

Concerning Old Ministers and Others.

(By J. B. GAMBRELL, D. D.)

In an appeal the other day before the Northern Baptist Convention, a pastor called attention to the fact that the average salary of Baptist preachers is \$1.87 per day. (Please note that this is "the average"—and includes those getting the **highest** salaries. Then what must be the **minium** salaries, if \$1.87 per day is "the average".) Then he added:

"Let us take care of the wounded veterans of God's warfare; let us make it unknown that a man of the calling at the age of sixty five years must creep away somewhere to die of a broken heart. Shame on America that one of them should ever die that way!

I should feel myself allied with the forces of assassination if I did not help to stop that sort of thing. The living wage has got to come."

The question of old ministers' relief goes back, in many cases, to the inadequate provision made for the support of pastors. One of the most pathetic scenes in the world is the struggle of a man who has been paid a pitifully small salary, and is now unable to work.

A few such men may be destitute because of extravagance in living or bad management of funds; but the majority of them suffer because they did not receive a living salary. We believe that an increasing number

of churches are making proper provisions for pastors, but there is room in many of them for improvement.

A word needs to be said about men who receive good salaries. Many of them, in order to lead their churches to do their duty, make large contributions and impoverish themselves in doing so. I know a pastor, for instance, who receives a large salary. He is not growing rich. Within the past few months he has given \$500 for one good cause, \$200 for another and \$100 to each of several other institutions. Yet a very few know any thing of these sacrificial offerings.

These gifts did not get into the papers and were not meant to. I doubt if he ever has as much as \$200 in the bank thirty days at a time. He is a poor man financially. But he is rich in the affections of the many who have been helped by his ministry of love. He is rich in heavenly treasures into which gold and silver have been transmuted.

Practically every great denominational enterprise is a monument to the sacrificial offerings of preachers who counted not their own lives dear unto themselves.

In nearly every one of them the foundation stones rest on the hearts of men called of God to be His ambassadors. Many of these institutions would have failed had not these men thrown themselves into the breach and saved them.

Every great moral reform in the country is rooted in the labors of these brave men who faced the forces of evil with hearts unafraid. **Shall we be so ungrateful as to forget their valiant services and leave them to suffer in silence?**

I am thinking now of an old man who in the earlier days was a great soul winner. Thousands of lost men and women were led into the light by his messages of hope. The hungry who came to his door turned not away unfed. **More than one time he shared the last crumb of bread with a needy man.** The sick looked to him for succor; the faint-hearted for cheer; and the sorrowing for comfort. He had little money, because the people thought souls were hire enough!

The years passed, and the day came when he and his companion of the years sat in the door of a little three-room cottage. No children had been spared to comfort them in their declining days. Hope still lived in their hearts. Surely they would not be forsaken. They had given their lives to others. Now others would steady their steps as they trod the path which grew bright as they neared the perfect day.

But, somehow, the people had forgotten! Years ago, a young farmer had been saved by the gospel which the faithful man of God preached. He has hundreds of acres of land in cultivation, **but he had forgotten the man who pointed him to the Saviour of the world!** One day, another young man whose sins crushed him with the weight of a world, felt the burden lifted from his soul as, in a quiet hour, the preacher led him to Jesus Who gave rest. He became a great business man, **too busy to concern himself about wornout preachers.** The two could wait no longer--and the gentle modesty and pride must be put aside, and an appeal sent to the denomination. They waited, and

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the answer came. **With it came disappointment. Somehow, nearly everybody else had forgotten them and their comrades, who had thought not of themselves but of others.** Nobody on earth ever knew how, in the lonely hours, they suffered, yet rejoiced, as their abode with them One Whose grace alone could sustain. This is the experience, **not of one man, but of many**, for whose support and comfort in their last days on earth, Texas Baptists, numbering more than 300,000, with millions of dollars entrusted to them by the Giver of all good gifts, gave last year less than \$7,500. Will we do better this year? **While putting money into institutions, put some of it into men.**

Send a good offering to Secretary McConnell for aged and disabled ministers.

The above is an editorial written for The Texas Baptist Standard, by the great preacher-editor, Dr. J. B. Gambrell, issue of July 2, 1914. I wish the reader would now turn back, and read it again--reading "Kentucky", where he wrote "Texas". The whole may easily be duplicated here in our beloved Kentucky.

For the last three months--April, May, and June--the receipts for **our** aged and dependent ministers has fallen far short of what has been necessary to send them their checks. There are now forty three aged ministers and widows of ministers depending on us--on you, brethren and sisters--for their support.

Please send all funds for this work to the undersigned, and tell from what church and association it comes. You shall be receipted at the very earliest convenience.

J. D. MADDOX, Cor. Sec.,

Owensboro, Ky.