

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

HELP US TO PROMOTE THE WORK OF CHRIST.

In the discharge of our work we have to do with four descriptions of people, and in dealing with each we stand in need of your assistance, namely, serious and humble Christians—disorderly walkers—persons under concern about salvation—and persons manifestly unconverted.

First : It may be supposed that in every Church of Christ there will be a considerable proportion of *serious and humble Christians*. Our work in respect of them is to feed them with the wholesome doctrine of the Word, and to teach them the mind of Christ in all things. The assistance which we ask of you, brethren, in this part of our ministry, is, that you would not only pray for us, but be free to impart to us the state of your minds, and whether our labours be edifying to you or not. It is not so much by a systematical statement and defence of Christian doctrines that believers are edified, as by those doctrines being applied to their respective cases. This is the way in which they are ordinarily introduced in the Scriptures, and in which they become "words in due season." But we cannot well preach to the cases of people unless we know them. Add to this, the *interest* which you discover in the things of God, has a more than ordinarily influence on our minds in the delivery of them. You cannot conceive the difference between addressing a people full of tender and affectionate attention, whose souls appear in their eyes, and answer, as it were, to the Word of God ; and preaching to those who are either half asleep, or their thoughts manifestly occupied by other things. By looking at the one, our hearts have expanded like the flowers before the morning sun ; thoughts have occurred, and sensations have been kindled, which the labours of the study could never have furnished. But, by observing the other, our spirits are contracted like the flowers by the damps of the evening, and thoughts which were interesting when alone have seemed to die as they proceeded from our lips.

Secondly : In every church we must expect a greater or less proportion of *disorderly walkers*. Our work, in respect of them, is to warn, admonish, and, if possible, to reclaim them ; or, if that cannot be, to separate them, lest the little leaven should leaven the whole lump. But in these cases, more than in many others, we stand in need of your assistance. It is not ministers only, but all "who are spiritual," that the apostle addresses on this subject ; and spiritual characters may always expect employment in restoring others in the spirit of meekness. It is of great importance to the well-being of a church that men are not wanting who will watch over one another in love, observe and counteract the first symptoms of declension, heal differences at an early period, and nip disturbances in the bud. By such means there will be but few things of a disagreeable nature which will require either the censures of the church or the interference of the pastor.

There will be instances, however, in which both the pastor and the church must interfere ; and here it is of the utmost consequence that they each preserve a right spirit, and act in concert. There are two errors in particular into which individuals have frequently fallen in these matters. One is a harsh and unfeeling conduct towards the offender, tending only to provoke his resentment, or to drive him to despair ; the other is that of siding with him, apologising for him, and carrying it so familiarly towards him in private as to induce him to think others who reprove him his enemies. Beware, brethren, of both these extremes, which, instead of assisting us in our work, would be doing the utmost to counteract us. We may almost as well abandon discipline as not act in concert. It was on this principle that the apostle enjoined it on the Corinthians "not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such a one, no not to eat."

Thirdly : In every Church of Christ we may hope to find some persons *inquiring after the way of salvation*. This may be the case much more at some some periods than at others ; but we may presume, from the promise of God to be with his servants, that the word of truth shall not be any length of time without effect. Our work in this case is to cherish con-

viction, and to direct the mind to the gospel remedy. But if, when men are inquiring the way to Zion, there be none but the minister to give them information, things must be low indeed. It might be expected that there should be as many persons capable of giving direction on this subject as there are serious Christians ; for who that has obtained mercy by believing in Jesus should be at a loss to recommend Him to another ? It is a matter of fact, however, that though, as in cases of bodily disease, advisers are seldom wanting ; yet, either for want of being interested in the matter, or sufficiently skilful in the word of righteousness, there are but few, comparatively, whose advice is of any value ; and this we apprehend to be one great cause of declension in many churches.

When a sinner begins to think of his condition, such questions as the following will often cross his mind : "Was there ever such a case as mine before ? Are there any people in the world who have been what I am, and who are now in the way to eternal life ? If there be, who are they ? Where are they ?" But if, while he is thinking what he must do to be saved, he neither sees nor hears anything among you which renders it probable that such was ever your concern—if, as soon as a sermon is ended, he sees merely an exchange of civilities, and, on leaving the place, observes that all the congregation immediately fall into conversation about worldly things, what can he think ? Either that there is nothing in religion, or, if there be, that he must seek elsewhere for it. The voice of a Christian Church to those who attend upon their ministry should be that of Moses to Hobab : "We are journeying to the place of which the Lord hath said, 'I will give it to you.' Come thou with us, and we will do thee good : for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Fourthly : There is in all congregations and neighbourhoods a considerable number of people who are *living in their sins*, and in a state of *unconcernedness about salvation*. Our work, in respect of them, is, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, to declare unto them their true character, to exhibit the Saviour as the only refuge, and to warn them to flee to Him from the wrath to come. In this also there are various ways in which you may greatly assist us. If, as heads of families, you were to inquire of your children and servants what they have heard and noticed in the Lord's day, you would often find occasion to second the impressions made by our labours. It is also of great consequence to be endued with that wisdom from above which dictates a word in season to men in our ordinary concerns with them. Far be it from us to recommend the fulsome practice of some professors, who are so full of what they call religion as to introduce it on all occasions, and that in a most offensive manner. Yet there is a way of dropping a hint to a good purpose.

You are acquainted with many who do not attend the preaching of the Word. If, by inviting them to go with you, an individual only should be caught, as we say, in the Gospel net, you would save a soul from death. Such examples have frequently occurred. It is an established law in the divine administration that men, both in good and evil, should in a very great degree draw and be drawn by each other. The ordinary way in which the knowledge of God is spread in the world is, by every man saying to his brother, "Know the Lord." It is a character of gospel times that "many shall go and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Add to this, by visiting your neighbours under affliction you would be furnished with many an opportunity for conversing with them to advantage. Men's consciences are commonly awake at such seasons, whatever they have been at others. It is as the month to the wild ass, in which they that seek her may find her.

Finally : Enable us to use strong language when recommending the Gospel by its holy and happy effects. Unbelievers constantly object to the doctrine of grace as licentious ; and, if they can refer to your unworthy conduct, they will be confirmed, and we shall find it impossible to vindicate the truth of God without disowning such conduct, and it may be you, on account of it : but if we can appeal to the upright, the temperate, the peaceable, the benevolent, the holy lives of those among whom we labour, it will be of more weight than a volume of reasonings, and have a greater influence on the consciences of men. A con-

gregation composed of kind and generous masters, diligent and faithful servants, affectionate husbands, obedient wives, tender parents, dutiful children, and loyal subjects, will be to a minister what children of the youth are said to be to a parent : *As arrows in the hand of a mighty man* : "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."—*And. Fuller.*

A SCOTCH STUDENT'S STORY.

On a beautiful summer day, last year, I went on board a steamer at Leith for Rotterdam. The cabin was filled with passengers, some of them very pleasant people, as I afterwards found ; but from among them I singled out one whose gentlemanly appearance and bearing attracted me. I accosted him, and found that his looks did not falsify his appearance. He seemed in very delicate health, which might be the cause of his extreme melancholy. He appeared about my own age, and there was something in his face, especially in his dark, flashing eyes, and in the tones of his voice that reminded me of some one I had seen before.

We had a pleasant conversation down the Frith till within sight of Dunbar, when he suddenly left me, went down into the cabin, and I did not see him again that night, nor till late next day, which was bright and calm—a true Sabbath—to the cheering influences of which, which whether external or internal, the faces of all seemed to respond, except his, which looked haggard and doubly miserable in the surrounding cheerfulness. My attempts to draw him into conversation were vain. "Yes," or "no," was all his answer. He sometimes leaned over the bulwark, looking at the calm, deep sea. Once I saw him turn round to the deck. Large drops of perspiration stood on his face, and his eyes had an unnatural, glassy stare.

At the dinner table I sat opposite to him. He seemed more composed, but ate almost nothing. Near the end a gentleman beside him asked for a glass of brandy. A strange light gleamed from his eyes. He arose with a deprecating gesture, and hurried on deck. Late in the evening a gentle breeze sprang up, which raised long, swelling waves, and all the passengers, including the invalid, retired to their berths. I lay on the poop, enjoying the cool breeze, the gentle heave of the ship, and the play of light and shadow on the water as the moon shot her pale ray across it, or was obscured by the passing cloud. My thoughts naturally turned to the invalid. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it struck me that it was Roberts. But, oh ! how changed from the rosy, vigorous schoolboy ! As I mused, a figure glided out of the cabin door to the side of the ship, and jumped overboard.

"Man overboard !" I cried. "Reverse the screw," said one to the engine man. "Lower the boat to the starboard quarter," cried the mate.

The whole passed in a moment. The moon shone out clear as day, and in five minutes the man was on board. It was the invalid. He was stripped on deck and carried to the captain's cabin, where he soon recovered. It was Roberts. I introduced myself next morning. He was subject to somnambulism from his weak, nervous state, and had not awakened last night till he was in the water. He was going to the water cure establishment on the Righi, his health having been completely shattered by his heavy duties, first as popular assistant of a city clergyman, and then as the incumbent of a large country parish. I intended remaining a fortnight in Belgium, and we parted in Rotterdam, expecting to meet again on the Righi.

On Saturday evening I left Cologne for Bonn. As it was late when I got to the Trierscher Hof at Bonn, after taking some refreshment and writing my name in the hotel book, I retired to my room. I was writing when the landlord knocked and came in. "There is in the house, sir," said he, "a countryman of yours, very ill—dangerously so, the doctor says ; we asked the English clergyman here to come, but the gentleman would not see him. Only to-night, when I told him that a Mr. Cameron had come, he was anxious to see you." "Certainly," I said, "I'll go," and followed him up to a room nearly above my own.

Who could it be ? I entered, and there on the bed lay Roberts. His former look, miserable as it was, was calmness and peace compared with his present—was full of terror and despair. The paroxysms of his disease were past, and I feared this was but a lucid