

We remember having seen, some years ago, a homily of the Church of England, upon the duty of "cleaning and repairing churches," which, always excepting its state-churchism, of course, we have often thought might be circulated to advantage in this country. There is a very prevalent notion, in many communities, that any sort of a building, in any sort of condition, will do for a chapel; and it is often this *laissez faire* feeling, more than actual inability, that prevents the people from building. Comfort and cheerfulness reign at home. Their own "ceiled houses" are clean, painted, and carpeted perhaps, but the chapel,—the wind whistles through the chattering window sash, and under the floor, till the worshippers shiver on their seats, and the flow of holy eloquence is frozen upon the preacher's lips; or, the rain has found its way in through the long-neglected roof, and the plastering has taken leave of the ceiling, never to be repaired again; or the congregation try to sing by the aid of a solitary tallow-candle, as we once saw them ludicrously attempting to sing—

"Shall we, whose souls are *lighted*, &c."

All is comfortless and repulsive, and it is not much to be wondered at if those who have no very strong drawings to the sanctuary, should find in this condition of things a reason for spending the Sabbath around their own blazing firesides, or those of their neighbours. The chapel is altogether too mean in their eyes to be regarded as the "House of God;" it is only the "meeting house," and they lose the reverence that ought to be felt for it as the place where, however humble, the Lord has promised to meet with those who gather together in His name. Our Puritan forefathers were wont to declare that a good sermon should be sufficient to keep any one warm; and our Baptist brethren with a similar strength of faith, were accustomed formerly to sing at their mid-winter immersions,

"Brethren, if your hearts be warm,
Ice and snow can do no harm."

But many of our hearers have no such spiritual preventives against taking cold, and for their sakes, if not for our own, we ought to see that the Lord's house is attractive and comfortable.

We are far from imagining, however, that the faults are all on one side of the house. An uncomfortable building and an unsociable people will thin a congregation, but so also will poor preaching, or pastoral neglect. That there should be regular visitation, more or less frequently, of every family in the congregation, there can be no doubt, and that it should be more frequent and more faithful than it is, there can be as little doubt, although no one can judge of the amount of time that should be devoted to it as well as the minister himself. But equally important is it that there should be an intelligent and faithful presentation of the gospel in public, and that there cannot be long together without careful study and preparation. Some preachers possess