

matter, and the chief sufferer, when a conflict arises between the Missionary Executive and the church seeking aid ?

If we are to undertake new enterprises, demanding no small outlay of means, and if we are to do so in the face of a diminished subscribing constituency, must not some new effort be put forth to lift all the missionary churches up nearer to the point of self-support ? But what shall that effort be ? Shall we adopt the sliding scale, and do with our missionary churches as the Colonial Committee now deals with us ? This could not be tolerated. It has been tried within the memory of some of us, and proved a miserable failure, although certainly it may work well if voluntarily adopted by individual churches. Shall we reduce the grants to all churches by a certain per centage during the coming missionary year ? This plan would also, we are persuaded, prove a failure, and would lead to a general exodus of many of our ministers to the United States and other countries. I humbly submit to our District Committees a plan which I am persuaded would do much to develop self-help, and set free a proportion of our funds for new efforts. It is this, that during the month of April or May next, before the annual application for missionary grants be made, every missionary church be visited by a deputation of two. There might be the District Missionary Secretary and an intelligent and enterprising lay brother, or failing him, a pastor of a self-supporting church. These brethren should seek a conference with the church and earnestly and affectionately press upon them, in view of the new enterprises contemplated, and the diminished income, to make an increased effort in the direction of self-support ; or should it be found that the pastor's salary is inadequate to his requirements, that the effort be either wholly or in part with a view to his more efficient support. We are persuaded that such a deputation would be welcomed by all the missionary pastors, and if more quiet, would be far more effective than the annual missionary deputation to collect money. Is it not a fact that it is sometimes easier to induce a church to add \$50 or \$100 to its minister's salary than increase its annual missionary collection by \$20 ? Now I am not sanguine enough to suppose that in every case an increase would be the result, but in many cases it would certainly be, and in all cases it would do good to have the matter set before the churches, *ab extra*. If no more than six churches were in this way urged up to self-sustentation, or twelve churches led to increase their contributions towards the pastors' support by \$80 or \$100 each, it would set free a sum equal to that which we now receive from England, and which is demanded for the new enterprises. Certain it is that something has to be done, and some new steps staken, if we are not only to hold our ground but make progress. And should the above thoughts provoke discussion on the point the writer will feel rewarded.

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### PRAYER-MEETINGS.

The Prayer-Meeting arises out of the spiritual necessities of Christians. We could imagine any number of merely formal professors, living without Prayer-Meetings, and without prayer itself ; but we cannot do so with genuine Christians. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another," declares to us not only a fact, but a necessity of spiritual life. The existence of the Prayer-Meeting, and its state, constitute the best tests of the vigour and warmth of Church life. In seasons of revival and ingathering, Christians flock to the meeting for prayer, as hungry men gather in for food ; but unlike hungry men, they go forth with appetites still increased.

Answers are promised to prayers. Help is not promised to mere needs, as such. The need becomes a sore spot in the moral man. The pulse beats through it ; everything unfriendly tortures it ; the thought cannot get beyond it ; it becomes a cry of the heart for help. And then the help comes. It is bound up. It is