

nary committee left to seek their agents among our second-rate preachers; and thus the mission-field which ought to have at least a fair share of the most competent men, will continue to be supplied with an inferior ministry. When a young man of high promise is licensed, and the vacancies are contending for his services, bring out calls on his behalf, and these calls supported by petitions and commissioners, and public and private influences all brought to bear upon the young man's mind, as to the prospects of greater usefulness in this or that congregation, unless a rival call be presented to him from the missionary committee, the claims of the heathen are not likely to be brought before his mind with anything like the same prominence as the claims of congregations at home; and however strong his previous inclinations for missionary labour may have been, these are almost certain to be overlaid by the efforts to retain his services for some congregation at home, and exactly in proportion as his preaching is acceptable, will home-attracting influences be brought to bear upon him. I am slow to think that there is any special lack of missionary spirit among our preachers and students. They must be greatly deteriorated—fallen greatly behind the preachers and students with whom I was acquainted—if their missionary spirit is not greatly above the average missionary spirit throughout the Church. But preachers are men and not angels—men of like passions with others, and influenced by the same motives that influence other men; and with one, two, or three public positive calls to labour at home, and with nothing but general exhortations and private applications to go abroad, our young preachers cannot be severely blamed for want of missionary spirit, if they accept of such calls and settle down at home. If when calls equally urgent are presented to them from both the home and foreign field, it shall be found that they almost always decline the call from abroad, and cling to the call from some congregation at home, then let them be censured freely for lack of missionary spirit, and want of compassion for the perishing heathen; but till such be the case, let that charity that thinketh no evil protect them from all such imputations.

But another question will naturally be started. Suppose the men can be got; suppose we could find men, to send out

at least *one* new missionary every year, how are these men to be supported? How are thirty or forty missionaries to be supported by our small Church, when it is with difficulty they can support that number of ministers? This I apprehend need excite no anxiety. There are various grounds on which I think we may safely infer that the church's liberality is yet far from being exhausted, and that her liberality will not be withheld if a fair case be presented for its exercise. If thirty or forty missionaries were to come upon the Church's funds next year, serious difficulties would no doubt be felt; but a scarcely perceptible advance in her liberality year by year presents no such formidable aspect.

We are told by some of the ancients, that Milo, the celebrated athlete of Crotona, carried on his shoulders an ox four years old, and that the way he was able to perform such a marvelous feat of strength, was by continuing to lift the animal daily from the time it was calf. The grace of liberality, like every other grace, increases in strength and vigour by being brought into frequent and regular exercise. In 1830, when our Synod resolved to commence missionary operations as a Church, the support of one missionary seemed to be all that they thought practicable; and in one of their resolutions, they very modestly say, "although the resources of this Church are limited, and the present is a season of difficulty, yet there is reason to believe, that if the members of the Church shall enter into this measure, in a dutiful and cordial manner, sufficient means may be obtained for supporting at least *one* missionary, sent out by this Synod to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, in some destitute region, where the gospel is not at present published." The Synod have at present *three* missionaries; and one of the best informed authorities in the Church assures me, that he thinks the church is now quite able to support other two. In 1856 the support of *five* missionaries appears far less doubtful, than did the support of *one* in 1830. It is to be hoped that by 1886 the support of *forty* missionaries will be looked upon as easy as the support of *five* at the present time. The liberality of our Church is steadily and rapidly increasing. The contributions during the past year for all your schemes shew clearly what our people are able and willing to do when fairly and fully appealed to.