force were brought to bear on the greatly too numerous class of unproductive Associations.

Abstract, showing the Rate of Contributions, according to the Actual Remittances to the Treasurer in Edinburgh, from all the Associations of the Free Church of Scotland, for the six months immediately following the General Assembly of 1844:

Rates.	No. of Associations.	Average Sum from each per Annum.	Amount from all the Associations per Annum.
1. At or above £500 per annum....	17	£980 13 6	£16,671 9 6
2. From £300 to £500.....	13	354 15 0	4,611 15 0
3. " £200 to £300.....	30	238 16 4	7,164 11 9
4. " £100 to £200.....	114	131 10 0	14,991 0 0
5. " £75 to £100.	95	86 8 4	8,209 18 8
6. " £50 to £75.....	145	62 5 4	9,029 2 3
7. " £20 to £50.....	240	34 1 4	8,176 0 0
8. Under £20.....	37	14 2 10	523 4 10
9. Associations which made no remittances during the six months, but have since remitted sums which may fairly be taken as their half-yearly sum,.....	13		645 7 4
10. Associations entirely blank,.....	4		0 0 0
11. Stations returning very small sums,	48		198 8 9
Total number of Associations,..	756		£70,220 18 1

Abstract, showing the Rate of Contributions, according to the Actual Remittances to the Treasurer in Edinburgh, from all the Associations of the Free Church of Scotland, from 15th May to 15th November, 1845:

Rates.	No.	Average per Annum.	Amount per Annum.
1. Above £500 per annum,.....	15	£979 14 6	£14,695 18 1
2. From £200 to £500.....	52	288 7 7½	14,995 16 6
3. " £100 to £200.....	146	129 16 10	18,957 4 0
4. " £50 to £100.....	275	73 2 4	20,107 7 3
5. Under £50.....	287	28 9 2	8,169 3 2
	775		
6. Remitted nothing during the above period,.....	31		£76,925 9 0

The comparison of this abstract with a similar one for last year, enables us to state the following differences betwixt them:

1. There are two fewer Associations this year than last, which yielded more than £500 a-year each, and the whole sum contributed by these is £1975, 11s. 5d. less. This process of diminution will infallibly go on, if the aid-receiving Associations do not bestir themselves.

2. There are nine more which yield from £200 to £500 more than last year; and their united contributions exceed those of last year by £3,219 19s. 9d. This forms a very wholesome class of Associations; and to the multiplication of these do we look for the extension of our Church.

3. Of those which yield from £100 to £200, there are so many which rise above the self-supporting point, and so many which fall beneath it. We would earnestly urge upon them an aspiring effort toward the 2d class. They give £3,966, 4s. more than last year.

4. There are thirty-five Associations more than last year of those which give from £50 to £100; and united they give £2,868, 6s. 4d. more than last year. But they are all beneath the self-supporting level; and we do, for the sake of the Christianity of our land, implore them to rise above the condition of receivers.

5. Of those who give under £50 there are twenty-four less than last year: but they give us amongst them much less in proportion—that is, £1,373, 5s. 7d. less than last year. These form the heaviest part of our concern, and they will at last sink the ship if not put under proper regulation. It is for preventing the multiplication of these that our nursery operations are so indispensable. The office-bearers connected with such Associations, and who mak eno effort to amend them—these are they to whom I referred in the Preface as being most grievously in the wrong.

Let me not be understood, however, as if I regarded with indifference the larger contributions of the wealthy. All is wanted; and let me hope that not only will individuals of signal munificence arise in greater numbers to befriend us, but that the aid giving Associations will increase and multiply more and more.

No. V.

On certain requisite Modifications by which our present System of an Equal Dividend might be Improved. Sect. III. and IV., § 2.

The only semblance of an argument for an equal dividend is, that it carries an aspect of justice (*aequitas*) to the ministers who came out at the Disruption. There is but the aspect in it, however, and not the reality of justice. Had the plan been adopted of each Association getting back one half more than it gave, up to £150, it would have insured this dividend to at least the great majority of the outgone ministers, whereas, with no less than 318 Associations giving us less than £50, and some of them less than £20 a-year, the result is unavoidable of a much lower dividend throughout the whole Church; so that all, in fact, are weighed down to a lower level, for the sake of a few who, at the same time, would, if found in their ascertained circumstances not to have been glaringly deficient, would,

through the medium of the Home Mission Committee, or otherwise, have been raised to £100; an allowance which, on the system of an equal dividend, all must make up their minds to, though no practical good, but, on the other hand, a great and depressing influence is brought to bear by it on the revenues of the Church.

But if the evil cannot at once be done away, we should at least attempt to mitigate and to make it temporary. Some are proposing that the ministers admitted from the Assembly 1843 to 1844 should come under the new regulation. But the regulation of 1844 was adopted prospectively; and I for one have no wish that aught which can be complained of as having in it the injustice of a retrospective operation, should be proposed in the Assemblies of our Free Church.

But there is a very obvious contravention of sound principle which ought to be instantly provided against. The equal dividend should be continued only with the ministers who came out, and not be perpetuated in the charges which are left vacant, whether by their death or by their removal. There have been several such vacancies; and we have committed the flagrant error of keeping up the equal dividend to the newly appointed ministers who have succeeded in their places. At this rate, the anomaly of 470 congregations on a different footing from all the rest would be perpetuated to the latest ages. Whereas the anomaly should be suffered to die away with the disappearance of the original ministers, and at length all would be placed under the common rule of getting as they give—a rule that should stimulate to its uttermost every Association in the Church; and, under the operation of which we could accomplish two objects, otherwise hopeless; first, the raising generally of the allowance from the Central Fund to £150, and we think at length to £200; and, secondly, the indefinite expansion of the Church, so as to meet all the necessities of all our population.

There is another modification which, we think, might be adopted with a most beneficial influence. Let those ministers of the Disruption who choose to be placed on the footing of one and a half more till they receive £150, signify this wish; and let it forthwith take effect. Many, we are sure, who are now kept down to the present low dividend would rise, *per saltum*, to £150. We are confident of many Associations which now give much less than £100, and even less than £50 annually, that they would instantly put forth new vigour; and rising each to £100, and some of them I hope generously beyond it, would ensure £150 from the Central Fund for their minister. The regulation of one and a half more would act as if by barometrical pressure in raising the contributions; whereas, from the want of this elevating power, the Church loses every year many thousand pounds which it might otherwise realize.

I had a visit some time ago from a zealous friend of the Free Church, which I confess greatly discomposed me. The object of it was to point out and complain of an anomaly in which the system of getting as they give was likely to land us. Some of the new ministers, under the new regulation, will, in virtue of the handsome contribution from their people, be entitled to £150, and so shoot a-head of all who are limited to the dividend. Would that this anomaly were realized by all of these ministers, or at least by as many as would demonstrate the stimulating and elevating power of the rule under which they are placed. But the mortifying circumstance is, that what formed the most impressive argument for our adoption of this system should thus have been turned into an argument against it. I perfectly despair of a right and comprehensive policy being adopted, if in our popular Assembly, where not twelve perhaps have listened to the subject in all its bearings, and made a thorough study of it, the most laboriously devised scheme, however sound and however much it may commend itself to the judgment of practical men, shall be in danger of being overset on the rash and hasty suggestion, whether of one who can sport what may seem a plausibility, but only to those who take in but a part or fragment of the whole; or of one who carries weight because of his real excellence in some departments of the Church's business, and who therefore is held worthy to be a universalist in the direction of all her affairs. If it seem hard that they who, by giving us £100, have earned their right to £50 more, should receive so much from us, is it not infinitely harder that those who make no exertion, and give us less than £50 each, should obtain more than £50 additional, even upon the low dividend of £100; and should put in even for more than £100 additional should the dividend ever rise to £150; a point, however, that it will never reach under the system of an equal dividend; or if it does, it will be because of the cruel arrest

which it has laid on church extension. It were a mighty relief could we obtain the establishment of a system under which the maximum of what we had to give over and above the remittances of any church, was not more than £50 to any of our aid-receiving Associations.

No. VI.

On the Character and Prospects of a Church indifferent to the Moral and Religious State of the Outfield Population. Sect. III. & IV., § 7.

One can imagine, no doubt, a selfish church, headed by aspiring rulers; the former caring more for the comfort of its existing ministers than for the Christian good of the surrounding population; and the latter satisfied with the command of a body, that held within its limits the political influence of five or six hundred congregations, although limited to this number, it should never be extended further. One can imagine a collusion between these parties, and a measure carried, such as a universal and prospective equal dividend, which promised, however fallaciously, to secure a higher provision for the ministers at large, while at the same time it paralyzed all our home missionary efforts, and laid a sure arrest on the extension of the Church. But such a system never could enjoy the continued support of an intelligent Christian public; and so aught like a general fund would speedily wane to its extinction, leaving nothing to divide, and so landing us in no dividend.

One of the most frequent marks of the indifference to be charged upon too many of the churches in our land, is the union of two weak congregations, for the purpose of forming a strong one. Surely if there be enough of population to make up both, it were greatly better that each should retain its own distinct agency, and by means of laborious and devoted missionary work, that they should recruit their respective churches from the outfield families around them. There is a congregational interest that comes into direct conflict with the Christian good of the community at large.

No. VII.

On Scales of Distribution. Sect. III. & IV., § 15.

These can be variously constructed. The rate of one and a half more would give rise to a scale, No. 1. of the three here subjoined. The other two have been actually proposed.

(1.)		(2.)		(3.)	
Contribution.	Stipend.	Contribution.	Stipend.	Contribution.	Stipend.
£50	£75	£60	£120	£50	£120
60	90	70	130	60	120
70	105	80	140	70	136
80	120	90	150	80	144
90	135	110	165	90	152
100	150	130	180	100	158
		155	190	110	164
The increase of the 2d column stops here. The first rises upwards through the aid-receiving to the contributions of the aid-giving congregations.		180	200	120	170
		200	205	130	176
		220	210	140	180
				150	184
		Both columns continue to increase.		160	188
				180	193
				200	198
				220	208
				Both columns increase.	

It will be observed that by the 2d and 3d scales, no congregation becomes an aid-giver till its contribution has risen above £200. All at or below £200 are aid-receivers. Let it be observed that at present we have only 67 congregations who give up to or above £200; and that if there be no increase in the number of them, over and above providing the stipends of their own ministers, they would have to make up the deficiency of towards six hundred aid-receiving congregations.

We hold that the main purpose of scales would be served by the simple regulation, that no congregation should be connected with the General Fund till it remitted £50 a-year—after which let us imagine a scale terminating where No. 1 does; but that, instead of its rate of one and a half, each should receive £50 more than its contribution till the stipend came to £150, and there should be no further increase upon it. This would give rise to the following scale:—For £50 get back £100; for £60, £110; for £70, £120; for £80, £130; for £90, £145; for £100, £150. After the selfish principle had carried up so many congregations to the contribution of £100, it is to he hoped that so many more would not stop there; but that the generous principle would then begin to operate, and we should have contributions of £110, £120, and £150—lessening their burden upon us from £50 to £40, £30, &c., till they became self-supporting at £150. Then, and at this point would there commence our aid-giving congregations; and it will give some idea of the capabilities of our Church, if to avoid complexity we shall keep out of view the intermediate congregations; and, suppose that all the aid-receiving congregations cost £50 each to the General Fund. Let us then conceive our Church to consist of 750 congregations, and that one-third of them only, or 250, are aid-giving, while two-thirds, or 500, are aid-receiving. This would imply a deficiency on the part of the latter to the extent of £25,000 to be made up by the former, whose contributions would therefore require to average £250 each—that is, £150 reserved each for its own minister, and £100 over and above for the deficient congregations. The sum total from the 250 aid-giving congregations, on the supposition that they averaged £100 each, would be £50,000. Or, in other words, from a net revenue of £112,500, we could afford to give £150 a year to each of 750 ministers. This might be realized next year, could we only get rid of the enormous deficiencies of those who now give us less than £50 a-year. Why, to get up these alone to this £150, we should require to expend more than the whole £25,000 of surplus put into our hands by the aid-giving congregations—whereas, with this surplus, and on the simple adoption of the regulation that none should be admitted into connexion with us till they give £50—we could, with the same £25,000 of surplus, insure a dividend of £150 a-year throughout nearly all, or with a very few straggling exceptions, a whole Church of 750 ministers.

And let it not be said that by ridding ourselves of this incubus, we doom to extinction so many of our poorer congregations. The truth is, that almost, if not altogether, they, every one of them, under the stimulus of getting as they gave, would remit the £50. Or if some few did not, there is not one of them, if found by the Home Mission Committee to be meritorious cases, which would not receive what would make up £100 from their funds, a sum as great as they ever can receive under the system of an equal dividend, a system, therefore, which, though continued for their sakes, would yield no practical good to them, and at the heavy expense of keeping down the general dividend to its present level; or, if the extension of our Church is to be prosecuted, of sinking it still lower.

When I think of the perfect ease wherewith both dividends might be increased, and the Church rapidly extended, I am all the more conscious that these various schemes of distribution should be discussed with the most perfect temper and forbearance; and, also, that enough of time should be taken for the maturing of them. It were grievous, indeed, if, when within demonstrable reach of so blessed a consummation, we should fall short of it by falling out among ourselves. Let us not give our enemies this triumph.

There is nothing which has more shaken our confidence in the disposition of the Free Church to become an extending Church, or at least in its perception of the right measures for carrying this into effect, than a late resolution on the part of a numerous meeting of its ministers and elders, that the equal dividend should be kept up in those charges whose ministers came out at the Disruption, even after the outgone minister had been removed by death or by translation, and been succeeded by one who had made no sacrifice. If there be any soundness in the principle that congregations should be encouraged to make an effort for themselves by getting in proportion as they give, then there is so little sense or reason in exempting from the operation of this rule, and that for ever, all those geographical portions of the Free Church territory, whose ministers happened to come out at the Disruption, that the resolution they should be so exempted looks very like a blow at the rule or principle itself. And then, should the blow take effect,

it will involve the restoration of a universal equal dividend, both present and prospective. Our reason for deprecating such a measure as ruinous is not that it will hang with depressing effect in all time coming upon the dividend, though this must be one of its sure results, but that it will prove a death-blow to our Church's extension, and thus incapacitate her for taking a share in the honourable work of making aught like a large or successful inroad on that outfield population, who occupy the wide and fearfully increasing domain of the country's practical heathenism. It will land us in a most anomalous system, at variance with all the attempts which have been made of late years for adding to the number of ministers, or churches, or schools in the land. The *regium donum* proceeds on the rule of getting as they give, the sum awarded to the minister from the Treasury bearing a proportion to the sum raised for him by the congregation. The present allowance from the State for the erection of schools is regulated by the amount of private subscriptions for the same object. The Church Extension of the old General Assembly, under which 200 churches sprung into being in four or five years, advanced with such rapid strides, not by granting to all equally from the Central Fund, at which rate we should not have had a tenth part of these additional churches, but by a certain regulated centage, which left the remainder, or rather main bulk of the expense, to be provided for by local efforts. Let not our Church be abandoned to the recklessness of men, who, under the power of one engrossing idea, or misled by some specious plausibility that carries in it the semblance, and but a semblance, of the reasonable and the right, would shut out the light of all these experiences, and rush headlong into a policy that would soon bring us to a dead stand. The equal dividend, carried out and persisted in, will not only operate, which it has already done, to a fearful extent, as a sedative on the efforts of the aid-receiving, but as a sedative too, and that right soon, on the liberalities of the aid-giving congregations. The spectacle of nearly one-half our Churches receiving each £120 from the Central Treasury, and contributing less than £50, and this palpably due, not to the necessities of the case, but to the downright apathy or indolence of Deacons and Collectors, such a spectacle cannot long be perpetuated, but will soon fall to pieces under the weight and the exhaustion of its own natural decay.

We have heard it objected to the method of getting as they give, that instances may occur of the remittance from the association being made, not of a sum raised, but of a sum borrowed, and this to cause the larger proportional return from the Central Fund in Edinburgh. And it is argued, from the possible or even the actual occurrence of such a flagrant iniquity, in one or two instances, that the system though otherwise and in general of most wholesome operation, should be therefore done away. It were well if these reasoners would only bethink themselves of wherein it is that the necessity or the wisdom of legislation lies, not most certainly in the sacrifice of a universal good, and this for the prevention of such a rare and disgraceful enormity, that the very exposure of it would prove its own severest punishment, and therefore its own most effectual check and corrective; but for the prevention of a sore and universal evil, and this through the operation of a natural lethargy, which stirs up no vivid indignation whatever, because there are so many who share in it, and keep it in countenance. When a congregation, who might easily do three times more, gives less than £50 to the General Fund, and yet without remorse would take out £120 for the maintenance of their minister, there is readiness enough, we admit, to call out shameful; but the shame of it is not really felt, or at least not so felt as to be of practical operation, as the very existence of 318 such congregations in the Free Church most abundantly testifies. The law of getting as they give supplies the very stimulus that is obviously awanting; and which, if not supplied, will perpetuate such a drag upon the Church as shall both restrain, or rather wholly arrest its progress, and keep down the general circumstances of the whole body.

We would not have dwelt so long on the subject of this note, but for our apprehension of its being the very subject on which the Free Church is likeliest to go wrong. And should the apprehension be verified, then must we abandon our fondly cherished hope of its ever attaining to the magnitude of a national institute, or of its ever reaching farther than by a very little way among our yet unprovided families. The loss of importance to it is comparatively a bagatelle; but it is

no bagatelle that we should adopt a system which limits and disables us as a Home Mission, and so confines that gospel within a narrower territory, the blessed calls and overtures of which might, under another economy, be brought to every poor man's hovel, to every cottage door.

No. VIII.

Fear lest the work of Church Extension should be mismanaged or neglected.

We confess that our fears lest any suggestions which might be offered shall not be attended to, but be overlooked in the headlong and hurried style of Assembly business, by which matters are huddled through, of whatever importance; and however essential, that they should have been well weighed and undergone a thorough elaboration in the silent chambers of thought, or amid the leisurely deliberations of a small and select committee, the members of which were not overborne by the multitude of their tasks, we confess that our fears lest such matters should proceed in their wonted hap-hazard way, have been greatly confirmed and aggravated by a very glaring instance of it that occurred since the first impression of this pamphlet was thrown off, and copies of it put into the hands of the most prominent and public men in Edinburgh, and who have to do in the management of the affairs of the Free Church. The very essence of our proposed training method for the non-ministerial Associations, lies in the separate correspondence that we hold, and the separate accounts that we keep with each of these. But so little was this adverted to, even after the method had been proceeded in for nearly a whole twelvemonth, that two or more Committees which stood related to these Associations were on the eve of a joint resolution that all their contributions should be merged into one, and disposed of for the general behoof. This measure was fortunately averted by the production of the original circulars which had been sent forth at the outset of this peculiar arrangement, when it was discovered that the produce of such Associations could not be alienated from the special to the general application, without the violation of a distinct understanding with each and with all of them. It was well that a very grievous blunder was thus prevented; but, on the other hand very mortifying to find that the charm and efficacy of this separate mode of treatment were still so little acknowledged and so little understood.

It is, however, all the more gratifying now, that there is a likelihood of these nursery operations being better attended to. My able and intelligent friend Mr. Handyside, is all alive to the importance of them. The beauty and the efficacy of such a process as that exemplified at Ellsrighill could not fail indeed to arrest and convince all who have had the opportunity of closely observing them. And it is a very great satisfaction that the correspondence with these nursling or embryo congregations should have fallen into the hands and been placed under the direction of Mr. Tweedie. I do hope that he will be left to prosecute this very high and most prolific walk of usefulness without disturbance or embarrassment of any sort. And here, let me be suffered to make frank and honest utterance of the mischief and mismanagement which I conceive to be attendant on the interference of Committees with each other. Each should have its own well defined task and territory, and each should be left to the separate and uncontrolled management of its own affairs—subject of course, and responsible at all times to the Assembly, to whom it brings the annual report of its proceedings; but free from all jurisdiction on the part of other Committees—between which there should be the utmost readiness to confer, for the sake of mutual information and advice, but with no power either to overrule one another's decisions or to intromit with one another's funds. Nothing could exceed the regularity and right working of this mechanism in the old Assembly; whereas the system of dovetailing and complicating the committees with each other, has not only the immediate effect of confusing every thing; but in its tendencies and final outgoings would place the whole business of the Church in the hands of a small ecclesiastical oligarchy. I exceedingly grieve to find that many are yet so insensible to practical evils which even in our brief course have been so often experienced from this cause, and ought to be vigorously and instantly redressed.

Before quitting the subject of this article, let me state as minutely as I can the

respective influences for good, and for evil; first, of the system under which each locality receives as it gives; and secondly, of the system under which there is placed full before the view of each locality from the outset, the share that will fall to it, when once admitted among the ordained charges, of a prospective universal equal dividend.

1. Let the locality in question be some plebeian district of a large town, or some recent manufacturing village, chiefly made up of utter aliens from the gospel; there, with the exception of school fees, little or nothing can be expected, at the outset, from the co-operation of their own payments. The necessary advances will have to be made in the first instance by a voluntaryism *ab extra*, though it need not to be long ere that the voluntaryism *ab intra* is brought into action. This, indeed may begin so soon as a Sabbath service is instituted, with the customary offerings at the door; but the great and decisive epoch of its operations is when, after a sufficient nucleus has been obtained for the future regular congregation, a District Association is set up for weekly contributions, and these placed in the custody and for the purposes specified in the body of our pamphlet. The Association has only to be well worked, and it will do wonders. The wholesome habit of lending a helping hand themselves to the good work will take root among the families. Themselves will be astonished to find how much they can do for the payment first, it may be, of their own catechist, then of their own probationer, nay, towards the erection of their own church; last of all, for the support of their own minister; and they ought to be provided with one so soon as they can raise two-thirds of £100 a-year. But they need not stop there. So great is our faith in the capabilities and willingness of our people under such a process as we are now describing, that it were no marvel to us though they should raise the whole £100 themselves, so as to obtain for their minister, at our present rate of one and a-half more, £150 a-year, and yield him a good supplement to the bargain. With what delight would our aid-giving Associations push forward their liberalities, if sure that for every £50 additional to their present annual contribution, they gained a distinct parochial economy among our former out-field population. Church extension would proceed, with rapid strides, from one territory to another, under such a procedure as this, till all the spiritual destitution of our land were at length overtaken.

2. But try the other way of it, and as yet we have been doing little better with our out-field operations. Let the people among whom we work be confirmed in their sordidness and lethargy by the imagination that all is to be done for them, and that little or nothing is expected from themselves. Let the rudimental education, under which they are made to pass, be one of selfishness, instead of considerate regard for the necessities of a Church that has to provide for other places and other people beside their own. Above all, let the prospect of an equal dividend be held out to vitiate both the parties concerned; lulling the people into apathy, and, perhaps, tainting, by a most unworthy motive, the heart of him whose predominant impulse to his work, as an ecclesiastical labourer, should be an affection for human souls. Last of all, let it be found, when the measure of its full admission as a regular charge comes to be agitated, that it cannot be done but at the expense of nearly its whole up-keeping to the General Fund of the Church; and then we may well imagine, with the indisposition of aid-givers to do all if aid-receivers are to do nothing, with what slowness Church-extension will proceed, or rather, with what certainty it will soon be brought to a dead stand. A process so impure in its earlier stage, and landing in such a burdensome result, neither will nor should go prosperously forward. And yet, such is the mistiness and confusion of ideas upon this subject, that people will ask, How can extension go on without the encouragement of an equal dividend? With the encouragement of the one and a-half more we can make way; but with the equal dividend we shall never make way, at least throughout the dense and, as yet, unexplored masses of our increasing towns and newly-sprung-up villages. A wedge is employed for penetration; but it makes all the difference in the world, though not greater than the difference between the two methods which we are now comparing, whether we shall present the fine or the blunt edge of it.

No. IX.

On the Prospects of Voluntaryism. Sec. VII. § 2.

I thought it possible that among the other slight articles which compose this Appendix, and which I am forced to write *calamo currente*, I might have had some space for a few thoughts on the subject of the present one. I can afford to say no more than that my hopes of an extended Christianity from the efforts of Voluntaryism alone have *not* been brightened by my experience since the Disruption. This is no reason why we should seek an alliance with the State by a compromise of the Church's spiritual independence; and still less with a government, which on the question of endowments, disclaims all cognizance of the merits of that religion on which it confers support, and makes no distinction between the true and the false, between the scriptural and the unscriptural. Still, it may be a heavy misfortune, it may prove a great moral calamity, when a Government does fall into what, speaking in the terms of my own opinion, I hold to be the dereliction of a great and incumbent duty. And ere I am satisfied that Voluntaryism will repair the mischief, I must first see the evidences of its success in making head against the fearfully increased heathenism, and increasing still, that accumulates at so fast a rate throughout the great bulk and body of the common people. We had better not say too much on the pretensions or the powers of Voluntaryism, till we have made some progress in reclaiming the wastes of ignorance and irreligion and profligacy which so overspread our land; or till we see whether the congregational selfishness which so predominates every where, can be prevailed on to make larger sacrifices for the Christian good of our general population. Should their degeneracy increase to the demolition, at length, of the present frame-work of society, and this in spite of all that the most zealous Voluntaryism can do to withstand it, it will form a most striking experimental demonstration of the vast importance of Christian Governments for the Christian good of the world. The lights of experience and prophecy will be found to harmonize, when, after what may be called the horrors of the middle passage, the desolating flood of anarchy and misrule that is coming upon the earth, the Millennium will at length emerge from it; but that, in conjunction therewith, the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; or, in other words, the Governments of the world shall all be Christianized.

It seems very clear that internal Voluntaryism will not, of itself, do all, and, with all the vaunted prosperity of the Free Church, we do not find that external Voluntaryism will either make up the deficiencies of the former, or, still less, of itself, do all either. If the two can be made so to act and react as to stimulate, rather than check and discourage each other, a better result might be obtained than we yet have arrived at; and, for this purpose, it calls for the highest wisdom of the Church to relate these two elements or agents aright to each other. It, I trust, is pretty obvious now that, under the system of an equal dividend, it is the imagined sufficiency of the external which keeps our internal Voluntaryism so miserably low in more than half our congregations; and, on the other hand, the provoking exhibition of so much apathy and selfishness must inevitably, sooner or later, cool and alienate our aid-giving congregations, till an arrest be laid on the further increase of external Voluntaryism. Under the system of getting as they give, the very reverse of this takes place. The internal puts forth its most strenuous efforts that it might share as largely as possible of the external; and, on the other hand, the external rejoices in fostering and calling out the internal to do its uttermost.

Should both together, however, fall short, and there is too much reason to apprehend this, both from the selfishness and the short-sightedness which prevail amongst us, then must we lay our account with an untouched mass of heathenism, both in large towns and in many other places of the land. And so the argument for State endowments, if only given on a right principle, will stand thus: Are the thousands and the tens of thousands whom Voluntaryism, with all its efforts, and, we may well add, with all its high-sounding pretensions, have failed to overtake, are they to be sacrificed to an impotent and most inoperative theory—a theory tried in all its forms, and most palpably found wanting?

We rejoice, therefore, in the testimony of the Free Church for the principle of a National Establishment, and most sincerely do we hope that she will never fall away from it. Little do those of her enemies, who, at the same time, are the friends of loyalty and order—(for, besides these, we can rank many of the turbulent and disaffected in society as among the deadliest of her enemies)—little do they know, that the Free Church is, at this moment, lifting a far more influential testimony on the side of ecclesiastical endowments, than can possibly be given in any other quarter of society. Hers is a wholly disinterested testimony in their favour, for she reaps no advantage from them; but, sorely aggrieved though she has been by our rulers, she will neither underrate the importance of their friendship, nor yet the solemn obligation which lies upon them to care for the religion of the people, and to provide within their sphere for this best and highest interest of the commonwealth.

There is a saying of the King of Prussia quoted by my friend Dr. D'Aubigné, and strangely rejoiced in by our Continental Voluntaries in support of their system. The King puts the question, What were my duty to my mother if she were a slave? and his reply is—Emancipate her. Were it not his farther duty to support her? or does he acquit himself of all he owes to her by simply giving her liberty, and then leaving her to starve? Were it not wrong to withhold from her the requisite maintenance? Just as wrong as to give her the maintenance, and, as the price of it, take away from her the liberty. This last is the wrong that has been done by the British Government to the Church of Scotland, to escape from which 470 of her ministers came out at the Disruption, though in so doing, they had to encounter and submit to another wrong, even the spoliation of what was most rightfully and constitutionally theirs.

No. X.

Conclusion—The Author's view of what should be the state of the Church's outward Business for the following twelvemonth.

We have no wish for the instant adoption of any material change, saving for a more efficient agency, and more especially for paid visitors who might transact *personally* between the Edinburgh Committees, and all the places in Scotland where their services might be available for the good of the Free Church; which is no other than the best and highest good of all our families. With this exception, we should be happy if things were allowed to remain as they are till the Assembly of 1847; provided that the following suggestion were acted on, a suggestion which I owe to a closely related friend of my own; and to whom I also stand indebted for the first suggestion which led to the memorable Convocation of November, 1842, an event which both in itself and in its consequences is one of the greatest that ever took place in the ecclesiastical annals of Scotland.

The suggestion is simply this: That the Assembly of 1846 should appoint a committee, made up of real business men, with a very small proportion of ecclesiastics; and who, after a lengthened, and deliberate, and comprehensive survey of the whole matter, might report to us next year their well-matured opinion, both as to the best way of raising the Church's funds, and as to the best and fittest method for the distribution of them. So large a pecuniary concern, approaching to nearly a hundred thousand pounds in the year, and implicated with an object so mighty as the moral and religious well-being of Scotland—we say, that an interest of such extent and magnitude as this, should not be left at the mercy of every random conception which might occur on a single and superficial glance to any hasty observer; but should be committed to the judgment and experience of men who are conversant in the affairs of life, and can look with a practised eye both to the connections and the consequences of any arrangement that might be proposed. Let us wait patiently for the well-weighed deliverance of such men as these; and, meanwhile, let all our Associations, placed under their surveillance, and vigilantly looked to in all their workings by able inspectors so well qualified to appreciate and distinguish between the commendably efficient and the culpably remiss—let these Associations feel and act as if put on their good behaviour; and then, with the blessing of God, we predict, with all confidence, that by May, 1847, they will

have made full proof of their sufficiency for sustaining and perpetuating a machinery adequate to all the religions and all the ecclesiastical necessities of our people.

The above paragraphs were written last year, the change being only made now from the years 1845 and 1846 to 1846 and 1847. But the suggestion has been misunderstood, and so the matter was devolved on the Sustentation Committee, where, I am told, it was agitated at a large general meeting, the worst kind of body, we do not say for finally deciding, but certainly for preparing a complex arithmetical scheme, made up of many details, and involving many and various considerations. It is only a small and very select committee which can rightly make their way to such a scheme. It should be then long and in many ways before the Free Church public, and subject to the amendments and modifications that might be proposed from all quarters, ere it shall be definitely adopted by the General Assembly. We cannot imagine a more admirable mechanism for a process like this, than that which is supplied by the Church courts of our Presbyterian constitution, when any measure for permanent regulation is committed to the ordeal of the Barrier Act. We have no fear that once the manifold lights of free and full discussion have shone upon the question in all parts of the Church, the returns from Presbyteries will evince a very general and harmonious understanding of what is best.

Though this proposed Committee should have its sittings in the Metropolis, it ought to have one or two members from other places, and more especially from Glasgow. It is by no means indispensable that they should be selected from the members of Assembly; for did we confine ourselves to these, we should be cut off from the services of some of the wisest business heads and best business habits in all Scotland. My reason for suggesting even so much as one ecclesiastic is, that they may assign certain good general objects which might not so readily occur to men of another profession, though these be the fittest for devising the pecuniary means by which they might be provided for. Certain it is that none who stand publicly committed to any particular view should be allowed to have a share in them—however desirable it be that both they and all others should be encouraged to give their respective proposals or schemes for the consideration of such a Committee as we have ventured to recommend.

We cannot figure a more egregious absurdity than to speak of the Church being committed to any particular scheme, or to any part of one, as, for example, an equal dividend. She is not more pledged to give out an equal dividend to all ministers, than she is to take in no more than a penny a week from all contributors. When the system of our present Associations was first expounded, the demonstration of their power was grounded on the hypothesis of a penny a week, from each member, on which, as the base line of our calculation, we stated how much could thus be allowed to each minister. We can imagine nothing more ruinous than to ground upon this, not only a present but a prospective claim to an equal dividend in all time coming. And yet we hear as if an equal dividend were the radical principle of the scheme. The radical principle of our scheme is the power of littles; and it is to the practical disregard or reversal of this that all our difficulties are owing. It is because of the confidence which our aid-receiving Associations have in great sums, and not in small sums; in the hundreds raised in Edinburgh and Glasgow, instead of the pennies which ought to be raised not from wretched minorities, but from the great bulk and body of their own congregations, it is because of this that the Free Church moves at so slow a pace among the outfields of our land. Would they but generalize their contributions till it became a universal habit that each should give something, it might enable us to progress at a greatly faster rate than we are doing.

It is my confidence in the power of these Associations when well worked, which leads me to befriend the idea of admitting our Free Church teachers to a share in the Sustentation Fund. This is quite a topic for the deliberation of our proposed Committee. But, meanwhile, had our coming Assembly but the faith and courage to venture on an experimental year, it would mightily enlighten the question, and I fondly hope would supply a powerful impulse for the enlargement of our cause. For the idea of some such process as the following, I am indebted to a very able and energetic friend. Let the Sustentation Fund be kept entire for the ministers till their dividend reached £100 a-year. Afterwards, let the increase upon this be alloted to the schoolmasters to the extent of £25 a year. Then whatever ulterior increase might accrue, let it be shared in the proportion of four to

one between the two parties. It were no surprise to me, however Utopian it might appear to others, that under the new influence which such a system would create and keep in action, there would speedily result a dividend of £200 for each minister, and £50 for each schoolmaster throughout the vast majority of our church, while the inferior provisions made for those who are under the rule of getting as they give, would rapidly tend upwards to this maximum. We have no sympathy with those who think that we are aspiring at a maximum which is too large, feeling as we do that all public functionaries, and more especially the functionaries, of education, are greatly underpaid. Little are our aid-receiving Associations aware how much they stand in the way of high interests. O, that they had more of the spirit of the Apostle, who told the elders of Ephesus, that his own hands ministered to his own necessities; and adduced the precious saying of our Saviour, that it was more blessed to give than to receive!

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