

ioners may be divided into two classes. This division is neither fanciful nor arbitrary, but one which is made by the facts. In every parish the world over these two classes are present. One class is composed of the faithful people who are a help and an ornament in the Church, and whose praise is in the hearts and on the lips of all who know them. They are a precious comfort to the rector and mainstay of the parish. They are always in their places during divine service unless hindered by some necessity, ready ever with aid and sympathy and appreciativeness, and invariably to be depended upon to support every noble undertaking. In them we have the valuable parishioners.

"The other class consists of those who, though their names are on the roll of communicants and the list of pew-holders, are of no real account to their parish. Indeed the parish is scarcely theirs except in a most remote sense. Nothing pertaining to their Church arouses their interest. At the best they are spectators, and not very inspiring ones either. They do not know what is going on, and they do not care. No one expects them to do anything. When parochial schemes and possibilities are canvassed, they—their purses, co-operation, and even their good wishes—are left out of their calculations just as though the individuals were not in the land of the living. They are never counted upon for any good word or work. If they were only zeros, the case would not be so distressing, but they are a dead weight on the parish, and by their example they hamper and hinder the glorious work of saving souls and blessing the world. Let us not characterize them except to say that they are not valuable parishioners."

But why cannot we all be valuable parishioners, "helpers in Christ Jesus"? There is work for all, and power is always furnished freely to do it. The Lord never calls a man to any work, never by His providence puts the Christian in the way of work, without at the same time giving him the power to do it. Responsibility, as a lady missionary recently explained, is the "response"

we make to the "ability." It is the response you make or the attitude you take to the ability offered by Christ. Without Him we can do nothing, but abiding in Him we can do all things. So we may all be "helpers in Christ Jesus." Office-bearers of the Church, who undertake their respective duties from love to Christ, His people, and cause, and faithfully, diligently discharge these duties, are helpers. Christian Sabbath-school teachers are helpers. All who take part in "works of faith and labors of love" for the good of souls and the advancement of Christ's kingdom are helpers. Parents who endeavor to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" are helpers. All religious professors, in so far as they live consistent Christian lives in the family, the Church, and the world, are helpers.

Do you ask how we can render help?

(1) By the believing acceptance of Christ for our own personal salvation. Faith is the primary grace of the Christian life; no mere belief in the existence and perfections and providence of God, and in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible, but "like precious faith," as Peter expresses it, "in the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." This is the fundamental grace, because it builds on the Foundation (I. Cor. iii. 11). This is the Leader of the Christian choir. Help from any other than believers is like that of Noah's carpenters. It is taking part in putting up the scaffolding of salvation while not ourselves entering the ark. Unbelieving, unsaved persons may hinder, but cannot help, true spiritual work.

(2) By our open confession of Christ in all appointed ways. "Add to your faith virtue," *i.e.*, manly courage, in confessing Christ (II. Pet. ii. 5). "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10).

(3) By regular and as far as possible full attendance upon public worship, and by the earnestness with which we engage in all religious exercises. "I like to come to church," said a now deceased

Christian, "for I have spent many a happy hour there, and it is one way of honoring God." Alike under the Old and New Testament dispensations, "holy convocations" were appointed as a necessary part of our religion (Lev. xxiii. 3; Num. xxviii. 25; Heb. x. 24, 25). They were attended by our great Exemplar, and He who knows our frame has instituted them as a necessary means of our spiritual well-being, and has promised to meet with and bless all who believingly attend them (Exod. xxix. 43; Ps. lxxxvii. 2-5; Matt. xviii. 20). If, then, we would honor God by recognizing His authority and bearing testimony for Him in the midst of indifferentists and errorists; if we would follow the example of our Lord, and seek our own personal edification and set a good example to all around us, we must give constant, earnest, and, as far as possible, complete attendance upon public worship.

(4) By the general consistency of our Christian conduct. To the primary grace of faith we are enjoined to add not only virtue or courage, but also knowledge—knowledge especially of the divine mind and will—temperance or self-mastery, and indeed the whole choir of Christian graces. By such a life we sing a song of perpetual praise to our Redeemer, we preach a sermon all through the week which is being ever and anon blessed to the salvation of souls (Acts ix. 31). When the native converts of Madagascar presented themselves for baptism, they were asked, "What first led you to think of becoming Christians; was it some sermon or address, or the reading of God's word?" The answer usually given was: "It was the changed lives of those who had become Christians." This is as it should be. The best commendation of a tree is the quality of the fruit which it bears; and the best testimony to the power and purity of the Gospel is the true and noble character which it produces. This will do more to convince of the reality of Christianity than either books or speech. What kind of testimony do you bear for Jesus? Is your life a living epistle in which men read of the possibility of being washed, justified, and sanctified?