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ARTICLE I.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY.

Moral philosophy as a science is older than Christianity, and many of its doctrines can be traced to the earliest pagan writers; and while some are true, because drawn from natural law, recognising principles imbedded in human nature by the Author of our being, yet many are false, being the fruit of minds beclouded by human depravity.

In looking to the origin and history of ethical philosophy, it cannot be denied that many of its truths were first recognised in the principles of Roman jurisprudence. But this, with all its merit, is an imperfect basis; and while it has performed a most useful mission, in being thus connected with that great system which has modified the equitable principles of law throughout the civilised world, yet, when placed among the great family of sciences and there left to be sustained by the inherent merit of its principles, from its earliest day to the present time, it has failed to attain the great end for which it was designed.

We do not say that moral philosophy as a science has entirely failed, but that it has fallen far below the noble purposes intelligent minds designed for it and had a right to expect at its

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give, as an act of worship and means of grace. And this last feature of the subject has but recently begun to be recognised in the Church. The Church is but just waking up to this great principle; and that it is as fatal to a Christian profession that one does not practise almsgiving, as it is that he does not habitually pray. We need to advance a step further, and more fully recognise the objects and purposes for which the Church is called upon by its great Head to give so frequently.

By allowing outsiders to usurp her prerogatives, she is like Samson, shorn of the locks of her strength. She would be irresistible in the strength of her King, in standing fully up to her high prerogatives. Whenever she does this, and not until she does, may she expect, in the strength of an omnipotent arm, *to lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes; and break forth, on the right hand and on the left, with the praises of God; her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her.*

ARTICLE VII.

OUR CHURCH—ITS CONDITION, WANTS, AND PROSPECTS.

We are greatly mistaken if the Southern Presbyterian Church is not regarded with a peculiarly tender interest by the great mass of its membership. Nor is it surprising that such should be the case. Its prostration and impoverishment consequent upon the late war, after long years of quiet and peaceful prosperity; the struggle it has maintained to preserve its existence as an independent branch of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; its steadiness in walking in the good old paths trod by our fathers, and its comparative freedom from all those radical and semi-infidel agitations which are threatening the peace and purity of other branches of the Church: the obloquy and mis-

representation that have been persistently heaped upon it from the very beginning of its career as a separate Church; the steadiness and singleness of purpose with which it has gone forward in the discharge of its duties, notwithstanding all this abuse and misrepresentation; the respect it is beginning to command, even with those who formerly took pleasure in maligning it; the quiet harmony and decorum which have heretofore characterised all its public proceedings; the deep, pervading, and almost universal impression among our people, that God has appointed this beloved Church to be a faithful witness for the truth and simplicity of the gospel in these times of defection and threatened apostasy; and, above all, perhaps, the many and varied tokens of favor bestowed upon it by the great Head of the Church—these are considerations well calculated not only to endear it to the hearts of God's people, but show likewise that it is destined by the providence of God to take a high and honorable place among the other branches of the evangelical Church, and exert a commanding agency in spreading the knowledge of the gospel throughout the whole world. A Church endeared by so many tender associations, and having the prospect of such distinguished usefulness in the future, ought to occupy a place very near to the heart of God's people. Notwithstanding all these favorable considerations, however, there are difficulties and embarrassments surrounding our Church at the present moment which deserve patient and careful consideration by us all, some of which we propose to point out in connexion with the means necessary for their removal.

The sparse and widely scattered elements of the Southern Presbyterian Church, present a very serious difficulty in the way of its efficiency and usefulness. When we speak of our fourteen hundred separate church organisations, our ninety thousand church members, and our eight hundred and fifty ministers of the gospel, it makes a formidable array of statistical facts; and these undoubtedly would constitute a very strong and effective Christian body, if its elements were not scattered over such a vast extent of territory. The Free Church of Scotland, with something like the same number of ministers, but with a much

larger communion, does not cover one-tenth part of the territory that ours does. The consequences are, that their congregations are much larger, they need fewer ministers to break to them the bread of life, and those ministers of course are better supported than ours can be. Our churches, because of their smaller size and greater number, as well as the wide distances intervening between them, not only need a greater number of ministers, but their capacity to support them is diminished in the inverse proportion. Out of this state of things arises the necessity of grouping two or more churches under the same pastorate, which greatly increases the labors of ministers, but lessens at the same time the opportunities of the people to hear the gospel. A large proportion of our people, therefore, do not receive one-half of the instruction they would, if the country was more densely populated and the congregations were larger. Nor is this the only disadvantage connected with this state of things. Much of the energy, life, and efficiency, which always spring from frequent contact between church and church and particularly from frequent ministerial intercourse, is almost entirely lost in consequence of the existing state of things. We must not overlook, however, certain ulterior advantages that will arise out of these present inconveniences. When the country is filled up with a larger population than it has at present, (which will undoubtedly be the case in a few years,) these smaller churches will become the centres around which will be gathered much larger and more effective ones; and, with this expectation in view, too much care cannot be exercised to preserve the life and efficiency of those already called into existence.

The weakened condition of a large number of our churches, and the want of proper training on the part of a still greater number, present another very formidable difficulty to the full efficiency of our Church as a whole. The feeble and weakened condition of many of our churches may be ascribed to a variety of causes. The loss of personal property, as the direct and indirect consequence of the war, have reduced many of the supporters of religion from affluence to downright poverty. The removal of influential members of the Church from one part of

the country to another, the unsettled state of the labor system, and other causes of a like nature, have all operated more or less to weaken our churches, and prevent them from doing as much for the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom as they might otherwise have done. Still, however, no one of these causes, nor all of them combined, perhaps, have operated so injuriously to the cause of benevolence as the want of proper training on the part of a great many of our people. The duties and obligations of Christian benevolence have neither been properly inculcated from the pulpit, nor fully understood by the great mass of our people; and the necessary consequences are that they neither contribute for the support of the gospel among themselves, nor for the extension of its blessings to others, as they should. According to the report submitted to the last General Assembly by the Secretary of Sustentation, it would appear that at least half of our churches contributed nothing at all last year to that, and probably nothing to any of the other schemes of benevolence; and no doubt, if the inquiry was carried a little farther back, it would be seen that all such churches had contributed very meagrely to the support of the gospel for their own benefit. But to what is this delinquency to be attributed? Not to the want of means, in the great majority of cases at least, but to the want of proper instruction in relation to the claims of Christian benevolence. The people have not been made to understand that Christian benevolence and true godliness are inseparable. They look upon what they do for the upholding of the gospel, not as a matter of Christian obligation, but purely as a matter of charity, which they may give or withhold as they choose. Ministers are mainly accountable for the prevalence of such views among their people. From indolence, indifference, want of moral courage, inappreciation on their own part of the nature of these claims, misapprehensions of the views and feelings of their people, or some other cause of like nature, they have not trained their people to those habits of giving that fit them for active coöperation in the great work of building up and extending the Redeemer's kingdom. No doubt the people, in many cases at least, are ahead of ministers, and

would contribute largely and freely to all our schemes of benevolence if they were only instructed in relation to their claims. No church, however poor or obscure, ought be left uninstructed or uninterested in these schemes. Life and efficiency can be imparted to such only calling their benevolence into exercise. The great Head of the Church looks at the motive, not at the amount given. One single dollar given by a poor church, if it proceeds from right motives and is accompanied by sincere prayer, will be as acceptable in his sight, and, under his control, will be made as effectual in advancing the interests of his kingdom, as hundreds or thousands of dollars given by wealthier churches, especially if they are wanting in those elements which render the smaller gifts so acceptable. It is earnestly hoped that presbyteries, whose special province it is to look after all defaulting churches, will adopt the necessary measures, and follow them up until every church within our whole bounds is brought into hearty and active coöperation in promoting the great ends for which the Church itself was instituted—the upbuilding and extending of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the whole world.

Another great want of our Church at the present moment is more ministers—and, we may add with propriety, ministers who will be able and disposed to devote the whole of their time to the interests of the Church. It is a fact calling for serious and prayerful thought, that the number of deaths that have occurred in our ministry for several years past, is greater than the accessions that have been made to it in the same time. Most of those of the former class, it is true, were men of feeble health, or of advanced years, whilst the additions have been men of youthful vigor. Our working, effective ministerial force may not therefore have been actually diminished; but the number on our list is becoming smaller year by year, and must continue to decrease until a much larger number of our young men will feel called upon to devote themselves to the work of the ministry. The whole number of ministers on our list, according to the minutes of the last Assembly, is eight hundred and forty. But when we strike from the roll such as are infirm and aged, those engaged

in the foreign missionary work, such as are engaged in teaching schools or in some other secular calling, and the very large number who are reported without charges, it will be found that the number actually engaged in preaching the gospel and otherwise laboring for the interests of the Church probably does not exceed six hundred. This would show an average of something like two-and-a-third churches to each laboring minister. When we take into account the further fact, however, that about two hundred of these churches have each a minister to itself, then there remains an average of something more than three churches to each of the remaining four hundred ministers. But these churches are not grouped according to any regular order. Whilst a large number of these four hundred ministers have not more than two churches each, others have three, four and five, and sometimes as many as ten or twelve. In order to meet this great deficiency in the number of ministers, almost every Presbytery in our bounds has resorted to the expedient of appointing evangelists to take the oversight of all their feeble and vacant churches. But this process has already been carried as far as is compatible with the welfare, if not the very existence, of many of these churches. It is gratifying to know that the number of students in our Theological Seminaries is gradually increasing; but up to the present time that increase falls very far short of the demands of the case. Churches can not be in a very healthful condition, where they are not assembled more than once or twice a month for religious worship and instruction; and if ever there was occasion for a people to cry earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers, it is the present.

But a more serious embarrassment to the prosperity and welfare of our Church, perhaps, than either of those already mentioned, is the want of *proper ministerial support*. This charge is not of course preferred against all our churches, (for many of them have been very exemplary in this particular), but against a very large proportion of them. Without pretending to give precise statistics, we can say with a good deal of confidence, that outside of our large towns and cities, the average salary of the great body of our ministers does not exceed \$600, even if it

amounts to as much as that. To argue the insufficiency of such a salary, is simply to waste words. But what are the consequences of this state of things? Ministers are compelled, as a matter of dire necessity, to betake themselves to school-keeping, to farming, or to some other secular employment, in order to provide the means of support for themselves and their families. The further consequences are, that ministers soon become secularized in their feelings and habits, have little or no time left for study and for preparation for the pulpit; and their people, as a matter of course, have not that kind of instruction which will be promotive of either their intellectual or spiritual improvement. This course is mutually injurious to pastor and people; and without an immediate and thorough reformation, our Church can never attain to that high and honorable position which would seem to have been assigned her by her great Head, nor can she ever become very useful or effective in extending the blessing of the gospel among mankind. At the same time, it is poor policy, to say the least, for the Church at large to educate ministers at heavy expense, then have them spend the greater part of their time at the plough-handle, or in the school-room. How will the wants of the churches ever be fully met, when the ministers we send forth will not be allowed to devote more than one-fifth or one-sixth of their time to their spiritual improvement? It is just here that the great strain rests upon our Church. If all our ministers could at once receive the support they need, and such as we feel assured the churches could give, if they fully understood their obligations—such as would relieve them from the necessity of continuing their secular pursuits—it would be equivalent to adding three or four hundred ministers at once to our present preaching force. But can our people be thoroughly aroused to the demands of the case? Can they be made to feel and act up to the full extent of their obligations? We think there is no doubt of it, if wise and judicious measures are adopted and patiently carried out. They need instruction on the subject. They ought to be made to understand, that true piety and liberal giving always go hand in hand; that God does not require gifts at the hands of his people because he needs

their money; but because he would repress their selfishness, the great master sin of the human heart, on the one hand; and, on the other, develope their benevolence, which assimilates them to his own moral image. The wrong impressions of former years, as to having the gospel preached without charge, must be entirely effaced from their minds. They must be made to understand that the great end of their conversion as individuals, as well as their organisation into churches, was that they might have the honor, as well as the duty, of being co-workers with the Lord Jesus himself in building up that great spiritual kingdom which is ultimately to swallow up all other kingdoms and exercise universal sway and power over all this sin-ruined world. Churches thoroughly aroused to their high calling, and made sensible of the solemn responsibilities that have been devolved upon them, will not long be tardy or slack in the performance of the duties assigned them by the providence of God.

The Synod of South Carolina, at its meeting before the last, inaugurated measures, which, if faithfully carried out by the presbyteries under its care, cannot fail to bring about the most important results in the condition of the great majority of its churches. Those measures have for their object the securing of a more hearty consecration of ministers to their peculiar calling as preachers of the gospel, on the one hand; and, on the other, such support on the part of the churches as will free them from the necessity of following secular pursuits for the means of subsistence. It will be a bright and happy day for our Church at large, when these two objects are fully realised; and it is earnestly hoped that presbyteries will have the grace, the patience, and perseverance to carry them into full effect. The Sustentation scheme is also exerting, in an indirect way, a very considerable influence in preparing the churches for these important and necessary changes. In disbursing the general fund committed to its care, it can make no appropriation to aid a church in the support of its pastor, unless the Presbyterial Committee, in whose bounds it is located, and through whom the application must come, can certify that the said church, or union of churches, cannot itself provide his support. This requires the Presbyterial

Committee to look carefully into the true condition of all such churches. If the Church is really able, but not disposed to make the necessary effort to raise the pastor's salary, they are promptly denied all assistance from the common fund; and they must therefore discharge their duty in full, or fall under condemnation of their own consciences, as well as the censure of their brethren in the Lord. The injunction laid upon the presbyterial committees and the Executive Committee of Sustentation, by the two last Assemblies, to make the effort to raise the salary of every laboring minister to \$750 as the *minimum*, is also exerting a powerful influence in the same direction. This likewise imposes the duty on the presbyterial committees of looking very narrowly into the condition of all their churches. If some of them are found able, but not disposed, to give their pastors a competent support—especially such as is proposed by the above-mentioned injunction—it becomes the duty of the Committee to report such cases to the Presbytery for its consideration and action, and not come to the Central Committee for assistance. On the other hand, if they find churches utterly incapable of supporting their ministers, it becomes their duty to seek for them such supplemental aid as will relieve their pastors from the necessity of continuing their secular pursuits, and devote themselves wholly to the work of the ministry.

Having considered, in a brief manner, some of the difficulties and discouragements which surround our Church, we propose now to point out some of the means and agencies by which they are to be removed.

The first suggestion we would offer is, that presbyteries (not to mention other church courts) must hold the reins of government with a firmer and steadier hand. Theoretically we are Presbyterians, but practically, in many respects at least, we are Independents. This is manifested but too often in the language and conduct both of ministers and people. Presbyterianism, rightly understood, is a system of government. It is the form of government, as we profess to believe, that was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ for the government of his spiritual kingdom on earth; and we know from experience and history alike,

that wherever its principles have had full play, they have been found preëminently suited to promote that kingdom. A Presbytery consists of ministers and of elders designated by the churches to coöperate with them in the administration of government. A minister, when received into a Presbytery, comes under its authority, and agrees to abide by the counsel and advice of his brethren in the Lord. And a church, when taken under the care of Presbytery, comes under similar obligations. Ministers and churches, therefore, are alike amenable to the authority of the Presbytery; and the Presbytery, on the other hand, is bound to look after the good name of its ministers and the spiritual welfare of all the churches under its care. Whilst each minister has a special relationship to the particular church of which he is the pastor, he has also an *ecclesiastical* relationship to all the other churches of the same Presbytery, and is bound to do what he can to promote their spiritual welfare. No minister can be installed over a church without the consent of Presbytery; and no pastoral relationship, after it has been established, can be dissolved without the same consent. Presbytery, nevertheless, has the right to dissolve any existing relationship, (of course having due regard to the views and wishes of the church at the same time,) if it is found to be injurious or unprofitable. It has the further right, and is solemnly bound, to see that churches and ministers discharge their mutual duties and obligations to each other. These are simple and obvious principles that will be admitted on all hands. Yet there is a lamentable deficiency in almost all our presbyteries, so far as their practical enforcement is concerned. How many churches are there in almost every Presbytery that utterly fail to support their pastors, even after having given the most solemn pledges to do so; and yet how seldom are churches called to account for such neglect of duty? On the other hand, how often do ministers, after having taken the most solemn obligations to devote themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, either give it up altogether, or allow themselves to be so completely entangled with the cares of the world as to lose all interest in the *spiritual* improvement of their people; and yet how tardy presbyteries

frequently are in rebuking such delinquencies. Again, it is no uncommon thing to see a minister holding on to a charge, not only long after he has ceased to be acceptable as preacher, but when it has become obvious to almost every body but himself, that his continued connection with that church is alike unprofitable and injurious. Now, in these, and in all similar cases, it is undoubtedly the duty of the Presbytery to interpose and rectify such irregularities. All false delicacy should be set aside, and brethren should deal with each other in frankness and fidelity. And until all such irregularities and abuses are corrected, we cannot expect our Church to take the high rank she ought, or exert a very powerful influence in extending the knowledge of salvation among men.

Another matter of no less importance is the careful cultivation in all our churches of an energetic, self-reliant, and benevolent spirit. The time for complaint and despondency is gone by. What we need now, and what must be put forth, if we would save our beloved Church from utter prostration and helplessness, is a spirit of energy, self-denial, and self-reliance. If we have been brought low in our outward circumstances, the undoubted *object of it was* to give scope to the growth and development to these sturdy Christian virtues. Every thing like a complaining, dependent, eleemosynary spirit should be banished from the heart of our people. The Macedonian churches, in the times of their poverty, did more for the cause of Christ than in any other periods of their history, and, so far as we know, more than was done by any of the sister churches of the same period. And their spirit of benevolence and self-reliance is just what we need to arouse our churches to the highest degree of energy and efficiency. If our people generally were imbued with this spirit, there would be comparatively few calls for aid in supporting the preaching of the gospel, in erecting church edifices, and for objects of like nature. In the great majority of cases, Christian people really do not know how much they can do until they set about it in an earnest manner and on a systematic plan. Two churches, contiguous to each other, and connected with the same Presbytery with the writer, thought for several years past,

that they could not, even by their united efforts, raise more than \$250 or \$300 for the support of their pastor, and they came year after year to the Sustentation Committee for assistance, representing themselves as very poor, and their circumstances as very urgent. Last year most of the leading members of these churches determined to cultivate as much as a half acre of cotton for every horse used on the farm, and the result is, that they can, on this plan, pay their pastor as much as \$800 or \$1,000; whereas they formerly thought they could not possibly give more than \$300; and yet this amount is not more than one-fifteenth or twentieth of their regular income, or about one-half of the Jewish tithe. Similar efforts in most of our churches, we have no doubt, would bring about similar results. But the history of modern missions furnishes the most remarkable illustrations of what may be done by throwing churches upon their own resources for self-support, as well as for the development of the true spirit of benevolence.

The great missionary associations, both of this country and Europe, conducted their foreign missionary operations for nearly fifty years, on what are now very generally acknowledged, in many respects at least, to be erroneous principles. The missionary, when he gathered a church out of a heathen community, almost always became its permanent pastor. In consequence of his superior knowledge, he directed and controlled all its affairs; administered discipline; received and dismissed members from its communion; and, indeed, embodied the whole government in himself, the native members being regarded as too ignorant to take part in it. At the same time the missionary received his support almost entirely from the churches in his native land, the members of his own church contributing little or nothing to it. The consequences of this course were, that the native members of such churches were left without the training necessary to fit them for self-government, their benevolence was left in a great measure undeveloped, and they made little or no progress in those great elements of character that would fit them for usefulness and efficiency in their day and generation. Fifteen or twenty years ago this line of policy was superseded by a better and more scriptural one.

Missionaries now, as a general thing, act in the capacity of evangelists, and follow as closely as possible in the footsteps of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. When they organise churches now, they appoint pastors and rulers over them, (of course selecting the best and most promising materials that can be found among these new churches), and go on forming others, but exercising, for the time being, a general supervision over the whole. The results of this change of policy are already very decided and marked. Native converts have made much better pastors than they were thought capable of making; native churches are beginning to have clearer ideas of the nature and obligations of church government; congregations that once thought themselves incapable of supporting the preaching of the gospel for their own benefit, have now found that they can not only support their own religious teachers, but they can do and are doing a great deal to extend the blessings of the gospel to their more benighted fellow-men. It is really surprising to know what results have been brought about by simply throwing these native congregations on their own resources. Take the churches of the Sandwich Islands, of which there are not more than fifty, as an illustration of this great principle. It is less than fifty years since they were redeemed from the very lowest depths of heathenism. And already they not only support their own pastors, maintain their effective systems of education for their children, but they contributed the last year for the spread of the gospel in neighboring islands more than \$30,000 in gold. Surely, if a similar spirit of benevolence and self-reliance could be aroused in our churches, we would soon witness results that would greatly transcend any thing that has been brought forth in the heathen world. What we need, therefore, is the cultivation of this spirit of benevolence and self-reliance on the part of our people and churches. Presbyterial committees, we sometimes fear, do the churches they represent a serious injury by seeking aid for them from the Sustentation fund, instead of stirring up their own energies and self-denial. Nothing does a church more good, on the one hand, than to have its benevolence and self-denial exercised; or harm, on the other, than to allow all its energies to

lie dormant. But can we expect to see our numerous and widely scattered churches thoroughly aroused to their obligations in these great matters? No doubt of it, if the necessary means are diligently employed. Let that dependent, eleemosynary spirit which has been sapping the foundation of many of our churches for some time past, be superseded by a manly, self-reliant, and benevolent spirit; let our people be thoroughly convinced of the force and truth of the scripture adage, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" let our ministers who have heretofore stood in the back-ground, so far as all our great schemes of benevolence are concerned, come forward and do their utmost in arousing their people to a full sense of their responsibilities; and it will not only inaugurate a new epoch in the history and condition of our beloved Church, but will start it forward with new and resistless vigor in the discharge of all those high and responsible duties that have been devolved upon it by the providence of God.

But another matter equally essential to the growth and efficiency of the Church, is the maintenance of the bonds of unity and common brotherhood. It is scarcely possible to attach too much importance to this. It is this that has sustained and strengthened us amid all the trials and difficulties through which we have already passed, and upon this alone, with the blessing of Almighty God, can we rely to uphold us in the trials which manifestly lie before us in the future. Had not our whole body stood firmly together immediately after the terrible disasters of the late war, the stronger portions of the Church sustaining the weaker, and the wealthier helping the poorer, it is highly probable that a very large number of our church organisations would have become extinct. At the same time every careful observer of the signs of the times must feel convinced that there are to be severer tests of our faith and steadiness in the future than any we have yet experienced; and, consequently, there are the strongest and most urgent reasons for maintaining this unity of feeling and action. But not only have these bonds of unity and brotherhood upheld us in the times of calamity and distress, but they have proved the special means in the

hands of providence of arresting that tendency to isolation and disintegration which was rapidly hurrying us as a people and church into the broad ocean of independence, and ultimately into infidelity. But notwithstanding the manifest importance of this great principle of Christian unity, we regret to know that there is a strong tendency, in some portions of the Church at least, to fly off in the opposite direction. This is inferred from the fact, that it has been proposed in several cases to take the work of Sustentation and Education out of the hands of the General Assembly, and place them under the care of the synods. And what is this in fact but erecting synods, so far as these enterprises are concerned, into General Assemblies? and thus we shall have ten or a dozen instead of one common bond of union. Besides, if the work is remanded back from the Assembly to the synods, are we sure that it will stop there? Will not presbyteries, strengthened by the example of the synods, demand that the work be turned over to them? And is it presumable that the churches will be entirely silent under such circumstances? But what advantages can be gained by the proposed change? Can it be supposed that the churches will act more freely or contribute more largely of their substance from having their views and aims circumscribed within narrower boundaries? A number of presbyteries, immediately after the inauguration of our general systems of benevolence, acted upon this principle. It was thought that their churches would contribute more liberally by having the claims of their immediate neighborhood pressed upon their attention; but all such presbyteries, with perhaps two exceptions, have found out that they were mistaken, and have had the candor and magnanimity to confess their error and change their course. And, now, shall the same thing be reenacted on a larger scale, only to illustrate and confirm the same general principle? We do not see how synods could inaugurate any agency for stirring up the churches to greater liberality than that of presbyterial committees, which is now in almost universal use. And if those who are in favor of change know of any such agency, why not bring it forward and let it be applied in full force to the present general scheme? The Central Com-

mittee of Sustentation, as we understand, has never yet refused to grant any presbyterial committee, when asked to do so, fully as large an amount of funds for local purposes as has been contributed by their churches, and if this rule is substantially carried out from year to year, we do not see how there can be any just ground for complaint. If larger amounts are needed, then the churches are to be stimulated to greater liberality, which every presbytery can effect by giving its presbyterial committee the necessary instructions.

The success of the Kentucky Synod, in raising the salary of its ministers at once to \$1,000 as *the minimum*, has been quoted against the Assembly's plan. But it should be borne in mind, that the people in Kentucky have never been stripped of their property, as the great mass of the Southern people have. There is probably at the present time as much wealth in the single Synod of Kentucky as in any four other synods in the whole Church, so that what was practicable and comparatively easy for them, was an impossibility, for the time being at least, with us. More than this, the Synod of Kentucky, in carrying out their plan, have been so severely taxed that they can do little or nothing for the general cause of Sustentation. Far be it from us to find fault with our brethren in Kentucky for doing just as they have done. We entertain too fresh and too deep a sense of their great kindness to us in the time of our extremity, to feel like finding fault with them, especially for achieving the very same thing that we are striving to accomplish ourselves. But suppose all our stronger and more prosperous synods had acted on the exclusive principle of attending to their own wants, what would have become of all our weaker presbyteries and churches in the mean time? And if this practice is introduced to any considerable extent in our Church, then our missionary operations cease, and Texas and other portions of the southwestern country will inevitably pass into other hands.

We conclude this article, by stating the deep conviction upon our mind that the great and urgent want of our Church at the present moment, is *the thorough waking up of our ministry to the demands of the crisis*. If there was the life, the energy, the

self-denial, and the activity on their part that the circumstances of the Church demand, we should have very little anxiety about the future. Few as we are, compared with the actual wants of the Church, our power and influence, with the blessing of Almighty God, would not only be felt in all our churches, but even to the remotest extremities of the earth.

ARTICLE VIII.

PAUL, THE CHURCH AT ROME, AND THE EPISTLE
TO THE ROMANS.

Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. With an Introduction on the Life, Times, Writings, and Character of Paul. By WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D. D., LL. D., Author of "Studies in the Book of Psalms," etc., etc., etc. Pp. 646. Large 8vo. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 770 Broadway, corner of 9th street. 1870.

When we take in hand any valuable book, like the one whose title is given above, which proposes to treat of such a portion of Scripture as the Epistle to the Romans, a multitude of thoughts and memories crowd upon the mind, touching the providence of God as to the writings of the New Testament; as to the author of this Epistle in particular; as to its importance, the people to whom it was sent, and the manner in which it should be studied and expounded. To some of these we propose to devote a portion of the following pages, having it in view also to introduce the book itself to the acquaintance of our readers.

There is no one who values the Scriptures, and rejoices in the inspiring truths they disclose, who would not feel it an irreparable loss if the fourteen epistles of Paul were by any inconceivable calamity abstracted from the sacred volume. Every portion of God's word, even the smallest, is of priceless value. To David, when he had before him only the Pentateuch, Joshua,