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ARTICLE I.

HOME MISSIONS—HOW SHALL THEY BE CONDUCTED?

It is generally agreed among our Christian people that the work of Foreign Missions ought to be conducted under the direction and superintendence of the General Assembly. Presbyteries and Synods are fully competent to carry on the work, if they had the means and facilities, and could do it as effectually and economically in their separate character as in combination with other Presbyteries. But as Presbyteries, with few exceptions, perhaps, have not the means of themselves, and as separate action would involve a great increase of machinery as well as of expense, the work, by common consent, is committed to the General Assembly, the proper representative of the whole body. Presbyteries, in accordance with our Book of Order, in ordaining men to the work of foreign evangelisation, have agreed to transfer them to the control of the Assembly, so far as their general work is concerned, but without abdicating their right of control, so far as the moral and ministerial character of these brethren is concerned. In this view of the matter, our Church, so far as is known, is very nearly a unit.

In relation to the Home work, however, as also of Education, there is some diversity of views as to the mode in which it should be carried on. The great mass of our people hold that so far as

this department of labor is concerned, there ought to be one common treasury, out of which, according to certain rules agreed upon by the whole body, the wants of all the Presbyteries should be supplied. Others—and among them some of our wisest and best men—contend that the work of Home Missions, and also of Education, ought to be entirely and exclusively under the direction of the Presbyteries, with the single reservation that all surplus funds or certain percentages on all funds raised for Domestic Missions shall be passed over to a central treasury, under the control of the Assembly, to be used for the benefit of the poorer Presbyteries, and for carrying the gospel into destitute and frontier regions. The difference of views here is what we propose to discuss in the following pages. But before proceeding to the main subject of discussion, there are two points of incidental importance that we wish to notice.

One of these comes in the form of an objection to Committees, as such, under the direction of the Assembly. It is maintained that where there are a number of these, each having its own Secretary and Treasurer, there is danger of their consolidating their powers, so as not only to protect each other, but also so as to foil any attempt that may be made to investigate their internal affairs, no matter how urgent the case may be. This is no new objection. It is almost always brought forward, especially in the Presbyterian Church, when any special powers are delegated to any one man or set of men outside of the well-beaten track of ecclesiastical usage. Nothing is more dreaded among us than the one-man power. Nor is it strange or to be regretted that the Church, in view of her past experience, should diligently guard against the improper assumption of power, either by individuals or associations within her own bosom. Her internal affairs need, from time to time, to be closely scrutinised. At the same time, this scrutiny may be so unrelentingly pressed as to defeat the very object for which special powers are sometimes conferred. The charge of combination for mutual protection was preferred against the Secretaries at the last Assembly; and when proof was demanded, it could not be brought forward, but the speaker explained that it was to the *liability* to such abuse of power that he

had special reference. The same argument, and in almost the same form, was brought forward again in the July number of the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, when the proceedings of the Assembly were under review. The writer here again exempts the Secretaries from the actual abuse of power, but inveighs strongly against the *tendency* to such abuse, and infers, as a necessary consequence, that the fewer of these Committees under the care of the Assembly, the better.

Now, the two brethren referred to have been Professors in our Theological Seminaries for many years, and one of them is still discharging the high vocation of that office; and it has been the occasion of much surprise that neither of them seemed to see how easy and natural it would be to prefer the same charges against the Professors of our Theological Seminaries. If there are any ministers in the Church who have special advantages for exerting extraordinary powers, it is undoubtedly these Professors. Now, would it be wise, simply because of the possibility or tendency to the abuse of power, that our Seminaries should be dissolved, or the number of Professors be reduced? We have too much esteem for the piety and good sense of these brethren even to suppose that they would pervert the power intrusted to them to the accomplishment of any selfish or ambitious ends.

But why should the Secretaries of our benevolent schemes, so long as no charge of usurpation of power is preferred, not stand on the same high ground of confidence before the churches? Why should the possibility, or even the liability, of their doing wrong, be paraded before the Christian public, when its only effect can be to injure those important causes which they represent? But it may be asked in a general way, what important trust can be committed to fallible man that is not liable to abuse? Furthermore, if every enterprise is to be abandoned simply because it is liable to abuse, how is the world ever to be evangelised through the instrumentality of earthen vessels?

Another incidental matter which we propose to notice, is what a writer in the October number of the REVIEW (page 616) says about the prelatial powers involved in the office of Secretary; having more special reference, we suppose, to the Secretary of

Foreign Missions. The writer is perhaps not alone in this view of the matter, and it is on this account that we deem it necessary to notice it. The statement in the REVIEW is put cautiously and hypothetically in the first instance, but the writer goes on to argue the case as if he really believed that such powers did inhere in the office of Secretary. He does not charge the Secretary, if we understand him aright, with playing the part of prelate, but that such powers belong to his office, and that they may be brought into exercise at any time the incumbent may choose to do so. In supporting his position, he quotes what Dr. Thornwell said about the Old Boards and their Secretaries ; but failed to mention, as he ought to have done, that Dr. Thornwell assisted in forming the present constitutions of our committees, and that he felt satisfied that all the objectionable features of the one had been carefully eliminated from the other. He not only approved of the structure of our present schemes, but he was an active member of one of them from the time of their enactment to the day of his death.¹ The writer also refers to the fact that Dr. Janeway, Secretary of Domestic Missions for the Northern Church, became known in the country generally as *Pope Janeway*, because of the exercise of certain arbitrary powers in distributing the Domestic Missionary funds ; but here again the writer failed to couple with the statement the important fact, that Dr. Janeway was simply carrying out the instructions of his General Assembly, and that that Assembly, and not Dr. Janeway, was responsible for those unjust and arbitrary measures. The writer infers, and upon grounds that no one will dispute, that the investing of the Secretary with prelatival powers undermines the great Presbyterian doctrine of the *parity* of the ministry. This is a serious matter, and if there was any solid ground upon which to rest the charge, the Church ought to look into the matter at

¹It would be well for brethren who quote from Dr. Thornwell, to remember that he was not the editor of his own works. Had he lived to revise them for publication, and especially those of his earlier years, he would no doubt have made important changes and modifications, which, of course, his editors had no right to do. To mention no other item, he would undoubtedly have modified what he wrote about Presbyteries conducting the work of Foreign Missions, for he afterwards approved the course now in use.

once. But how does the Secretary come by these extraordinary powers? They are not self-assumed; for he is exculpated on all hands, and by the writer as well as others, from exercising any undue or improper authority.

They are not derived from the Constitution of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions; according to that instrument, he is styled, "the Secretary of Foreign Missions," "and is the Committee's organ of communication with the General Assembly, and with all portions of the work intrusted to the care of this Committee." Surely it will require very close scrutiny to find even the germs of prelacy here. Are these powers conferred by the Executive Committee? This they could do only by abdicating all personal responsibility and devolving the whole work upon the Secretary. The writer intimates that this is the case, but we hope this was done without intending to offer an affront, as it certainly does, to the members of that Committee.

Now we wish to state here for the benefit of the writer, as well as others who may entertain similar views, that no act looking to the control or government of any part of the missionary work, is ever intrusted to the Secretary alone. The Secretary, if he was imbued with a single grain of wisdom, would not desire to exercise any authority of the kind, and the Committee could not conscientiously grant it even if it were desired. Neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer ever expends one dollar of mission money without the formal sanction of the Committee. Whatever may be the case elsewhere and with others, the Baltimore Committee is always faithful and conscientious in the discharge of all the duties that have been laid upon them; and the Church is under great obligations to them for the time and labor and thought spent by them in the discharge of those duties. No important act connected with the missionary work is ever performed by the Secretary except in conjunction with the Executive Committee. The missionary is appointed in the first instance by a vote of the Committee, and not more upon the recommendation of the Secretary than upon the testimony of others; his field of labor, as well the particular kind of work in which he is to engage, is determined in the same way; he can be transferred from one post of labor to

another only by the same authority; his salary is determined and the amount of funds allowed him for carrying on his work is always settled by a formal vote of the Committee. The vote of the Secretary counts no more than that of any other member of the Committee. Not only so, but he sometimes finds himself in a very anomalous position. He is not unfrequently "floored" by a vote in the Committee, and before he can regain his feet, he hears himself denounced as a prelate from without.

The Committee, acting as an ecclesiastical commission, does exercise general control of the missionary work, but only to the extent of the power granted by the Constitution, and which is essentially necessary to carry on the work with system and efficiency. But whilst the Committee does appoint the missionary (which is never done, however, without the concurrence of the Presbytery to which he belongs), assigns his field of labor, fixes his salary and all matters of a similar character, it never interferes with what may be regarded, in the stricter sense of the term, his *ecclesiastical functions*; for example, the Committee never undertakes to determine when a church shall be organised, who shall be received to its membership, who shall be appointed deacons and elders, or when or how discipline shall be exercised; much less has the Committee the power to *adjudge* a minister or to depose him from the ministry. In all such matters the missionary is responsible to his Presbytery, and not to the Committee. The Committee exercises only such powers as have been delegated to it by the General Assembly, and, in this respect, it stands precisely on the same footing with other ecclesiastical commissions, whether appointed by Presbyteries, Synods, or General Assemblies. When commissions are denounced as excrescences on the ecclesiastical system, of which we have had a notable case of late, it becomes such persons to show how any of our church courts can carry on this work of aggression without employing some such agency.

Now if the facts and principles that have been laid down are indisputable, as they undoubtedly are, where is there room or opportunity for the Secretary, or the Committee, or for the two combined, to exercise prelatival powers? Our foreign missiona-

ries certainly have no reasonable ground to complain. They are governed much more by each other, when there are a number of them on the ground, than they are by the Committee at home. In either case they have much more freedom of action and are less under surveillance than their brethren at home, and they can well congratulate themselves sometimes that they are not as closely watched or as sharply criticised as the Secretary of Foreign Missions.

But we are not yet prepared to dismiss this accusation of prelacy. It is a serious charge, and if without foundation, it ought to be effectually rebutted. When the writer charges that the office of Secretary involves prelatical powers, he means, we suppose, that the Secretary can, if he chooses to do so, act the part of a diocesan bishop in the bosom of the Presbyterian Church. If he does not mean this, when he speaks of the Secretary being the bishop of the whole Church, then we do not know what he does mean. Now we remark, in passing along, that we have no respect either for the sagacity or common sense of that man who would attempt to play the part of a prelate in the Presbyterian Church, especially in the Southern Presbyterian Church, where there are so many standing with drawn swords ready to strike even at the shadow of prelacy. If any of our younger brethren have any such aspirations, we would seriously advise them to wait until certain brethren, whom we need not name, leave the stage before they commence the play.

But to return to the question under consideration. What are the powers and functions of a diocesan bishop? In the first place, he holds his appointment for life and cannot be deposed except as the result of a tedious and prolonged ecclesiastical process. The Secretary of Foreign Missions holds his appointment for one year, and he may be set aside at any time by a single vote of the Assembly, and without even the formality of a trial. What resemblance is there in this particular between a bishop and a Secretary? In the next place, an Episcopal bishop exercises all the powers in his diocese that a Presbytery does over all the Church within its bounds. In other words, according to the Episcopal system, a prelate wields as much power in one case, as twenty,

thirty, or forty presbyters do in the other. Is the writer whose views we have under consideration, prepared to show that there is any similarity here between the office of a bishop and a Secretary? Furthermore, the bishop has control over all the pulpits in his diocese; no one can be installed as rector in any of the churches under his care without his consent; to the bishop it belongs to ordain, to instal, and to have complete control both of rectors and congregations; for the time being, he can depose any rector from the discharge of his proper functions. More than this: no person can be received into the full communion of the Episcopal Church without the act of confirmation on the part of the bishop. The bishop, when any special case arises, prepares prayers to be offered up in all of his churches, and no rector ever thinks of disregarding or setting them aside. Now this brief statement shows the utter absurdity of the charge that has been laid at the door of the Secretary. Can the writer point out one of these functions that the Secretary ever has or can exercise in the Presbyterian Church? Does he ordain; does he instal; does he ever severally or in conjunction with the Committee, adjudge a minister of the gospel? Does he direct when a church shall be organised, or who shall be received to its communion, or who shall be elected deacons or elders? The evangelist may perform some of these functions; but the Secretary has no more power in such matters than the brother who has preferred these charges. But we ask, Is it just, is it manly, and is it Christlike, to bandy charges that have no foundation in fact, when the only result can be to injure a cause that ought to be dear to every Christian heart?

But we come now to the main subject of this discussion, viz. : the management of our schemes of domestic benevolence, especially that of Home Missions. No doubts are entertained on either hand, so far as the writer knows, as to the necessity of having a Committee of some kind, under the direction of our Assembly, to manage this important department of labor. But the point where there is divergence of opinion is, whether all the funds raised in the churches for this purpose should be placed under the control of this Committee for the benefit of the whole

Church, or that the bulk of these funds should be kept in the hands of the Presbyteries where they are raised, to supply their own wants first, but leaving a surplus or percentage to be forwarded to the Assembly's Committee, to supply the wants of the poorer Presbyteries, and to carry on the work of evangelisation in frontier regions. We think we have stated the case with all possible impartiality. Much may be said on either side of the question, and it is not surprising that there should be diversity of views. But there is a real essential difference between these two modes of carrying on the general work. Those Presbyteries which give a percentage of their funds, or what surplus remains after their own wants are supplied, do, indeed, help the general cause to that extent. But those which allow all their funds to go into the central treasury, and receive back again such proportion as will place all the poorer Presbyteries, so far as this particular fund is concerned, on the same footing with themselves, are illustrating co-operation, we think, in a much higher and nobler sense. It is placing the wealthier of God's people on the same footing with their poorer brethren—which is the true spirit of Christianity, as exemplified in the primitive Church. It makes provision for the whole Church to rise and stand together as one compact united body, having the unity of a common faith, and being bound together by the strong bonds of fraternal love and sympathy. This, we think, is the broad and solid foundation upon which all Christian coöperation ought to rest; and we confidently believe that the future prosperity—not to say the permanency—of our own branch of the Church depends, under God, upon the steady maintenance of this great principle.

The writer, from the very organisation of the Southern Presbyterian Church, has always contended for coöperation, through the General Assembly, in carrying on her general schemes of benevolence. He assisted in forming the Constitutions which were adopted at that time for the execution of these different trusts. They were formed and adopted under a full sense of all the abuses that had taken place under the old Board system, and they were intended to have no sympathy or affiliation whatever with those. If the old system were still in force in our Church, and

there was no possibility of getting rid of it, we would be on the other side of the question as strongly as any brother in the Church.

According to the old programme, the Domestic Board had the home work, whether within the bounds of Presbyteries or in frontier regions, entirely under their control, and they carried on the work in either case with very little reference to the Presbyteries. They located missionaries where they thought best, assigned their work, fixed their salaries, and required them to render an account of their labors, not to the Presbyteries in whose bounds they were laboring, but to the Board. Nothing of this kind, we need scarcely say, pertains to our present system.

We advocate the plan of coöperation through the Assembly on several grounds, but mainly because of its tendency to bind the whole Church together in the strong bonds of one common brotherhood. The unity here advocated is equally removed from centralisation on the one hand, and from disintegration on the other. The true course for our Church lies between these extremes. We are, as every attentive observer must see, pretty safely guarded against one of these extremes, but perhaps seriously exposed to the other. The tendency of the times in which we live, so far as religious matters are concerned, is not so much towards centralisation or prelacy as to independency. Church authority, as such, is at a discount. There is scarcely a minister in any of our evangelical churches who does not find it difficult, if not impossible, to administer discipline. Large numbers in almost all of our churches deem it their right to walk according to the light of their own eyes ; and what can this lead to but the overthrow of all church authority ? The only check to this alarming tendency, we confidently believe, is in the revival of primitive Christianity by which we can be not only restored to pure Christian love, but be once more bound together in the strong bonds of a common brotherhood.

This strong bond of brotherhood was undoubtedly the great instrument which God employed in establishing our Church in the first instance on a solid foundation. She commenced her ecclesiastical career in the midst of extraordinary trials and discouragement.

ments. Our people were fearfully impoverished; scores of our church edifices had been destroyed; our literary and theological institutions were lying in the dust; and with a few noble exceptions, little or no sympathy was felt in our behalf by the great body of Christian believers in other parts of the country. It was in consequence of the wealthier churches and Presbyteries making common cause with their poorer brethren, that our Church was enabled to rise from the dust, take an honorable stand among the other members of the evangelical body, and make her influence felt, as she has been doing ever since, in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the remotest nations of the earth. If any other branch of the Church has ever struggled against greater difficulties and discouragements, or has achieved grander results in the midst of almost unparallèled trials, we know not what branch of the Church it is. And this success, under God, must be ascribed mainly to that feeling of brotherhood which pervaded the Church in the earlier period of its history, and held it together in the strong bonds of unity and fraternity.

But this great principle of unity and brotherhood was not more important to the Church in the days of its infancy and feebleness, than it is at the present moment. The same element which inspired new life then is equally necessary to the preservation of that life now. In the providence of God our Church occupies a peculiar position, whether regard be had to other branches of the Church, to our own future history, or to the condition of a perishing world. Our position as a separate and independent branch of the Church of Christ, was not one of our own choosing. It was forced upon us by the providence of God. What were the precise designs of that providence none of us perhaps fully understand. It may have been intended to awaken greater life and activity among us in promoting the salvation of men. It may have been to make us the conservators of certain great principles of doctrine and polity that were imperilled by the rapid changes that were going on in other parts of the land. Or it may have been to prepare us for certain great emergencies in the future, of which we have not now the most distant conception. But whatever may have been the design of Providence, we occupy a position of great

moment—one which we ought never to abandon without as clear an indication of Divine Providence as the one which originally placed us in it.

This position can be maintained only by standing shoulder to shoulder, as one compact brotherhood, ever ready to meet in one united strength any emergency that may lie in our pathway. If we would be true to ourselves, true to the Master, and true to the great responsibility that has been laid upon us, we must cultivate with all possible diligence this great principle of unity and Christian fellowship among ourselves. Our weaker churches and poorer Presbyteries must feel the strong arm of their more favored brethren around and underneath them—not in dealing out a cold and formal charity, as is done when mere surpluses and percentages are offered them, but in having one common fund, out of which the poor and rich are to share alike. This would be alike gratifying to the poor, and ennobling to the rich. At the same time it brings into play those grander and broader principles of benevolence which not only shone out so gloriously in the life of the Redeemer himself, but which were absolutely necessary to develop the full strength and power of his Church.

But what are the objections urged against this scheme of coöperation through the General Assembly ?

The first and principal one is, that this general plan takes the appropriate work of the Presbyteries out of their hands and places it under control of the Assembly, in consequence of which the powers of the one are greatly magnified, whilst those of the other are unduly contracted. Now if this were true, the argument would be irresistible. It is undoubtedly true that Presbytery has the constitutional right to control and direct the work of missions within her own bounds. To interfere with this, is to unsettle the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, and we are not among those who would desire to countenance such interference. But we deny the assumption that our present plan does strip the Presbyteries of any of their legitimate functions or prerogatives. At the same time we have been greatly surprised to find brethren, for whose wisdom we have the profoundest respect, giving emphasis to this objection without apparently having inquired

whether it had any foundation in fact. It may be asked, then, in what sense and to what extent is the work of domestic missions taken out of the hands of Presbyteries by this general plan of co-operation? The reverse, it may be contended, is demonstrable. Instead of reducing the Presbyteries to a state of inactivity, its legitimate tendency is to stir them up to a higher degree of energy. In no other way can they keep pace with this general co-operation. But what powers or functions are taken away from the Presbyteries? If an evangelist is to labor within the bounds of a given Presbytery, by whom is he appointed? Who assigns his particular sphere of labor? Who superintends his work, and to whom does he render an account of his stewardship? Who determines the amount of salary he shall receive, or whether his appointment shall be renewed from year to year? Furthermore, if the salary of a minister is to be supplemented from the Sustentation Fund, who determines whether an application shall be made, or how much supplemental salary shall be asked? Who determines whether an appropriation shall be renewed or not? Still further, who decides when and how collections shall be taken up in the churches for the Domestic Missionary work? We go still farther, and ask, if the Presbyteries themselves do not settle the question whether they will act independently or in concert with other Presbyteries. May not any Presbytery, if it sees proper, withdraw at any time from coöperation and become independent? Now in all the above mentioned matters, as well as a great many others of a similar character, the voice of the Presbytery is alone potent. How strangely it sounds then to hear it said that the Presbyteries are stripped of their powers? The central Committee has not a word to say about the evangelist, his qualifications for the work, the particular kind of work he is to perform; it receives no reports from him, and cannot determine even what salary he shall receive, except so far as they are governed by the state of the treasury and the rules given them by the Assembly for their government. In all these matters, the Presbytery, or its Committee of Missions, is the governing power.

The only point conceded by any Presbytery is, that all the funds raised in its churches for Domestic Missions may go into a

common treasury, to be disbursed by the central Committee, under certain rules and regulations, for the benefit of the whole Church—its own churches among others. Even this much is not conceded without sufficient guarantees that the wants of any particular Presbytery shall not be overlooked in the general distribution. The central Committee in dispensing the funds placed under its control, is so completely hemmed around with by-laws enacted by the Assembly, and, of course, approved by the whole Church, that there is very little room for the exercise of personal discretion on the part of the Committee. One of those by-laws, to mention no other, empowers every Presbytery to draw as much from the central treasury as its churches may have contributed. This is seldom done by one of the stronger Presbyteries; but any of them have the right to do it if they see proper, or if their exigencies should at any time render it necessary. These rules or by-laws are so full and complete in themselves, that the Committee, even if it could be supposed that they were so inclined, could scarcely have it in their power to indulge personal partialities in the disbursement of the common fund. The power which every Presbytery has to withdraw from concerted action would itself be an effectual protection against anything of the kind. More than this. Every Presbytery has the right of representation in the central Committee in the person of the Chairman of its Presbyterial Committee of Domestic Missions. He is distinctly recognised as a corresponding member of the Committee, and when present may take part in its deliberations. When not present, he is there almost always by letter, and the Committee never fails to make such letters the basis of their action. How, in view of all these facts, any one can contend that the Presbyteries are stripped of their proper functions in acting with the central Committee, we cannot understand. With the single exception of having a common fund, to which every Presbytery may assent or not as it thinks best, not one of its functions is touched, so that the main argument for opposing the general plan, as it seems to the writer, falls to the ground. Furthermore, if the Presbyteries would adopt a system of general presbyterial visitation, by which to bring themselves in personal contact with all of their churches,

a measure alike necessary to the spiritual welfare of those churches and to the success of general coöperation scheme, they would find themselves as heavily taxed with labor as it would be possible to endure.

A second argument brought forward against the general scheme is, that the churches will not contribute as freely for the general cause as they would to relieve the destitutions more immediately around them. Now, if this were true, which we are by no means ready to concede, would it be right and proper to foster and cherish such a feeling among our people? The Master himself has commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature. Our duties and responsibilities are, therefore, coextensive with the human race. No Church, and no section of the Church, ever rises to a proper sense of its own true calling, which aims at anything less than the regeneration of the whole race of mankind. Some portions of this great work may be beyond our reach; and for this we are not responsible, except so far as our prayers and sympathies are concerned. But when we restrict our efforts to a narrower sphere of labor when a broader and more extended one is equally accessible to us, the true spirit of Christianity is necessarily dwarfed and dried up. Our true policy is to train our people to the practice of the broadest benevolence, and not let them feel that their whole responsibility is confined to a little section of country immediately around their own doors.

But the assumption above stated, and against which we are contending, is not only wrong in principle, but it is untrue in fact. The writer already referred to quotes and eulogises the statement made by one of our distinguished divines, to the effect that "a concrete case is stronger than an abstract cause," which is explained to mean that the churches of a given Presbytery will contribute more largely to promote the cause of Domestic Missions within its own bounds, than for the same cause outside of those bounds. Now there may be cases where it would not only be more natural, but might be the duty of churches to contribute more liberally for wants immediately around them. There are cases, too, where churches might, under special excitement, do more to relieve the destitutions immediately under their eyes,

than for all other causes combined. Perhaps this would generally be the case, where our emotional nature alone is concerned. But this feeling, no matter from what source, is only temporary in its nature ; and when applied to the great principles of gospel truth, especially to those broader and more elevated feelings of benevolence which have been enjoined by the Redeemer, it is not only injurious in all its operations, but is opposed to the spirit and the demands of Christianity itself. It does not come within the province of human wisdom to lay down any programme by which the world is to be regenerated. The duty of the Church lies in simply following the command of the Saviour to preach the gospel to every creature. And whilst it is true that every church, and perhaps we might say every individual member of the church, must have some sort of plan by which to carry into execution the command of the Saviour, yet it is not wise or justifiable in either to assume that this or that particular section of the race or world is to be thoroughly evangelised before the glad tidings of salvation are made known to other and more destitute portions of the earth. The measure of the liberality of God's people ought always to have reference to the nature and the magnitude of the work which is to be performed. The Church will never realise the full glory predicted of her until she comes squarely up to the work assigned her of evangelising all the nations of the earth.

But this great principle for which we are contending is not a matter of mere speculation. Brief as is the history of our beloved Church, it is nevertheless developing results that show that the separate and independent mode of conducting the Domestic Missionary work is not only questionable in point of policy, but there is serious reason to fear that it will lead to the entire overthrow of the Domestic Missionary work, and that at no very distant period. Without attempting to argue this point, we would simply ask brethren to examine carefully the Annual Report on Domestic Missions—especially what is found on the 4th, 5th, and 6th pages of that Report—laid before the last General Assembly. We have not ourselves examined all the facts and figures embraced in that Report, but we take it for granted that they are correct, and especially as no one has undertaken to contradict

them. But if they are true, then the necessary inference is, that when all the Presbyteries adopt the independent line of action, there will be no central Committee, and no central treasury to aid the poorer Presbyteries, or to carry the gospel into destitute and frontier regions; and then the further inference naturally follows, that when the general work is abandoned, the present work will follow also. No one can foresee where the retrograde movement will stop, if it is once fairly set in motion; and here, undoubtedly, lies the peril of our beloved Church. It needs strong bonds, especially in the times in which we live, to hold it together. If the one arising from sympathy between Presbytery and Presbytery is broken asunder, who can tell what will be the ultimate consequences?

We notice, but in a very brief way, another objection frequently urged against the general plan of coöperation, viz., that it is a roundabout way of doing business to have the contributions of the churches travel a great distance—sometimes more than a thousand miles—to the central treasury, and then come back again over the same road to the churches where they were at first raised. The writer, to whom reference has already been made, characterises this proceeding by quoting the old couplet:

“The king of France, with forty thousand men,
Marched up a hill, and then came down again.”

A little reflection would have convinced this brother that the mode of procedure to which he refers and which he ridicules, is common in these times to almost every department of commercial enterprise. Postal arrangements and railroad enterprise have brought the most distant parts of our land in close proximity. Money can be sent from Missouri to Baltimore without any more cost and with very little more time, than from one point in that State to another. The old king of France, it is true, went up the hill without a purpose. Not so with the contributions that are sent up to the treasury in Baltimore. They go there to be mingled with the offerings of God's people from other parts of the land, to go back over the same road indeed, but in many cases at least, in double or treble the amount sent up. Many a good and needy brother in Missouri can testify to the wisdom and ex-

cellence of the arrangement, whatever others may think or say about it.

In the foregoing statements we have aimed simply to set forth the great importance of coöperation in all the departments of church work. We have by no means intended to imply that our various schemes of benevolence admit of no modifications or readjustments. There are many minor matters, such as the location of the Committees, the mode of administering them, the persons who shall be intrusted with their execution, the salaries that shall be allowed the officers, and other matters of a kindred nature, that ought to be so arranged as to meet and satisfy the matured judgment of the Church, so far as that can be ascertained; and in such readjustments none will feel more real satisfaction than those who now hold office in connexion with these schemes.

In bringing this article to a close, the writer wishes to say that it has not been written in a spirit of controversy. It is a grief to him to have to differ from brethren for whose piety and wisdom he has the profoundest respect and with whom he can act in almost all other matters of public interest with the most hearty concert. But he is profoundly impressed with the conviction, that, if the policy he is opposing becomes prevalent, it will lead necessarily to the weakening of all those bonds which now hold our beloved Church together, and ultimately, if not restrained by the providence of God, lead to its disintegration.

More than this. We are suffering, if we do not misapprehend the signs of the times, from overmuch controversy. We do not undervalue the importance or the necessity of controversial discussion. But this, like everything else, may be carried too far. Brethren who have a natural love for controversy for its own sake, and who fancy that nothing but good can proceed from it, ought to bear in mind that there are others who are not like-minded with themselves, and who long to prosecute their work in peace and quietness. Much of our time, since the organisation of the Church, has been devoted to controversy, and, so far as can be judged from present appearance, we are about as far from the end as we were at the beginning. We have spared no pains in en-

deavoring to conform our standards to the spirit and requirements of God's word, and in this respect, perhaps, we have been more successful than almost any other branch of the Christian Church. But the question may be raised, whether in giving such exclusive attention to what may be called the scaffolding of the superstructure, we have not neglected the proper work of the Church itself. Other denominations that may be behind us, so far as Church order and discipline are concerned, are far ahead of us, so far as the great work of evangelising the world is concerned. We ought not to forget that the Church has a life as well as an organisation, a spirit as well as a body, that she needs true piety as well as sound orthodoxy, that she has a work to perform as well as a faith to illustrate, a gospel to proclaim as well as a creed to defend, a world to save as well as a Church to maintain.

J. LEIGHTON WILSON.

ARTICLE II.

A MEMORIAL OF THE LIFE AND LABORS OF THE
REV. STUART ROBINSON.

STUART ROBINSON was born Nov. 14th, 1814, in Strabane, Tyrone County, Ireland. He was the fourth son of James and Martha Porter Robinson. His mother was the daughter of a ruling elder and granddaughter of a Presbyterian minister. His father was a prosperous linen merchant. In the year 1815, he became involved in debt by becoming security for a friend; and determined to come to America in the hope of retrieving his fortune. He landed in New York in 1816, where, in the course of eighteen months, his family joined him. The elder children were sent to school, and Stuart soon attracted the attention of his teachers by his great intelligence. One of them wrote in his book: "This is a remarkable child, and will one day make his mark in the world"—a prediction which has been fulfilled in the life and labors of the man.

During his infancy in Ireland, Stuart was injured by a fall from the arms of his nurse. His right shoulder was dislocated and his arm and thumb crushed. The blow upon his head at the