

You give no encouragement to your poor neighbours to get their children taught. You would leave the minister to preach to a people incapable of understanding the usual conversation of an educated man, or seeing the force of the simplest illustration, and you wonder there is not more effect produced! You might as well sow wheat among brambles, and wonder that there was a thin crop!

2. *There is the Press.* People say that it is superseding the pulpit. It may be so in England, where there is much bad preaching and clever writing; but in Ireland, at least, the pulpit is tolerably secure, so far, from any such intruder. How many families of Protestants do not spend half-a-crown a year on sound reading? How many discourage to their utmost even the issues of the church? How many do not read them, even when they come as a gift? Parents who do not read, and get for their children sound, safe, and instructive reading, you might here help your minister, and you do not. If the people read, and grow in intelligence, a minister has some stimulus to cultivate and try to sanctify such a taste. If not, if every attempt to form reading habits be attended with discouragement and expense to himself, there is a very strong temptation to think that his people have little intelligence and little desire for it, and to act accordingly.

3. *The Sabbath-school.* Some say it is relieving lazy parents of their duty. Probably it is abused, like every other good thing. Some say it will be useless when the church members do their duty. But when church members do their duty, they will look to the godly training of the young of the flock, and of the young *outside* the flock, far more than they do now. Some say, that many teachers are incompetent. Perhaps so. Then, when *they* become parents they are not fit to train their own children, and will need help. So that, in any case, we believe the Sabbath-school is an institution for good, and will "stand." Now, my good friend, you can help the minister here. Can you teach? Go and offer yourself. Can you not? Go and learn. Have you children? Send them, or better still, *take* them. Have you not? Take out your neighbour's. Have you money? Give it to help such institutions. Do all you can for them. In many cases they are a minister's chief hope.

4. *The "Committee" or, properly, Deacons.* Their business is to attend to the temporal interests of the congregation, and the efficient discharge of their duties wonderfully helps the minister. But if stipend is not regularly collected, or paid,—if pews are not promptly and judiciously appropriated,—if the minister has sometimes to reckon the "collections,"—if, as in many rural districts, every pecuniary claim goes first to him, and *sometimes no farther*, the office of deacon might as well not have been instituted, for any help it is to him. There are congregations in which, in connection with the "Ministerial Support" movement, visiting Committees were organized half a year ago, consisting of many members, and they have not called on all the people till this day; and yet the minister *alone* is expected to pay *pastoral* visits to the whole congregation, along with all his other duties, during that time. Good reader, if you be a member of a Committee, where every one's business is done by no one but the minister, who should have nothing to do with it, arise, and rouse your neighbours, and help your minister.

5. *The Prayer-meeting.* There is no such thing in many cases. Ask the ministers "Why?" In a large proportion of cases the answer is, "I could not get people to come." No. They could not be induced to come together, and wait and watch one hour for a blessing on his labours for their soul's good. Verily, it is no wonder if his services be dull and uninteresting, and if they get little benefit. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." In many cases, ministers convert the prayer-meeting into a "lecture," and try to induce them thus to come. But how often the people will not be caught, even by this well meant guile! The consequence is, the minister begins to feel as if he alone in all the congregation longed for a blessing. His heart is discouraged, his hands hang down, and if great grace prevent not, he is likely to descend to the level of the mass, and to go through the services as coldly and formally as the people, expecting no benefit, and getting none.

The very same thing holds good of ministers' Bible classes, adult classes, young men's classes, and the like; and, good reader, if you do not go to the prayer-meeting begin at once, and if your minister has none, suggest it, and encourage it, and you help him greatly. The same thing holds of every other means he is led to attempt for your good, or that of your children or servants.