

Your Committee, however, rejoice to think that there is a growing sensitiveness as to this evil in the Church and community, and they look forward to the time when the Legislature, becoming more and more alive to it, will adopt some more effectual measure than it has ever yet done towards its suppression. They believe the time has come when God's people, instead of leaving it to be dealt with by Temperance Societies, should come forward themselves and take it in hand in some more specific way than by the general ministration of the Word, and give it a larger place in their public deliberations, a place corresponding to its magnitude and importance.

Meanwhile, your Committee would suggest that ministers fail not to give prominence to this subject in the pulpit, *warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect before God.*

With regard to *pastoral visitation*, there seems to be very great faithfulness in the case of all those congregations that have sent in reports. All the ministers visit at least once a year, and in many cases oftener. Reading and exposition of the Scriptures, with prayer, and sometimes catechising the children of the family, seem to be all but universal on such occasions. On this subject the Committee have nothing to suggest, save, perhaps, that there be more close and personal dealing with young men and women than that which the returns reveal. Often and often young persons that have grown up to manhood, unpledged to lead a Christian life, need to be taken aside by the minister—apart even from the family—and spoken to in reference to their souls; and there is many a young man standing at a distance, looking wistfully to a religious life, who would welcome a true man as an angel of God.

The question, making enquiry as to whether there is "any particular evil hindering the work of God in your congregation," has also met with a great variety of answers, but the prevailing answer is *worldliness*. One man speaks of a poor church, a miserable building, being a great evil in his way, another of a heavy debt on his church, another of intemperance, another of family quarrels, another of Sabbath visiting and desecration, but the great and overshadowing evil hindering the work of God, against which ministers and elders have to contend, is *worldliness*—haste to be rich, the love of distinction and the love of money, *which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* Such is the excitement of gain, the shortness of the seasons, and the hurry and bustle of life, that the mind is often unfitted to listen to religious truth or to profit even when it does listen; and so weary are many of the people on Sabbath morning, that they have difficulty in getting up in time for the service. To meet this great evil there is no antidote but the glorious Gospel, proclaimed by living men in daily communion with the Eternal God.

Your Committee were much interested with the suggestions which they have received as to the best means of securing the co-operation of the office-bearers of the Church and others, in Christian work. The general suggestion, and the one which weighs most with the Committee, is, that every congregation be divided into districts, over which elders should be appointed, and that the Kirk Sessions should meet frequently for conference and prayer. Managers also should have their districts assigned them, and the best business man in the congregation should be asked to act as Convener, and the Board of which he is Convener should publish an annual statement of their affairs and circulate the same widely through the whole congregation.

Such is a rapid review of the main facts brought under the notice of your Committee by these returns; and, while they cannot but mourn