

I may so speak. I say it because I believe it, and it is that the Scotch, with all their morality so-called, and all their outward decency, respectability, and love of preaching, are not a praying people. Take the Presbyterian Churches,—I am not speaking of the Free Church, the Established Church, or any other Church,—take the Churches of the land, and you find congregations of from 1400 to 1600 on Sabbaths, and at the prayer meetings on Tuesdays you find thirty, forty, fifty, and sixty people. Sirs, is there a cause? The neglect of prayer proves to my mind; that there is a large amount of practical infidelity. If people believe that there is a real, existing personal God, they would ask Him for what they want, and they would get what they ask. But they do not ask, because they do not believe or expect to receive. Why do I say this? Because I want to get Christians to think, that though preaching is one of the great means appointed by God for the conversion of sinners, yet unless God give the increase, Paul may plant and Apollos may water in vain. Oh, ministers! excuse me,—you gave me this chance of speaking,—urge upon your people to come to the prayer-meeting. Oh, Christians! go more to prayer meetings than you do. I have seen Christians sit at home quietly, and not go to the prayer meeting; but if it is only for the example you set, it is bad. And when you go to the prayer meeting, try and realize more that there is use in prayer. I do not believe that there is a more effective body in the world, or in Christendom, for the promotion of true religion than the Presbyterian body. I do not believe that there is any system that can be so effective if it were carried out. But the machinery is not worked. Now, look at the mass of elders there are in the Presbyterian Church. But what are these elders doing as a body? Blessed be God, there are many holy, self-denying, godly men, who seek not their own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's, and who go into the lanes of the cities and pray, and speak, and try and lead people to church. But do the elders, as a body, do that? How many elders are in Edinburgh? Say that there are a thousand. If these thousand elders would go forth and try to promote the glory of Jesus Christ, and the good of souls, what salt, light, and leaven might they be to the whole community? But I believe there are elders, it is possible there may be such in this very Assembly, who know, and God who searcheth their hearts, knows that, from week to week, and, it may be, from month to month, they never make a single attempt to do anything for the glory of Jesus Christ. There is another point I have seldom or never heard touched upon, but I believe it lies at the very heart's core of the irreligion of the land and it is this:—In the Church of England, and in all the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and, I doubt not, in all other bodies, men are brought up from childhood to say that they are going into the Church—men are put to College and educated for the Church,—and men in England are brought before the Bishops, and in Scotland before their Presbyteries and without any fear of being struck dead for committing blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, they swear in my Church, and state in yours, that they believe they give themselves to the ministry out of a desire to promote the salvation of the souls of their fellow-creatures: and they know when they say it they tell a lie. I say there are many instances where people know differently; and if there are people here who know differently—for even among the twelve disciples there was a Judas—if there is one who has not in his heart the belief that he has been converted, conceive your position. If it was a dreadful thing for the rich man to think of the entrance of his five rich brethren into hell because he did not care for them, what will the entrance of your congregation into hell be to you? Think of it. It will come, friends. You are mortal men, and if you have not been baptized already by the Holy Ghost, when you speak to God, ask Him who searcheth the heart to give you faith. Shall we not follow the advice that Paul gave to Simon Magus, and lay ourselves down before God? and who can tell but this poor man may not be made the means of bringing some man to God this day for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and for that fire which will enable him to kindle the dead around him and make him the means of saving others, instead of being lost for ever? Now, is there not to be some test in the Churches—some practical proof of the new birth—something requiring an evidence of fruit before men are sent into the ministry