

to procure the return of the draft. 'My life,' replied Mr. Fletcher, 'is secure in the Protection of the Almighty Power who guards it; nor will He suffer it to be the forfeit of my integrity and of your rashness.'

This firmness drew from the other the observation, that his uncle De Gons, though an old soldier, was more afraid of death than he was. 'Afraid of death!' rejoined Mr. Fletcher, "do you think I have been twenty-five years the minister of the Lord of life, to be afraid of death now? No, Sir, thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory! It is for you to fear death, who have every reason to fear it. You are a gamester and a cheat, yet call yourself a gentleman! You are a seducer of female innocence, and still you say you are a gentleman! You are a duellist, and your hand is red with your brother's blood, and for this you style yourself a man of honour! Look there, Sir, look there! See, the broad eye of Heaven is fixed upon us! Tremble in the presence of your Maker, who can, in a moment, kill your body, and forever punish your soul in hell! By this time the unhappy man was pale; he trembled alternately with fear and passion; he threatened, he argued, he entreated. Sometimes he withdrew the pistol, and, fixing his back against the door, stood as a sentinel to prevent all egress; and at other times he closed on his uncle, threatening instant death. Under these perilous circumstances, Mr. Fletcher gave no alarm to the family, sought for no weapon, attempted neither escape nor manual opposition. He conversed with calmness; and, at length, perceiving that the young man was affected, addressed him in language truly paternal, until he had fairly disarmed and subdued him. 'I cannot,' said he, 'return my brother's draft; yet I feel for the distress in which you have so thoughtlessly involved yourself, and will endeavour to relieve it. My brother De Gons, at my request, will, I am sure, voluntarily give you a hundred crowns. I will do the same. Perhaps my brother Henry will do as much; and I hope your other family will make up the sum among them.' He then prayed with him, and for him."

By Mr. Fletcher's kind mediation the sum was made up; he has, however, been highly censured for this noble action. Let it be remembered that the exposure was not rash and unwonted, but firmness in the moment of exigency—firmness in the reliance of the voice that rolled the stars along, and spake the promises.—*Encyclopedia of Facts, &c., in support of Universal Peace.*

FAULTS IN THE CONGREGATION.

By Heman Humphrey, D. D.

A fault which I have sometimes noticed; and which I feel constrained to mention, is lingering about the doors and in the porch of the sanctuary, till after the services have commenced. It is less than a year, by half, since I made my way through a crowd of this sort, both morning and afternoon, in a very respectable town, where I was called to supply the vacant pulpit for a single Sabbath. I was surprised, as I walked up the aisle, to see how few of the congregation were in the house. After waiting much longer than I used to do, when I had a pulpit of my own, I commenced. When the crowd of men and boys without, found that "meeting was begun," they began to come "stringing along in," as they opened and shut the doors every moment, and by the time the first singing was through, they had nearly all got their places; though if my memory serves me, there were some stragglers afterwards. I was so much disturbed by it that I made some inquiries, and was told, that this had been the habit of a considerable part of the congregation, for many years. I have witnessed the same faults of lingering till the preacher had gone in elsewhere, but nowhere, I think in an equal degree.

Need I say, that it is a habit, for which there is no excuse? Why should any body stop at the door, or loiter in the porch when the hour of public worship has arrived? It indicates great thoughtlessness and irreverence. No one who goes to the house of God from his closet, and desires to be told the beauty of the Lord in his temple, will think of stopping any where, till he sits down in his pew and lifts up his heart for a blessing. It requires no words to show, that every member of the congregation ought, if possible, to be in the house as soon at least as the minister himself, that there may be perfect stillness when he commences, and that all may worship without distraction.

Another fault, is spending the intermission in worldly, vain and unprofitable conversation. In large country parishes, many of the families live quite too remote from the house of God, to go home and return between the services. But many, if I mistake not, are in the habit of remaining, who might in good weather, easily go and return, if they chose; and some allow their boys and girls to stay, who would be much safer to be taken home and kept under the eye of their parents. Many take the hour or two, "between meetings" to discuss politics, to hear and retail the news, to talk about the weather, to inquire about the markets, to plan visits, to collect and retail all the current gossip, &c. &c. How strangely out of place and out of season is such conversation? How unprofitable, how sinful! I hope it is not common for professors of religion to indulge themselves in this manner, and yet, I fear there are many whose consciences will testify they are not sufficiently careful. How can they expect a blessing upon the word in the afternoon, if they get their minds filled with the world during the intermission? Besides, the example is bad, extremely bad. Whatever those who make no pretensions to piety see members of the church do, they will feel quite safe in doing themselves, and in taking much greater liberties.

Adjusting the dress, putting on over-coats, children's bonnets, tippets, &c., during the last singing, is another fault, to which many in almost every congregation, are, perhaps, unconsciously addicted. They and their neighbours in half the pews around them, have so long been in the habit of making these early preparations for leaving the house, that the impropriety never occurs to them. But let them think a moment. Is not singing as much an act of worship as praying, and can their thoughts and hearts be in either, while they are so busy in arranging their wardrobe, as not to be behind the foremost in leaving their pews? Others, if you will notice, who though not quite so much in a hurry, evidently do not hear a word of the benediction, so busy are they in looking for their hats, buttoning up their coats, and getting ready for an early start. That there is the least necessity for any such haste, no one can plead, and of course, that it is an inexcusable encroachment upon the solemnity and decencies of public worship, who will dare to question? And after all, what is gained by it? How much sooner do these loiterers in coming, and bustlers in going, reach the porch, by elbowing their way through the crowd, than if they waited till the aisles were clear?

Another fault with which some very worthy members of the congregation are chargeable, is bowing to every acquaintance as they are leaving the sanctuary; and addressing one and another, with that easy familiarity, which is so amiable and acceptable in a social party of friends. I am no advocate for a sour and repulsive sanctimoniousness any where. A kind recognition of those who happen to be about us after the service is closed, promotes good fellowship without interrupting those religious trains of thought with which we ought always to leave the house of God. How very different this is from that easy and smiling familiarity which is directly calculated to banish all serious reflections from the mind, I need not stop to show.

Another fault which every preacher must have noticed more or less, is leaving the house in the midst of the service. While he is in the most impressive part of his discourse, some sturdy boy will suddenly start from his pew in the gallery, and with his heavy cow-hides make the floor tremble as he marches the whole length of the church to the stairs and makes his clattering, slamming exit. What preacher has not been thus annoyed and disconcerted either at home or abroad, through the neglect of parents who ought to teach their children better, and who might keep them quietly in their places if they would. For myself, when such a disturbance happens, I cannot help stopping and eyeing the culprit as long as he is in sight, and thus giving him the full advantage of hearing all the noise that he makes, and if it is not presuming too much, I would recommend to my brethren to try the same experiment. I think the boy will either stay at home or keep quiet for a Sabbath or two at least.

The mention of one fault more, will be enough for the present: Did you never see a dozen or twenty boys, (I will call them, though some of them are old and tall enough to be men,) standing near the doors with their hats in their hands, and ready to rush down stairs at the hazard of their necks, ere the blessing is half pronounced from the pulpit? I am sure I have, and that