

MINISTRATIONS TO THE POOR.

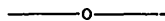
THE poor we have always with us. This seems to be a divine arrangement. No doubt it is for the best good of all that it should be so. The rich need the poor as well as the poor need the rich—in some respects more. At any rate both classes are in the world, and not only meet together but have to live together, and dependent on each other.

Suppose all were rich. What would become of the Community? Who would do the necessary work? Where would be the mechanics? Where the shopkeepers? Where the common laborers? But the poor alluded to at the head of this article are such as may be partially or entirely dependent upon others. To such all good people are called to minister. What shall be the ministrations, and how shall they be performed? The hungry must be fed; the naked must be clothed; and the sick must be cared for. We look first to the bodily wants—our blessed Lord did this. He gave food to the weary and famishing, and then told them of spiritual and heavenly things. It would simply be cruel to give a book or a tract to a poor, starving creature. Give bread first and then food for the soul.

But just here is a practical difficulty, especially in cities and large towns. Careless or indiscriminate assistance produces nothing but harm. It increases the evil we wish to correct. It should be our aim so to help others that they may feel that they are, as far as possible, helping themselves. The great end and aim of human ministers should be to lift up the fallen and help

the feeble to stand on their feet; hence the danger of asylums, refuges, poor houses, homes and the like, except in cases of absolute disability. Whenever our charities tend to pauperize the healthy and able-bodied, then they become an evil and do a world of mischief. As a rule we should endeavor to encourage an ambition to self-support. This is the wisest and best charity we can bestow. This will require time, patience, wisdom, suggestions, and often some money. The trouble is, if we meet with a case needing help, we are much more ready to give money, if we have it, than we are to give time or take trouble. Here is where the benevolent rich make their greatest mistakes. They give away money freely, but not in a way to help or strengthen.

We should become co-workers. The rich and the poor meet together, and are a mutual help. So far we have taken only what may be called the earthly view. But there is an earthly side to our Christianity. It has to do with the life that now is, the life in the flesh, as well as the life which is to be hereafter. Our religion embraces two worlds.—*See*



THE position of the Christian in the world is that of a lighthouse keeper. He is living in the midst of storms. But he is safe himself, and he knows that he is safe. He need have no fear about himself. There is everything to make him sure of safety. His proper mission therefore is, assured of his own stability on the Rock, to remember why he is placed there; to see that the light he is to give forth shines brightly, steadily and continuously; thus accomplishing the twofold end