

ARTICLE V.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

[by the Rev. John M. Lowrie]

“The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. Presented to the General Assembly in May, 1852.

The Presbyterian Church in this land has ever possessed a missionary spirit. Though it is now but fifteen years since she formally entered upon the work, in her ecclesiastical capacity, yet it can be seen, by referring to the very first records of the General Assembly, in 1789, that the duty of missionary operations was recognised and enjoined upon the Synods.* Older proof in the records will show, that though in early days they were obliged to appeal to the liberality of foreign Christians, for the support of weak congregations here; yet, even in their poverty, they were not unmindful of their Indian neighbors, and annual collections were taken up, for missionary purposes, before the Revolutionary war.† But, as a Church, we have but recently girded on the harness. And now, we think that, as by the authority of our own judicatories, and through an agency of our appointment, and under our control, the Presbyterian Church is ecclesiastically Missionary, it may be well for us sometimes to consider the advantages she possesses to encourage her in the work,

* Minutes of Gen. Ass’y., vol. 1, pp. 10, 11.

† Records Synods, N. Y. and Phil., pp., 56, 269, 370, &c.

and to lead us to hope for her eminent success in it. We have no wish to disparage, much less to hinder, the efforts of other Christian bodies, in the same great work. The field is large enough for us and them. The harvest is plenteous; and counting all the laborers from every body of evangelical Christians, and making the largest estimate of their practical efficiency, the numbers are few. We think facts will abundantly prove that our spirit has never been exclusive. From the very first attempt at ecclesiastical organization in the Presbyterian Church, for missionary operations, the design of interfering with the largest usefulness of all our co-workers has been distinctly disavowed. "In reference to the Am. Bd. of Com. for For. Miss," say the Directors of the West. For. Miss. Soc., in 1833, "we hope to cherish no selfish principle, and we shall appeal to no sectarian feeling. We contemplate its past achievements, and its present prosperity with unmingled pleasure. Our only strife will be to copy its every good example, and try not to be outdone by it in kind affection and Christian magnanimity."* In our view, a warm attachment to Presbyterian institutions does no more imply hostility to other churches, than an enthusiastic admiration to our own country implies a hatred to other lands. Surely a man can be a patriot, and not thereby an enemy to all the world beside. And just as truly may we rejoice if Christ is preached by other lips to perishing men, and yet claim that the church to which we belong has peculiar inducements to lead her to missionary labor, as she has peculiar advantages in her organized capacity for its rapid and successful prosecution. We believe that in no better way can Christians in general learn to appreciate in each the Christian character, than when actuated by one spirit to labor for the perishing; we believe that here are good and proper opportunities to provoke to love and to good works, as we also think that whatever system of Christian experience, theological doctrine and ecclesiastical government, is nearest to the scriptural standard, will be found best adapted—because divinely adapted—to promote the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The missionary work will do more to knit together all the

* For. Miss. Chronicle, vol. 1, p. 6.

true followers of Christ, than any other instrumentality; and if, even in form, as well as in substance, the Church becomes one, it will be by uniting upon those principles which actual experience has proved most directly adapted to promote the spread of the gospel.

There are especially three things in the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church, which, in our view, are eminently favorable to her zeal, and energy, and success in the work of evangelizing the heathen.

First, the peculiar type of personal religious experience generated by Calvinistic teachings, naturally tends to give its subjects an interest in the missionary work.

In the purest churches there ever have been, and perhaps, while the church is militant, there ever will be, a large body of professed Christians, whose piety is so feebly exhibited, that, both themselves and others are unable clearly to decide as to its characteristics, or even its existence. We look not to such persons in any ecclesiastical connection for definite and instructive proof of what religion is, or of the Spirit's work upon the soul. What we urge is this: that if, under the teachings of the doctrines of Calvinism, and the efficacy of the Spirit through these teachings, a work of grace is wrought upon an intelligent and thoughtful mind, no more effectual preparation can be made for enlisting the energies of that mind on behalf of the perishing heathen. The principles necessarily impressed upon this man at his own conversion; his clear view of his own necessities and unworthiness; his reliance upon the grace of God, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, and the preciousness of the blood of Christ; his reception of a new spirit, as a renewed child of God; his grateful surrender of himself, as bought with a price, and his joyful recognition of the excellence and blessedness of his new-found privileges—all tend to awaken his compassion for the perishing, to convince him that they are no further from hope than he himself was as an alien from God, and to urge him from motives of duty, gratitude, and compassion, to teach others also the way of salvation. Let the believer in Christ, who can trace the workings of God's Spirit in his own soul, begin with his first hour of trouble, and follow on the dark pathway, which was succeeded by the day-star of eternal hope, and

the, bright beaming of the Sun of Righteousness upon his sinful soul. If he has been taught by the truth, as we hold it, then indeed his first lesson has been one of deep depravity and sinfulness before God. A distinguishing feature of Calvinistic doctrine refers to the entire sinfulness and hopelessness of man; and our teachings upon this subject are thoroughly understood only by an experimental acquaintance with them. Let a man know that he is himself in the horrible pit, and the miry clay; let him feel in his own case that every effort seems but to engulf him the deeper, and the more hopelessly beyond human relief; let him recognise the stirrings of depravity, working all manner of concupiscence against the law of God; let him see yet, that that law, in its entire character and in every requirement, is holy, just, and good; that he is unreasonably wicked, and that though so helpless he is justly condemned; let him be driven from every other refuge—be convinced of God's complete rectitude in his condemnation—and led to wonder how mercy can be exercised towards such a wretch as he; let him kneel at the throne of grace only through that despair of every other helper, which makes this his only refuge; in this dark extremity, let him be led by the Spirit to Christ; let him feel as after such leadings he must feel, that by grace he is saved; let him have this feeling renewed in subsequent days, by repeated experience of his own unworthiness and helplessness, and liability to error, and by repeated recognitions of the grace and efficacy of the Spirit and blood of Christ; and we affirm that in every step of such progress in the Christian life, there is hope for the heathen, and there are practical incentives to every believer, to send them the truths which he has found so precious. If the Christian has had a view of the plagues of his own heart, can he believe that any wretched Pagan is more deeply engulfed than he was in personal ill desert, or more hopelessly beyond the power and grace of Christ? If he has by faith looked into the eternal world; if its terrors and its joys have deeply affected his heart, may he not judge that a knowledge of that eternity, and of the way of escape from its perdition, is as important to these immortal souls as to himself? If he has been led to utter despair of human aid, and to feel that the power is of God alone,

what better preparation could be given for entering upon a work where the earthly discouragements are so numerous, and where is so great need of relying upon Divine assistance? If, finally, his is a new spirit, even the spirit of Christ, what shall we look for, as essential to the spirit of the Master, if we may not expect compassion for the perishing?

Let any, man examine the, essential features of the work of conversion, and he will, find that this great change involves all that is necessary for urging forward the great work of missions. We believe this is so the more clearly, when we fully discern the influences of what are usually termed "the doctrines of grace." We think a little observation will prove that in bodies not Calvinistic, the chief exhibition of the missionary spirit is seen in their members who most nearly approach to our distinctive views. True piety is essentially evangelistic. The new-born soul desires that others may partake with him of the same grace. The restored backslider longs to teach transgressors the way, and to lead sinners to salvation. The doctrines of grace, in promoting a clear and true Christian experience, promote also a missionary spirit.

Secondly, we urge that the Calvinistic doctrines of the Presbyterian Church are peculiarly favorable to her zealous engagement in the missionary work,

It is easy to show that we have all the inducements, arising from the command of our ascending Lord, and from the promises of the Bible, which may influence any other evangelical Christians whose doctrinal views differ from our own. But what we now urge is this: that wherever our views, as Calvinists, differ from the views of other Christians, every item of difference is an inducement, over and above all that we possess in common with them, for our labors in behalf of the perishing. No system more clearly than Calvinism points out the necessities of the heathen; no other links the entire race together in closer bonds, not only of a common origin, but also of a common corruption; derived from a like connection with the same federal head; no other extends over them with the same inflexibility a just and righteous law, known indeed to them only by the teachings of nature, but under its teachings leaving them without excuse; no other magni-

fies more the certainty and the dreadfulness of their perdition without the gospel. Especially do we aver that Calvinism excels all other systems, in its power to encourage every believer who attempts, under the direction of His word, to carry out God's gracious purposes. It is a plain decree of God, revealed as such, that this gospel of the kingdom is to be preached to every nation under heaven. This counsel of the Most High shall certainly stand; it shall further be accomplished through the earnest efforts of the people of Christ; and the man who earnestly and prayerfully goes forth to this work has abundant reason to hope that enlargement and deliverance to God's redeemed ones, shall arise through his instrumentality. The Calvinist who does the work which the providence of God has placed before him, has supports and encouragements in it, which cannot be felt by him who refers not all things to the eternal counsels of God's will, or whose hopes are less dependent upon sovereign and efficacious grace. As no man is taught to be more entire in his dependence on God than the Calvinist, so, if he is consistent with his own principles, there can arise no discouragement in the plain path of duty, which has not an answering support in the gracious dealings and promises of God. There are many trials which may be justly expected in this great cause, both to contributing and praying friends at home, and to the toiling missionary abroad; and it is of the very nature of trial that, in the midst of it, "we walk by faith and not by sight." Faith often, like Abraham on Moriah, discerns the duty and sustains for its painful discharge, but knows not the immediate result. That system of doctrinal teaching which leads us to rely least on the visible and tangible, is best fitted for our support in the delays and difficulties of the missionary work. Let us but consider briefly some of the encouragements of a Calvinistic missionary, as he stands upon heathen ground; and let us take for granted his satisfactory conviction of two truths: that he himself belongs to Christ, and that the Master has placed him at this post of duty. Thus prepared for labor, his doctrinal views are eminently fitted for his support in trial. The troubles which spring directly from the providential hand of God, he knows how to understand, and they are refining to his faith. If his path-

way is shut up by hindrances he did not cause, and which he has no power to remove, he remembers that his sphere of duty is in the church patient as well as militant; and that the suffering and waiting servant is not less acceptable than the active one, and may in the end be not less useful. His feeble health reminds him of his better tabernacle above; the early death of beloved ones assures him that his own crown of victory may be nearly won; and he knows that these things are not contrary to the wisdom of Him who worketh all things after the counsels of His will. From the troubles of human iniquity he has an unchanging refuge. Does discouragement arise from the carelessness and opposition of the heathen around him? Yet he knows that the grosser their ignorance, the more truly are they the objects of his compassion, and the greater is their need of his continued efforts; that sovereign grace may select, and by its efficacious energy may sweetly subdue the most stubborn will; that in every event God's wisdom and rectitude vindicate all His counsels; and that in the discharge of his duty he is a sweet savor to God, even in them that perish. If it is disheartening to say "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought;" it is sustaining, to add, "surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." Is he disheartened that the evidences of grace are feeble in those upon whom he has bestowed his deepest anxieties; or that some, whose promise was fairest, return again to their filthiness? He is yet supported by the faith that only such go out from us as are not of us; and that where a good work has been begun by the Almighty hand, it will certainly be carried on to completion. Do deeper troubles spring up among his co-laborers from a land of Christian privileges; that some of them are weak in faith, or selfish and domineering in spirit, or, that some are led away, by heathen corruptions, to apostacy? Even against these sorrows, he is fortified by his belief in the entire depravity of the human heart; and while deeply grieved and humbled, he cannot be thrown back from his work at these sad exhibitions—for in their grossest forms they do but the more firmly establish the certain truth of his own creed. As no one has a deeper view of sin's intrinsic evil—of its fierce workings in the heart of man; of

its continued hold, even upon the renewed mind; of its deceitful disguises to the soul's delusion; so, no one should be less surprised than a Calvinist at its manifestations in any heart; and, certainly no one knows a surer or more available remedy in the grace of God. Upon his principles grace demands no previous qualifications in its subjects, and his prayers are justly called forth, rather than hindered, by the abounding of iniquity. In a time of deep discouragement, the heart of a missionary cannot dwell with comfort upon any idea foreign to our views as Calvinists. Strike out any thought from this system, and place in its stead an Arminian or a lower view; and you have weakened his support in trials. Substitute the choice of man for the sovereign will of God; substitute sufficient grace for all, for efficacious grace to its chosen subjects; substitute the power of man's will for the efficacy of God's renewing spirit; let it be said that if man uses well the grace he has, he shall receive more, instead of God's calling and justifying, the ungodly; let it be said that though a good work has been begun, it may be stopped to the perdition of even a regenerated soul; and every such declension from the rigor of Calvinism is discouragement and declension from his hopes for the heathen. Are his hearers to choose for themselves the service of God by their own mere will, in the use of grace common to all, and dependent upon their good use of the present for the mercy of the future? Alas! they have already chosen, and are daily more inclined to choose the ways of evil; the common grace to all has led none to the Saviour; and all their use of grace imparted forbids the idea that just improvement should betoken future good. Even the good seed already springing up may be nipped in the bud by untimely frosts; and though angels have rejoiced over repenting heathen, there may yet be malignant triumph in hell, over that same soul's apostacy. Human dependence of every kind, upon ourselves or our fellows, is dangerous; and if Calvinism is peculiar for anything, it is for its reliance upon the will of God. Faith with us lies between the wide extremes of presumption, which claims that it need do nothing, and despair which claims that it can do nothing. Faith teaches us that the will of God is exerted for the salvation of sinners, in perfect consistency with

man's natural and moral constitution, as a rational and voluntary being. But that the grace and efficacy is of Him, gives us a warrant for prayer, makes our dependence entire, just in proportion to the lack of encouragement from every other quarter, even enables us to feel that when human inattention seems insuperable, and when human opposition rages most fiercely, our path to the mercy seat is as open as ever; our motives for prayer are greatest when it is our only refuge; the grace and power of God are not lessened for the accomplishment of his designs, and the final issue shall be good to them that are the called according to his purpose. We cannot but judge that in the peculiar trials of the missionary life, our doctrines are especially precious; that their invigorating spirit is essential to the strength of the cause; and that every element, foreign to sovereign, electing and efficacious grace, is the mingling of miry clay with the purity of gold or the strength of iron.

Not less do these principles apply to support and animate the zeal of every friend at home, whether his sphere of duty be that of official agent to urge on the work of the Church; or of a pastor leading on his flock; or of a private Christian, reading with interest the missionary news, or praying for the world's conversion, or contributing of his substance to the more direct laborers. No system, we are persuaded, brings more closely home the responsibility of the individual, or allows him to be less influenced by the manifest coldness and remissness of others, or forbids more strictly that the feeblest talent should be hidden in the earth, or encourages more largely the most humble desires and efforts.

We pass to the third; that the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church is an important auxiliary in her efforts to evangelize the nations.

It has often been remarked that the charter of the Church makes her a missionary society. The Church of God has existed in all ages; but under the new dispensation, her ministers have derived authority to teach and baptize, and her rulers to govern, chiefly from the Redeemer's last command. But no words can more distinctly recognise the claims of the heathen, even every creature of them, than does this charter of the Church; and

to every spot of ground, and to every soul of man, she is debtor. Let our church judicatories then be organized upon any form ever adopted in the wide varieties of human opinion; and the representatives of the world may appear before the organized tribunal, and in the name of the Master recognised by it, they may sue out their right to receive the gospel at our hands. Every church Session, every Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly, Association, Convention, or bench of Bishops, sitting for the government of the Church of Christ, must necessarily annul its own authority if it refuses to preach the gospel to every creature.

But, while ecclesiastical authority of every form, professing to be based upon the Saviour's ascending command, implies missionary duty upon those that exercise it; and, as we believe implies, that this duty should be carried on in an ecclesiastical capacity; we claim that in a peculiar manner the Presbyterian form of government is of a diffusive spirit, may more easily be established than any other, and is eminently calculated to awaken public interest, whenever it is associated with the preaching of the gospel.

If it is in full consistency with our views of efficacious grace to urge that the views by which the grace influences the minds of men should be adapted, in divine and infinite wisdom, to effect its ends. And thus we claim on behalf of Presbyterianism; a peculiar adaptedness to awaken new thoughts in the minds of the heathen, which will arouse their minds, and, prove in the end revolutionary in moral and perhaps civil affairs. We say nothing of that independence of the civil power, so essential to Calvinism and the Presbyterian polity, and which teaches man the infinite superiority of his spiritual over his temporal interests; nor assert now, what seems highly favorable, that distinct from the support of the State, prelacy cannot long exist without introducing, if not ministerial parity, yet at least the Presbyterianism of lay delegation; which change has invaded the higher courts of the Protestant Episcopal Church—has already caused a division among the Methodists—and has recently renewed the assault in their General Conference. But we say, let the missionaries of a prelatial church establish their congregations upon

heathen soil, surrounded by the forms of absolute authority; and in the government of these churches, the heathen will see nothing different from the rule to which for ages they have been accustomed. The rulers are so by divine right; and the people are simply the governed. But let a Presbyterian church be but organized among them, and a lesson of individual rights and responsibilities is at once taught, whose importance it is hard to overestimate. Every such church is taught that while government is from God, the ruler is of the people's choice. Before the eyes of the heathen there is set the novel and spirit-stirring example of a self-governing republic: the educated missionary admits the feeblest member of his flock to a voice in choosing his spiritual guide and rulers; and in the assemblies of the church a direct influence may be exercised by one who all his previous life has been passively obedient to rulers alike ignorant, rigorous and arbitrary. Such lessons of the superior claims of piety, and of man's rights and responsibilities, cannot be learned in vain.

And if in these instructions Presbyterianism is superior to Prelacy, it is free also from the dangerous tendency of the Independent system towards lawlessness. Our Independent brethren have, equally with us, separation from the State, the parity of the ministry, and the recognized rights and responsibilities of individuals. But they lack that healthful control in government, which is especially needful on the transition of a people long shrouded in ignorance and bondage to the light and liberty of God's people, and which does not cease to be necessary in the most intelligent and best established churches. With us there is the same perfect and simple organization at home and abroad. The congregation of heathen is governed by its own bench of elders; in Presbytery and Synod those elders have their seats, as in this land; there is ever exercised the power of review and control, which operates most healthfully to deter from evil—which, as a preventive of irregularities is invaluable; which, occurring statedly at brief intervals, takes each rising difficulty before it, has time to grow formidable; and which, even in the monstrous growth of crime or heresy, is efficient to vindicate the just rule of the house of God.

For diffusiveness, and for equality of energy wherever

diffused, Presbyterianism is remarkable. Every American knows how easily and peacefully the government of the United States is extended over territory after territory, of our wide domain. It is but the gathering of a people upon a newly settled soil; the application for admission into a voluntary union; and the freedom and privileges of the youngest State, are secured equally with the eldest. Properly speaking, there is no centralization of power; for if necessarily there is a seat of government, yet the executive officers are substantially at the appointment of the entire people, and the legislators are actual residents, by an equal distribution, of all parts of the empire they govern. There is nothing to prevent the government of an entire continent on these principles; it is the self-control of the several parts, and the voluntary union of the free whole. Now, nearly analogous to this republican government, is the government of the Presbyterian church: and the only points where a contrast may be instituted, are in favor of the church. The church has no separate executive or judicial officers seeking personal aggrandizement; no central point of authority. But her diffusiveness is like the march of civilization between our oceans. A single church upon heathen ground is the germ of a Presbytery; a few widely scattered form a Synod; and from their first organization they are perfect, as free from extraneous control, as capable of participating in all the privileges, and as much bound to engage in all the duties of a pious life, as any church in the oldest Christian land. "From the first," says the present Annual Report, p. 73, "the missionary work has been conducted on the enlarged and comprehensive principles which mark the character of the church at home. The same care to obtain an educated ministry, and a well-instructed membership; the same primitive and scriptural form of church government; the same pure and holy doctrines are as faithfully taught in the mission churches, as in the churches at home." There is indeed a need of pecuniary assistance arising from the feebleness of the flocks thus gathered in the wilderness; but even in dispensing this, the church at large reposed a just confidence in the ecclesiastical assemblies whose province it is to take the personal oversight of the ground, and who are best acquainted with its wants. In the expansion

of the Presbyterian church, there is no increase of power to any individual; no lack of oversight to the most distant and obscure of the frontier congregations, save the destitution arising from the scarcity of laborers; no encouragement to the disregard of lawful authority in any quarter; no undue dependence of the several parts upon each other; and no jealousy of superior prosperity in one or another land. The formation of new Synods on the shores of the Indian and Pacific oceans is matter of joy: and should a General Assembly be formed in India or China, should it separate itself from our General Assembly in every respect except for the fraternal intercourse existing now between us and the Scottish Assembly, not the slightest objection would be made, as we believe, to such a step; we would only be glad to see them able to stand without our help, and to carry the gospel to others; not a word of complaint would be made that our power or our unity was injured; no blemishes would attach of ordination in the interchange of our ministers; and we rather look forward anxiously to the glad day when such Assemblies shall exist in every great empire of the world; when the diffusive spirit of Presbyterianism shall overspread the globe with ecclesiastical organizations, distinct as their respective civil governments, and only united in the same bond of faith, or the breathings of the same spirit, and in vital connection with the one supreme and living Head of the universal church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the thoughts we thus express are just; and if, as we confidently believe, they will gain rather than lose in force, the more deeply they are pondered by intelligent minds; then should the Presbyterian church feel more than ever her deep responsibilities, and be encouraged to go forward to her duty. We may rejoice in the ground already gained. The present Annual Report of our Board is a valuable document indeed. But there are some sentences which arrest especial attention. "If the comparatively few members of the church have been permitted to do so much, which might not the whole church do, if all her members were to arise as one man to the Lord's work? p. 73. It is lamentable, that with all our means of efficiency we do so little. "It is a very sad thing to see one-third of our church members with more than half our organized

churches under the care of more than than five hundred pastors and stated, supplies, doing nothing for a whole year for the benighted heathen." p. 72. The table shows 1404 churches, and 67,183 members, as non-contributing; and 1260 churches, and 139,591 members contributing. This seems to take for granted that every member in a contributing church is also a contributor. If we had the means of correcting this error, it might, and all likelihood would appear, that one half the membership of the Presbyterian church do nothing whatever for Foreign Missions. To this matter we direct a few brief closing reflections.

In the first place, upon our system we are at no loss to account for an apathy which we have no wish or power to justify. It arises from the depravity of the heart, which finds ever irksome the duties of faith and spirituality; and which, even in regenerate souls, exerts its power to war against the law of the mind. When we consider that so many in every church are but nominal professors, that others are ignorant of the claims of the heathen, and that the state of piety with yet others is low; we are at no loss to solve the sad problem of our remissness. But this solution is full of grief, and leaves upon us a load of guilt, which we should not lightly bear.

In the next place, the first valuable step towards a better state of things is to present more fully to our people the claims of this great work. It certainly is not within the range of possibility, that the claims of the heathen world have occupied their due share of thought and time in the pulpits of fourteen hundred churches; and that the officers of these churches have offered to raise contributions in them, and yet not one dollar be the result invariably of fourteen hundred efforts. Our experience has sometimes, in a voluntary agency, brought us before some of feeblest churches upon this subject; and we never yet knew a collection utterly fail.

In conclusion, we may here see upon whom comes the special responsibility. If it is the duty of the church, as such, to carry on this work, then the responsibility of seeing that it is done, lies upon the Judicatories. Our higher judicatories have done their part, at least so far that contributions have been made in every Presbytery. But let it be repeated—let those that are measurably delinquent

be quickened to duty by it—and let those entirely delinquent be urged to their duty. “More than half of our organized churches, under the care of more than five hundred ministers of Christ’s gospel have done nothing for a whole year for the benighted heathen.” Perhaps the sessions of any one of these churches would immediately take action, if a church member under their care was known to be immoral. This is right. The accused is under their jurisdiction. Let them vindicate the honor of the Saviour, and the purity of His church; and this, though it may cost them many hours of patient investigation. But the general cause of Christ and his honor suffers in another matter, which all having authority to teach or rule in his house are bound to regard. Reproach is cast upon the benevolence of the church; every member of our Zion, by his religious experience, and his solemn vows, and his views of truth, and the imperative call of, his Lord, is urged to wipe it away; and especially do six hundred millions of men, in all their misery, appear before the bar of every church Session to say, “Your Master bade you take care of us:” and their urgent plea may be taken from the charter of the church itself. “How can you expect as you PREACH THE GOSPEL, that the Redeemer will be WITH YOU, while you virtually strike out the clause, TO EVERY CREATURE, which he inserted between the command and the promise? If the copula is dropped, your charter and its blessings part company.”

And so it is, He that watereth shall be watered.

Brethren, ministers of the gospel, and elders of the church, you are undoing your authority, and marring your usefulness, while this great cause has so small a share of your thoughts. But let every Session do its duty, and while even then we do not suppose that every professed Christian will do his, yet the most truly spiritual in all our churches will awake, there will be something done in every congregation, and as the light increases upon the duty of the church, the discharge of duty will be more general.