

weakness of the flesh to help make empty seats."

They all smiled, for in their kingdom "lying" was a great compliment.

"I have a way of keeping people home from church, and they feel perfectly innocent about it," said one. "I induce them to have company or go visiting on Sabbath. Of course, this takes their minds off sacred things to begin with, and puts them on dressing and eating. Hired girls, mothers, and older sisters, have to stay at home to get big dinners. Many of the guests lose church to be in time for dinner."

"Anything to make empty seats," approved the king. "These people cannot be tempted by Sabbath excursions, but they miss God's house just as easily in this way."

"To make ladies feel that their servants need no Sabbath privileges is good," suggested one.

"Very true," said his superior. "As long as we can get Christian people to cause or allow men and women to work during their church hours we can keep many empty seats in churches, and men and women away from God."

"I am the weather imp," said one gloomy fellow. "I go around persuading people it is going to rain, or it is too cold, too damp, or too hot to venture out to church. It is enough to make even your gloomy majesty laugh to see these same people start out the next day in wind and weather. One would think it a sin to carry umbrellas and wear gum coats to church."

"Confidentially," answered the king, "when I find a Christian who has no more concern about the weather Sabbath than Monday—determined to make as much effort for spiritual gain as he would for worldly profit—I just give him up. It's no use to try to drag back the man or woman who goes to God's house in all kinds of weather."

"I'm able to do a great deal with some of the ladies of the congregation," spoke up the imp labeled Fashion of this World. "I can make some people stay at home because the new hat did not come, or because their clothes are out of style, or they have not gotten a new cloak."

"I have a better scheme than that," said another. "These people you keep away are indifferent—generally good-for nothing folks, who are hardly worth getting into the kingdom of his Satanic majesty, but I have a plan that empties seats of the workers of the church."

"That's just what I want," said the king.

"I make these people overwork on Saturdays. For instance, I make some good man the preacher depends upon, or some devout Sabbath-school teacher, to make Saturday the busiest day in the week. I just keep him rushed with neglected things till late at night, and then he oversleeps or is sick the next day, and can't get out, or, if he goes, he is too tired and sleepy to take part, or even listen."

"Splendid plan!" cried Satan.

"Yes, it works well with delicate women. If they can clean house, or have Saturday night company, they can be kept home without knowing that they have broken the Sabbath the day before. A church party late Saturday night helps with empty seats."

"You are doing finely, my imps," his majesty said, warmly—for his breath was a flame of fire. "Preachers may work and pray over their sermons all the week, but there will be no results in preaching to empty seats. One of the most important things we have to consider is how to keep people away from churches on Sabbath. Your plans are excellent, but I must suggest another good point. All preachers have human imperfections—some fault of manner or speech. Get Christians to criticise their pastor, especially before their children. This keeps the young people from wanting to be church members. If you can stir up a spirit of fault finding against the preacher or among the members, it will help to empty seats. People who get mad at each other do not care to go to church together. If the seats are empty, the minister may be a saint and preach like an angel to no purpose."

See the result of your labor on High Street church to-day. Half of the seats are empty. Not only did the two hundred people that staid at home lose a blessing, but each empty seat did its work against the Lord's kingdom. The preacher made unusual preparation, and went with his heart on fire, but the empty seats chilled him and he did poorly. Several strangers had dropped in with letters, but they were disappointed at the small attendance, and took their letters home, and some will not take them any place. There was a special collection, but the best givers were away, so it was a failure.

It isn't a smart preacher, nor a rich congregation, nor a good location, nor a paid choir that makes a successful church. It is the church members always being there that draws in the unconverted and makes an eloquent preacher. As soon as a Christian begins to stay at home, from one excuse or another, I know I have a mortgage on his soul, which, if he does not shake off, I will foreclose in the judgment day."

"You have none on mine!" cried Mrs. Ckark, who had been listening with bated breath, "I'll go to church, if only to defeat you."

"What's the matter, dear?" asked the doctor. "Have you been dreaming?"

"Perhaps so; but I'm going to church if I get to my seat just in time for the benediction. I'll cheat Satan from this day out of one empty seat."

And she has kept her word and influenced many others to let nothing trilling keep them from God's house; and one "down town" church has begun to grow, and will soon be a great power to God, because of no "empty seats."—Northwestern Christian Advocate.