

We were deeply humbled before God, to find that we had a decrease of members for the year. The declension is but local, being mainly in two or three places; but it is deeply painful to us, to find that the success of our stations, generally, was not quite sufficient to cover these local drawbacks. We deeply need more spiritual power; more attention, undistracted and earnest, to our great work. We must not rest satisfied with merely maintaining our ground. We must be aggressive. Souls are perishing around us. Multitudes are living without God. Society needs leavening with the lofty spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ. Permit us then to urge upon you all the greatest purity in your public and private conduct. Remember that we are called unto holiness.

We solemnly ask you to seek a deeper love to private prayer. The closet should hallow the pew and help the pulpit. When the holy wrestling with God, for souls, is restored to our societies; when we are again in an agony of earnestness to win men for God; when we come to feel that we cannot live, unless the Lord make bare His holy arm in our assemblies: then we shall have abundant prosperity. A superficial religious life will neither glorify God, nor benefit ourselves, nor save others. Brethren, sisters, let us go in tears to God's footstool. Let us call to mind the agony of Gethsemane; the anguish on the cross; the pangs by which souls were redeemed. And then remember how he wept, and prayed, and travailed; let us seek His face; let us lay our failures before Him; let us ask him how it is we do not succeed. The want of spiritual power is a fatal want. It is a want not simply to be talked about, or to be mourned over; it is a matter that should be taken up into our Master's presence. Let us lay the whole case before the mercy seat. There is help there. We say in all sincerity and solemnity to you, the state of the church universal, at this hour, supplies no cause for despair; but abundant cause for profound anxiety, and much enquiry of the Lord. The course we have indicated is that which our fathers followed. No better has been discovered.

"Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Peace be with you all.

RBH
Feb. 21. 9. 15

ROBERT BOYLE, *President*.
 HENRY HARRIS, *Secretary*.