

point. Your Committee were struck with the remark, which many of the Ministers make on this subject, namely, that they did not know to what extent this duty was observed; they could not even make an approximation to the number who engaged in this duty. Believing that the state of religion is closely connected with household worship, and that many of the evils affecting society proceed from the neglect of this duty, your Committee express the hope that the Synod will not dispose of this report without giving forth an expression of its mind in this regard and lending the weight of its authority to the suggestions which they would make on this subject. They believe that if Ministers, in their public ministrations and in their private intercourse with their people, would bring this duty more prominently before them, and, in the case of those who from diffidence or want of ability neglect this duty, recommend the use of "the Prayers for Families," authorized by the Church of Scotland, the best of results would attend their efforts and exhortations—in short, that there would be a great quickening of religious life in all our congregations.

As to prayer-meetings held during the week, it appears that thirty-four of the reporting congregations maintain those services, although in some cases the service is not regular. The minister himself, in nearly all the cases reported, conducts the service; and the congregations are few in number where he can count upon any assistance from the elders or other members of the Church. One minister complains that he cannot count even upon the presence of an elder on such occasions and that he is not always sure of a precentor. For this reason the meeting is often heavy, the attendance small, and the life of the Church languishes. Still these reports bring to light many pleasing evidences of real life in the Church at large, and the Committee cannot but congratulate the Synod on so many earnest workers, who do not forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is, but who love to meet together on an evening for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, and who, at the throne of heavenly grace, bear upon their heart their fellow-worshippers—not forgetting the backslider, the afflicted, the poor, the wanderer, and those that are in ignorance and out of the way. Your Committee have no suggestions to offer on this point save this, that every congregation should seek to maintain its prayer-meeting, that the people be encouraged to attend, and that, in the case of those brethren who have a large rural district to superintend, district prayer meetings be instituted and maintained, and an elder, under the pastor, be appointed to each, to watch over the same, who may call to his aid such help as he can obtain in conducting the services.

With regard to the elders and their work, a few cheering cases are stated, but the most are set down as doing nothing special—nothing save, here and there, taking part in Sabbath School instruction and making some visits to the sick. There is no complaint as to the ordinary or routine duty on the Sabbath, but the duty of general visitation, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, searching for the wanderer from ordinances—in short, caring for souls as those that are to give an account, does not seem to be generally felt or recognized. Perhaps the saddest fact brought under the notice of your Committee is that bearing upon the elders. Great complaints are expressed in regard to their coldness and want of co-operation with pastors in caring for the flock. One minister, smarting under this evil, exclaims: "Oh for a staff of godly elders;" and another, "Why should there be such a thing as a closed church or any interruption to the service in the event of the minister being absent a Sabbath or two? Why should not