

Spirit of God. If a congregational meeting furnishes entertainment for those people who love to see a fight, it is high time that congregation had mended its ways or ceased to hold meetings.

But after all *can* a congregational meeting, conducted with anything like business tact, be uninteresting to a fairly good Christian? How can Christian men fail to be interested in work? If they feel no interest in it does this fact not raise a question as to their own spiritual condition? The managers submit a report of the financial condition of the congregation. To say that any good loyal member of the Church feels no interest in that report seems like a libel on common sense. The report of the Sabbath-school is submitted. Are we asked to believe that Christian men may feel no interest in the teaching of their own children? A proposal is made to build a new church or repair an old one; to build a new manse or improve an old one; to pay off a long standing debt; to take additional measures to increase the contributions to the Schemes of the Church, or do any one of a hundred things, and if a man's heart is really in his Master's work, he cannot help feeling an interest in these proposals.

Many reports, or rather abstracts of congregational reports are being published just now. As a rule the best reports come from the congregations that have the most efficient staff of officials. It is a dream to think as some good, easy people do, that in large congregations the pastor does nearly all the work. The better the organization and the more efficient the office-bearers the less the pastor has to do, and he has the more time to do it. Now good organization is an impossibility unless people take an interest in the congregational meeting. At this meeting the office-bearers are appointed. Efficient office-bearers are indispensable to success. Therefore, if you would have a successful congregation you should go to the congregational meeting. And not only go but take a hearty interest in its business without the prospect of being entertained by tea, music, spicy speeches or a fight.

OUR DEBT TO THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS.

SOME time ago a claim was put forth that to the Baptists, we on this continent are mainly indebted for the blessings of civil and religious liberty. It is claimed by some that in America Roger Williams was the first exponent of the great principles on which modern civilization is based. It is needless to add that the claim was not conceded. It is not denied that Roger Williams and those associated with him were stout champions of liberty of conscience, but they were not the first even on this continent who contended for the truth that God alone is Lord of the conscience.

In the last number of the *Southern Presbyterian*

Review, the Rev. E. O. Frierson, of Norfolk, Virginia, gives a historical sketch of the Scottish Covenanters, and seeks to show plainly that the cause of civil and religious freedom throughout the world owes much to those heroic defenders of truth and right when they were imperilled. This writer very justly observes that the Scottish people were no revolutionary enthusiasts. They only contended for their inalienable rights. For the retention of these they were willing to make many sacrifices. Like the early martyrs and confessors of the Christian faith they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, they wandered in deserts, they took refuge in dens and caves of the earth; they counted not their lives dear unto them.

The reviewer begins by referring to the natural characteristics of the Scottish people. He says that from the dawn of their history they have always evinced a determination to think for themselves. They were born to be free. This inborn love of freedom has evinced itself all through their history, in no way more decisively than in their heroic efforts to defend the rights of private judgment and liberty of conscience in matters of religion. He then goes on to state the leading and well known events in Scottish Church history, tracing the foundation of Christianity in Scotland to the labours of the Culdees—*cultores Dei*, worshippers of God—refugees from various parts of the Roman Empire, who found an asylum in Scotland. In 1176 Rome gained the ascendancy over the Scottish people, but to a great extent they still maintained their rugged independence. The doctrines of Wycliffe and Luther found appreciative and sympathetic adherents among the Scotch. George Wishart, Patrick Hamilton, and John Knox found responsive audiences wherever they went. These pioneers of Gospel truth evidenced the sincerity of their convictions by going to the scaffold, the stake, and the French galleys.

In 1638 began the real struggle for liberty of conscience, which, with varying fortunes through stern conflict and apparently dark eclipse, finally triumphed in the vindication of the principle which has never since been seriously impaired. Charles I. and the Stuart dynasty claimed to rule by Divine right. They claimed supremacy in Church and State. To this usurpation of spiritual authority Presbyterianism was diametrically opposed. Whatever else Charles I. misunderstood he was thoroughly convinced that Presbyterianism and spiritual despotism were incompatible. He thought to gain his object by the imposition of Episcopacy. His efforts moved the hearts of the Scottish people as they had never been moved before. They were attached to the throne. They respected the king's authority but they declined to become his slaves. They believed their souls were their own.

Their religious fervour and love of freedom culminated in one of the most memorable acts of Scottish