

PRESBYTERIAN REUNION:

A MEMORIAL VOLUME.

1837—1871.

*"Ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν· οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς
ἄρτου μετέχομεν.— I CORINTHIANS x. 17.*

NEW YORK:
DE WITT C. LENT & COMPANY,

451 BROOME STREET,

CHICAGO: VAN NORTWICK & SPARKS.

1870.

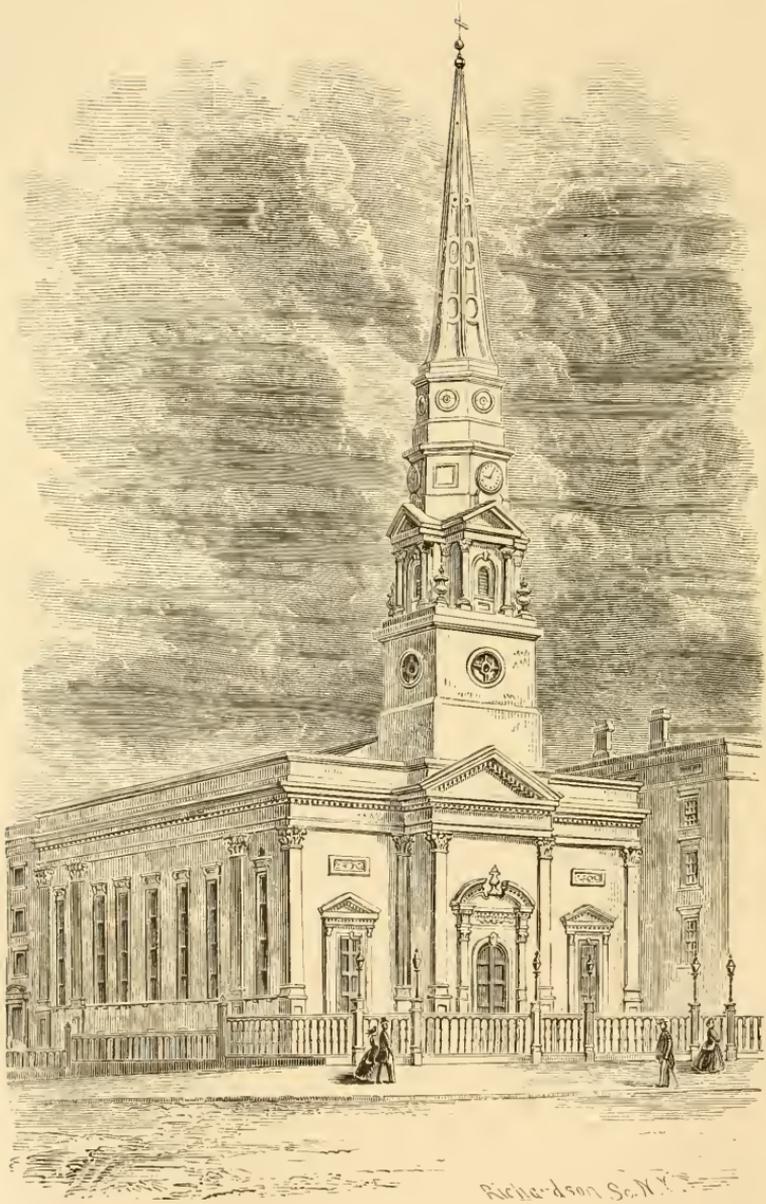
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by

DE WITT C. LENT & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of
New York.

Stereotyped at

THE WOMEN'S PRINTING HOUSE,
Cor. Avenue A and 8th Street,
New York.



BRICK CHURCH, NEW YORK

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE FUTURE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. JOHN HALL, D.D.

Objects of the Reunion. — The Church must hold fast what it has already gained. — Influence of American Cities. — What Church will control the Religious Character of the Country. — Law of Growth for Churches. — Need of Amalgamation. — Congregations misplaced. — A Distinct Territory for Each. — The best Missionary Organization. — Problems of City Missions. — Church Extension. — Disadvantages of a Casual Plan. — Each Church responsible for Evangelizing the Region around it. — Denominational Co-operation. — Function of the Elders. — Theory and Fact. — Stated Supplies. — “My People— “Our Pastor.” — Ministerial Support. — Scotch Sustentation Fund. — The Deacons. — The Church must teach the truth. — “Gospellers.” — Teach the Children. — Sunday-school Teachers and Literature. — Parental Responsibility. — The Shorter Catechism. — Presbyterianism in Great Britain. — Public Services of the Future Church. — Sermons read and spoken. — Agencies of the Presbyterian Church. — Doctrines. — The great Object of Prayer and Labor.

WHEN the English and the Prussians, under Wellington and Blucher, effected a junction on the 18th of June, 1815, on the field of Waterloo, it was not that they might enjoy the parade and pomp of a mighty host, or luxuriate in the gladness which led the old Prussian, after the manner of his country, to embrace and hug the victorious Englishman; but to continue the work in which they had been engaged — to drive a military despotism out of France, and to restore to Europe the blessings of an assured peace.

And when two great sections of the Lord's sacramental host fell into one line in Pittsburg, it was not for the satisfaction of exulting in the sense of greatness, or indulging in mutual gratulations, but for the purpose of

pushing Christian effort with more vigor, of concentrating strength, and bringing the land under the Saviour's peaceful sceptre. The sympathy of numbers is indeed a valuable power, and the joy of enlarging communion on earth a precious fruit of the Spirit. But they are not to be rested in as an end, but employed as means. We are to be more sanguine because we are one; for the Spirit that has put aside the barriers to union, and made us one, may well be counted upon to carry us over other difficulties. If, however, flushed with a sense of strength and success, we rely on visible resources, and yield ourselves up to mere carnal exultation, we shall be certainly visited with God's displeasure, and with deserved humiliation. But if we feel our dependence on Divine aid, give God glory for the great things he has done for us, and address ourselves in a right spirit to the work of a Church of Christ in this land, we shall see enough in ourselves, and in the desolation around us, to emphasize the caution to the angel of the Church at Sardis, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die."—Rev. iii. 2.

The measure of the strength of a machine is the strength of its weakest part. It is prudent for a besieged city to look to its defences where the line is most easily penetrable. And it is wise for a church to make good any position which it is right to hold, preparatory to successful aggressive effort. There is a charm about a new thing to many minds. It is all too common to quit the old spheres and relieve the monotony of labor by seeking fresh fields of exertion. The lines may thus be widely extended without any absolute gain. To cultivate a country is not to rush across it, here burning

a wood, and there making a corduroy road over a swamp. When men steadily, persistently, and on a definite plan, sit down on the land, root out its trees, fence it in, and cultivate it, till its valleys are covered with corn and its hills with cattle, they are really ruling over and subduing it. And on such a course, though less striking to the imagination than the movement that sweeps along like a prairie-fire, ought the Presbyterian Church to enter if she is to win in years to come the Master's commendation, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."— Rev. ii. 19.

The cities of America are permitted to exercise an immense influence. The agricultural districts of every country are slower in movement than the cities. From great cities smaller towns take their cue; from these, again, the villages; and from the villages the purely rural population. What an immense power is radiating from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and many other centres only distinguished from these by their areas of influence being less extended. It ought to be among the first objects of the united Church to strengthen itself in the great cities. Apostolic practice, the later history of the Church, the deductions of common sense, and the peculiar circumstances of America, all point to this. If we be strong in the cities, we shall be strong in the land. If we be feeble where people most do congregate, where mind is most active and vigorous, where thought is soonest and most loudly uttered, we must resign into other and abler hands the work of evangelizing the land. The Church that holds the

great cities will control the religious character of the country.

In some of these, our Church is already strong, relatively. In some she is almost unknown. And in some she must be content to remain unknown. To expect missionary effort to be made from without for setting up Presbyterianism in New England towns, for example, is in the highest degree absurd. There are certain laws of life which must be respected in the growth of churches, as in the growth of any societies composed of human beings, and which you cannot control by any forcing agency with advantage. A congregation "got up" in a place by external zeal is usually a poor, sickly, hot-house plant, drooping under every unfavorable change. "Behold, I am at the point to die," is its frequent cry, "and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" There is no wisdom in forwarding these artificial "erections." But when the people of a locality, looking around, and seeing how well a system works elsewhere, set up among themselves an organization, and maintain it as a thing of their own, there is hope; for there is natural and healthy growth. The plant is racy of the soil. It does not need the nursing demanded by an exotic. It has not to overcome the prejudice with which an intrusive stranger is apt to be regarded. Its existence is its justification. Its progress is an argument for sympathy, and its success is a plea for a second like unto it. And so the work of healthy and useful church extension advances.

But how are our existing possessions to acquire that attractive appearance?

1. In many places there is need for wise amalgama-

tion. Of what use can it be to maintain two feeble churches in a district which has seen its best days, when one would serve all the objects of a church? Union would set one man free for ministerial work elsewhere, and would secure employment and adequate maintenance for the other. That there is a second building is of no real consequence. Buildings and organizations are for men, not men for them. There is no indelibility about the sanctity of a church edifice; when it ceases to be what it was intended, its work is done. No mercantile firm that *could* move would remain in a region from which trade had disappeared simply because they owned a house. And the children of light ought to be no less wise than the children of this world.

2. There has been some waste of power in many of our cities and towns from the misplacing of congregations and mission stations. Sometimes this arose from the ignorance which comes from want of concert and consultation. Sometimes, one fears, there was too much eagerness to push denominational interests to permit dispassionate examination of collateral questions. It would be easy enough to have Presbyteries survey the cities and towns within their bounds, and so far as new churches and mission stations are concerned, distribute their resources to the utmost advantage, so as to secure as near an approach as possible to the territorial system. To give to each congregation that undertakes aggressive work a definite district for which, in Christian honor, it should be held responsible, would be an immense gain. There is, on the present plan, a great discouragement in the apparently unmanageable character of the undefined regions in which evangelistic

organizations labor. A small, defined, and appropriated "plot" would be cultivated with a sense of obligation and a hopefulness of spirit not attained upon the present haphazard method. So congregations only able to maintain themselves should have assigned to them the region immediately around their centre, for the careful cultivation of which they should be considered accountable. Many a congregation is sinking to dependence, when, by the faithful and joint effort of pastor and people, its pews might be filled, its funds replenished, and its life invigorated and prolonged by the evangelization of its surrounding district. The cheapest, most effective, and every way most reliable missionary organization is the congregation, which subsidizes and sanctifies the social instincts, and forms Christian character in and through the Christian fellowship, the want of which is the confessed weakness of ordinary city missions. When the lapsed or careless family has been brought to value religious privileges, and to desire them, the difficulty arises, How are they to be given? The mission is a reclaiming agency. It does not contemplate the cultivation, but only the awakening, of religious life. Its very success becomes its embarrassment. Its subjects are skilfully and patiently conducted upward to the point of seeking fellowship with God's people, and there they are to be abruptly *switched off* to a congregation of which they know nothing, to be scrutinized and — through what elaborate forms they know not — put on probation for the Church privileges. It is not in the earlier stages of Christian feeling that this process can be hopefully entered upon. Even advanced Christians would not

always cheerfully submit to it. Men like to be, or to think themselves, free. The people whom city missionaries approach have their full share of pride, sensitiveness, and independence. They do not like to be "evangelized," labelled, and handed over like a parcel, to a body of Christians which, however valuable and excellent, is a strange body to them.* But a congregation is able to offer a home to each family as it is brought in; the children form social ties; the parents learn to take an interest where they are of some consequence; and as the devout aspirations grow in the minds of parents or children, there are means of satisfying them simply, naturally, and without that violence which not unfrequently throws back an inquirer on his old and careless ways. The adjustment of this matter, and the determination of the means by which mission work can be made to pass over into organizations, like the trees of the field "whose seed is in themselves after their kind," is one of the questions awaiting settlement. The Presbyterian Church ought to be able to deal with it, and a satisfactory and practical plan would be eagerly scanned by other churches with a view to its adoption.†

* So strongly has this difficulty been realized in the New York City Mission, that after much consideration, and in the face of some difficulties of detail, it has been decided to give congregational shape and privileges to the better attended mission stations. The difficulties encountered there would not attend the movements of a single Church.

† In New York, and probably in other cities also, there has grown up a system—if that word can be applied properly to anything so irregular and without concert—of mission churches and schools. It is an obvious advantage that the congregations of such cities should be grouped in one Presbytery, so as to give opportunity for adjusting the orbits of these satellites, and securing by united counsel and joint action that they shall give light where it is most

3. The United Church, having rearranged its Presbyteries, might easily direct Church extension among the self-sustaining districts in such a way that no strength should be wasted, and that the least possible temptation should lie in the way of pastors and people to look with jealousy on their neighbors' prosperity.

The loose and casual plan upon which churches and mission stations are, at present, too much located, has these disadvantages, no one of which may be thought serious, but the conjoined result of which is in the highest degree mischievous :

1. The POOR are allowed to drop out of view of the Church, to fall into carelessness, and if ever won back, which all too often never occurs, it is by whatever Church may "happen" to notice them. Of course it is well that they should be drawn in anywhere, if they learn Christ; but it is a pity that they should for any length of time swell the ranks of the lapsed masses, create necessity for missions outside the Church, and carry about in their bosoms the rankling thought — as we fear many do — that while they were of some consideration the Church cared for them, but so soon as they lost their position, disregarded them. How diligently Satan fosters this feeling, by exaggeration, misrepresentation, and reiteration, is known to all who have ever had to do with the neglectors of ordinances, who were once in better circumstances. As it is now, people are sought out and visited, because they are on the roll of the church or congregation. On the plan we recommend

wanted, and with the least risk of their obstructing the path of other, and in some instances brighter, luminaries. Such an object is adequate reason in itself for having, for the present, large Presbyteries.

they would be reached with Christian care, because they were in the given district which a church had in charge to convert into a "garden inclosed." The loss to the Presbyterian Church among the poor, though probably no greater than in other communities, is yet far too great to be contemplated with indifference. Let us reform in this respect, and earn the benediction which comes on churches no less than on individuals, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor."

2. Less important than this, but yet not to be overlooked, is the facility now afforded to persons so inclined to fall into practical neglect of ordinances. A family takes a residence in a given district. If not prominent enough to be anticipated with some interest, and calculated upon to enter a particular congregation, the members may remain long enough without any approach on the part of Christian people. No one feels responsibility. No one wishes to intrude. No one, with an honest, kindly zeal invites to the sanctuary, and compels a decision one way or another. All are apt to wait to see what the family will do. But the family will do nothing; and by and by, some providence makes explanation necessary, and they may be heard saying, "Where we lived last, we attended church regularly, but since we came here, we knew no one, and we have fallen into neglect." But suppose the congregation charged with the care of a district. Now no apology is needed for calling upon the new family. It is an admitted duty. It is done from felt responsibility. It is the way of the place. If the first call is without result, a second will perhaps succeed, and the hearts that would have been glad of an excuse

for letting God alone, feel that God will not let them alone, and are won to the reverent reception of His truth. And how many, under such a well-worked arrangement, would be found saying, "We love our church, for when we came here it took kindly notice of us, and drew us in, and we never felt as strangers, and God has made it the means of unspeakable good to us."

3. A third bad consequence follows: Districts neglected follow the usual law, and become missionary ground. Each church is surrounded by a belt of ungodliness. It should be reduced by the activities of the church, or rather should never have been allowed to form. Instead of this, it is constantly encroaching on the church, widening itself and reducing the church area. At length there comes a period of Christian activity. "Here are lapsed people, living in heathenism. Shall we feel as Cain did? Are they to perish at our door? Surely not. Let us form a society." And so City Missions, Reformatories, Refuges, Woman's Aid, Helping Hands, and other well-meant expedients, come into being, each with its Secretary, Board, and Directors, first, second, and third, and try to drain this Pontine marsh, which is not only stagnant, but malaria-breeding, and threatening to overrun the church itself. And so the ministers have to be "approached;" the societies have to be sustained, and their rival claims nicely adjusted; and the community has to be interested, and — we write it with no lack of appreciation of the real good in these auxiliary agencies — the churches are teased by the persistency of worthy people, who have a vested interest in the life and prosperity of an organization, the failure

of which they persuade themselves would be the collapse of Christendom. And then comes the long train of Fairs, Bazaars, Concerts, Lotteries, with their gambling, and other abominations, by which the world is humbly entreated, in its worldly way, to help Christ's kingdom, and in which we presume, it laughs at the simplicity of the church, or despises its servility. And in all this the church is punished in the way of her sin. Overtake the wants of the population, forsooth! How did the population get so far ahead that it is now a hopeless race to overtake it? By the church's neglect. Had she done her duty, this "mixed multitude" had not grown up defiant of the societies, which are called in as mercenaries to gain the ground which the church should have conquered and held all along.

It may be said, indeed, that we assume that our church shall occupy all the ground and include all the population. We do not make such an assumption. Let other churches do the same if they think fit, and gather in all in their districts that are in affinity with them. The accumulation of lapsed Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians will make a practically heathen people; and their being cared for in detail by their respective churches will prevent the catastrophe. Nor would it be any calamity if the Presbyterian elder should say to the Methodist class-leader, "I came the other day on a family that would more readily fall into your church than mine; won't you try them?" When the godless find churchmen — we use the word in its true sense — thus work disinterestedly, they will be helped to believe us something better than

members of ambitious corporations. Oh! for more charity and fewer "charities"!

But, it may be said, this process would entail the employment of a large staff of Christian workers. Of course it would require a number. But in the first instance the Presbyterian Church has them to her hand. What are her Elders? A body of "selectmen" to comfort the minister? An honorary and ornamental Committee meant to give the weight of their sanction to the cause, as a list of Presidents gives respectability to a charity ball? No; they are a bench of Bishops, to whom the Holy Ghost has given oversight of a congregation. In theory the office is the glory of our church. In practice, it has been a source of immense strength to her. But she is not deriving from it all the aid she ought to obtain, and the fault is her own. She has not magnified the office that distinguishes her. Other churches have Bishops. So has she. Other churches have Deacons. So has she. But she has Elders, as she professes to believe, on the New Testament plan, and with adaptations and authority peculiar to her. Let the United Church make the whole use of the Eldership that Scripture and reason warrant, and she will find herself possessed of power she has never yet realized. Let ministers preach on the office. Let them teach the people to magnify it. Let them take pains to train Elders, to introduce them to work, to lead the people to expect their visits, admonitions, and Christian offices. Let earnest Elders deal with those who are idle or inefficient,* so as to deepen a sense of responsibility, and send the indolent either out

* In some instances, *Elders' meetings* — separate and distinct — for mutual edification and prayer, have been set up, with great advantage.

into the field, or out of the office. It is a mockery of sacred things, and has all the mischievous effects of such mockery, to go through the solemn pageant of ordaining men to duties they never attempt. Let us here be true to the facts of life, and to the commands of the Master; let us honor Him, and He will honor us.

This waste of power in the Eldership suggests another and similar sphere for reform. Here is a village that expects, like two-thirds of all American villages, to become "quite a place" by and by. Some years ago, a settled pastor did not get on well. There was some trouble about his leaving. The consequence is that the congregation has since been provided for by stated supplies. A minister is engaged from year to year, but not installed as pastor. A conscientious man will try to do spiritual work wherever God is pleased to put him; but it is easy to see how much is wanting to the complete idea of the pastorate in this penny-a-day plan. How does a man stand in the community whom a congregation hires from year to year, but does not sufficiently trust to require his settlement? In some instances, it is true, the minister has declined settlement for reasons of his own, in which case the history and operation of the evil are different, but the evil itself remains. Both minister and congregation are in a position of weakness, relatively to one another, and to the general community. It is good for a minister to be able to say "My people." If there be true worth in him, the words recall responsibility, Christian honor, fidelity — "My people — who appreciated me, called me, asked my settlement over them in the Lord, honor me in the Lord, for whom I watch, pray, live, labor; and among whom,

so far as I know, I am to die and be buried." And so it is good for the people to be able to say "Our pastor." It recalls their own act and choice, their obligation to receive his teaching, their union as a congregation, their relation to him and to one another. "Our pastor, who loves us and whom we love, who belongs to us, to whom we belong, who goes in and out among us, in our joys and sorrows, sharing both, and giving to us, the children, the consolation that cheered our departing parents." This is the feeling that ought to be, and that cannot be in the case of these incomplete connections. "Moderator," said the old man when it was proposed to transfer his pastor to another sphere, and the Presbytery was sitting upon the question, "our minister has been with us thirty years. He has married most of us, baptized our children, and married many of them. He has been at the dying beds and graves of our departed. Moderator, we hoped he would live among us, die among us, and be buried among us, and *break ground for us at the resurrection morn.*"

Quaintly put as this is, it embodies a fine sentiment, the strength and value of which it is impossible to overestimate in a Christian church. It is desirable that the Presbyterian Commonwealth should rid itself of these anomalies, which are at war with her theory, with her organization, and, we humbly think, with her efficiency. A system of rotation, such as our Methodist brethren employ, works well, because it is the accepted plan of operations. But when, in opposition to our Church's idea of the pastoral relation, the average of pastorates is reduced to almost the term of Metho-

dist residence in one locality, as it is said to be in New England; or when, as in the case of these long "stated supplies," years pass without any pastoral relation whatever, nothing but growing weakness, derangement, and depreciation of the ministerial office can result. It is a sore misfortune for the land when her rulers fall into contempt, and their office is despised, for respect for them is a kind of chivalrous self-respect. And it is a terrible loss to a Christian community when her religious leaders of whom the Spirit of the Lord says, "Obey them that have the rule over you," and the high office they occupy, fall below their proper place in the community. To raise the ministry, not in the Anglican, but the Presbyterian and evangelical sense, is to raise the entire Church, and to bless the community.

But this desirable elevation is closely connected with another and very commonplace topic, the material support of the ministry. Attention has need to be called to this point, and in many instances this is all that needs to be done. Many congregations only require to be shown that they are defrauding the laborer of his hire, that the preachers of the gospel should live by the gospel, and that their minister only lives by the gospel and his own or his wife's means, and they hasten to rectify the wrong. But in many cases there is an entirely mistaken idea upon this subject, which needs to be energetically dealt with, and removed, like any other practical error, by solid instruction. The agricultural population is slower in movement than the dwellers in cities. Producing on their own ground much of what they consume, the farmers form no idea of how much it

costs to pay for everything. Receiving the money they use once a year, they are less familiar with it than traders who constantly pass it through their hands, and a sum of five dollars appears much larger to a farmer than it does to a storekeeper of no greater wealth. Then the amount of supplies "sent in" to ministers is tremendously overrated in quantity, and still more in *value to him*. On all these accounts the rural population has special need of enlightenment on this point. Yet it is not with them, but with the larger and richer churches, the reform is to be practically begun. When a subscription is to be raised in the community, we go to the larger givers first, knowing that they will be followed by the less liberal or less competent. Precisely so we believe it must be with the raising of the standard of ministerial income.*

The most obvious method of putting ministers' incomes upon a basis not contemptible is by a systematized employment of the resources of the rich for supplementing the contributions of the poor. The Free Church of Scotland has given prestige to the plan of a common fund, into which all put their contributions,

* With this conviction we cannot regard with any satisfaction the course pursued, no doubt with the best motives, by clergymen declining increased salaries. If they do not require them, many of their brethren do. If they do not need the money, there are a hundred ways of using it for good; and if they are not as capable as the trustees of the church of laying out for God's glory a thousand dollars or so, they are hardly fit to lead a Christian community. It is not common for a rich lawyer or doctor to reduce his fees because he is well off, nor would it serve either the profession or the community. The placing of the ministerial profession upon a different basis *in this respect*, has done much evil, of which we shall have occasion to take subsequent notice.



WILLIAM STRONG.



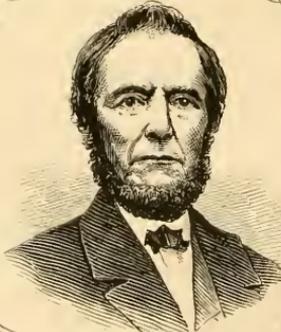
DANIEL HAINES.



WILLIAM E. DODGE.



J. S. FARRAND.



JOHN L. KNIGHT.

and out of which all congregations receive for their ministers an "equal dividend."

But it by no means follows that a movement in Scotland arising out of the strongest feeling naturally evoked by legislative wrong, could be here copied with success, in cold blood. The immense extent of country over which the Presbyterian Church must operate, and possibly what may be called the national feeling, are unfavorable to such a common sustentation fund. But we are already sustaining many of the weaker "causes" through the Board of Domestic Missions, and otherwise. The consolidation of these resources and operations might be made to do the work at the lower end of the scale, while the movement of intelligence and liberality from the higher might meet it, and so produce a church above reproach on the score of justice to ministers: for surely it is not the divine will that the world should be brought to truth, justice, and piety, through a ministry systematically wronged and underpaid.*

For the vigorous prosecution of a work of this kind, we have an order of officers — the Deacons — to whom it is appropriate, and ought to be congenial, work. The

* One of the very strongest arguments on behalf of the national establishment of the British Isles is founded upon the inadequacy of ministers' incomes in America. They can tell there of ministers among us keeping stores, and being driven to still more unprofessional pursuits — almost as much so as Paul's tent-making. They make rather merry over such accounts as they have received of "donation parties;" and they allege that churches so sustained cannot raise and educate in the natural way their own ministers. Even so lately as the last meeting of the Scottish Assembly [Established], Dr. Norman McLeod urged this argument with all his characteristic force and earnestness. American failure in this particular is a strong buttress of Old World state churches.

legislative arrangements of the country regarding tithes take out of the deacons' disposal and give to the trustees what in European churches is supposed to be peculiar to the deacons' court. How much good public service even a few spirited men, conversant with affairs, themselves accustomed to business life, might effect by the agitation and discussion of this question! Let us suppose them to call a State convention; to invite all denominations to send representatives; to compare notes; to ascertain how many ministers — educated for the work at some expense, often at the public expense — had been starved out of it; to compare the usual mode of providing ministerial incomes; to examine their proportion to the incomes of other forms of educated industry; to tabulate and publish the results; and then to set about acting on such suggestions as could not fail to be elicited: suppose other States to follow the example, what an amount of good might be done to the Church and to the country!

For our sober and deliberate opinion is, that on this side is the greatest weakness of the American churches. In zeal, fidelity to the world, energy, and capacity of adaptation to the wants of men, they have no superior. But the arrangements regarding the supply and maintenance of ministers are open to criticism. Of course, we who live in the country understand the allowances that have to be made for its peculiar circumstances, arising from a history like which the world has no other. But others have not the intelligence, perhaps not always the candor, to take these things into account; yet the fact may be fairly weighed, as one of many considerations that should stimulate us to reform.

Our attention has been fixed, so far, upon the means of "strengthening the stakes." But when the Church has put her machinery in the best working order, when the organization is as thorough as it can be made, what is it to accomplish? What work is to be done?

To this question but one answer can be given. The great function of the Church is *to teach the truth*. The Church is a mighty civilizer. She keeps intellect awake. She is a grand reformer. Science flourishes most where her testimony is clearest and best heard. Commerce lives in the security and confidence she begets. Crime is kept mainly outside her territory. But all those incidental and collateral benefits are attained, not when directly aimed at, but as the results of the Church's fidelity to her main duty—the duty of witnessing to the truth. When these objects are aimed at as primary, the consequence is often enough a failure; when the salvation of men is directly aimed at, the minor benefits come in their place as consequences. There is indeed no true social or moral movement in which the Churchman may not take his place. There is no honest human effort in which he may not, if it be otherwise suitable, bear a part; but his main power to do good, his special and distinctive "talent," is setting forth the Christian truth. To use a bad instrument when a good is at hand; to employ an old flint-gun when the newest and best can be had—such a course is, by common consent, foolish either in peace or in war. Why, then, should men armed with that which is "the power of God unto salvation" turn to weaker weapons? Is human ingenuity to succeed where the power of God is ineffectual? Is human speculation to avail

where divine revelation fails? Will good be done by ingenious essays on petty side-issues, if "the cross of Christ" be impotent? He who loves Zion may well pray and labor that the Church of his affection may be ever distinguished by her decided, upright, downright, thorough evangelicalism. Let her ministers be "Gospelers." The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the sharp-cutting instrument with which they are to clear away vices and crimes. "If the iron be blunt," says the wise man, "and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength." And many a strong man is toiling with a blunt axe, when the sharpest possible is within his reach. "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Let the Presbyterian Church of the future be marked above all by this, that her ministers are teachers of the Word, in Sabbath schools, in Bible classes, in the pulpit; let her people be thorough in their knowledge of the Scriptures; let her prayers, her sermons, her literature be rich in scripture truth; and her energies will be little wasted and her time little consumed in the temper-trying discussion of such petty crotchets as have all too often vexed the community.*

* The earlier Protestants were distinguished by their using their Bibles in church. Men have heard of the great English evangelist's amazement when he read his text in a Scottish pulpit, at the rustle of the leaves as the people turned it up in their Bibles. Why have we abandoned this goodly custom of the fathers, both of Scotland and of New England? Why not use our Bibles in church? We need every help to memory in divine things, and it is of some importance to be able to "place" the great sayings of inspiration. Nothing can be more pitiable than the helplessness of many a professing Christian,

We make no apology for adverting at this point to the imperative necessity that exists for securing for our children thorough scriptural instruction in the Sunday schools. It is pleasant to think of the homage done to God's Word by its being read in our common schools; but if the American churches persuade themselves that anything approaching to real scriptural knowledge is thus given to any considerable proportion of our population, we fear it is a mischievous delusion. Thousands have passed through them with no more knowledge of the Word than suffices for a flippant allusion, or a profane reference. The Church must see to it that the Word of her God be taught her young members, or they will be practically ignorant of it. Nor is it at all certain that their attendance on the Sabbath school is an adequate remedy. Many teachers are incompetent *as teachers*; and much of the Sunday-school literature which is superseding the reading of the Bible is worse than useless. It is mischievous. What can be the effect of giving children mere stories with just enough spice of religion to make them "Sunday books," but to drive them to novels? For *novellettes* many of these volumes are, and often poor as such. There is little reading, and no study of Scripture on week-days; and on Sabbath it is supposed to be as it should if the children are engaged with their Sunday-school books; and so they grow to maturity, with only the most superficial ideas of the holy oracles. The years roll on, and they go West, or to Europe, or to social circles at home, where indifference or scepticism reigns, or where some human

when an occasion arises for finding,—say one of the minor prophets. And yet this book is his Bible — the foundation of all his hopes!

“ism” is in the ascendant, and they have no definite knowledge to the contrary, and go with the tide. All this must be considered by the Church, if her children are to be safe.*

And at this point let us not suppress the hope that the catechism of the Church will receive increased attention in the training of the young. If the vows which parents make in the act of dedicating their children to God mean anything, the parents bind themselves to teach their offspring the doctrines of the Christian religion. Do they? Were we to ask thousands of professing Christians, “What doctrines of the Christian religion have you taught your children?” we should get no satisfactory answer. If our young people were left to learn arithmetic and grammar in the haphazard way in which they are left to learn these doctrines, these unambitious attainments would be much rarer than they are. No wonder that a speculation cannot be propounded among us so silly that it shall not find followers. Multitudes, and that where the population is the least affected by the tide of emigration, have no anchor in definite religious knowledge, and are consequently blown about by every wind. True, it is easy to make flippant statements about the difficulty of learning our catechism, and its obscurity to the young mind. The young mind finds the multiplication-table hard; learns

* It will not, I trust, be thought improper to refer here to the fact that the Scotch-Irish form so large and so reliable a portion of many a congregation, and that it is because they have been so grounded in the truths of the Word, that when they settle, instead of consulting mere convenience, they either find out or they form a congregation where they can have the same old, definite truths. There are, of course, many sad exceptions, but such is the general course; and such is its explanation.

it as a mere matter of memory, and finds the use of it afterwards. It is so with much of the education of every one of us. Common sense, observation, and fidelity to our vows all combine to urge upon parents the right and conscientious use of a help so valuable in giving the young members of the Church a competent knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian religion.*

In confirmation of the views here presented, and with general reference to the fitness of Presbyterianism to instruct and, if we may so say, unify a people, let the reader give a moment's thought to Scotland. Small as a country, and one half of it moor; long harassed by wars, intestine and foreign; in constant jeopardy from the ambition of England, and compelled again and again to buy her freedom with blood, what a power she has been in religion, in philosophy, in commerce, in politics, and in war! How much she has moulded human thought, and influenced human action! Her Church has again and again been violently agitated, and many a secession has taken place in her borders. But her seceders carry with them her Confession of Faith, her catechism, her forms of government and of worship, without the slightest change. The overwhelming mass of her people are Presbyterians. Look at England, which has also a Church, from which an enormous proportion of the

* It has been shrewdly observed that the method of baptism in the English Establishment — the placing of the responsibility of training upon persons who became sponsors as a mere act of social courtesy, and who mean nothing — has done much to send people into the ranks of the Baptists. It is matter for congratulation that there was such an excellent body to receive them; for the rough sense of mankind will always ask the value of infant baptism, detached from parental teaching. “Go ye, therefore, *and teach* all nations, baptizing them.”

population, nearly a half, have seceded. But when they have gone out they have uniformly left behind them bishop, prayer-book, and catechism, and adopted or set up something entirely without all these — often conspicuously opposed to them. English seceders get away as far as they can from their former system; Scottish seceders, without exception, have gone out avowedly and actually to obtain a purer Presbyterianism. We adduce this notable historical comparison, not with regard to the relative goodness of either system, but as proof that a Presbyterian Church, rightly worked, gives stability, steadfastness, and a healthy, safe, conservative bias to a people. It is therefore, we humbly venture to think, well adapted to elevate a country like ours, — a country whose population is so various in training, mental habits, and tendencies, and in which change is all too readily presumed to be improvement.

For another feature of the Scottish population deserves our notice in this connection. Though repeated schisms have weakened the “Kirk” established in the country, the population is exceptionally homogeneous in religious thinking. Not only is Arianism, for example, unknown, but even denominations elsewhere strong, such as Congregationalism and Methodism, have hardly found materials with which to build. Whether this is an advantage or not, may be a matter of divergent view. The question is not material to our object. The point we emphasize is, that Presbyterianism has held and united the whole people. It has retained the strongest hold on the popular mind, as evidenced by the influence of its courts. The *Times* newspaper, though conspicuously unfriendly to Scotland, in a review of the last General

Assemblies and the U. P. Synod, describes them as the most influential ecclesiastical assemblies in the British empire, compared with which the meetings of the Congregational Union and Convocation are feeble. These courts of review exercise real power. They decide cases, legislate upon questions that have interested kirk-sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and so have reached the entire thoughtful mind of the country. The effect of such an agency here ought to be the same as it has been there—to bind the people together in conviction and sympathy; to maintain the recollection of a real and spiritual authority in the world; to keep alive in men's minds the feeling that there is a kingdom of Jesus Christ to which and through which he speaks on earth; and so to give to men in a true and evangelical way what the Church of Rome offers in corrupt and unscriptural fashion, but yet by presenting which, and so satisfying a craving of the human spirit, she commends herself to mankind, and maintains her position.

In order to realize this high object, and become a yet greater power for good in the country, we doubt not the Church of the future will seek in a higher degree to popularize her services. And this, we apprehend, will be done, not so much by the adoption of new, as by the resumption of former methods. Take, for example, the subject of singing in divine service. In many churches this noble function of the Church has been relegated to a few persons, and the appearance a congregation presents to an observant heathen would be that of a body of people in a large building, at one end of which, on an eminence above the people, a man does all the praying

and talking, and at the other end of which, three or four others, at a greater elevation, do all the praising! This plan is bad enough in city churches, but when it is rudely mimicked in small villages, as it has been seen, it is intolerable. It recalls Conybeare's description of the state of matters in many English churches, where a set of the worst reprobates in the parish bawl out "the Hanthem," or shriek out the Psalms, out of which the poetry has been previously extracted by Tate & Brady. Musical faculty and moral worth do not, unhappily, always go together; and where the "voices" in the singers' gallery disport themselves in the intervals of their performance in a way more like their week-day than their Sabbath spheres, the farce is turned into an abomination. We shall live, let us hope, to see this thing banished from evangelical churches. All the history of Protestantism is against it. Luther led Germany to worship in spirit and in truth in no small degree through the popular hymn-singing. Knox had the Scottish people taught to praise God so thoroughly, that a mass-meeting could sing a psalm through without books, and in the "parts" of the melody. The Wesleys, the power and value of whose work can hardly be overrated, sung Methodism into the cots and hearts of the most inaccessible of the English population. The spectacle of a church claiming to win the masses, and taking from them the one portion of public worship in which they can all unite, would be, if not so saddening, supremely ridiculous.

It is idle to say that certain people get music of the highest order elsewhere, and if they cannot have it in

the church they will not come. The patrons of the opera and theatre have never been of so much real value in the Church as to be worth consulting, and least of all should devout and serious worshippers be wronged and driven away, for the æsthetic satisfaction of casual and patronizing visitors to the services. Let Israel worship God as He has appointed, and let the "mixed multitude" follow, or keep away. But the army of the Lord is not to change its plans for the idle pleasure of the camp-followers. And it is vain to think of winning the world by mere music. What is the value to any church of such acquisitions? The week-day entertainments supply the genuine article, and without making the church an actual theatre, you cannot compete with them.

Whether a less formal style of pulpit address will be adopted in the future, is an open question. There always will be in the Church probably—and to the Church's advantage—a number of men who will read sermons, which by their very nature almost require to be read. But possibly the power of the ministers, as a whole, would be increased by their *speaking* instead of *reading* their discourses. We have to get rid of the phrase "*extempore* preaching." There never was continuous good *extempore* preaching. Any preaching, to be good, must be carefully prepared, in the order of thought, links of argument, substance of illustration, and in some parts in the phraseology. It is not unreasonable to think that the minister can remember what he expects his people to remember. And it is hard to expect the audience to carry away definite thought which an educated man cannot put into intelligible lan-

guage and speak to them. At the same time, it must not be forgotten, that no rule can be laid down that will apply to all cases; that men will always do their work according to their aptitudes and tastes; and that the great power that is wanted is not so much that of free utterance or finished reading, as the power of the Holy Ghost. When we recollect that Jonathan Edwards read closely those sermons through which so noted a revival was produced, we are interrupted in our generalizations. God "divideth to every man severally as He will."

That the organization of the Church is adapted to the institutions of our country, and that it can work harmoniously with them, is a truth so obvious as to require only statement. Again and again there has been collision in Great Britain and on the Continent between the civil government and the churches. We see no likelihood of such conflict here. A free church works without obstruction in a free state; and the intelligence, constancy, and fidelity to principle, which the Church inculcates and fosters, constitute the best guarantee for the stability and security of a people's government. No man can possibly forecast the future, but it is not too much to hope that, with the growing and consolidating Republic, there will also advance and prosper a Presbyterian Church, whose influence shall bind together and bless these United States.

For one can see no reason to anticipate any material changes in the forms or methods of our Church. Our brethren of other denominations, as it seems to us, find it wise and proper to adopt methods — to say the

least — very like ours, when they wish to extend their church operations. The best and most evangelical Episcopal missionary society has as little to do with the bishops as it can. The “Union” of our valued Congregational brethren in England, or here, looks to us — and we regard it only with kindly interest — like “feeling after” our method of concerted action. So, when times of revival have come, the free worship for which we have always contended becomes natural to many who declined it before, and men pray as the Spirit gives them utterance. No amount of religious earnestness, so far as we can see, will render our machinery useless, or our forms of worship obsolete. The current of spiritual life cannot become so deep that our system shall have no channel for it. Let millennial knowledge and peace come in, and the simple forms of our Church will well avail for the expression and culture of religious feeling. When “the people shall be all righteous,” they can be safely trusted to “look out among them” men of good report for places in the Church. When mutual love is fervent, free men can meet and confer without collision of temper, or violation of the unity of the Spirit. The supremacy of God’s Word, the Headship of Christ over His Church and people, the brotherhood and parity of His ministers, and His constant presence with His Church by the Holy Ghost, who energizes her effort and makes effectual the means of grace — these doctrines, for which the Presbyterian Church has ever been a witness, will not dwindle into insignificance in that coming and glorious time, when “the mountain of the Lord’s house

shall be established in the top of the mountains, and when all nations shall flow unto it" — a period of glory and blessedness into which, we believe, will extend the future of the Presbyterian Church, and a period for the speedy approach of which it is her duty and her honor to pray and labor.