

course of pastoral visitations, and to get the example by restoring the good old custom of *Congregational Catechising*.

Ahly. Feeling the importance of maternal influence, if rightly exerted, we would class *Maternal Associations* amongst the instrumentalities which may be of material use in the prevention of the evil in question which we deeply deplore. These have been tried with no little success in the old Country and the adjoining Republic.—Mothers come under a solemn engagement to pray with and for their offspring. They meet more or less frequently to converse on their common duties, trials and responsibilities—to stir one another up by way of remembrance, to read suitable extracts from approved works, and to send up to heaven their united supplications. The introduction of such associations amongst ourselves, with such modifications as may be thought advisable, might tend to secure a more hearty co-operation on the part of this most influential portion of the community in the godly upbringing of the young.

5thly. The *Sabbath School* and *Bible Class*, of course, cannot be lost sight of. More system, and adaptation to circumstances, might with advantage be employed in the management of both.

Ministers, in addition to stately attending and addressing the children on the subject of the lesson, on *Missionary* topics, and others of general interest, would do well to have a regular sermon say once a quarter, for their special benefit. This has already been tried and found beneficial in arresting and arousing the young, and by bringing the school directly under the eye of the whole church, to keep up that bond of connection between them which should never be broken. Parents should be earnestly and affectionately exhorted to look diligently after the attendance of their children—to discountenance irregularity, to superintend the learning of their lessons, and the reading of the library books, occasionally to inspect the school, and studiously to avoid transferring to the shoulders of the teacher a responsibility which is peculiarly their own.

Growth. Zeal and zeal might be infused into our *Bible Classes*, by more copious references to *Scripture*, *History*, *Biography*, *Geography*, *Chronology*, *Antiquities*, &c., to such illustrations as *Paxton* and *Kitto* may supply—giving out occasionally such subjects for written exercises as may be suggested by the lesson for the day—and meeting during the week for the older members to take up such general topics as might not so exactly accord with the sacredness of the Sabbath. How most effectually to excite the interest and enlist the influence of our *Young Men* is a subject to which we cannot too closely bend our minds.

We have dwelt thus long on this matter of the young, because we are convinced that parental indifference and filial insubordination rank amongst the most formidable obstacles with which we have to contend.

In what follows we shall endeavour to be brief, indicating a few additional sources and signs of religious declension, without indulging in lengthened illustration.

II.—*Prevalent Worldliness*.—This, of course, we have always to encounter, interwoven as it is with the very fibres of the human heart. But in this country and at this time, we feel its pernicious influence in a more than ordinary degree.

Generally speaking, people come here to better their worldly circumstances—to get on in the world—to make provision for the flesh. Unless much on their guard, they are, therefore, in great danger of putting the “all other things” before the “Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof.”

While rejoicing in the prospect presented to our noble Province of having her latent resources developed, and that elevated position assigned her in the scale of nations, which is certainly her due, we much fear that the very career of pros-

perity which is being opened to her, is proving the reverse of favorable to her growth in a religious point of view. A spirit of speculation is afloat—the tone of public morality is being lowered—lotteries, raffles, and other exceptionable modes of worldly aggrandizement are being introduced—mammon and policy too often carry it over God and principle. Men are *making haste to be rich*. One goes to his farm; another to his merchandise. The cattle—the crops—the transactions of the store and the exchange—the contents of the ledger and the daily journal—the turnings in the political compass—the ever shifting current of this world's affairs—these form, too generally, the staple of our ordinary conversation. Were a stranger to visit us from another planet, or a heathen from a remote corner of our own, it would be difficult for him to gather from it what religion we professed; or whether, in fact, we had any religion at all.

When the world is thus coming in on us like a flood, it becomes us to be in the attitude of lifting up a standard against it.

III.—*Public festive entertainments*.—By these we mean specially *balls*, and *private parties* on such an extensive scale as to differ but slightly from them. These have of late become more common in certain portions of our Presbytery, and have been countenanced even by some professing christians.

We feel convinced they have had a most deteriorating influence—wasting time, dissipating the mind, relaxing the morals, quenching the flame of piety, stifling the strivings of the spirit, wounding the heart of Christ, causing the enemy to speak reproachfully, and offering incense at the shrine of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

We are affectionately desirous of those who have named the name of Christ amongst us, that they would seriously consider that they are expected to depart from all iniquity, to avoid the very appearance of evil, to come out from the world and be separate, to keep themselves unspotted from the world, to be not conformed to the world, to be not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

IV.—*Unequal Yokes*.—We are perfectly aware that this is a delicate and difficult matter to deal with—but we have a deep conviction that the cause of Christ has seriously suffered from the religious element not obtaining greater prominence in the formation of matrimonial connections.

We do not refer merely to Protestants marrying Roman Catholics, (of which there are, alas! too many instances), we take it for granted that for such unnatural alliances there can be no excuse or extenuation. We refer also to the inconsiderateness with which many professors enter into relationships, on which such important interests hang, without having anything like a guarantee for the religious character of those with whom they are bound for life. In such cases instead of imparting their religion to those with whom they are thus united, it generally loses its hold on themselves. Promising blossoms are prematurely nipped: good resolutions fade insensibly away—the whole character receives a melancholy blight.

V.—*Irregular and desultory attendance on Ordinances*.—There are not a few who, on Sabbaths are *half-day hearers*, they would think it wrong entirely to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is—but if they are once a day at church they deem that quite sufficient—and that anything more is to be religious over much. On grounds far too trivial they occasionally absent themselves altogether.

The members of our churches are far too negligent in regard to attendance at *Weekly Meetings*. It is universally admitted that by them, much more accurately than by the Sabbath

services, may the spiritual state of a soul be determined. This is a very fair thermometer and touchstone.

Brought to this test, it must be acknowledged many of our congregations cannot be judged to be in a thriving state. Were we, like the primitive disciples, to take greater pleasure in meeting with one accord in prayer—then might we look for our great Master to stand in the midst and say Peace be unto you, and breathing on us to exclaim “Receive the Holy Ghost.” But, alas! too many follow in the footsteps of Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, *who sees not with them*. It is this breath we specially need—“Blow upon our garden,” “Breathe upon these slain.”

VI.—We may conclude with a few practical suggestions for our own personal and Presbyterial guidance.

1. That Ministers preach more frequently and systematically on the great subject of Revivals.

2. That on occasion of Meetings of Presbytery there be occasionally consecutive preaching as may be deemed expedient: subjects being selected at the previous meeting, and treated as far as possible in course. The special services connected with communion seasons might also be employed advantageously in this way. Some of the most fruitful Revivals in the Church have been associated with such seasons. And why may not the hallowed scenes of *Shotts*, *Cambuslang*, *Kilsyth*, and *New England* be repeated?

3. That we have more brotherly fellowship on the subject, not contenting ourselves with the mere mechanical getting through with the regular routine business—but devoting a specific portion of time, to plain, practical dealing with one another on the spiritual state of our respective charges.

4. That we resume our *Presbyterial visitations*, and in conferring with the office bearers of each Church, give greater prominence to the spiritual element, requiring from Sessions a report, at least once a year, as to the state of religion within their districts.

5. That Sessions meet more frequently, have fixed times for doing so—for uniformity sake—say the first Tuesday in every month, and that at such meetings conferences be held on this great subject, similar to those recommended for the Presbytery.

6. Special Meetings for anxious inquirers have in some instances been found very profitable.

The Minister intimates from the pulpit, that he will be at home, at a specified time, to converse with any who are anxious about their souls. Many, in this way, have been brought to a decision whose state of mind might never, otherwise, have come under a pastor's eye, and who, from want of needed directions at the crisis of their history, might have had convictions smothered, and serious impressions effaced.

7. A *Pastoral Address*, issued by authority of Synod, directing the attention of our people to some of the above or kindred topics, would be extremely desirable.

After all, however, we feel that Revival must commence in *our own souls*—ere we can expect it to spread to our people. A *Brotherly Address* similar to that sent forth by the Free Church of Scotland last year, might have a happy effect, or a single Address might embrace both—the one half being directed to office bearers, and the other to members.

While an influence certainly must rise from the pew to the pulpit, generally speaking, it descends first from the pulpit to the pew. “Like pastor like people,” is proverbial.

Let us, therefore, *take heed unto ourselves*, and thus will we be the better enabled to take heed unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers.

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