

instances "conferences" have been held with chosen representatives of the non-church-going classes, with the view of ascertaining the causes which have estranged them from the sanctuary.

Most of these efforts have been re-produced in this country, and with what we must account a fair measure of success, when we consider the limited amount of means at the disposal of those who have conducted them. But yet, who that sees the multitudes of men and women in every community to whom the Sabbath is a day of pleasure-seeking, if not of drunken carousal, and for whom there might as well be no gospel of salvation, or house of prayer, can help asking himself, will these people ever be reached by existing agencies? Is there not still another something "missing," without which missions and societies will be multiplied in vain?

Without in anywise intending to disparage organized and paid agencies of a religious and benevolent character, we must confess our conviction that no such efforts will ever meet the case. Our feeling in sight of them all is like that of the disciples in the presence of the four thousand men who were to be fed with the five barley-loaves, and two small fishes,—“What are they among so many?” And even though they should be almost indefinitely multiplied, our hope with regard to the result would be but slightly increased. And for this reason; it was never the design of the Head of the Church that His servants should do their work by *proxies* however generously they may pay them. The minister of the gospel is no proxy: he does only his own work, and neither he, nor any other man can ever do both his own work, and that of his neighbour. “Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel,” says Paul; but the very same woe rests upon the head of every unfaithful servant, according to the opportunities he has enjoyed, but misimproved, in the vineyard of the great Husbandman.

This idea that we may obtain a receipt in full, absolving us from all further demand upon our services by, *paying somebody else* to perform them for us, is a most false and mischievous one. Hardly anything does more to damage the spiritual life of a church, or to hinder its progress. The soul cannot prosper and be in health any more than the body can, without a proper exercise of its divinely given faculties and powers. Prayer becomes a meaningless form, and not unfrequently ceases altogether, where it is unaccompanied by personal effort. “God is not mocked,” and it scarcely requires His all-seeing eye to see through the hypocrisy that prays long and loud for the spread of His kingdom, and yet never lifts a finger to help it forward. “Father, why don't you answer your own prayers?” once enquired a child, as he saw his father turn away the poor from his door unrelieved, just after having asked the Lord to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry. And so we might say to many Christian professors who pray much and do little; or, to use one of Mr. Beecher's expressive phrases, who “pray *cream* and live *skim-milk*.” One can understand, and almost pardon the antipathy of the Plymouth Brotherhood to everything in the shape of organized philanthropic