

cases to carry out the views of the Synod, what is the duty of the Synod? The duty of the Synod, it is clear, is to consider carefully everything belonging to the Eastern section coming before the Assembly. Then when our boards and committees report, the Assembly will know that they report the views of the section of the Church which they represent. There will then be no need for any protracted discussion at the Assembly. The discussion has already taken place; it has taken place in the Synod.

My view then of the management of our ecclesiastical affairs, briefly stated, is as follows:—The Synod should carefully consider every matter of importance; the Boards should recommend to the Assembly only what they know to be in accordance with the wishes of the Synod, or of the majority of our people; and the General Assembly should sanction the recommendations of the Boards. I do not of course say that the Assembly should sanction the acts of the Synod and boards, if these acts should be opposed to the general laws of our Church. The Assembly alone can make laws. All synods and boards must act within the limits of these laws. Neither do I say that the Assembly should sustain the acts of the Synod in cases of discipline. The Assembly is the final court of appeal, and must judge the questions coming before it, not by the views of presbyteries and synods, but upon their own merits.

If our meetings of Synod are to be useful it is necessary that they should be well attended. It is of far greater importance that our ministers should attend the meeting of Synod than that they should attend the meeting of Assembly. The work of our Church is really done at the Synod; not at the Assembly. In the Western Section, a meeting of Synod is a matter of no great consequence, simply because a meeting of Synod can only be a meeting of the third part of that section. With us however a meeting of Synod is a meeting of the whole section of our Church.

It is to be hoped that at the meeting which is to take place in *New Glasgow*, our ministers shall be well represented. It is not right for a minister to say, I am going to the Assembly, therefore I will not go to the Synod. Those ministers who are going to the Assembly should also go to the Synod. By being at the Synod, they will be better fitted to represent our Church at the Assembly.

It is desirable that our elders should also attend the Synod. If our elders cease to come to presbyteries and synods, we may write Ichabod on the walls of our Church. Those who think that elders cannot be of much service at church courts are sadly mistaken. Of course our elders as a general thing cannot speak as fluently as our ministers can, but the object of church courts is not to give persons an opportunity of showing how well they can speak. It must certainly be admitted that there are men who speak merely for the sake of speaking, men who delight to hear the sound of their own voice, and who think they are making great men of themselves because they make a noise. Such men are a great nuisance but it is impossible to get rid of them. The object of church courts is to do church-work, work in the interests of Christ's Kingdom. Now, if an elder is able to speak and reason, he may be very useful. But though he should not be able to speak at Synod, he may be useful. He may have far more sense than the loudest speaker, and may be working in private, and by his vote, tend to bring about a desirable result. Then when our elders, and our ministers too, come together at Synod, they learn a great deal respecting our church affairs, and get their zeal kindled up to some degree. They go back to their congregations full of knowledge and earnestness, and communicate their ideas and feelings to others. They thus exert a very great influence for good.

There is one difficulty in the way of ministers and elders attending meetings of Synod, that of expense. It always costs something to get fitted up to go away