

SPEAK KINDLY OF YOUR PASTOR.—Many Christians inflict serious harm on their pastors and on the cause of Christ by their careless gossip and habits of capriciousness. An idle word of censure, forgotten perhaps as soon as uttered, leaves a permanent impression on the minds of children and visitors, and works mischief in the future. While Christians are human, we suppose it is useless to hope for a perfect cure of this vice, but the following words of advice are pertinent:

"In all your transactions with your minister deal with him *candidly* and *honestly*. Hold his reputation as a sacred thing. Never by word or deed permit yourselves to injure it; if you do, you injure his usefulness and your own interests. If you think you have ground for fault-finding, tell *him*, that's the manly and Christian course; but never whisper scandal about him to others in his absence. And especially never speak derogatively of him before the young. Parents little know what they do when they permit themselves to censure his conduct, or disparage his work in the presence of their children. Many a young heart has thus been alienated from the minister and from truth, ere yet it has been brought under the salutary influence of either. That accounts, in many instances, for the fact that children do not follow in the steps of their parents by identifying themselves with the Churches to which these belong, and this in its turn often accounts for children breaking loose from religious restraints and influences altogether. Not till the issues of time are revealed in eternity shall we see all the wrong that has resulted from the evil I have just deprecated. May every Church be saved from it"

JOY OVER ONE REPENTING.—It was probably a hard saying to the Pharisees, that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." And certain ingenious philosophers of our own day most surely take offence at joy so entirely out of correspondence with arithmetical proportion. But a heart that has been taught by its own sore struggles to bleed for the woes of another—that has "learned" pity through suffering—is likely to find very imperfect satisfaction in the "balance of happiness," "doctrine of compensations," and other short and easy methods of obtaining thorough complacency in the presence of pain; and for such a heart that saying will not be altogether dark. The emotions I have observed, are but slightly influenced by arithmetical considerations: the mother, when her sweet little lisping ones have all been taken from her one after another, and she is hanging over her last dead babe, finds small consolation in the fact that the tiny dimpled corpse is but one of a necessary average, and that a thousand other babies brought into the world at the same time are doing well, and are likely to live; and if you stood beside that mother—if you knew her pang and shared it—it is probable you would be equally unable to see a ground of complacency in statistics. Doubtless a complacency resting on that basis is highly rational: but emotion, I fear, is obstinately irrational; it insists on caring for individuals; it absolutely refuses to adopt the quantitative view of human anguish, and to admit that thirteen happy lives are a set off against twelve miserable lives, which leaves a clear balance on the side of satisfaction. This is the inherent inebecility of feeling, and one must be a great philosopher to have got quite clear of all that, and to have emerged into the serene air of pure intellect, in which it is evident that individuals really exist for no other purpose than that abstractions may be drawn from them—abstractions that may rise from heaps of ruined lives like the sweet savor of a sacrifice in the nostrils of philosophers, and of a philosophic Deity. And so it comes to pass that for the man who knows sympathy because he has known sorrow, that old, old saying about the joy of angels over the repentant sinner outweighing their joy over the ninety-nine just, has a meaning which does not jar with the language of his own heart. It only tells him that for angels too there is a transcendent value in human pain, which refuses to be settled by equations; that the eyes of angels too are turned away from the serene happiness of the righteous to bend with yearning pity on the poor, erring soul, wandering in the desert where no water is: that for angels too the misery of one casts so tremendous a shadow as to eclipse the bliss of ninety-nine.—*Elliot's Scenes of Clerical Life.*