

course, was not of great importance in a spiritual point of view; but, in practice, it was something to be able to say that they served the Lord for the bread that they ate—the raiment they put on. If, then, they were few, let their numbers be increased; and if they were devoted, let them be encouraged. The Lord could work great things through the instrumentality of a few. He concluded with an appeal for assistance in the great work of continental evangelisation.

The Rev. Mr. Ritchie, of Dunse, spoke. The topic—"A Spirit of prayer the strength of the church." Through prayer we unite our own weakness with the grace of God's promise, in which Omnipotence is engaged to ask for human conversion in answer to believing supplication. By prayer, we bring down that sovereign agency which secures all needful means for sustaining or enlarging missionary efforts, and also every element of saving power to crown these with complete success—we move the hand which moves the world—we influence the mind that touches all hearts—we set in motion the energy that draws all men to Saviour. In ourselves we quail before the humblest Christian duties, saying, "Who is sufficient for these things?" but in prayer, we advance to the highest missionary enterprise, exclaiming, "Our sufficiency is of God." "When we are weak, then are we strong." Thus survey the history of the throne of grace in all ages, and you will observe, while nothing great has ever been accomplished in religion without prayer, the Lord has looked on his church in her supplication, and said, as to Gideon, "Go in this thy might." We behold Jacob left alone at Peniel with the angel, he wrestles, he weeps, he makes supplication, and "as a prince he has power with God, and prevails." We see Moses on the mount with Israel beneath in conflict with Amalek, in the valley of Rephidim, when he holds up his hand Israel prevails, when he lets down his hand Amalek prevails; and as they stay up his hands till the going down of the sun, Israel discomfits Amalek with the edge of the sword. And was it not in answer to prayer that the sun stood still over Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Aijalon? Was it not in answer to prayer that Judah was redeemed from captivity in Babylon, and restored in peace to the land of the covenant? Then how mighty were the triumphs of prayer on the day of Pentecost. As we look on that motley assemblage, gathered around the Galilean fisherman, as we behold one after another pierced with conviction of sin till thousands are subdued under the truth, and cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do,"—we may wonder how instrumentality so feeble accomplished results so glorious. And is it not a fact as humbling to man, as it is honouring to God, that all revivals of religion, whether at home or abroad, are traceable, not so much to the eminence of gifts in preaching, as to special manifestations of secret and social prayer? How often, after long seasons of fruitless labour and increasing difficulties, have the servants of God been brought to cry, "O Lord, we have no might against this great company, and we know not what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee, and it is nothing with Thee to save by many or by few." It was in a special prayer meeting of four young men, in a meadow, that the American Board for Foreign Missions originated; and what are the twenty-two thousand Christian worshippers now gathered by their missions in the Sandwich Islands alone, but just a testimony of the Lord's hearing the needy's humble prayers? Is it not a commendation of prayer, as the element of the Church's strength, that all the piety and life of her members here find common expression for her increase? The rich alone can afford large contributions, the gifted alone can bring great talents to sustain or diffuse the truth, but the poorest and humblest of believers can pray, and thus the means which possess the mightiest power for Zion's increase are constantly available for all her children. Let us not forget, however, the character of the prayer that prevails with God. It is "the effectual prayer of a righteous man"—the prayer that takes effect in corresponding action, the prayer that seeks its own answer, by employing suitable means to gain what it desires from God. If gifts that might be rendered are refused while supplications are offered, the denial of contributions is a condemnation of prayers, and these being fruitless are proved to be worthless. But let humble petitions be combined with holy actions, and then "God, even our God, will bless us." Let those who who pray that the wealth of the earth may be offered to Christ give of their substance as God hath prospered them—let those who pray "the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest," give themselves to the work according to the will of God, and so will "the Lord save us, we shall be a blessing, and our hands shall be strong."

The Rev. H. M. Wadell then rose, and remarked that the subject on which he had been called to speak was the mission on the western coast of Central Africa. First of all, I have three important facts to state for the encouragement of all interested in the welfare of the African continent. One is, that the progress of discovery has made such advances within the last few years from the N. and S., E. and W., that not more than one-fourth part of the whole—the central regions—remain wholly unknown, and these also, it is to be hoped will, within a few years, be traversed and laid open to the view of the world. A second is, notwithstanding the increase of mission and trading settlements, from the river Gambia southward and round the coast of Guinea to the Equator, no such mortality prevails now as once rendered the name of the African coast terrible. Either the climate of the country is improving, or some of the incidental causes of disease are ceasing, or the means of care and cure are increasing. It need no longer be dreaded as fatal to Europeans. The third fact is, that the slave trade, so long the crime and curse both of Europe and Africa, is virtually at an end along the whole western sea board of that continent both north and south of the line. I state this fact on the authority of a recent letter from Mr. Goldie, who had it from the

commander of one of H. M. cruisers lately visiting the Calabar river. Considering these great facts, may we not see that the Lord in his wisdom and mightiness is preparing the way for the speedy fulfilment of that old prediction, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God?" To come closer to our point, I would in a few words state the present condition of our mission at Calabar, in order to show that it has now attained a position which enables us to spread abroad, and requires its extension. The consideration of this point furnishes cause for great gratitude to God, and encouragement to persevere in the work He has put into our hands. 1 That the missionaries have been so long spared, beyond all expectation, in a measure of health and strength, to do the work of God there. Since the death of our beloved brother, Jamieson, nearly six years ago, no breach has been made in our company, though the number of agents has increased. 2 That the externals of the mission are now so well arranged, that we need not depend any longer on the West Indies for supply of labourers. They may now go direct from this country to Calabar, with scarcely more immediate danger than they would to the West or East Indies. 3 That the language of the country has been mastered, and is now spoken, written and printed by your missionaries; and the Word of God is already in part translated into a language in which no book was ever written before. 4 That the preaching of the gospel publicly, and from house to house, and the education of the children, have begun to take effect in various ways. The good-will and confidence of some of the chief people has been secured; a great number have learned to read and understand the Bible both in their own language and ours, and can write letters in both; the majority of the youths of the towns where we live, are on our side for social and moral improvement, and some of them give evidence of being in the way of salvation. 5 That some great breaches have been made in the strongholds of their ancient superstitions and barbarous customs, by the abolition of human sacrifices,—the preservation of twin-born infants, heretofore destroyed,—and the gradual abandonment of the ordeal of the poison-suit in legal investigations concerning imputed witchcraft and other reputed crimes. 6 That a beginning has been made in the observance of the Christian Sabbath, by the cessation of public markets thereon in one town, and the limitation of them in others, and by the voluntary cessation of work that day by some chief people even on their distant farms. 7 That the country has been explored in different directions as far as eighty miles from our centre of operations, a long way there, and not easily travelled; and various important and healthy localities found, for the settlement of new mission stations, at diverse but convenient distances, and which may be soon occupied, if the Church will only furnish the men to occupy them. The mission work at Calabar, thus effectually commenced, should now be extended.

The Rev. Mr. Guxion then said—the subject assigned to me is, "Progress the Safety of the Church." The phraseology, I am sure, is not designed to convey the impression, either that the church can perish, or that it can fail to advance. "The church in danger" sounds the most absurd of all conceivable cries. The emblem of the church has always been the bush which Moses saw, with innocent flame playing amid its leaves—rendering no shade of greenness less fresh—only appearing to destroy. A few years shall witness the painter's colours fade from a wrotting canvass; the marble of the sculptor shall soon indicate that it enjoys no exemption from decay; time shall leave no trace of those undertakings which outrivalling the pyramids, distinguish our mechanical generation; but effects have been produced in every converted soul which shall remain while God has being and eternity continuance. The church however, cannot be stationary any more than it can be insecure. That progress is the safety of the church will perhaps most easily appear by supposing all Christian aggression at an end. The bearing, to any extent, of man's efforts on the safety of the church, furnishes a motive of stupendous strength to sanctify ambition. Were the lust of power directed by intelligence, warriors would perhaps be pedagogues; and probably our last prime minister would again set about expounding the parables for children. In respect of at least the very highest influence over mankind, you might venture to weigh the humblest schoolmaster who inculcates occasional lessons of wisdom or piety against Nimrod or Napoleon. Soon does the field of battle refuse to tell of garments rolled in blood. Soon does the grass cover up the prints of the war-steed's hoof. Soon does the mound, under which myriads occupy an uncoffined and unshrouded grave, appear not different from any natural elevation. Soon does the village that was laid in ruins look as it did before the fight raged around its homes—with its old men basking in the sun and its children blowing bubbles on the grass. A short time silences the echoes of the orphan's wail, and to the widow herself vouchsafes a tearless cheek. But the traces of Christian effort are more ineffaceable than the letters which are chiselled deepest on the hardest rocks.

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE ASSOCIATE AND ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES.

Pittsburgh, May 26th, 1853.

Two Synods have been in session in this city during the past week,—the General Synod of the Associate or Secession Church, and the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church of the West. The most prominent object which has engaged their attention is the question of a union between the two bodies. As the precise position of the various Presbyterian bodies of the country may not exactly be understood by all your readers, they may be aided, perhaps, by a brief historical statement.