

But let us look at home, among our own ranks ; here the same evil prevails to a very considerable extent. And we need not be surprised if people should seem heartless in upholding and dilatory in extending a system which they do not understand. Let us not fear to look each other in the face and frankly ask the question, do our people as a whole know and appreciate our principles ? Is there not a large number who are Presbyterians by force of habit, by the accident of birth or circumstances, rather than by conviction and intelligent investigation ? Their attachment to the Church is traditional and even superstitious to a great extent. The matter is easily tested. Our principles are accurately and admirably formulated in certain books, in The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, but are these works understood and mastered by the rank and file of Presbyterians ? How many households possess a copy of them ? Very many I grant do, but very many do not. Are they in the hands of all our Elders and Deacons and Sabbathschool teachers and heads of families who mould the character and opinions of the rising generation and are supposed in loyalty to their own convictions, to their historic past, and to the truth of God to teach the doctrines and the polity of the Church ? The books, with perhaps the exception of the Shorter Catechism, have a very limited circulation. No Canadian publishing house, so far as known to me, has issued an edition of them. There is a growing feeling which is already strong and dominant in many instances that these books are too dull, and hard, and antiquated for our progressive age and that if they are to be looked at at all they should be relegated to the libraries of ministers and colleges. Some go even the length of piously deploring the very existence and the dissemination of such works. I read not very long ago in a religious paper which