

are expressly appointed for the highest benefit of all who are under their jurisdiction. They by no means discharge their whole duty in licensing preachers, settling ministers over congregations, hearing appeals, receiving reports, and attending to routine business generally. Some parts of this work are indeed sufficiently momentous, and no part of it should be spoken of with contempt, as if it were not the Lord's work, or had little to do with things spiritual. But Church courts should not be disproportionately occupied with matters of routine: they should give adequate prominence to those interests which have manifestly most intimate connexion with the life of the Church and devote sufficient time to the consideration of them. Presbyterianism does itself injustice when there is the slightest ground for alleging that it is more interested in the careful observance of certain forms, which may have only technical importance, than in the great things by which the body of Christ is directly edified.

An adequate sense of responsibility to the Lord on the part of Church courts would affect the spirit and temper in which all their work is done, and would go far to ensure the adoption of wise measures for promoting the interests of the brotherhood. Their deliberations would manifest the high estimate which they have of their duties and functions, and would ever be pervaded by the spirit of love. Everything would be done as if the Lord were present in these courts, and were heard saying to their members: "feed my sheep, feed my lambs." Indifference would disappear, as would pleasure in the mere gladiatorship of debate; and we should only see men of true pastoral and brotherly spirit earnestly consulting together for the glory of the Church's Head and the welfare of His kingdom—seeking only to know and follow the mind of the Spirit.

The constant prevalence of this entirely Christian temper in our Church courts would of itself be an immense gain, and its effects throughout the Church great and salutary. But presbyteries and synods have much work to do which has most intimate connexion with the Church's life, and with the progress of the Gospel in the world.

The Presbyterian Churches, like other Churches, are engaged in certain great departments of work, both home and foreign. The consideration of these should largely occupy our ecclesias-