

VII.

AN ADDRESS

ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE

RELIEF OF SUPERANNUATED MINISTERS

AND THE

INDIGENT FAMILIES OF DECEASED MINISTERS OF
THE SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY THE

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DELIVERED AT SUMTERVILLE, S. C., OCTOBER 29, 1858.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.  
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COLUMBIA, S. C.:

STEAM-POWER PRESS OF R. W. GIBBES.

1858.

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ADDRESS.

The Scriptural law, enforcing the duty of the Church to furnish an adequate support to the Christian Ministry, has recently been so fully discussed, and, not long since, so eloquently pressed before the Synod of South Carolina by one, who was never heard by it without respect, and, on that occasion, not without profound emotion, that it would be unnecessary now to advert to it, otherwise than as furnishing the principle upon which the subject of the present address is based. While, however, the general obligation to afford the Ministry a comfortable sustenance has been freely canvassed, the specific duty of supporting superannuated preachers of the Gospel, and the indigent families of deceased Ministers, has not been presented to the Church as fully as it might have been. It seems to have been tacitly assumed that, according to the commercial maxim of rendering an equivalent for value received, the preacher of the Gospel may only claim a subsistence during his actual term of service; and that when, from whatever cause he ceases to discharge the active functions of the Ministry, the obligation of the Church to sustain him comes to a corresponding close. A due regard to the Divine statutes touching this matter, to reason, and to the instincts of our nature, will, we apprehend, convince us that this principle is falsely applied in the case before us.

I. From the tenor of the enactments embodied in the Levitical Code, respecting the support of the ministry of the ancient Church, it is clear that the possibility of the aged or disabled Levites being left to want was never contemplated. The mode by which they were supported was such as to enable them to live comfortably during their time of active service, and, by the exercise of ordinary economy, to make provision, if they pleased, against the exigencies of disability or age. It is not necessary to exhibit statistics in proof of this position, though

that might easily be done. Some of the old writers upon the Mosaic Institute have furnished tables of figures descending to curious details, showing that, if the Levitical Minister ever suffered from privation, it was not because an almost sumptuous provision was not yielded him by law. Indeed, one cannot but be struck with the affluence of this provision, which seemed to render it possible for the Jewish Minister to live in little less than palatial splendor. It must, however, be remembered that drafts upon the generosity and hospitality of the Levitical priest were frequent and heavy. The entertainment of strangers, for example, devolved chiefly upon him; and the God, who had inculcated upon His Ministers the obligations of an unstinted and ungrudging beneficence, so that they might become marked and illustrious exemplars of the loveliest graces as well as the sternest duties, made full and generous provision for the cultivation of these traits and the discharge of these obligations. If the means of being generous, hospitable and charitable, were necessary, those means were furnished by Divine enactment. The fact that the Old Testament history not unfrequently mentions the poverty of the Levites, does not prove that the Divine law did not render their support obligatory upon the Church, but only that that law was disobeyed in times of idolatrous defection. And it is a fact not now unworthy of attention, that the poverty of the ministry was always contemporaneous with, and evidential of, an unspiritual and rebellious condition of the ancient Church.

It ought to be remembered, moreover, that by law *a home* was provided for the Levite, which could not be perpetually alienated from him. It was his, as well during his age and feebleness, as when his sinewy strength lugged the bullock to the altar, and piled the wood for sacrifice. He was never, at any period of his life, whether in active service or not, left without a shelter for himself and his family. Nor are we anywhere informed that when he ceased to discharge the active duties of his office, he ceased to receive the regular stipend yielded by tithes. In fine, there is nothing to show that he did not receive, in time of disability and age, precisely the same salary which he had worked for before.

There is another consideration, too, which ought not to be overlooked, in attempting to settle the question—What provision was made for superannuated Ministers in the ancient Church? I allude to the fact that the office descended from father to son; and that, as a consequence, were no special allowance made to the superannuated Levite and priest—he could partake of the provision amply made for the support of his son and successor. Unless, therefore, the Levitical ministry, as a class, were characterized by monstrous filial ingratitude, the aged father, who had spent his prime in the service of the Church, could not be reduced to penny and want. So that it would appear that, in proportion to the increased infirmities and necessities of age, was a correspondingly increased provision made for the sustenance and comfort of the disabled Levitical Minister.

In view of these facts, it seems to be clear that the Head of the Church did not, under the Old Dispensation, leave his servants in the ministry without a comfortable maintenance under the pressure of decrepitude. On the contrary, an examination of the ancient code would lead us to believe that the aged Levite, in the home of his youth and bosom of his family, passed the evening of life without care for himself, and, certainly, without an anxious apprehension in regard to the temporal prospects of his children. And, when he came to die, no bitter reflections on the ingratitude of the Church, and no disturbing anticipations of a hard future for his family mingled with his last counsels to his sons, and the last act of worship by which he committed his departing spirit into the hands of his God.

And must the Christian preacher, whose duties it might easily be shown, press more onerously upon him than did those of the Levitical Minister upon him; upon whose time and talents, mind and body, there is an incessant and, at times, almost an intolerable drain,—must the Minister of Jesus look forward to an old age of poverty and want—an evening of clouds and storms? Must he work the marrow out of his bones, and the breath almost out of his body; must he preach, study, visit, watch, pray; in short, do what might fill an angel's hands, and

more than fill a mortal's capacity; must he do this, and mourn at the last that his old friends look strangely upon him, and that while another drinks of the milk and eats of the butter of his former flock, he must, with a gourd of water and a crust of bread in hand, wait patiently until he is summoned to the heavenly banquet and his eternal rest?

Surely the *spirit* of the ancient law touching this matter is not departed. Nor can the Christian Church plead, because the letter of that code is not enforced in the New Testament, and tithes are not expressly required; that, therefore, she is not bound by an obligation equal to that which Christ imposed upon His ancient people. If He has not told His people now to pay tithes for the support and propagation of the Gospel—and many regard that obligation as unrepealed—He hath said, "*freely ye have received, freely give,*" and when *the love* which beat in His heart, and led Him to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of sinners; when that love shall pervade the souls of His people—as one day we trust it will, even on earth—they will perceive the reason why gratitude to Him, and generosity to the needy and the dying, were not tied to metes and bounds, but left to give as they list.

In no respect can the obligation to sustain the institutions of the Gospel be less now than it was under a more imperfect and shadowy dispensation. If the Jew was required to contribute to the support of his aged Minister—much more is the Christian. If the man who had spent his life in instructing his people in the principles of that incomplete economy, in sacrificing bulls and goats whose blood could not take away sin, and only foreshadowed the great sacrifice; if he was maintained in comfort when age disqualified him from further service, shall he who has worn out his life in preaching a crucified and risen Saviour, in toiling and watching for souls, and in serving the Church, shall he be left, in weakness and age, to feel the pinch of poverty and the dread of want? Has the King of the Church so intended? Is the obligation to support His aged Ministers less stringent now than under the former dispensation? No, reader, no! Christ has written the law of justice and of love upon the heart of His Church, and it is to her

infinite shame if she render not obedience to that law in all that it requires. It was not necessary that He should have said, "let not my aged servants in the Ministry die in want." He supposed that the Church, to whom He has bequeathed them as ascension gifts, would be prompted as well by gratitude to Him as by the very instincts of Christian love, to afford them sustenance in feebleness and age.*

II. If the questions be pressed—What do we *pay for*, when we are required to give of our substance to the support of the ministry? and why should men be salaried when they cease to work? I reply, that the answer to these inquiries, even on the principle of rendering an equivalent for value received, is obvious. The Christian ministry, as the exponent and distributor of the priceless blessings of the Gospel of Christ, exerts a signal and inestimable influence for good upon the interests of society, considered in any of their main aspects as material, social and spiritual. It will scarcely be disputed by candid minds, that the stated assemblage of men for the decent and orderly worship of God, and the regular inculcation of the salutary doctrine and holy precepts of the Gospel, tend to advance even the *material* interests of a community. It is stated as a fact that, during the first year of the pastorate of Dr. Asa Burton, in a New England town, real estate increased in

* NOTE.—It has been suggested to the writer as a question worth considering whether, if the terms of the covenant, made with the ancient Church, had been faithfully observed by that Church, there could have been any such thing as a superannuated or disabled ministry. The promises of the covenant seemed to provide against it. If that were the case, the foregoing considerations would not, *for substance*, be divested of force. The form of the argument would be changed, and it might then be put thus: "If God, by special promise, mercifully guaranteed to His ancient Ministers, security against the infirmities and distresses of decrepid age, but is now pleased, for wise reasons, to suffer His servants in the Gospel to undergo them," then the temper of the Christian Church ought, in this respect, to conform to the *spirit* of the ancient code. Christ *does* now permit His Ministers to linger with His Church in a disabled condition. The Church is, therefore, under obligation *actually* to furnish them the provision demanded by their necessities, in conformity to the *spirit* of that beneficent covenant which, had it been faithfully observed, would have *entirely* spared the Levitical ministry the pressure of these necessities.

value three-fold. A community without a Church would be one of which few respectable business men would like to become members. A town, without the Gospel, would scarcely be deemed reputable enough to induce an honest man to make it the abode of his wife and children. It is too true to be denied, notwithstanding the cant about priestcraft and priestly domination, that the presence of a Christian Church, and the dispensation of Christian instruction in a place, are not considered valid objections to the establishment of business, or the investment of capital there.

But the beneficial influence of the Gospel, and, by consequence, of the Christian ministry, is more conspicuously exercised upon the *social* interests of the race. I do not intend to affirm, as has sometimes been thoughtlessly intimated by its apologists, that Christianity is the only civilizer of mankind. A nation may become civilized without a knowledge of the principles of the Gospel. The early history of Egypt, Greece and Rome, furnishes proof of the fact, that a certain intellectual type of civilization may exist, and exist in a high state of advancement, where the scheme of Christianity is unknown. The admission may be cheerfully made, that the pure intellect of man has never reached a higher stage of development than in ancient Greece. The writings of Plato and Aristotle, the poetry of Homer and Euripides, and the statuary of Phidias, will extort the homage of mankind as long as a generous sympathy with genius shall exist. Without pausing to inquire how far the higher thought of Greece and Rome may have been affected and stimulated by contact with those articles of Natural Religion, which God originally revealed to man, and which it is one office of the Gospel to republish under new and peculiar sanctions, it may safely be assumed that an attentive examination of the specific differences of the ancient and modern types of civilization will evince the infinite superiority of the latter, especially as it passes under the moulding influence of a pure Christianity. It would, of course, be impossible in an address like this to attempt a discussion of a subject so fertile in reflection. A few of the distinguishing characteristics of Christian influence upon society may, however, be noticed in passing.

It is chiefly in the *moral* aspects of modern civilization that we discover the immediate and specific effect of the Gospel. The corporeal and mental nature of the ancient Greek and Roman were subjected to an elevating discipline, while his moral constitution was dwarfed or ruined by neglect. It is the peculiar office of Christianity to induce a parallel culture of all the elements of the man. While, consequently, the social state of the ancients received a one-sided and dangerous development, Christianity infuses into society those great moral principles which at once ennoble it and render it stable.

It is, for example, peculiarly its province to inculcate upon the masses the salutary truth that obedience is due to government as an ordinance of God. Destitute in great measure, if not entirely, of the conviction of this truth, the ancient States, to which allusion has been made, contained within themselves an inherent proclivity to disintegration and decay. Christianity, by enforcing this regulative principle, opposes a barrier to this downward tendency, moderates the excesses of popular passion, and checks the sudden and violent impulses of the popular will. The Christian patriot of our own country, while he contemplates with apprehension the disturbed condition of a confederacy composed of so many States, characterized by diverse and often conflicting interests and sentiments, looks to this great principle of Christianity as a break-water to arrest the furious tide of fanatical excitement and political caprice. Much, doubtless, of the future stability and prosperity of this Republic, will depend on the degree in which obedience to this law of the Gospel pervades the hearts of its people.

It is the distinguishing office of Christianity, moreover, to impress upon society the wholesome influence derived from the fact, which it alone clearly reveals, of the brotherhood of the race, and from the implantation in the heart of man of the catholic attribute of love to his fellows. The Gospel re-affirms the truth of nature, that God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the whole earth; and adds to it the new and distinctive enunciation, that as there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, all classes and conditions of human society are bound together by

their common relation to this one God, by the nexus of that one glorious mediation.

So, moreover, does a preached Gospel tend to achieve for society what never was, and never could be accomplished under the ancient civilizations, its *purification and safety*, by inculcating the true theory of morals; by teaching men that a good life originates in an inner principle, and develops itself from within; and by providing the agencies by which that principle is engendered and matured. The social relations are thus guarded from violation. The family tie is sacredly maintained, and men are not compelled to regard each other with everlasting suspicion and distrust.

Lastly, the full knowledge of the sanctions of the Divine law, and of a future state of retribution, is alone imparted by the Gospel of Christ; a knowledge without which there can exist no effectual restraint upon the evil passions of men, and by which a stronger police is erected in society than that of standing armies, and a firmer check imposed upon license than the dread of the gallows or the guillotine.

It is impossible, now, to form any just and proper estimate of the benign influence of a preached Gospel upon the social interests of man. We know it only in its tendencies. Were it exerted in all its legitimate force, society would be remodelled, and its whole aspect changed. In that case every human soul would become a temple vocal with the praises of God; every power of the intellect, and every affection of the heart, according to the exquisite picture of Whewell, would meet together in harmony around the Divine altar, and minister there in sublime acts of Divine worship; while the will, an obedient attendant, would spring with alacrity to the fulfilment of the Divine commands. Society, as a whole, would be a glorious church-state; the communion of men would be a perfect communion of saints; and we should come to Mt. Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the General Assembly of the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant; and

to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

The *spiritual* benefits conferred upon man by a preached Gospel, I shall not attempt in this presence to describe. They can only be measured by the infinite price which was paid for their acquisition, and the boundless duration in which they shall meet their full and legitimate expansion.

Now, it will be conceded that whatever influence for good is exerted upon the interests of society by the Gospel of Christ as a recuperative and conservative moral scheme, is exercised mainly through the instrumentality of the Christian ministry, an order of men appointed and commissioned by the Saviour for this very purpose. It is their business, their only proper avocation, adopted at the call of Christ, and prosecuted in view of extraordinary sanctions. With them stand or fall Gospel worship, Gospel ordinances, Gospel instruction and Gospel churches. This argument may possibly be devoid of force to those who acknowledge no allegiance to Jesus as King upon His holy hill in Zion, but surely it is not without weight to those who do. These men ought not to be left to struggle with the hardships of poverty. Justice and gratitude alike demand that they who have exhausted their strength and worn out their lives in the one simple duty of promoting the blessings which the Gospel is suited to confer upon society, should not only be sustained during the period of active service, but should not be forced to drag out the weary remnant of their days in dependence and privation.

It must be remembered, furthermore, that it is not alone the precise amount of labor which is, from week to week, expended by the Minister of the Gospel, in study, in preaching and in pastoral visitation, which is to be considered in the adjustment of this question. The inquiry arises when this ceases? does the obligation to support the laborer likewise cease? We must take into account *the whole influence in all its extent*, which a faithful minister of the gospel exerts. That influence, be it observed, is by no means limited to the precise time of the actual discharge of the functions of his office. It survives those functions. It lives and acts, when his mouth is sealed by

age, and his ministry on earth by death. The whole influence of a godly, devoted Christian minister!—who can calculate its value? Who can measure the influence of the ministry of a Richard Baxter, a George Whitefield, a Jonathan Edwards, an Edward Payson, a Samuel Davies, a William Barr, and a host of others, whom time would fail me to mention; who, I repeat it, will measure the influence of the labors of such men in their effects upon society, and in their spiritual and everlasting results? Every brick in the old Kidderminster and Northampton Churches, shall have mouldered—every beam in Upper Long Cane shall have rotted—every foot of Commons in Moorfields be occupied by the advancing tide of the great capital of Britain, ere the influence of these men shall cease to be felt. The very name of the faithful Minister is sacredly handed down from pious father to son as the symbol of all that is holy and noble in the sanctified nature of man; and, like a talisman, exerts a certain magical spell long after the record of it on the sepulchral stone has been obliterated by the weather of centuries. It is said by physical philosophers that nothing which impinges upon the atmosphere—not even a word spoken at random—fails to make itself felt in the undulations it causes, as long as the atmosphere itself shall last. So the impression upon the world made by the labors of a true Gospel Minister shall never fail to stir the hearts of men. The young student who, at the present day, pores over the lives of such men, feels within him the pulse of a strong resolve to follow those who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises, and falling on his knees prays that the Holy Ghost may pour into his heart the spirit of these departed heroes of the truth, and inspire him for a kindred career of usefulness.

Now, the same kind of influence, though mayhap in a less degree, is exerted by every true godly Christian minister. And those who are benefitted by it are bound in justice, as well as by the instinct of love, to pay for it, during the whole life-time of him who, through grace, was the medium of its diffusion. His influence yet speaks as well when he is laid aside from active service in the earthly house of God by age or affliction, as when upon his removal to the upper sanctuary, the voice

from heaven cries: "Write blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth. Yea, saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." It may not be extravagant to suppose that Christ allows His servants to linger with the Church in weakness and decrepitude, in order to test her appreciation of the preciousness of His ascension gifts to her, and of the value of that influence exercised in her behalf, of which He has made them His chosen vessels and dispensers. As a loving and grateful family of children would regard it as not only a sacred duty, but a cherished privilege, to nurse and comfort an aged and venerable parent in the helplessness of age and even of drivelling dotage, so ought the Church to soothe the declining years of the man who has bound the energies of his youth and prime as a willing sacrifice upon her altar. She cannot cast off her aged ministers in the time of their sorest earthly need without exposing herself to the charge of ingratitude before God and man. The disabled servant of the Church might be content to bear the indifference of the world often manifested much in the same way as men look upon an old worn-out cart horse grazing on a common. The reproaches of those who have reproached his master may alight upon him without awakening an emotion of surprise, though for them, too, he toiled and wept, and would have died. He may look for no gratitude from those who, without a thankful ejaculation, can contemplate the sacrifice of his Saviour on the Cross; but it is not in his nature to be insensible to his abandonment by the Church, of whom he may have often sung:

"For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my toils and cares be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

As the stab of Brutus inflicted on the great Roman "the most unkindest cut of all," so do the indifference and desertion of the Church gather around the declining life of her disabled Minister its deepest shadows and its bitterest storms.

III. But it may be asked, why should not the Minister of the Gospel be governed by the ordinary rules of prudence, and, by the exercise of economy, make provision for the necessities of

age and the wants of his family? Why should not he, as well as other men, act in accordance with the common adage, and "lay up something for a rainy day?" Several reasons may be given why, ordinarily, it is not possible for him to do it. It is not seldom the case that the pittance, miscalled a support, which he receives, is wholly insufficient for the present wants of his household. And to require a man in such a case to lay up money for the future, is like attempting to wring blood out of a stone. I have often thought that if a Minister so circumstanced could make up his mind, instead of ploughing or teaching for his bread, to die of starvation on the hands of his congregation, while his death under *those* circumstances might, perhaps, fix an everlasting stigma upon that particular batch of Christians, his martyrdom, like that of those who have died at the stake, would confer an immense benefit upon the Church at large. In this age of newspapers, the Philistines would hear of it, and the probability that any other preacher of the Gospel would die under *those* circumstances would be exceedingly remote. O, that some one had the faith to do it! His poor brethren would gather from Dan to Beersheba, have a grand jubilee, take up a handsome collection, and erect a monument to his memory out of the surplus of their salaries! But men do not usually fancy death by starvation, and it is questionable whether the Church will ever have the benefit of that species of martyrdom.

There is, too, another difficulty in the way of a Minister's making a comfortable provision for the future wants of himself or family. His congregation expect him to be an ensample of generosity, hospitality and charity. When, in accordance with their own expectations, he is generous in his dealings with his fellows, hospitable to strangers and charitable to the poor, how much of his salary remains to be laid aside for the demands of the future? The fact is, the same thing is required of him by the Scriptures and by his own noble instincts. But it is plainly impossible for him conspicuously to exhibit these graces, the exercise of which suppose the possession of a comfortable home and a competent salary, without either one or the other. And when without either one or the other, he *does* manage to be

hospitable and charitable, is it any marvel that, having been kept poor all his active life *by* his hospitality and charity, he should in his age be destitute of a comfortable maintenance? And is it precisely right that he should, at that season of his need, be taunted with having failed, like other men, to act according to the prudential maxim, “lay up something for a rainy day?”

The worst of the case is, that the same people who require him to be a model of these expensive graces, and give him never the means to cultivate them, and yet press upon him the old saw, which has been quoted, are not a little outraged if the Minister *does* save his money and make a comfortable provision for the future. “No preacher of the Gospel ought to be rich. He should be poor, like his Master, and live by faith in the promises!” They who thus sagely and tenderly counsel the servants of Jesus to live on air, forget that the Master himself neither wrought miracles, ordinarily, for his own support, nor toiled in a manual occupation to earn a livelihood, but looked for, and actually received, a maintenance from His disciples, such as they were able to give. He evidently acted on the principle upon which He directed the twelve and the seventy, to proceed in fulfilling the duties which He assigned them; a principle everywhere affirmed in the Scriptures—that “the laborer is worthy of his hire.” It is true that He felt not the sorrows of a superannuated preacher, for “He was cut off out of the land of the living” after a brief but consummate ministry. It is, nevertheless, an affecting thought, that He is represented in the persons of His aged and disabled Ministers; He feels their griefs and shares the loneliness and bitterness of their time of desertion; and He regards whatever is done unto them—even the least of them, the most infirm, the most decrepid, the most drivelling,—as done unto Himself. Do they not fill up what is behind of His sufferings in the Church which is His body? Ah, if the Church could but realize this, she would treat His aged and disabled servants as she ought to have treated Him, if it had been a part of His mediatorial work, and His estate of humiliation, to have lingered with her as an aged and disabled Minister of His own glorious Gospel.

Besides those already mentioned, there are other expectations which a Christian congregation often entertains in regard to its pastor, which enhance the difficulties lying in the way of his making provision for the future.

He must maintain his family decently, and he must live decently himself. Otherwise he would be a standing libel upon them, and to the eyes of all beholders would reflect, as in a glass, a horribly faithful picture of their own stinginess and neglect. That would never do. It would be little less than outrageous that such insinuations upon their justice and generosity should be conveyed by the very appearance of their pastor, and his household. His house must not be mean; his study must not lack a goodly supply of costly theological literature: his furniture must not too roughly shock the sensibilities of his fashionable visitors: his family must not promenade the streets, or attend Divine worship in unseemly apparel; nor must his own coat be thread-bare, and his aspect slovenly. If that were the case persons would be apt to suspect that his first and most pressing wants are not very handsomely provided for by his own decent congregation; or, that if they were, such a pastor, and such a pastor's family, are not worthy of the very respectable Church to which he has the honor to minister. But, if his house must not be mean, nor his study meagrely supplied, nor his furniture shabby, nor his wife and children poorly clad, nor his own coat thread-bare and his aspect slovenly, nor the tastes of his congregation violated, nor the public led to surmise that his congregation behave badly towards him, it would seem to be clear that he must have *the means* of living in a good house, the means of supplying his study, the means of furnishing his home, the means of clothing his family, the means of doing what snakes are said to do once a year, shedding their skin, and indulging in the luxury of a new coat. But if he has not the means, he has the *expectations*; and, after all, since ministers and ministers families ought to be ensamples to their congregations in all respects, not omitting hospitality, charity and respectability, they ought not be too rich, but live a life of simple, strong and lively faith in providence and in the promises! Masterly logic! But if it should

happen to be true that these expectations do not furnish the Gospel laborer bread, clothing, and shelter, during his term of active service, it may be feared that they would have no very decided influence in enabling him to provide bread, clothing and shelter, against the winter of his own infirmity and age, and for his dependent family when he is dead and gone. But I dismiss this unpleasant train of thought by simply repeating its conclusion: it is hard to "get blood out of a stone!" It is hard for a man, during the time he is actually serving others, to live on *little*, from *that little* to lay up a supply for his future wants and those of his family, and, during the season of old age, when he might expect a harvest of thank-offerings, to live on *nothing*. Yes, it is hard!

IV. There is but one other consideration touching this subject, which remains to be presented. The commonest lessons of *analogy* tend to show that the superannuated Minister of the Gospel should not be abandoned to want.

The soldier who has fought the battles of his country, and worn out his energies in her service, is not left in a crippled condition or amidst the infirmities of age without a pension—at once a testimony of that country's gratitude and a means of enabling him, without anxiety or disquietude, to pass his declining years. But the faithful soldier of Christ who, having girded on the panoply of God, and, harassed by bitter inward conflicts, has waged, on behalf of the Church, incessant warfare against the powers of darkness, against the wiles of the Devil, the deceitfulness of the flesh and the blandishments and oppositions alike of an ungodly world, when he pulls off his armor and yields to the pressure of infirmity or age, has nought to console him but the honorable marks of past battles and the hope of heavenly rest. Why should *he* not receive his pension? Is the country more just and grateful than the Church? The member of a charitable association, a Masonic or Odd Fellow's lodge is not left without maintenance in infirmity and age! Is the Church less just and charitable than a Masonic or Odd Fellow's Society?

The horse who has borne his master on his back, when his tread was elastic and his neck was clothed with thunder, is not

left in his age to feed on a common, but has a softer bed and more comfortable stall than ever. Shall he who, like his Saviour, has carried the burdens and griefs of the Church, and borne on his soul the unutterable responsibility of preaching the Gospel to deathless souls—shall he be left at last to take up the touching plaint of “the Man of Sorrows”—“the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but I have not where to lay my head?”

The very dog who has faithfully guarded his master’s premises in his prime, is not left without his kennel and his daily food when his teeth are worn out and his bark is hoarse. Shall the Minister of Christ, who has watched for souls as one that must give account, and has spent his active energy in sedulously guarding the spiritual and eternal interests of his charge, shall he, in his age, be deprived of the attention which is gratefully rendered to a dog? It is oftentimes even so. Statistics show that while the dogs cost this country something like eleven millions of dollars annually—the Christian Ministry costs it only six millions. The very dogs of the land have expended for their maintenance almost double the amount which is devoted to the support of the Ministers of the Gospel! And, if the comparison could be exposed in figures between the sustenance of aged dogs and aged preachers of Christ, it is to be feared that the showing would still be worse.

Yes, oftentimes, the very brute, the horse, the dog, the ox, the ass, which have spent their strength in their master’s service, are better supported when their vigor is gone, than the men who have toiled, and prayed, and wept, for the edification of the Church which Jesus hath redeemed, and the salvation of souls for whom Jesus hath died. It is not unfrequently the case, that when they are least able to help themselves, they receive least help; when most they need sympathy and sustenance, lo! none are at hand. Look in at the humble lodging place of that infirm, aged Minister of Christ. His hair is thin and white; his once firm step is unsteady; his hands, which once broke the sacramental bread, which not seldom rested in blessing on the head of children and wiped the sweat from the brow of the dying, are tremulous; his once strong voice which,

like the trump of jubilee, heralded the tidings of redemption, is feeble and broken. Go near to his closet door and listen.

He has nought now to give but his prayers and tears—they he is pouring out freely; and, hark! he pleads with his Master that he would not lay to the charge of the Church, and the world he loved and served, the sin of abandoning him in his last days to penury and want. Would to God this were merely a picture of the fancy. Alas! it is too often realized.

But, it cannot always be so. The Church of Christ needs but to be faithfully reminded of her duty in this matter, and her sense of justice, as well as her love to her Master, will lead her to discharge it. We may not venture to indulge in the language of crimination towards her. She has not been fully taught her obligations in this respect, or long ere this the reproach, which the neglect of her disabled Ministers and the needy families of her deceased Ministers has entailed upon her, would have been wiped away. Let her know her duty and she will begin to do it.

In conclusion, I would take leave to say to the President and to my fellow-members of the Society I am now privileged to address: Brethren, let us not despair in the attempt to contribute to so desirable a result. Let us agitate the subject, bring it to the notice of our respective Churches, and discharge our own duty in the matter, according to the ability and opportunity that God may grant us. The Saviour will not refuse to honor an instrumentality employed in endeavoring to supply the wants of His needy servants in His blessed Gospel, and to remove any stigma which may rest upon his blood-bought Church. Nor in the great day will He forget to say: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."