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ARTICLE I.

PRAYER CONSISTENT WITH THE UNIFORM OPER-
ATION OF NATURAL LAW.

Since the occurrence of the disasters, which, in recent years, have befallen us as a people, there are not a few who have been tempted to scepticism in regard to the salutary offices which the Scriptures ascribe to prayer. Many earnest and united petitions have apparently failed to meet a favorable response, and to produce any results for good. Confident expectations, which appeared to have divine guarantees of fulfilment, have been blasted. Cherished hopes, which were founded on what seemed to be the promises of God, have been bitterly disappointed. In place of blessing, we have woe; and instead of emerging into the anticipated light of morning, we are like men who walk in the valley of the shadow of death. The pleadings of prayer, so far from having been converted into shouts of praise, have deepened into funereal lamentations, and given way to the wailings of despair. In this state of affairs, the temptation with certain minds has been a strong one, to refer the whole course of events

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2. It is not possible that any human imposture could exist, and gain such universal credence among the most cultivated classes for forty centuries.

Next, internal:

1. The purity of Bible ethics.
2. The importance of the subjects treated, and the universal applicability of doctrine, precept, and promise, to all the conditions of all men.

Finally, the appeal to individual consciousness, the *argumentum ad hominem*. And although, in contests with unbelievers, this form of demonstration would count for nothing, yet it is far more potent than the best logic of the schools, when addressed to the Christian.

It may be said that these hints, vague as they are, are trite and commonplace, and that no new form of proof has been presented. But in this very fact lies another argument. Nothing that God does can be improved or amplified by human effort. His announcements are complete and final. His truth is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.

ARTICLE III.

SOME THOUGHTS AND SOME FACTS CONCERNING DOMESTIC MISSIONS IN OUR PRESBYTERIES.

The Reformed, or Presbyterian, system of Church government, it is alleged by some, is weaker and less efficient than Prelacy. One of the illustrations which may be employed in making good this statement, is this: Each session can very well watch over the interests of its own immediate parish, and so all the churches of a whole Presbytery enjoy faithful and diligent care, and supervision. But there are waste places in the bounds of every Presbytery which no particular church session claims or can cultivate. These, of course, it is for the Presbytery to look after; and yet the Presbytery cannot give any due degree of attention to them. The body meets ordinarily but twice a year, and it can-

not ordinarily meet oftener. Its other business necessarily occupies all its attention during these semi-annual meetings. The consequence is that those waste places, where churches might be gathered, must needs be neglected under such a system. The system is inherently weak and inefficient; a central power which is always in active operation is manifestly requisite. Let there be one man to rule over the whole Diocese; to take care for all its destitute portions; to seek out new stations for missionary preaching, and cause them to be efficiently occupied; to pass through, and overlook, and take care of, all the field.

Now, human wisdom has frequently approved, but divine wisdom condemns, this one-man-power in the Church. We find in the Scriptures, which are the sole, and also the sufficient, rule of faith and practice, that in all the apostolic churches there was a plurality of elders ruling and governing; and also, that whenever the business of the Church required, the apostles and elders would come together to consider of the matter, and to act according to their deliberate counsel. Inspired, these apostles, severally, were to write the Scriptures of the New Testament. Extraordinary powers they undoubtedly wielded as the first and the inspired organisers of the Christian Church; as indeed every modern evangelist also must carry with him extraordinary powers into "the regions beyond." But, nevertheless, we find them in Jerusalem meeting in council with ordinary office-bearers, and determining every thing, not severally, but jointly; not as being individually inspired, but collectively authorised to settle the order of the Church.

The system revealed in the New Testament for the government of the Church is the representative system—a government by chosen rulers—the very same which prevailed also in the Jewish Church from the beginning. Our Form of Government says, that it is agreeable to Scripture that the Church be governed by *assemblies* of rulers. (Chap. viii. 1.) Calvin insists (Inst. Book IV., Ch. xi., Sec. 1,) that the nature of church jurisdiction at the beginning, was the authority of spiritual tribunals to inspect morals and hold the keys of discipline; and he describes these tribunals as composed of two kinds of elders—

the teaching and the ruling. He adds, that preaching is "not so much power as ministry." He insists (Sections 5 and 6) that jurisdiction "did not belong to an individual who could exercise it as he pleased, but belonged to the consistory of elders." "The common and usual method of exercising this jurisdiction was by the council of presbyters, of whom, as I said, there were two classes." Hence the famous distinction of *several and joint* power which Andrew Melville in the Second Book of Discipline employs. As the celebrated Gillespie expresses it, speaking of the ordinary and settled state of the Church, and not, of course, of her aggressive operations in the outside field, (see his *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, Chap. ii.,) "We boldly maintain, that there is no part of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the power of one man, but of many met together in the name of Christ." Teaching or preaching is a several power, committed to individual ministers who are responsible, severally, to the Church and to the Lord, for the manner in which they discharge this highest of all spiritual functions; so that ministers of the word are immeasurably superior as such to all other church officers. And accordingly, they are to be held responsible always, most of all, for every existing evil or imperfection amongst us, since it is theirs to expound the word and apply it to the revival and edification and progress of the Church. But, on the other hand, ruling is a joint power, committed to courts of ruling elders, in which ministers take their seats by virtue of their being also rulers, and where all are equal as rulers. There were elders or presbyters ordained by the apostles over every church and in every city, so that parochial Presbyteries existed from the beginning. From an early period there must also have existed classical Presbyteries.

A very noteworthy fact it is also, that these assemblies* of

*The Free Church of Scotland in its *Act and Declaration*, May 31, 1851, made one of the only two "peculiar and essential features" of Presbyterianism to be "the government of the Church by Presbyters alone." The other feature was "the headship of Christ, and his word our only rule." The former is indeed the feature which gives us our present distinctive name—our Church is the *Presbyterian*, because governed by *Presbyters*.

presbyters or ruling elders should constitute the central and most important bulwark of the Church polity revealed in the Scriptures against Prelacy; which may justly be styled a semi-Popery. Separate entirely from the people a man whom you shall call by that popish misnomer—"a clergyman;" commit your spiritual affairs to him alone; conceive of him as discharging in any sense whatever, different from that which shall apply to all believers, the priestly function; commit to him and his class the power to rule the church; and you shall have taken one step, and that a long step, towards a prelatie order. It is quite easy to trace the history of Popery, which sprang directly out of Prelacy, of which the manifest root was clerical ambition. But one of the influences of this spirit was to cause ruling elders and deacons, too, to aspire all to be teachers, whilst the teachers aspired each to be the greatest. Thus the ruling elder early vanishes quite out of sight in Church history, except as a master-hand like Calvin's can trace him in the order of canons of the middle ages. "The institution," says Calvin, (Book IV., Ch. xi., Sec. 6,) "gradually degenerated from its primitive form, so that in the time of Ambrose, the clergy alone had cognisance of ecclesiastical causes." Contrary to what was right and lawful, the bishop, Calvin says, had "appropriated to himself" what was given to the church, that is, the consistory, "just as if the consul had expelled the Senate and usurped the whole empire." For, he continues, as he is superior in rank to others, so is there more authority in the consistory itself than "in one man." And he proceeds to denounce as a gross iniquity "the transfer by one man to himself" of a power that was designed to be "common." Then a succeeding step was, that bishops "disdaining the jurisdiction as a thing unworthy of their care, devolved it on others," that is, on their creatures. (See also Chap. v., Sec. 10.) Thus church power passes entirely into the hands of "clergymen." And then, by another curious perversion, it happens that the first and chiefest of these "clergymen" is transformed into a ruling elder—an exaggerated one indeed, governing, not jointly, but severally, not one church, but many—for Prelacy confers upon its bishops the rule and government of a

whole diocese of churches, ministers, members and all. We submit that, considering the origin and the results of Prelacy in the Church of Christ, Calvin is guilty of no extravagance when he speaks of its "pestiferous nature." (Chap. xi., Sec. 8.) But so long as church power is in assemblies, and these composed of two kinds of ruling elders—one of them kept free from all worldly cares, and avocations; and the other conversant daily with all the affairs of busy life, men of the people—so long, there is no danger of a priestly caste usurping the control of the Church, and one main inlet of Prelacy is closed. It ought not, therefore, to be supposed that our system demands simply the assertion of the parity of all ministers of the word, for that is but half the truth as against Prelacy; but the true Presbyterian position is the parity of all presbyters as rulers. It is conceivable that there might possibly be contrived by the Evil One a scheme of ranks and orders amongst our *ministers*, without absolutely overturning Presbyterian Church government; for the ruling power belongs not to ministers as such. But it is the denial of the parity of all presbyters, which is the mortal blow to the system of Presbytery. The stronghold, which must be held at all hazards: the central and the chief bulwark is the parity of all presbyters.

But the objection to Presbyterianism that it is weak and inefficient is specious and without any foundation. Any and all its courts can act by commission, and so perpetuate their own active existence. A commission, as any good English dictionary will show, differs from a committee, in that the latter is appointed to examine and report; but the former can inquire into and conclude. It has power conferred upon it to act, and therefore, amongst us, it is made to consist of, at the least, a quorum of the body, and is in fact the body itself. It is in this very way the Presbytery is able to look after its own waste places; and, perhaps, there is hardly a Presbytery in one Church which is not attending to its own domestic missionary interests by means of such a commission. Many of our Presbyteries also employ an evangelist. Sometimes he is connected directly with the committee, which we have described as a commission, and is either a member of it, or its chairman and executive officer. Sometimes

again he has no direct share in its operations, but is employed by them, or under their direction in simply preaching to vacant churches and missionary stations.

This brings us to a question which appears to us both timely and important: What is the true idea of our Presbyterian evangelists' office and sphere?

The Rev. GEORGE COOPER GREGG, who was taken from amongst us in the vigor of his manhood and the noon-tide of his usefulness, published some eleven years ago in this journal a very admirable article on *The True Theory of the Conduct and Management of our Domestic Missions*. He made the following points, which he sustained with convincing force:

1. That is the duty of each Presbytery to take charge of the territory embraced within its bounds.

2. To search out the waste places within its territory, ascertain favorable locations for mission stations, cherish feeble churches by pecuniary aid, and disburse funds raised for this purpose.

3. To employ one or more missionaries to visit vacant churches and mission stations, and minister the word and receive their contributions for benevolence.

4. To attend to the work of church extension as a coördinate branch of Domestic Missions.

5. To correspond with licentiates and ministers without charge, and bring them in contact with vacant churches and mission stations.

So much for the Presbytery. At the same time he insisted on "a central agency employed only in maintaining a pecuniary equilibrium," receiving the contributions of the strong, and distributing them according to the necessities of the weak. Thus his scheme answers perfectly to that upon which our Church is operating. We have reason, indeed, to rejoice in our having been delivered from the old Board, with its cumbrous and inefficient and really irresponsible membership of sixty ministers and thirty-six laymen, its absolute control over missionaries to the damaging of Presbyterian independence, and its interruption

of the direct connexion of the Church with her own work. That Board had power unrestricted by the powers or rights of any inferior court. The Presbyteries were mere advisory committees of that Board. They were its "*auxiliaries.*" It constituted a new kind of church court. The real power of it lay in its wheel within the wheel: its executive committee, which it appointed and which reported to it, and then it reported to the Assembly. But at the centre of this central wheel stood the Secretary of the Board, between whom and each one of several hundred missionaries there intervened no other power; whose bread depended largely on his favor; who constituted an army of ministers disposed and arranged through all the field according to his pleasure. Here, indeed, there was a mighty one-man power! Here was, in fact, a prelate of the very widest and mightiest influence and authority! This anti-Presbyterian arrangement (supposing Calvin, and Melville, and Gillespie, to know what is Presbyterian,) still prevails in the great "Presbyterian Church of the United States of America," now neither Old School nor New School, *especially* not now Old School. We have reason to rejoice that we have got rid of all this machinery, and that the whole direction and control of our missionaries in the domestic field is with the Presbyteries, where it ought to be; while our simple central committee of eleven members is purely executive in its functions, disbursing among the Presbyteries, through their own committees or commissions, the common funds.

Mr. Gregg said that to carry into execution this scheme of Domestic Missions, "Presbytery must have two agents—a Committee on Domestic Missions, and a Treasurer." Evidently he contemplated this Committee as charged by Presbytery with all the powers needful to carry on its work. The Committee was to be the Presbytery—in other words, it was the Presbytery's commission to inquire and act. They were to search out the waste places, and the mission stations; to cherish feeble churches, and to employ missionaries for preaching. But the Committee of Domestic Missions in that Presbytery had enjoyed the services of the Rev. J. C. Coit, of Cheraw, as its chairman—a man of

extraordinary energy and enterprise, and of first-rate executive abilities. Mr. Gregg, who had been Mr. Coit's colleague in the Committee, succeeded him in the post of chairman. Those were halcyon days in Harmony Presbytery. Coit and Gregg were both extraordinary men, and accomplished great things in connexion with the missionary committee, though in charge of congregations of their own. The Presbytery was felt through all its bounds, stimulating, encouraging, cheering, nourishing little feeble flocks of Presbyterians into strength and vigor; and causing mission stations to grow first into mission churches, and then into self-sustaining ones. With a few hundred dollars given from the Presbytery's treasury, they could draw forth from those whom they aided, all which it was in their power to give; thus doubling or trebling the means of support for the work. Thus was inaugurated a system of missions, the result of which was the building up of a number of churches able to take care of themselves.

Now, it appears to us that all this was an exemplification of the force and influence of the *power of rule* in our system. The preaching of the missionaries employed, did, of course, under God, accomplish the work that was done. But the ruling power of the court, through its commission, lay back of that preaching. The Committee managed the support of those missionaries, after looking them up and setting them at work in their several spheres. All these labors, and all their fruits, came out of the missionary zeal of the Presbytery met as rulers to look after the interests of the body. To carry the influence of the Presbytery all through its bounds, helping the weak, and stimulating the slothful or faint-hearted—that was the object aimed at. The idea was to bring the supervision and control, the power and the rule of the Presbytery, into every corner of its field; and wherever a poor little church was found, either trying to creep along, or else lying quite still in the mire of discouragement and sadness, to put all the power and influence of the Presbytery, and its charity too, as a lever, a mighty lever, under the poor little church, and raise it up at once to life, and hope, and action. This is what that Committee did; and they did it not by virtue

of the several, but of the joint power; not as preachers, but rulers in the house of God.

We come then to this, that what we want in our Presbyterian missionary work, is not a minister to preach a little to one feeble church, and a little to another; not two or three ministers to go and carry free preaching to all our waste places and mission stations; but the strong and steady arm of the Presbytery put forth in the systematic, and earnest, and vigorous, and persevering cultivation of its field—in other words, it is not a preacher's, but an evangelist's, functions which must be now employed. What the case demands, is just what Paul sent to Crete, because his own visit and labors there had been too hurried to bring the work to completion—and that was a man to “set in order things that are wanting.” We want an *evangelist*—you may call him chairman of a committee, if you will; but whatever called, he must, in conjunction with two or three other rulers of the church, constitute an impersonation of the Presbytery's governing powers. The more he can preach to the feeble churches, and at the mission stations, the better, of course; but it is not his own preaching labors that can constitute his peculiar usefulness. He must go out upon another errand than preaching, all glorious and excellent as that work always is. How much *could* any one man do towards supplying, by his own preaching, the wants of a whole Presbyterian mission field? This man's business is to be a stirring up, a regulating and a setting in order things that are wanting; and all this by setting others to work, rather than by his own individual labors.

The answer which we would give, therefore, to the question under consideration is, that the Presbyterian evangelist among us is the chairman of the Committee of Domestic Missions. Such was really the case when Coit and Gregg acted. Such is the case now in some of our Presbyteries. Such, it appears to us, ought ordinarily to be the rule and practice, for that idea is fundamental in our system and operations. You may have missionaries employed, and you may assist in supporting the pastors of feeble churches; but the work of superintendency, of stirring up, of encouraging and nourishing, of setting in order things

that are wanting, is the work which Presbytery seeks to accomplish, and that is evangelistic work in distinction from simple preaching; and for that work the body must look to the commission, and its executive officer or chairman.

What has been said leads to another question, which we are persuaded it is of vital importance for each Presbytery to consider: What should we aim at, as concerns our feeble churches?

If the evangelist amongst us is to be simply a missionary, whose work it is to go and supply one or all of our feeble churches with preaching, then it would seem to be our end and object concerning those churches to get them supplied with the ministrations of the word, without considering very carefully at whose charges the work is to be done. Naturally, it would be considered a high duty, and a great privilege to furnish these little companies of our believing brethren with the gospel freely preached; and to this end, of course, collections must be taken up in all our churches, so as to create a fund out of which the missionary doing this blessed work of charity should be supported. But if the evangelist's work is the work of the commission of Presbytery through its chairman, then a very different idea of the thing to be aimed at immediately becomes the natural and most prominent idea. The end to be aimed at, then, is to educate the feeble churches to do all they can to supply themselves with the preaching of the word, by encouraging their own efforts with the Presbytery's aid.

We are deeply impressed with the conviction, that there is a vast difference theoretically, and still more, practically considered, between these two conceptions. And very strong is our persuasion that the latter is the only true one. *Self-help*, it deserves to be engraven upon each feeble church's mind and heart with a diamond's sharpness and power—*Self-help is the first help amongst men for us*. And as it is of vital consequence for every particular church which is feeble to understand and feel this, so is it also, on the one hand, for every individual man and woman; and, on the other, for every Presbytery in the Church. There are young men willing to be assisted in getting an education to preach, but not willing to exert themselves sufficiently

in obtaining that education. There are impoverished families amongst us, whose members, male and female, are ready to throw themselves for support on others, and eloquent in soliciting the support of others, but not willing to work hard for their own support. There are little churches accustomed to being supplied with preaching by their Presbytery, and, thus trained, to be conscientiously persuaded that they can not and ought not to provide for themselves and children the bread of life. There are whole Presbyteries, and some of them the richest in our Church, willing to depend on the treasury of the Assembly for the means of carrying on their domestic missionary work—actually receiving, from year to year, more out of the common fund than they put in, and yet richer than the most of their sisters! When Dr. C. C. Jones was put in charge of the Philadelphia Board of Domestic Missions, he found a great number of these feeble infants amongst the churches which, to use his own vigorous expression, had been *sucking away* at the paps of the Church for twenty and thirty years; which liked so well their diet, as they lay reclining on the broad bosom of their mother, or were dandled on her knees, that they were unwilling to think of ever being any thing but infants. Our brother made a prodigious stir amongst all these chubby darlings, when he put forth the idea that the Assembly should at once proceed to wean her babies. By individuals and by families, by churches and by Presbyteries, it ought to be felt to be, as Jesus said it is, more blessed to give than to receive. It should be a point of honor with every Presbytery in our Church to comply with the Assembly's rule, if possible, and put into the common treasury more, much more than it draws out. And it is a high duty which each Presbytery owes to every one of its little churches, to train them to self-help; and we do not believe this can be otherwise done, than upon some such plan of operations as has been already described.

Another thought springs out of what has been said of self-help by the little churches, viz., that the evangelist and his committee should cultivate amongst all our churches, especially in the country, the desire for a full and constant supply of preach-

ing. Many of our strongest country churches are content with public services upon two Sundays in a month. They began with such a supply thirty or forty years ago when they were young and weakly. They have lived upon it, and, compared with those who get less instruction, they may be considered strong. But what an advantage it would be to them, and to the community where their candlestick is set, if they could have preaching every Lord's day! It is precisely by such an agency as our evangelist and his commission that the Presbytery can set in order what is wanting in these cases.

And there is still another thought we would briefly present, which arises out of a consideration of this subject. There ought to be a sincere and earnest effort by the Presbytery to secure a more liberal support for its ministers by their churches. And this, like the other points we have been urging, does not necessarily or naturally fall within the compass of any missionary's efforts; nor yet, on the other hand, can a body which meets but twice a year, adequately enforce any of these upon the mind and head of the churches. It is only the Presbytery *ad interim*, that is, the commission of the Presbytery, charged with the care of all its common interests in the line of aggressiveness and progress, which can press upon the churches the duty of self-help or of obtaining a fuller supply of preachers, or of affording them a better support. There is no single evil amongst us now for the abatement of which there needs to be louder or more earnest outcry than the evil of a secularized ministry. The scarcity of ministers is appalling to any man who earnestly desires to see the earth full of the knowledge of God. And yet scores of ministers are secularized in one way or other, because their support is inadequate. Many a faithful laborer worthy of his hire, many a good soldier of the cross who ought not to be forced to carry on the war at his own charges, is eating up the little patrimony he inherited and which ought to descend to his children, or he is rolling up a debt which will crush him; or he is harassed and oppressed with unavailing efforts to clothe himself and family, and get food for them out of a scanty income. And if some of this sort of men should resort to tent-making of one

kind or another (alas! there are some tent-making ministers amongst us of another sort and from other motives) in order to continue in the ministry, there is surely a fault lying at somebody's door; but just as surely it does not lie at their door.*

These thoughts about Domestic Missions have not been the fruit of mere abstract reflection, but the result of practical observation and some experience. And we propose in the remainder of this article to give some details of the history of Domestic Missions in one of our Presbyteries, by way of illustrating and enforcing the views expressed.

The Presbytery we speak of employed an evangelist for a number of years before the war, whose duties were to supply vacant churches and plant new ones. This work was suspended during the war, but was resumed again in the fall of 1865. One year later, viz., in the fall of 1866, a new feature was given to the plan, and it was made the chief business of the Committee to strive to supersede the prevalent system of stated supplies with the pastoral relation in all the churches. Moreover it was the

*It may be interesting and useful to condense from Mr. Gregg's paper a statement of the different phases which the work of Domestic Missions assumed in the earlier times of our Church in this country. From 1707 to 1722, aid was rendered to feeble churches, or rather to their pastors, but upon their attaining strength, further assistance was withheld. Down to this time the system of itinerating had not been introduced, but in this year we find missionaries sent to destitute places and frontier settlements. These were pastors taken from their respective charges for a few weeks or months. The compensation given was so much added to their income. This itinerating system continued from 1722 to 1825, when the Assembly added a new feature to the Board of Missions. Assistance now began to be given to pastors as such, and the old plan came back into use again. Now itinerancy languished and nearly ceased to be known. The care of existing churches occupied attention rather than the exploration of new districts. In 1839 the Assembly again called for itinerancy, and some pastors were released from their charges for short periods to attend to it. Another feature of the history is, that Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies, all claimed and exercised the right of laying an injunction at their pleasure upon any pastor, and sending him forth to do missionary labor. The consent of either party to the pastoral relation seems never to have been sought.

judgment of the Presbytery that ordinarily, no pastor should be connected with more than two congregations. At the same time the evangelist was made the chairman of the Committee of Missions, and they were instructed to aim at the ends above specified. It was estimated that for the support of the evangelist, whose whole time was to be given to this work, and also to give needful aid to the smaller churches in supporting their pastors, there would be required not less than four thousand dollars (\$4000) annually. But the Presbytery was large, and it was said that one dollar from each church member belonging to it would secure the necessary sum.

The experience of the first three months seemed to show that there was no probability of the required amount being secured upon the old system of occasional collections in the churches. Hence, on the 1st January, 1867, the Committee instructed its chairman to visit, as rapidly as possible, every church in the Presbytery, and endeavor to get introduced the system of weekly collections. The work was at once entered on and diligently prosecuted. The Presbytery at its meeting in April, 1867, gave its sanction to the movement, and by the middle of the following September, that is, in eight and a half months, all the fifty-three churches of the Presbytery had been visited. The success of the effort was remarkable, and nearly every church agreed at once to adopt the plan. The very small number which at first declined, soon yielded; and at the end of twelve months, the revolution might have been said to be complete. There were, indeed, some subsequent fluctuations; some few churches gave up the plan for special reasons, but returned to it again. But at last, four-fifths of the whole held steadily on, and in July, 1869, the plan was almost of universal adoption in the churches.

But this surprising success was not achieved without opposition. The prejudices of a whole life with many had to be overcome. False teaching in some cases, and in many more no teaching at all, caused the plan to be denounced as a "new fangled notion." A large presentation of Bible truth alone, tore down these prejudices. Even yet, not a few individuals refuse to contribute weekly, and some few oppose. But there is noth-

ing in all this which was not to have been expected by those who know the Presbyterian people. They are not to be driven about by every wind of doetime, and they cannot be coaxed or "blarneyed." They must be convinced. Hence, whenever right, they are gloriously right; even as when wrong, they are apt to be stubbornly wrong.

We must be allowed to dwell a little upon the greatness of the change of feeling and practice which has now been mentioned. In many of our churches, a public collection on the Lord's day for any purpose, even once or twice a year, would, before the war, scarcely be tolerated. If, in some emergency, funds were indispensably necessary to be collected, the elders and deacons would retire into the session-house, or get behind the church, out of sight, as though engaged in some questionable business; and they would themselves make up the necessary amount, if possible, rather than have any public call upon the congregation. Religion and money were regarded as holding something like the same relation to each other as light and darkness. Take the following incident in proof: At a certain meeting of this Presbytery, in 1858, after the body adjourned, a ruling elder, universally respected as a godly man, lifted both hands to heaven and thanked God that he had been permitted to attend one meeting of the Presbytery at which the word *money* had not been once uttered!

For twenty or twenty-five years, there labored, long since, in this Presbytery, one of the most gifted, earnest, acceptable, and influential ministers, who was absolutely opposed to saying anything whatever about money from the pulpit. He was opposed also, to all public collections in the church. Moreover, he always refused to accept any reward for his preaching labors. In 1849, he removed to the West; and before he left, saw and acknowledged his mistake. But his acknowledgment of error has not been very much heeded, whilst his former teachings and example are, in some neighborhoods, well remembered and often quoted. In justice to this excellent and much respected brother, who is no longer amongst the dwellers upon the earth, it ought to be stated that he had been an eminent lawyer and a conspicu-

ous member of society before his conversion; immediately upon which event he commenced to preach the gospel with fervor and unction and power. He said he had often heard it remarked amongst his comrades, before his conversion: "Take away the money, and you shall soon see how much preaching there will be left." Remembering this reproach and not looking at the subject in its other bearings, he resolved that it never should be said he was preaching for money. He carried this so far, that once when some money was left for him at his own house by some one who believed our Lord's saying, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and who respected our Lord's ordinance that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," our single-hearted brother sent the money back to the giver. It should be further stated that he possessed at the outset of his ministerial career an ample fortune, but spent it all before he died; impoverishing his family to preach the gospel without charge to people who were able to sustain him. Many of these exhibit the effects of this doctrine and practice of their minister down to this day, and so illustrate the evils that may flow out of the mistakes of the best of men from the best of motives.

The position taken by this eminent servant of God was on the one extreme. Other ministers associated with him did not perhaps refuse what was offered them, but they did not teach the people the duty of supporting the ministry, nor yet of worshipping God in any other way with their worldly substance. Rather than plainly preach that pastors must be set free from worldly cares by a competent support furnished, these brethren preferred to go to the school, the farm, and in some peculiar cases even behind the counter, that they might preach the gospel freely and without charge. And what would naturally be the result of such a proceeding in all ordinary cases? That the half-paid minister gets rich in worldly goods, but the church grows spiritually poor. He gets two or three hundred dollars per annum for simply talking a while in the pulpit on Sundays, after having spent his strength the whole week in worldly work. Commonly he is a man as capable of managing secular affairs as the mass of his people; he knows how to plant and when to

plough as well as they do; he is as good a judge of the points of a horse or a cow or a hog as any of them, and can decide as well as any man how much to take when he sells, or how much to give when he buys. Does it not appear very manifest that the two hundred dollars is just so much start given to the secularized preacher in the race for riches betwixt him and his flock? It was divine wisdom in our Lord, which ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and be set free from worldly cares and avocations. It is a sad and a dreadful mistake which any church makes, when she contravenes that heavenly arrangement and starves herself in starving the preacher.

Under these difficulties the attempt has been making for now three years to have weekly collections in all our churches, and to secure from them a proper support of their ministers. Progress has been certainly made, and yet the standard is far too low, nor can we boast at all for our Presbytery, that we have yet "attained"; but we are "reaching forth unto those things which are before."

To return. It has been said the object of Presbytery in the fall of 1866, was to establish in every one of its churches the pastoral relation, each pastor not serving more than two churches; and to raise \$4000 to aid in effecting these objects. Now, in fact, not one-third of this sum has been raised, and yet there is positive and marked progress towards the goal; for the churches are better supplied with preaching and the ministers are better supported. Our impression is very strong that there is something here well worthy of the reader's particular notice. We are persuaded that a new idea, and the right one, has dawned upon our churches; God's providence and the necessities of their case have brought light to their eyes. When the Presbytery's scheme was first set forward, churches and ministers began to make application for assistance. But the necessary funds were not at command. The case with many grew desperate; ministers could not remain with their churches for the pittance they were affording to them. Then dawned the first ray of the new light spoken of just now. The evangelist visited

the churches and explained the case, and they began to see after a new fashion that they must *help themselves* or do without preaching. Some churches took prompt action, and the people were themselves astonished to see what they could do under pressure. Others delayed action until they lost their ministers; when discovering that really the alternative was closed churches or more self-denying and liberal giving, they chose the latter. Thus a better result has been attained than if the \$4000 could have been secured to be distributed, for in that case this mighty and excellent spirit of self-help would not have been evoked. As it is, in three years time these evangelistic efforts have raised the average salary of all the ministers in the Presbytery up to the sum of \$588, which is 78 per cent. more than the average salary in the year 1860. The total increase of contributions in the Presbytery for the support of the ministry (including what is paid to the evangelist) is about \$7000, which is nearly double the amount which the Presbytery set out to raise in the fall of 1866. We are persuaded all will admit that that must be an excellent plan of domestic missionary policy, which results in rousing the slumbering churches to deny themselves for the support of the gospel at home, rather than encouraging the belief that they are unable to maintain their preacher and cherishing in them a detestable eleemosynary spirit.

Whatever may tend to shed light on the problem of how to develop best the resources of the Church, will of necessity be interesting and profitable to our readers. And we do not hesitate, therefore, to proceed in this line of narrative and observation, and to give some instances in detail of the working of this evangelistic scheme. We shall speak—

1. Of the B. church, which formerly enjoyed the ministrations of the excellent brother whom we described as opposed to receiving any reward for preaching. Naturally it followed after a short time that the people did not trouble him much in that way. After his departure they paid about \$100 for the services of a preacher once a month. Such was their practice until the fall of 1866, when the evangelist first visited them on the subject of weekly collections. The proposition met with the most decided

hostility, except from two of the male members of the church. Upon his second visitation, the opposition had decreased. Very soon after this they began to pay their minister \$200 for one-fourth of his time, and their other contributions were far larger than they had been before. In January, 1869, they were offering to pay \$320 if they could secure the half of their minister's services, and they have since raised the offer to \$400. Thus they both desire more preaching than contented them before, and also are willing to pay much for it, which is, of course, the true practical test of their sense of its value. Supposing the original wishes of the Presbytery could have been fulfilled and they had been supplied with \$4000 to spend upon their weak churches, is it natural to think that B. church would now occupy her present honorable position? It should be stated that B. church is very small.

2. Of the S. church, which is also a little one. In 1867, it had preaching but once a month and promised to pay \$150, but came short of it. For some months S. found herself without preaching, and then under pressure of necessity made what everybody considered a noble effort, and pledged and paid at the rate of \$300 per annum for one-half of a licentiate's time. If the Committee had been in possession of the funds requisite, it would cheerfully have assisted this feeble flock in raising this sum; but as the case stood, they raised it themselves. Which was the better result? The licentiate left them at the close of his Seminary vacation to go and finish his course of study. Again they were left without preaching for a time, but have since secured half the time of a preacher at \$450. The other church which is associated with them, being still feebler than themselves, S. church, through the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounding unto the riches of their liberality, was willing to pledge \$50 more than their share in this partnership in order to secure the end.

3. Of the N. church, partner to the one just mentioned and still feebler than it. This congregation thought they were making a very liberal offer, when they agreed at first to pay \$250 for the half of his time; and so indeed they were, con-

sidering what other and stronger churches are paying for the same. But to secure the arrangement spoken of with S. church, they were obliged to come up to \$350, and they have done it. Now, had the Committee been in possession of the funds, assistance would no doubt have willingly been afforded by them. As the case stood, the little church had recourse to *self-help*, and that mighty power did not fail them.

4. Of the M. church. This is a church numerically and pecuniarily quite weak. For a number of years it had preaching twice a month, for which it paid scarcely \$100 per annum, and its minister sustained himself by teaching. In January, 1868, this brother removed, and the little church was left vacant. For a supply of once a month they then paid less than \$150, but more than they had previously paid for preaching twice a month. Now they are anxiously offering \$300 to have the services of some minister twice a month. Here again, it was simply no prospect of outside help which brought about this result. In this church, a majority of the members hold that each church member is bound to give the tenth of his income to the Lord.

5. Of the F. church. This is a large church, which for years has employed a stated supply for twice a month, at \$200. Of course there was no thought of giving assistance to such a church; rather, the Committee looked for aid to it. But they seemed to think they were doing well to raise \$200 for preaching, and they made strong opposition to any innovations in the matter of collections. Of the evangelist's first visit, the only apparent effect was no little anger that such an unreasonable thing as the proper support of a minister for all his time, should be expected and desired of them by Presbytery. This was in 1867. Now they avow the determination to secure a pastor as soon as possible, on a salary of \$1000. The evangelist visited this church three times, and the avowal just mentioned was made after the third visit.

6. Of the W. church. This church was long ago supplied stately for years by a very eminent minister and celebrated classical teacher. Between his school and his farm, he was independent of any salary, and, of course, according to the notion of

those times, would have ruined himself as a preacher if he had asked or accepted any reward for preaching. At length their minister was removed, and there came a struggle to support the gospel amongst them. Finally, some two years since, they were found having a stated supply for one-half of the time, with a sort of indefinite idea that they ought to pay him about \$200, but this amount was not all subscribed, and only part of what was subscribed was actually paid. The Committee sent the evangelist to rouse them from this state. The leaven of truth worked, but not rapidly. They persisted in maintaining that they were not able to do more. In the spring of 1869, they were visited again. Their stated supply declined to serve them any longer on the old terms. They were left entirely vacant. The alternative came to be a much greater effort than they had ever made before, or to have their church vacant for a longer time. On their part it was felt to be necessary either that they get a minister who would work on half pay, or else that they be furnished with assistance from the Presbytery in paying the full value of his labors; but neither of these things was possible. Three days were devoted to persuading this people to make the needful effort. At the close of the first, they remained at \$200; at the close of the second, they had advanced to \$400, and supposed any further progress absolutely impossible. But they were assured that this amount was wholly insufficient, and that they must give at least \$600 per annum or be without a preacher. At the close of the third day they came up to this point, and solemnly pledged the requisite amount, and shortly a licentiate was found who preached for them four months at that rate. The prospect is now good that they will ere long be furnished with a pastor and find themselves able to give him a competent support.

7. The case of the C. church may be referred to as illustrating the general fact that there is to some extent on the part of the churches a wish to secure for themselves more preaching. This church had enjoyed one-half of the ministrations of its pastor. At the last meeting of the Presbytery, it secured the whole of them. Some of the larger churches are still content with preaching twice a month; yet even in some of these, the

desire begins to be felt for a fuller supply of the word publicly ministered in their own place of worship.

It may be added that in the spring meeting of this Presbytery, it was ordered that vacant churches desiring supplies, should make application to the Committee of Domestic Missions, and that Committee was ordered to procure supplies for them on the following conditions: (1.) That no minister should be called upon more than twice from one meeting of Presbytery to another for his services in this line. (2.) That the church supplied should pay to the minister, at the time of his visit, not less than \$10. (3.) That the supplying minister should report to the Committee of Domestic Missions, whether he had fulfilled the appointment made for him, and whether he had received the reward of his labors.

This rule led to some criticism of the Presbytery as being deficient in the true spirit of Christian benevolence, which required them to give without asking anything in return. But it has been said on the other hand, with great force and truth, that the gratuitous supply of vacant churches by the Presbytery only encourages them to inaction. It is unreasonable to expect a minister to supply any vacant church at his own charges, in any case; and especially in the case where such church is paying nothing for a regular supply.

It may also be *repeated* that no little opposition has been manifested, at times and in places, to all this evangelistic movement. Some who have been long sleeping and are enjoying their repose do not like to be roused up; and some have lived so long in the neglect of their duty without being waked up to a sense of it, that they seem to have actually persuaded themselves that the neglect is duty. But the leaven of truth may be trusted to leaven the whole mass wherever it is put in, although it must have time.

About fifty years ago the universal salary for ministers, where any was paid, in the bounds of this Presbytery, was \$400. No advance on this sum, or but little, was made in any or in very few churches, until about twenty years ago. At the present time, some object to *casting reflections on their honored ancestry*

by increasing ministerial salaries. It is a good thing to track the footsteps of our fathers wherein they were right; but their principles must be carried out, and we must not follow our fathers merely in the dead letter. Our fathers paid their ministers well enough when they gave them \$400. Thirty or forty years ago corn was worth, in the bounds of the Presbytery we refer to, from twenty-five to thirty-five cents per bushel. Flour was worth from two dollars to two dollars and a half per hundred. Meat was worth from one and a half to two and a half cents per pound. The clothing worn then was jeans and homespuns. Buggies and carriages were then almost unknown. Coffee was a Sunday beverage, not tasted during the week. Taking into account the price of provisions and the style of living half a century ago, one dollar was fully equal then to four or five dollars now, and ministerial support far better then than in any of our country churches now.

The facts which have been presented in this article, evince four positive results springing out of a Presbytery's evangelistic work. These four results are of the highest value and most cheering promise. Here is the system of weekly collections made nearly universal in the Presbytery's fifty-three churches; a marked advance in the support of ministers over what had of late years been common in its bounds; the desire for a fuller supply of preaching awakened to some extent generally, and to a large extent in particular cases; and the mighty idea of self-help roused in a number of cases, which do speak volumes of instruction to us all regarding both the resources of our weak churches and the true way of calling them forth. The eleemosynary spirit, whether in persons or in bodies amongst us, must be frowned down. It must be felt all through our Church, that to give is blessed rather than to receive. It ought to be a point of honor with every church to support its minister in comfort, and that without asking help outside the congregation. It ought to be a point of honor with every Presbytery to give much more into the treasury of the Assembly than it draws out. A person, a church, a Presbytery, that really cannot live without aid, ought not to be ashamed to accept it. We are all

brethren, and we have one Father and one Lord, and the strong must help the weak. But let us all try *self-help* to the utmost, before we ask for any help from others. If it is the Christian law to put your own shoulder to the wheel when you ask the Lord to help, surely it is meet to do your utmost before you appeal for help to other people. The resources we possess are, in a sense, boundless. No Christian man or woman, no church, no Presbytery, is doing the utmost possible. Let faith be stronger; love more active and tender and deep; zeal more earnest and fiery; the sweetness of giving to the Lord and his Church better understood—and wonders can be done by us all, in every portion of the field. We are poor now, comparatively, like the Macedonian Christians; but if the grace of God be only bestowed on us, then in a great trial of afflictions even, the abundance of our joy and our deep poverty will surely abound to the riches of our liberality. We must have *the abundance of the joy*, however, to make us liberal in our poverty. It must be sweet to us to give to Jesus and his people. We must be zealous for Christ and his Church. We must love sinners and the Saviour. We must believe in the unseen and eternal which is nigh. All these graces may God give to us all, and to all his people every where.