

willing to work for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom and the good of their fellow-creatures. Let the society meet regularly, say in the Church or Vestry, immediately after the forenoon service, every Sabbath. Let the Minister or Missionary meet with them and offer up prayer for the divine blessing on the work. Then let the members of the society go forth two and two together to their respective districts, furnished with such tracts and books as they may deem best suited to the circumstances of the various families they are to visit. We select the interval on the Sabbath for making these stated visits, because we think it the most suitable time, both for the visitors and the visited. Many members of our congregations have to come a considerable distance to Church, and are at a loss what to make of themselves during the interval. To such the visiting of a few poor families during that time would be profitable employment, and they would be the more likely to continue it, as it would not interfere with their week-day avocations. No other time would be so suitable and convenient. The family are usually all at home on the Sabbath, and are more disposed to read a tract or listen to pious counsel, than at any other time. It has been suggested that they might be visited for an hour or two on the week-day evenings. I have tried this, and found the time most inconvenient. In one house the family were just sitting down to supper, and appeared annoyed at seeing a visitor at so late an hour. In another the husband was a porter on the quay, and was out waiting the arrival of a vessel. In a third the two sons were engineers, and working till 12 o'clock at night to get a vessel off the stocks. In another the two daughters were employed in a warehouse, and working two hours later than usual, to complete an order. From these and other causes, I have rarely found the evening of a week-day a suitable time for visiting, and an unwelcome visit often does more injury than good.

I have said that the stated visit should at first be made every Sabbath, but, after some reformation has been made in a locality, and the circumstances of each family thoroughly known, it may be found that a visit once a month will be sufficient. The success of this plan very much depends upon the conduct of the visitors. Should a lady, for example, go into the house of a poor woman, stand in the middle of the floor, and point the tip of her parasol to a dirty, ragged child in the corner, and demand, in a tone of conscious superiority, why that child was not sent to school, the feelings of the mother would revolt at such rudeness, and the visit would be worse than useless. If we would make our visits to the poor truly profitable, we must address them in the language of kindness; we must speak to them as fellow creatures possessed of the same common humanity, as our equals in the sight of God, and inferior only in external circumstances. The grand object of every visit should be the temporal and eternal interests of the family; if this is kept steadily in view, plans for its accomplishment will readily suggest themselves on the spot. Kind inquiry should be made into the condition of the family; among other things, whether the children are attending week-day and Sabbath-schools, and whether the parents attend any place of worship. If they are quite unable to pay for the education of their children, they should be put upon the Sessional free roll. Should they, however, be able to pay anything at all, even a penny a week for each child, they should be exhorted to do so, as they will appreciate the

more what they pay something for. If the parents are not in the habit of attending any place of worship, they should be told of the nearest Missionary meeting or of the nearest Church in which there is evening sermon, and affectionately exhorted to attend.

Should any plead their inability to attend Church for want of proper clothing, means should be employed to assist them in procuring clothing. While we would most earnestly guard the visitors against indiscriminate charity, still they ought to have the power of granting relief in cases of extreme want; for, without this, prayers and exhortations to a starving family could only appear a solemn mockery.

In cases of sickness or distress, the visitors should read a few appropriate passages of Scripture and pray; or, if they are too timid for the latter duty, let them immediately bring the case under the notice of the Elder, Missionary or Minister.

Before leaving the house, the visitor should always leave a tract. These tracts are powerful instruments under God for good. A short, pointed tract of two pages, has often done what volumes of well-reasoned writing and the most powerful sermons had failed to do.

In order to keep up the interest of the visitors and encourage them in their labors of love, quarterly meetings of the society should be held. At these meetings the Minister should always, if possible, preside. After engaging in devotional exercises and the communication of some interesting portion of Missionary intelligence, he should ask each visitor—male and female—to give an account of their respective districts, and to mention anything interesting that might have occurred in it. By this means many useful suggestions would be given—each member would be made acquainted with the experience of all the rest, and the Missionary spirit would be cherished and fostered. In order to render this system complete there should be, in every destitute locality, a Mission Station or Church, to which the people might be invited to attend public worship. This station should be supplied, not by a layman, but by a Missionary regularly qualified and authorized to preach the Gospel. This would give the people full confidence in his expositions and addresses.

With the view of encouraging the Missionary, and forming a link between the Mission Station and the Church, the Parish Minister, however, should officiate there frequently. By this means the people would be made acquainted with the Minister, and many of them would be led to become members of the Church. There should also be, in connexion with every Parish Church, and under the management of this society, a library or depository of suitable tracts and books, a Dorcas society and a savings bank, and of course it is understood that there are Sabbath and week-day schools.

By this plan, it is not intended to supersede any existing agency for the evangelization of the masses, but rather to assist and encourage these agencies in so far as they are worthy of assistance and encouragement; and the advantages of such a plan as this are various. It opens up a proper channel for the Christian and benevolent exertions of the members of the Church. It gives every one who desires to work for the cause of Christ, an opportunity. Hitherto our people have only been asked to give; by this plan we also ask them to do. It brings the condition of every family and individual in the parish under the notice of the Kirk Session.

It is the only plan by which a large and des-

titute parish can be thoroughly superintended—existing agencies are far too limited. It brings the rich and the poor, the church-going and the non-church-going, frequently together, and thus soothes down prejudices and promotes Christian sympathy. This is much needed. The very distance at which the rich keep themselves from the poor, engenders hostile feelings in the bosoms of the latter, and fills them with ranking and suspicious imaginations. The rich, on the other hand, are too apt to look on all the poor as profligate, and to ascribe to vice what should rather be ascribed to the overruling Providence of that God who maketh rich and who maketh poor, who exalteth one and debaseth another. But by bringing the two classes together to speak of a common depravity and a common salvation, mis-understandings are removed—the sympathies of the rich are drawn out toward the poor, and the gratitude of the poor toward the rich, a way of access is thus gained to the hearts of the poor—they learn to see that the rich are really sincere in their desire to promote their welfare—and the exhortations addressed to them come home with a hundred times more force than the precepts of a paid agent ever could do. It is a cheap plan. I know that it will be said of this as it may be said of almost any other scheme: "All very well in theory, but it will not work in practice;" I trust, however, that none will make the remark unless they have really tried the practice and found it to fail. It is not (with me) altogether a theory; I have tried it and found, at least, all the success that, in my circumstances, I anticipated. I have no doubt there are many members of our congregations who would shrink from the very idea of entering the dwellings of the poor, but I have no doubt there are others more imbued with the spirit of their master, who would readily give their aid to such a plan if it were once fairly organized; nay, I do not believe that any true Christian who is able for the work, could refuse. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this," saith the Apostle JAMES, "to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction." Not that these two classes only are to be visited, but that their claims on our benevolent attentions are peculiarly strong. No man who takes the Bible as his rule of life, can lay his hand upon his breast and say that he has complied with the duty enjoined in this text, when he has merely contributed a few shillings to have it done by proxy. The text is general, and clearly implies that the duty is binding on all. No true Christian, however high his rank, could feel himself degraded by engaging in this God-like employment. What was the plan devised by God for slaying the natural enmity of the human heart, and reconciling the world unto Himself? It was just by exhibiting the highest love for the world by giving His Son to die for it. So I believe, if ever the world is to be converted—if the careless are to be aroused—if the dead in sin are to be made alive again—Christ—if the outcast are to be brought into the fold of the Great Shepherd—the principal means, under God, will be the manifestation of this spirit of love, on the part of His people, a love which will not evaporate in mere words, nor exhaust itself in contributions, but follow the example of the SAVIOUR, "Going about, continually doing good."

"We never know the true value of friendship while they live. We are too sensitive to their faults; when we have lost them, we only see their virtues."—Gusset at Truth.