

munity—the task, namely, of filling a church and saving souls in the face of such a standing antagonism, such a standing nuisance, as these old sheep or young sheep are to the whole community! Every failure, every empty pew, every case of defection from the ranks is laid to this poor sinner's charge. He lacks talent, or he does not visit, or his sermons are too long or too short (though the latter is seldom complained of in these times, for homœopathy is the dose wanted now a days), or something else is the matter with him; at all events, he it is, and no one else, who is made responsible for all the failures that have occurred in the church from the very first day until now.

You may speak and write as long as you please against PURGATORY, but here it is now, palpably, visibly existent among us; among us Protestants, among us Methodists, scorching one poor soul with its hot flames from day to day, and that soul is the "pastor's." He is chained to a block of granite, his hands manacled, his tongue tied, his lips parched, and the mockeries of withered, salted hypocrites are constantly ringing in his ears: "there is nothing doing, no souls saved, no increase of congregation; we are going to the dogs, and must soon shut up our church doors." Talk of saving souls in such relations! Salvation is a million miles away from such a church. No minister can save souls in it. No angel could. Jesus Christ himself could not until it repented and did its first works. The first elements of a christian church are wanting in it—love, unity, co-operation, zeal—all gone; and here, in this wilderness of thistles, "the pastor" is expected to make a garden like the garden of the Lord. Poor soul! poor manacled, grieved and sorrow stricken man! What think you now of a contract to break a thousand tons of stone to mend the public highways! or clearing and logging up a windfall, or a job of providing stovewood for the next season for a whole parish? Would it not be heaven upon earth to your miserable lot?

And, after all, we do not know but we ministers deserve the purgatory we sometimes get into. We have been so afraid of losing a member, especially if he be rich, so afraid of a "decrease"—and there is so much corruption in all the church, that some of them will lure to their fold any scoundrel who may leave or be expelled from another church, so only they can weaken a rival and strengthen themselves—that we are afraid of applying discipline, we are afraid of dealing with men according to their works, and thus men become hardened in their sins. Their backslidings are not healed. They hang about the neck of the church like a millstone, and that for years, and the only virtue which a minister can exercise under such circumstances is the virtue of exercising patience, and retiring as soon as he can from such an uncongenial field.

Now, we think it is about time to make a stand in some of these cases. It is about time to have "a strike;" about time to have a swarm; about time to turn out the drones, or to let them leave the hive and let the bees swarm. Painful as the process might be, we do not know of a process that would honor God more, or restore health to some dying churches, than to separate the precious from the vile, to say to the drones, "You eat our honey and you bring none. You sting and devour the bees, and stand in the way of all revival and all advance. The church stands before the community as bearing the ill repute which your deadness, formality and carnality fix upon it, and we want you either to mend or go." The thing must be done sooner or later, and why not have it done now? Twenty or thirty people whose hearts and souls are one, who are zealous, devoted and self-sacrificing, are worth hundreds in whom these qualities are wanting. If this cannot be done