

by saying that we cannot drag them along. But who draws us along—bears with us—even when we are very froward? “We cannot spend our time upon them.” But who bears patiently with us, saying, “Behold I stand at the door and knock”—waiting long days until we give Him full possession of *our* heart? Having by their conduct alienated themselves, we suppose that we are not bound to take further care of them. The exclamation, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” may not be audible, but the sentiment is imbedded in our practice.

We would appeal to you, beloved brethren and sisters, to exercise the spirit of the Master. Go to the wanderer from the fold, and beseech him to return. “Brethren, if any one among you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James v. 19, 20.) This exhortation is particularly appropriate to the subject. The “sinner” of the last verse is the “erring brother” of the preceding. If we bring him into the household again, the reward will be ours which is due the traveller who chafes into life his benumbed companion. Could we not approach the brother wasting his energies upon foolish indulgence, and make a kindly suggestion? Is it impossible to gain the ear of the man of business, who is neglecting his privileges, and forgetting his vows to God and his brethren, and invite his presence and his aid? Money these brethren sometimes freely supply, but money will not purchase exemption from the conflict. There are no substitutes in this warfare. They must be invited back to their Christian duties, and warmly urged to return to the Father’s house. We are aware that much discrimination and tact are needed in thus dealing with our cooled-off brethren, but we should be encouraged by the promised aid of the Holy Spirit. We may also rest assured that we will find a response wherever a spark of grace remains. These very brethren may be awaiting our approach.

At all events, let us bear them in mind: let us ponder their miserable condition. The instincts of brotherly affection will be aroused; we will cry unto the Lord on their behalf, and the joy will be ours, the peculiar, sacred satisfaction of seeing brethren who for long years have wasted their energies, return to the Shepherd and bishop of their souls, and to their place in His fold.