

it will aggravate your condemnation in the day of judgment, if, under a faithful ministry, and in the midst of light, you have remained in darkness,—either despising the great salvation of God, or shunning the light, lest your deeds should be reproved.

How much may the godly, in a congregation, stimulate and encourage their pastor to increased efforts by their eager hungering and thirsting after the bread and water of life, by their regular and interested waiting upon his ministration of Word and ordinance in the House of God, by their ever keeping before him and pressing upon him the wants and cravings of their souls. He will thus feel a deeper interest in their state, be more anxious to meet all their wants, and be able to dispense to each instruction, advice, encouragement and consolation, as they severally require,—for such an one cannot see the spiritually ignorant and destitute perishing for lack of instruction, or the alarmed and distressed needing comfort, without exerting himself to afford relief, any more than a benevolent heart can behold poverty, sickness, or suffering in the world, without an attempt to alleviate or remove it.

Do not accustom yourselves, my brethren, to be too critical about the preaching of your pastor, in the mere ornaments of style and manner. If the truths of God's word be fully, faithfully, clearly, and earnestly pressed upon you, many defects otherwise may be overlooked. The truly hungering soul seeks food, and, if wholesome food be supplied, it will easily dispense with dainties. The most gifted discourses, without Christ, or with Christ merely in the background, will not satisfy the man who is intent upon his salvation; but if Christ be presented in all the rich treasures of His grace, to the free acceptance of sinners, as their Saviour, in the experience of His exceeding preciousness,—all else will sink into comparative insignificance. When men are very nice about the dainties of the Gospel feast, it is to be suspected that they have but little relish for the simple bread and water of life.