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ARTICLE I.

CONGREGATIONAL TEMPORALITIES.

The whole subject of the temporalities of the Church should be elaborated into a science, which might be called Ecclesiastical Economy; and should occupy the place in ecclesiastical literature that Political Economy does in civil. It is a subject worthy of the best efforts of the best minds in the Church, and is susceptible of a thoroughly philosophical treatment. It is of almost fundamental importance when considered in its spiritual aspects; and yet it has generally received only an empirical treatment. It is a subject whose abstract doctrines grow out of the profoundest ideas of religion, both natural and revealed, and also have intimate relations with metaphysics, ethics, history, political economy, and the relations of Church and State; and until it is understood, systematized, and taught in its breadth, the temporalities will continue to be the "evil genius" of the Church, instead of a source of comfort, stability, and spiritual prosperity.

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The Church first needs to be relieved of that latent impression that her houses and lands, her revenues and investments, have something of a contraband character about them; that they are a kind of painful incident of Christianity, and not a part of its organic life. It is easy enough to show, from the Scriptures, and from the history of the Church, that the handling of these temporalities must accompany ecclesiastical work; but it is not easy to show to the apprehension of all, that these temporalities are not simply artificial vestments required for comfort and decency, but may be better represented by the physical organism in which the soul of man resides, and by means of which its life is fed and its activities put forth. In our present sphere, spirit must utter itself through material agencies. All through the Bible, in a thousand forms, is the alliance proclaimed between the temporal and the spiritual. The God-man teaches it in the very constitution of his nature, and in his life. What he denounced, and what alone the Church ought to denounce, was not the subjection of matter to spirit, but the subjection of spirit to matter: it was the looking at the seen and the temporal as the end of the heart's desire, instead of the instrument of the unseen and the eternal; it was making mammon a god instead of a servant. Christ distinctly teaches us to use mammon aright, declaring that he may be made a friend who will conduct us to the everlasting habitations.

The Church itself is but a corporation in the original sense—a body—a body formed like many vegetable bulbs, which consist of an aggregation of small bulbs united to form a single large one, and each part possessing a complete organism, capable of independent life, and the united whole requiring for its growth exactly the conditions required by each separate part.

All the considerations which render it necessary for the individual Christian to have temporal affairs, apply with equal force to the body of individual Christians, which is called the Church. The Church has to gather a support for herself. She has to provide herself with accommodations, to pay her current expenses. She has to educate her children. She has to help the needy, and to do good in the world generally. If such re-

marks seem to degrade the Church by giving it a secular aspect, it is only because, in all the earth, and in all ages, God's temporal gifts to man have been secularized, abused, and perverted. "The gold is mine, and the silver is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills," saith the Lord; and yet every man has been saying, "My money is my own, I will do what I please with it;" and so the rich blessings of the great Father of us all have become so associated with the impiety and wickedness of mankind, that they have lost their heavenly aroma, and smell of the earth.

This is all wrong; and a part of the Church's work is to correct public sentiment upon this subject, and to restore the wealth of the world to its rightful ownership and uses—but of this we shall speak presently.

The point in hand just now is the fact that the Church needs the use of temporal things for much the same reasons and uses that her individual members need them; namely, as necessary incidents of the mundane existence.

The next remark is, that with the Church, as with individuals, the getting, the managing, and the disposing of these temporal things, have deeper and more important uses in the spiritual economy of God's kingdom than in the temporal. "The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." You that seek after these things only as the nations of the earth seek after them, have need of a deeper insight. "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat that endureth unto eternal life, which I shall give you." The feeding of the inner man is the paramount concern. You must have carnal food, of course—even the lilies had to draw nourishment from the earth—but in your strivings remember that it is your heavenly Father who feedeth you, and let this fact bring your soul into its true relations, and teach you that the life of faith with its peaceful trust and its constant discipline of self, in order to fulfil the wishes of the Parent of good, is the real, true, paramount, unending life of every man; and that all these temporal things are meant to serve the spiritual.

If we study the principles which underlie success in temporal

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affairs, we shall see that they are so entirely opposed to any immoral or atheistic tendency, as to furnish one of many illustrations of the resoluteness with which man perverts the provisions God has given for his spiritual culture. They are all virtues worthy of imitation, and furnish an excellent and elevating discipline to human character. The practical evil among men of the world in their secular affairs is their neglect or violation of these principles; and this comes partly from ignorance and partly from evil example, but chiefly from a low moral sense in relation to the whole matter. For this state of things, existing so long under the light of Christian intelligence, the Church is in part responsible, because, owing to unsettled views in the Church itself, there has been a failure on her part in teaching society right principles in reference to this matter.

Now it must be evident upon a close examination, inasmuch as the relations of the Church to temporal affairs are similar to those of individuals, that the teaching office of the Church was meant to cover this whole subject. Of necessity she must have principles for her own action, and these principles are the same which should regulate individual action; and consequently, she must occupy the position either of a teacher of the world or of a learner from the world; and we can hardly suppose the latter to be becoming. In either case, she must give her mind studiously to the subject, and at least not be behind the world in intelligence, wisdom, and all necessary practical virtues. She should be prepared to show, by precept and example, how the temporal may receive its proper share of attention, and yet remain ancillary to the spiritual.

Let us now bring these principles to bear specially upon *congregational finances*.

The congregation is the first ecclesiastical remove from the individual—hence has more in common with him than the higher bodies have, and has need to refer more directly to the principles needed in daily private life. When a number of gentlemen organise a banking or a railway company, they do not find it needful to seek out new principles of business, but only to apply the ordinary principles to new subjects. Thus should it be in

congregational affairs. The fundamental principles of business are the same in all temporal matters, whether ecclesiastical, civil, or private. And this fact being obvious, it is astonishing that the Church has been so long in finding it out, and has so long been managing her business in a style that would have disgraced an individual, or ruined a State.

Manifestly then, every congregation should sharply recognise the fact that it *has temporal business* committed to it as a part of its Christian organisation and current duty; and that this business requires to be managed on exactly the same principles with their own private business. It is not meant by this that the congregation should be actuated by worldly motives, or should follow bad examples in private life, where even good men are often negligent, often worldly-minded, and sometimes a little given to the "tricks of trade," and also to mean and penurious habits of economy; nor indeed that she should follow examples at all, but right principles, eliminated from the Scriptures and from the world's experience, and purified from all contaminations. The Church needs this for herself, and she needs to learn this, in order to teach her own members and the world how to conduct their private affairs successfully, without detriment to their religious character and influence. For what other purposes can we imagine the Church to have been intrusted with temporalities at all?

If these remarks be just, we should next inquire what are the true, sound, scriptural principles on which men, individually and collectively, should conduct their temporal affairs. In determining these, it must not be expected that for every business maxim we can find a text. Christianity, as taught by our Saviour, and as spread upon the pages of the New Testament, is something very different from a code of laws. The few special practical instructions are incidental and illustrative, not systematic or exhaustive. Christianity is a spirit, not a set of statutes. It has but one law—the law of love—and under the inspiration of this divine affection, and the guidance of the scattered way-marks left us in the Scriptures, we may surely find our way into all the paths of duty.

But whilst we may not expect to find in the Scriptures, even in detached fragments, a complete system of business, we may and do find there given all the cardinal features of a wise business economy.

The main features of a good business character are industry, attention, system, calculation, self-control, prudence, economy, punctuality, perseverance, and greater than any, integrity and honor; and then, at the bottom of all, a high motive.

Now it would be easy to take these points in detail, and show by either express precept or easy application of general principles, that these are all Christian virtues, which every man's religion requires him to cultivate; and that he who neglects any one of them in his daily business is living in sin, and would properly be amenable to the censures of the Church, if the Church herself had not been so remiss. But the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

Let the judicatories insist then upon every congregation taking up its temporal affairs with the same zeal and under the guidance of the same principles which every man brings, or ought to bring, to his own private affairs. Ring in the ears of every slothful servant the words of the Master, "Occupy till I come;" "If you are unfaithful with the mammon of unrighteousness, who will commit to you the true riches?" Will you persist in representing the unjust steward, who was far more careful to provide for himself individually than to protect his Lord's interest? Will you rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, that you may add field to field; and only spare a hurried hour now and then to the Lord's business? Will you be very watchful and sharp at a bargain for yourself, but consider it quite out of the question to do a little financiering for the Church? Will you be very careful to protect your business honor, and yet see the congregation to which you belong *disgraced* by the neglect of such as you? You are not content to put clerks behind your counters, foremen in your workshops, and managers in your fields, and let them carry on your business in any sort of fashion, you neither knowing nor caring what they are about; but you are quite willing, perhaps you are very

glad, to find men willing to take the deacon's office, in order that your conscience may have a perpetual holiday. Hereafter you will neither encourage them to do anything, nor look to see what they are doing, nor even come for one hour in a year to hear what they have done.

Is it a wonder, then, that great rich churches do not pay their debts, and have not credit enough even with their own moneyed members to borrow a hundred dollars without personal security?

Surely, surely it is time our congregations were waking up to the disgraceful aspect which many of them present—time that the honor of Christ and the prosperity of his Church lay as near to their hearts as their private interests and reputation.

Could we only get our congregations to see the importance of this subject, and to lay hold of it seriously, forms and methods would readily follow. Give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, until the people and their office-bearers shall be made to understand that they, as a congregation, must be an example in temporalities as well as spiritualities, and that they are falling short, until in this particular their congregational characteristics are those of the very best man of business.

In all congregational obligations, however, there is an element which elevates them above ordinary pecuniary obligations—they are *debts of honor*!

There are persons in the Church who incline to methods of congregational pecuniary reform which would throw all church obligations into regular legal form, so that delinquents may be coerced by the machinery of the civil law. In our opinion, this is an error, calculated to degrade the Church. The law was made for the lawless and disobedient, the unjust and the covenant-breaker. The Church's true and proper code is the moral, and should never descend to the tribunal of Cæsar when it is possible to avoid it. Her sphere is higher, her controlling forces are stronger, and her punishments more severe, than those of the civil law; and if in temporal matters she has not thus appeared, it is only because she has failed to comprehend, and hence to inculcate, the right principles in the matter.

The fact that her discipline is purely moral, gives her an over-

whelming argument wherewith to bear down on the conscience and self-respect of her members; and more than that, it places her claims among that class of obligations which are above law and are self-enforcing, when made a part of public moral education.

The older philosophers divided all sorts of obligations into two classes, viz., those which could be enforced by legal or physical coercion, and those which could not be so enforced. The former they unfortunately denominated *perfect*, and the latter *imperfect* obligations; and these terms expressed the views they entertained of the character and completeness of the two classes respectively. But in process of time, it was seen that the obligations called perfect, or rather a large portion of them, were in their nature of so inferior a grade that they required for their enforcement the supplementary appliances of statutory law and physical compulsion; whilst those obligations called imperfect, were generally of so subtle, so sensitive, so superior a grade, as not to be appropriate subjects for the action of the coarse machinery of human law; and so sure and spontaneous in their natural autonomy, that they demanded for their enforcement only the proper natural conditions, together with moral education. For example, undoubted as is the high obligation in a man to fulfil a pecuniary contract, to avoid trespassing on his neighbor, and to aid in bearing the public burdens, all feel that the obligation of a man to honor his Maker, to be grateful to his benefactor, to love and cherish the members of his family, belong to a higher class than the former, and lie beyond the range of human legislation. And to attempt to make them subjects of civil coercion, would be to degrade those high sentiments, to weaken those natural and moral forces by which they are regulated, and to bring the law itself into contempt.

Now, it is clearly the policy of the Church, as it is clearly the right philosophical analysis of the subject, to place religious pecuniary obligations among the *imperfect* obligations; that is, among those obligations which do not, or at least ought not, and under right moral training certainly would not, need the help of human law, and which would be degraded, and practically weak-

ened by attempting to bring them under it. The mere fact that an obligation can not be enforced by law, does of itself enhance the moral obligation to pay it, and we all feel that when a man gives up to his creditors property which the law could not reach, he is entitled to more respect than he who does no more than he could be compelled to do. Under the Jewish law, a man's cloak was exempt from the distress-warrant, because it could be used for a coat by day and a bed by night; but the simple coat might be levied on by the officer of the law. Hence our Saviour, in order to give a poor man a chance to show his conscience and to elevate himself in public estimation, even while stripped by his debts of the very clothes on his back, he said, "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, give him thy cloak also."

In this and other similar counsels, our Saviour enunciated the law of *His* kingdom as a higher law than human law, as what might be called, by eminence, "the law of so-called imperfect obligations;" because it deals originally and specially with those subtler and superior impulses and sentiments which lie without the province of human law, and which carry the principles of justice and honor beyond the point where civil law ceases to urge its claims, and yet form the germinating principles of all law, justice, and honor. And the Church should be taught to understand that in this, as in other things, she represents her great Teacher and her spiritual Lawgiver. She should appeal to higher sentiments than even those of common legal justice and routine honesty; she should wield heavier penalties than civil judgments and sheriff's executions; she should teach the people that their pecuniary obligations to the Church are obligations of peculiar delicacy and sacredness, and that the credit and honor of the congregations to which they severally belong ought to be dearer to them than even their individual honor; and that all individuals and congregations who fail to act upon these higher sentiments, and who permit themselves and their congregations to be penurious and unfaithful, are justly amenable to a sentence of aggravated moral condemnation. Is not this the moral teaching in the terrible judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira—

“You have not lied unto men, but you have lied unto the Holy Ghost.” This is not a mere worldly transaction, in which you try to hide your property to avoid carrying out a contract with a fellow-man—but you have brought your dishonesty into the Church; you have lightly esteemed the honor of Christ and his disciples; you have broken your religious vows, in order to save your money; and now, by the stroke of God, your lifeless bodies shall teach all generations that it is a deadly crime to hold back the money you have vowed unto God!

If, then, the temporalities of a religious congregation grow from the same root as the spiritualities; if, indeed, in a certain sense, they embody the spiritual life of the Church, and give it its outward manifestation in the presence of the world for honor or dishonor; and if, as yet, our congregations have failed to understand the high principles involved in this matter, and hence have been derelict in practice, then, without doubt, and without need of controversy, these congregational temporalities, in all their ramifications, form a proper subject of presbyterial review and control.

It is really a surprising fact, that heretofore the higher authorities have exercised almost no supervision over our congregations in these matters of vital import. And yet, of late years, a beginning has been made in that direction. Formerly, a Presbyterian congregation might give nothing to general objects of Christian benevolence, and might fail constantly to pay the salary promised to the pastor, until the arrearages would amount to hundreds, perhaps thousands of dollars. The pastor might die or remove, and the debt remain forever unliquidated. There are congregations who owe dead pastors enough to support for years their suffering families, and probably their consciences are quite easy on the subject. But now, in some portions of the Church, they are very properly called to report to presbytery in regard to this matter, and since the adoption of the rule there has been a wonderful improvement in the matter of paying the pastor's salary. Even in this, however, there is great room for improvement, whilst in other matters all is in confusion. Congregations may still contract all manner of debts, and be as

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careless in regard to paying as they were in contracting; they may still disregard the calls of their creditors, and be utterly bankrupt in mercantile reputation, whilst at the same time they may manage to raise money for objects of far less importance than paying their debts. They may still leave their church buildings dilapidated and unenclosed, and their graveyards in a state of wild desolation; they may even be indifferent as to the validity of the title by which they hold their church property; they may be without deacons, or, having deacons, leave them to do nothing, or do anything; they may neglect the poor; they may have no system in the whole matter, and feel no desire to have any; and all this may be going on year after year to the spiritual detriment and public disgrace of the congregations, and yet nothing be known and nothing be done by the presbytery to protect the honor of religion, and promote the prosperity of the delinquent congregations.

In these particulars, too, and even without presbyterial solicitude, there has been within a century a great improvement, and a few congregations have reached a highly creditable grade of system and punctuality; but for this they are indebted to their own wisdom and conscience, more than to any instruction they have received from without; and such cases will always be exceptional, until some well-considered, uniform plan of congregational organisation and responsibility is made a part of our presbyterial system.

We have now fairly reached the question, *What should be done?*

In reply, it might be answered truly that we have undertaken to deal with and try to settle the great principles underlying this neglected subject, rather than to propose methods which must grow up into a general system under the modifying influence of actual experience. We shall feel that our labors have been most important if we secure a clear recognition of the principle that all the temporal, as well as the more strictly spiritual, affairs of our several congregations, form a proper subject of presbyterial supervision. Before closing, however, we will venture to make some suggestions which may serve as a beginning to-

ward the practical application of the principles for which we contend.

The first step manifestly is, to gather facts and statistics, to see to it that every congregation has its board of deacons, who are the scriptural financial officers. The movement made upon this subject some years ago by the Synod of Virginia, had some effect, but its partial failure was owing to the double reason that the appointment of deacons was not made a *sine qua non*, and the duties and responsibilities of deacons were not embodied as a part of the congregational economy.

Connected with the duties of the deacon, there is an open question in the Church, which ought to be thoroughly discussed and finally settled, viz., whether or not deacons ought to be the trustees of all church property. The practice of the American Church has been against this arrangement, but the question is too complicated and important to be mixed up with other, however cognate, branches of inquiry. There should be a special and deliberate examination of this whole system of resigning our church property to the control of mere civil officers. Practically, however, in the Southern States, the trustees have been nominal characters, who have allowed the congregations to do very much what they pleased with their church property. Therefore, the way is still clear among us to proceed with our congregational organisations very much as if no trustees existed, although we cannot tell how long this liberty will remain.

Deacons being appointed, they should have a very clearly defined programme of duties.

The general definition of the duties of the deacons given in our Form of Government is sufficiently comprehensive, viz., the care of the poor, and the management of the temporal affairs of the Church. The question yet to be fully answered is, what is the detailed working plan of the diaconate; what particular things are included in, and under what form of accountability should the deacons execute, the duties of their office.

In this discussion it should be borne in mind that the deacon is not an ecclesiastic. Unlike the minister and elder, he is exclusively a local officer, the servant of the particular congre-

gation which appoints him, and that only within the range of the temporalities: and yet, narrow as seem to be the limits of this office, and insignificant a part as it has played in modern Church history, it has in it the germ of a splendid development, in a direction presently to be mentioned.

Every officer of every grade in Church and State, should not only have clearly defined duties, but should feel the pressure of a supervisory authority, and the system of responsibility should be so arranged as to make it pleasant, interesting, and improving to all parties concerned. The direct responsibility of the deacons should be to the parochial consistory, or church session; but inasmuch as they administer the affairs of the congregation, they should, with regularity and great particularity, report to the congregation; and their report should in substance be laid before the presbytery.

As to the character of the duties of the deacon, these should be studiously elaborated into a working programme, which should form a part of every congregational constitution and by-laws, if not of the general Form of Government. The plan should be earnestly studied, discussed, and adopted by the congregation, and be frequently revised. It should also be a subject of presbyterial consideration, the presbytery taking advantage of the experience of individual congregations, and aiding in the perfecting of the system.

Let us look finally at some of the items which should be included in the diaconate.

One grand division of deacon-work is—"to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use."

This is the direction alluded to above, in which the diaconate is destined to grow grandly in the future developement of the Church's organism. When the Church shall at length comprehend her mission to the weak, ignorant, and destitute classes of society, she will be surprised to find embodied in her own organization an office which she will then see was meant specially for this very thing: an office as wide in its scope as the wants and sufferings of humanity; an office which was meant to represent

the human and temporal life of Jesus Christ in its brotherly sympathy and benevolence, just as the eldership and ministry represent his divine and spiritual mission. So that the Church of the future is destined to walk through the earth as her Master walked, as full of sympathy with the earthly life of man as with the heavenly—in other words, to make just the impression on society that he made by his personal life.

But inviting as is this larger aspect of the deacon's office, we must turn to those practical views which accord more nearly with our present estimate of the office. At present, it is not generally expected that the deacon should look beyond the limits of the congregation in relieving the wants of the poor. It is to be hoped that in now reconsidering the subject, our congregations will give a special study to the parable of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, and thus learn the answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It is also to be hoped that they will distinctly recognise the fact that the proper "care of the poor" includes a good deal more than a little food and raiment. Let them learn, too, that Christ never meant any church officers to be the proxies of the congregation in the sense of relieving them from personal activity; but rather as guides and agents to direct the labors of individual Christians.

But whatever be the congregational idea of the deacon's duty to the poor, that idea should be expressed in definite terms.

The other grand division of the deacon-work lies more in the line of this train of thought, which refers to the temporal business of the congregation, rather than to its benevolence. This, we should think, ought to include everything where property and money are concerned, including care, purchases and sales, hiring, building, investments, raising and disbursing of all money, keeping all accounts and doing all the financiering of the congregation; and all this on an established system, and under instructions general and special from the congregation.

Analysing these subjects, we should put into the schedule—

1. *The Real Estate.*

Even if the legal title is placed in the names of other trustees, the care of the property should be made a special branch of the deacon's duty. Ordinarily trustees do not, in our section of country, regard their office as anything more than a form, and commonly the real estate, (ground, buildings, plantings, and enclosures,) has no special officers to look after its condition; and hence our church property is generally 'badly kept and uninviting in aspect. But so far as this disarray results from the negligence of trustees, it is much the less of two evils. The other alternative—and the one frequently seen among the Northern churches—is an active trustee-board, which, whilst taking good care of the property, are almost sure to transcend their proper jurisdiction, and by usurping ecclesiastical prerogatives, trouble and corrupt the churches. If, then, we do have extra-ecclesiastical trustees, let the policy of the Church be such that they will find nothing left for them to do, unless the title of the property should be called in question, or some trespass be committed. Let the property be put under the practical control of the Board of Deacons.

In first assuming the care of a church property, let the deacons do as they would do in case of a purchase or inheritance for themselves—go at once to original sources, and examine titles and boundaries, see that there are no flaws or liens, no interlocks, nuisances, or trespasses; take possession of title papers, with carefully executed plats, or better still, maps of the tract or tracts. It would also be a useful work to make out and file a history of the ground from the first settlement of the country. With what interest do we read now, nearly four thousand years after its occurrence, of the negotiation between Abraham and Ephron the Hittite for the purchase of the field and cave of Machpelah! And with greater interest still do we read of the transaction between David and Ornan the Jebusite, by which the king bought the threshing floor of the latter: the spot where Abraham had prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, the sacred spot which became the great church property of the Jewish nation, whereon was erected the *Temple*.

Apart from the legal value of a recorded chain of title, there

is a sentiment belonging to the history of sacred places which ought to be cherished.

The entire custody of this property should be committed to these deacons, with instruction to look after the buildings, enclosures, grounds, furniture and utensils, and see that all are protected from abuse, kept in good repair, and rendered more and more comfortable and attractive as the means are furnished for doing so. Remembering that in this class of things, as in others, the Church is exhibiting her own inner character, and by the aspect she presents to the world is conveying to the minds of all observers lessons which must be for their good or for their injury, the deacons should seek to connect every thing in this department directly with the religious sentiment and life of the congregation.

2. *The existing financial condition* of the congregation should next be looked into by an incoming Board of Deacons.

A list should at once be made of debts due *by* and *to* the congregation, and of annual income and expenditures; and on the basis of all the facts in the case, there should be a carefully matured system of finance, prepared by the deacons, and submitted to the congregation for discussion, amendment, and adoption. In this, of course, a leading item will be the raising of the pastor's salary, but it is not certain that the method of raising this should differ from that of raising what is required for other needful expenditures. The same principle applies to all, and the same motive should be appealed to in all cases. The collection of arrearages from delinquent subscribers or pew-holders will offer a point of great difficulty; and in the doing of this, it may be remarked, that harsh measures are not the best; nor is it best to press most prominently the mere commercial motives. Reliance should chiefly be placed on the education of the public sentiment of the congregation, and habitual delinquents should, in the least offensive way possible, be brought under the influence of that public sentiment.

3. Where the regular income of the congregation does not pay current expenses, or paying them, leaves old debts unpaid, the deacon should not cease to devise and carry out extraordinary

methods of restoring or preserving the honor of the congregation. He should agitate, and continue to agitate, until the object is accomplished. He should do the same in regard to needed purchases or improvements. But every congregation should be brought up to annual contributions which would not only pay current expenses, but leave a margin for other purposes; and also be taught to avoid contracting debts, and to maintain so high a character for punctuality, that there will be no difficulty in obtaining means, when borrowing is proper.

4. Whether or not the deacons should have charge of the raising and applying all funds given by the congregation for objects of general benevolence is a question about which there might be difference of opinion, and we do not propose to discuss it on this occasion; but will only remark that we can see no sufficient reason for making a distinction among the offerings of the people; and many reasons might be given why all should be under the same management.

5. It is essential to systematic action in these matters that the Board of Deacons should keep a set of record and account books, in which there should be kept a record of all their official acts, and a business-like account of all receipts and disbursements; also, a list of assets and liabilities, and also lists of members of the congregation complete, a list of pews and pew-holders, a list of beneficiaries, etc.: these books to be submitted to the congregation once a year, and examined by committee; just as sessional records and treasurer's accounts are examined by the Presbytery.

6. Lastly, the deacons should, at least once a year, submit a *report*, which should be prepared with great fulness and particularity, and read to the congregation. This report should contain a minute history of their doings during the past year, accompanied by a complete financial statement, so simply and lucidly presented that every member of the congregation may understand exactly the existing condition of affairs; and in connexion therewith, a statement of wants unprovided for, and suggestions of all kinds for the future. Deacons should not feel that they have discharged their duty when they have simply presented the

financial *wants* of the congregation: they should have so earnestly studied the subject as to come before the people with plans of relief, that will at least awaken inquiry and prepare the way for some successful movement.

This annual report would also furnish the proper occasion for bringing the public sentiment of the congregation to bear upon delinquents. Nothing more, however, is recommended than reading aloud their names, and the extent of their delinquencies.

The substance of this report, as before remarked, should be sent by the session to the presbytery, so that the financial condition and habits of the congregation may be duly reviewed. If, as a whole, it has been conducting its business imprudently, or without system or punctuality, let it be admonished as in the case of delinquency in pastor's salary. If it has become insolvent, let it be assisted by other congregations, and at the same time be duly warned against future entanglements. But in no ordinary case, leave a congregation in that most disgraceful of all conditions—one of practical repudiation. Let not the children of ministers be allowed to transmit to future generations the fact that this congregation and that still owe to their fathers so many hundreds—possibly so many thousands of dollars—for pastoral services; nor the children of mechanics and merchants have it in their power to bring similar charges. Even if common honesty did not require the payment of debts, public decency and ordinary commercial honor require that the last vestige of the former habits of congregations in some parts of the country should be swept away; by instruction and exhortation, if that prove sufficient; if not, by the most trenchant discipline.

The most difficult step in any reform movement in this matter is to interest the people sufficiently in their own congregational affairs to induce them even to attend the business meetings. It is not very wonderful that this should be so, when the calling of a congregational meeting has generally implied some desperate state of affairs which was to be laid before the people, and they to be called upon for some large and unusual sacrifice. Badly managed affairs will engender a dogged and despairing state of

mind in the congregation, which will be hard to deal with, until there is some encouragement to hope that there is to be a better state of things hereafter. When they are made parties in all that is done, and when they find that there is such a condition of things as may be called "easy circumstances" in a congregation, and above all, when they fully comprehend the spiritual import of these temporal affairs and adopt these duties as a part of their religion—then our congregations will come up as easily, as fully and as heartily to the measure of their duty in these, as they do in more directly spiritual matters.

ARTICLE II.

SHAKESPEARE.

Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare, with an Essay towards the Expression of his Genius, and an Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Drama. By RICHARD GRANT WHITE. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1865.

This is one of the best books of its kind, and one of the most enjoyable books of any kind, which we have had the opportunity of reading. The author, Mr. Richard Grant White, is not wholly unknown to us. It was, we think, in 1860 that we first met with his edition of Shakespeare, only seven volumes of which were then published. These had appeared in 1859 from the press of Little, Brown & Co. It was in crown octavo and was the *avant courier* of that series of superb issues which have excited the admiration even of English booksellers, and have added so much to the laurels of the best publishing house in Boston. It is now conceded that the printing in America is often as good as the best in Great Britain, and this result we owe largely to the labors of Messrs. Little & Brown. The work before us is one of the handsomest which has yet appeared in the