

THE
WORKS
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AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

VOLUME EIGHTEENTH.

GLASGOW:
WILLIAM COLLINS, S. FREDERICK ST.
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ON
CHURCH EXTENSION:

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yet the island after all is a howling desert ; the town after all is a moral wilderness.

5. So much for the pulpit without the household duties of the clergyman. But these household duties admit of a most important subdivision, or rather might be classified into two species or modifications, the distinction between which we should like fully and clearly to impress on the understandings of our readers. It is a distinction big with principle and big with effect ; and could we only succeed in causing it to be thoroughly appreciated, we should not despair of overcoming the fearful inertness of the public mind to the fearful destitution of our city families. And there is no difficulty in comprehending the subject to which we now invite the notice of the community—once their thoughts were fairly engaged in it. Our only barrier (*so obstinate, however, as to be well nigh insuperable*) is the initial difficulty of gaining their attention to it ; or of creating in their minds any interest about a matter which lies beyond the range of their habitual sympathies and habitual contemplations. Yet great as the difficulty is of fixing the public attention upon this theme, and discouraging as our experience has been of the exceeding obtuseness of men's minds to its worth and magnitude, the cause is vastly too important to be given up in despair. At all events, let us once more lift up a testimony ; and its voice perchance may not be altogether the voice of one crying in a wilderness. The many, in all likelihood, may turn a deaf and disregardful ear away from it. But a few may listen, and if led to comprehend

the reason of our distempered ecclesiastical state, they will be led to perceive the remedy ; and perhaps to press onward for the adoption of it. In this hope we recur again to the distinction we have just intimated. To our own mind, it has all the properties of a cipher in the way of explanation—serving to unlock, as it were, and unravel a secret which lay concealed among the intricacies of a mechanism that had not been previously studied or explored. The distinction we shall now state, though aware of its utter insignificance in the eyes of merely secular men—whether in the walks of business, or politics, or general science. It is a distinction between one kind of the clergyman's household duties and another ; where, as in other examples of classification, each kind may be expressed by affixing the specific term which is peculiarly characteristic of itself to that generic term which denotes the common quality of both. The one species, then, comprehends the *household congregational* ; the other the *household parochial* duties of the clergyman.

6. For an example of the household congregational, as distinct from the household parochial duties, we refer to the dissenting minister both in town and country. He has a congregation, but not a parish. His hearers lie scattered in all directions and at all distances, without any tie of juxtaposition either to him or among themselves. It is this which makes the week-day attentions of the minister peculiarly laborious, and must of necessity deduct from the amount of them. The household visits, the family examinations, the due attendance

on the sick the disconsolate and the dying, must be limited by the very amount of the locomotion that is necessary to perform them. And there can be little or no abridgment of this labour by the grouping of contiguous families into one common assemblage for one common and general address—as the established minister may do, whether in the lanes or alleys of a town, or in the hamlets of a country parish. From these various causes the household duties of the dissenting minister can seldom be fully or satisfactorily overtaken; and nothing so reduces one to inaction as the despairing sense of a task so oppressive and operose as to have become impracticable. When there exists an invincible barrier in the way of doing all that we would, it often discourages even from doing all that we can. And, accordingly, it has often been alleged of dissenters, that, with all the zeal and talent of their pulpit services, there exists a grievous defect in their household ministrations; a peculiarity, however, owing, we believe, to no defect of principle, but to the real difficulty of their position. And there are noble examples amongst them of unquenched and unconquerable energy, by which even this difficulty has been made head against—as by my venerable friend, Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing, whose unwearied assiduities for about half a century have done much to sustain the Christianity of his neighbourhood, and to keep alive the sense and the savour of what is good among its families. He perhaps is not fully aware how much more effectual his labours might have been, had they been concentrated on a given terri-

tory, every house of which he could have entered with the freedom and authority of a parish minister. One like unto him in devotedness and worth, one of the excellent ones of the earth, good Philip Henry, has left upon this subject a precious testimony. He had the advantage of Mr Brown, in that he had personal experience on both sides of the question; and when driven by the tyranny of the times to the outfields of nonconformity, he often sighed for the reinstatement of himself in a situation where he might again enjoy the benefits of "parish order." Without this order, it is little known how inadequate, how powerless, all the efforts of human strength and human wisdom must ever prove to the effect of leavening a population with Christianity. At the most it will be a sprinkling, not an infusion. There will be a few scattered particles of pure farina in the heap,—a family here and there in which the melodies of sacredness are heard, amidst a stupendous and ever-growing mass of profligacy and heathenism.

7. We have already considered the effect of pulpit duties by themselves, when unaccompanied with the household—let us now take the opportunity of considering the effect, when the household duties of the clergyman are performed by themselves, and to families who, from some cause or other, while they have the benefit of his week-day, have not, at the same time, the benefit of his Sabbath ministrations. Let us conceive (for we have very seldom an opportunity of observing it,) the case of a minister plying his daily rounds among the contiguous families of a parish, to very few if any, of whom he

preaches on the Sabbath. It is not in blame of the clergyman that we affirm such a case to be seldom realized ; for, generally speaking, the circumstances under which he is placed preclude its possibility. He, in the first instance, preaches to very few of his parishioners ; because, unfortunately, he has no parochial congregation to preach to. Like his brother of the dissent, his congregation, from causes to be afterwards explained, is made up of hearers from all parts, without regard either to distance or locality. He is in the worst possible circumstances for entering on the work of parochial cultivation, already burdened with a task, subject to the various difficulties that we have just insisted on ; and, after all, as if to aggravate his sense of hopelessness and of exhaustion to the uttermost, found to be impracticable. We cannot imagine a worse preparation for entering with freshness and vigour on a new task, than to have expended one's strength, or to be still expending it, on an old one, that never can be fully or satisfactorily overtaken. And, accordingly, there are many Edinburgh ministers who have never attempted any systematic operation upon their parishes, and yet, notwithstanding, are among the hardest working men I know anywhere. Their time and strength throughout the week are absorbed in duties, although the duty of ministering from house to house be seldom or never one of them. The truth is, that, when the parish and the congregation are not coincident, the minister who gives himself to the performance of household duties at all, is under the strongest temptation to attempt the household congregational,

rather than the household parochial—to visit the man who is his hearer, though not his parishioner, rather than the man who is his parishioner, but not his hearer—the family, whose acquaintance he, through the means of his Sabbath ministrations, may be said to have already made, rather than the family whose acquaintance he has yet to make. It is the more inviting, and more natural movement, to enter upon an expectant household, where parents and children unite in one common recognition of the clergyman who addresses them every week from the pulpit, than to enter on a household of strangers, where there is no such recognition to prepare the way for him. And the influence which restrains him at the first, overhangs him ever afterwards; growing every year, in fact, as his engagements multiply, and his attachments become stronger to the members of his own congregation, and therefore detaining him with all the more hard and hopeless necessity from the inhabitants of his own parish, which, exiled from his attentions during the whole of his incumbency, remains a *terra incognita*, peopled by families of aliens.

8. Suppose, however, the clergyman to break his way through all these obstructions, and to resolve on a thorough territorial cultivation of his parish. He ought, in this case, to lay his account with the entire abandonment of his general, or extra-parochial hearers, upon week-days. But suppose, that, upon the principle of sacrificing the lesser duty to the greater, he commits this violence on his old habits and attachments, and gives himself forthwith to the busy cultivation of his own

parish families—not only making his regular yearly rounds amongst all the households, without the omission of one, save when they shut the door against him,* but holding himself in readiness to attend every funeral—to wait upon every dying bed—to seize upon each case of recovery from dangerous illness, as his golden opportunity for plying the conscience with lessons of seriousness—in every tenement which he enters to engage, as far as in him lay, the confidence and regard of children, taking the state of their education into his special cognizance and care—to be frequent at every seminary within his bounds, and by his presence there direct, and as much as possible, Christianize its scholarship—to have periodic meetings with the various agencies of his parish, whether they be elders, or deacons, or Sabbath teachers,—and, in short, to concentrate all his spare energies within that geographical vineyard, which he is henceforth to make the proper and exclusive field of all that labour, which, after the work of Sabbath preparation, and the hours or days of needful recreation or rest, he can possibly bestow upon it. We have no doubt, that, on these terms, a new minister, entering on a new-formed parish, disembarrassed, therefore, from a general congregation, and who

* On the strength of all our experience we affirm, that this would not happen in the proportion of any thing equal to one instance in the hundred. On the contrary, the whole of this ministerial progress, and more especially among the deep and densely peopled recesses of a plebeian parish, would be brightened at every footstep by the unbounded welcome and cordiality of the families. What a patent way is before us for a great and almost instant amelioration, if men would but open their eyes, and relax in the obstinacy of their prejudices!

had a church altogether to fill, would operate with prodigious effect on the families among whom he thus expatiated. But he who is a minister already, and who, instead of beginning *de novo*, merely changes the system of his operations, is in very different circumstances. His general congregation hangs like a mill-stone about him. He preaches to one set on the Sabbath; he visits another set through the week. It may be difficult to make an unprofessional reader comprehend the evil of such a disjunction. But so it is. Let the clergyman attempt, as he may, to ply in such a parish all the assiduities of a pastor—he is not their minister, and he is struck with impotency because of it. He goes among them bereft of all that sacredness and spiritual might, wherewith Sabbath associations, and these alone, can invest him. His visits will at all times be taken with perfect kindness; but they will want that certain unction and accompanying power, which no man can wield, save he who speaks with energy to their consciences from the pulpit, who baptizes their children, and at whose hands they receive the holy sacrament. His general congregation may be said to have divested him of all these elements of authority in his parish. His presence in their houses will at all times be welcome; but, wanting the full authority of religion, it will be tenfold less influential. Superficial and contemptuous men will ascribe the efficacy of that undoubted charm, which lies in the conjunction of the ministerial with the pastoral, to the mere influence of the priestly office over the *popular imagination*. But it is seated a great deal deeper

in our moral nature than this ; and is in no way to be likened to one of the caprices or fleeting forms of a delusive superstition. It has a stable and unchangeable hold on what may be termed one of the fixtures of the human constitution. Its hold is upon the conscience ; and he who, by his impressive demonstrations on the seventh day, hath achieved a conquest over this faculty in any of his hearers, hath subordinated to himself the whole man ; and needs only superadd to the fidelity of his pulpit the friendliness of his household ministrations, that, by the united power of truth and charity, he may acquire over the hearts of his hearers the likeliest influence of any, that is ever to arise in an aggregate of human beings, for building up, whether in the crowded city, or in the remote and sequestered parish, a community of virtuous and well-ordered families.*

* The disadvantage under which household visits are performed among families who are not hearers, will at once explain and excuse the separation that has taken place, under the system of general congregations, between city clergymen and their respective parishes. The week-day exercises by the clergymen among those who hear him on the Sabbath, are so much more prosperous and satisfactory, than the same week-day exercises among those who do not hear him, that we are not to wonder at the preference given to the former ; and, once this preference is acted on, once the minister embarks on a system of household ministrations among the members of an extra-parochial congregation, there is a limit both to time and strength, and any thing like a system of parochial assiduities becomes henceforth hopeless and impracticable.

I may here take the liberty of observing, that in Glasgow, my own congregation, with the exception of about a hundred hearers, was extra-parochial ; that I nevertheless, in the performance of family and household work, gave the preference to my parish ; that I had the distinct feeling, however, of the great disadvantage under which I laboured, in consequence of these parishioners not being my hearers also ; that, to overcome this, as far as I could, a Sunday evening sermon was instituted for their special behoof ;

9. Now conceive, of this bland, and beneficent, and withal powerfully moral influence, that, instead of being dissipated and lost, by its being scattered into shreds and insensible fragments over the whole city and neighbourhood, it is recalled and concentrated over the contiguous households of one definite and manageable portion of it. I wish that I could adequately impress on the mind even of the considerate reader, (the careless reader is out of the question,) the mighty moral change that hinges on this merely external and mechanical one—this new marshalling, as it were, of our ecclesiastical forces—this simple amendment in the tactics and disposition of our city clergymen. But I ought not to speak of it as an innovation; for, in truth, the present loosened relation between our churches and their corresponding parishes, is a grievous departure from the wiser and better system of the olden time. We shall not yet point out the methods by which it may be practically and gradually restored to us; but we ask the reader to imagine its effect, if fully reinstated in any section whatever, and more especially in any poor and plebeian section of the city population. Just fancy the condition to be realized, (and it is a condition to which I shall undertake the showing, that we have

and that a tenfold greater influence within the locality was the palpable and almost immediate effect of it. If the good of such a conjunction was so sensibly experienced in a parish of 10,000 people, what may we not anticipate in the way of all moral and economical reform, were a city clergyman but permitted to concentrate all his efforts on a contiguous population of about two thousand, to the great bulk of whom he stood in the relation, at the same time, both of minister and pastor?

it in our power to approximate indefinitely,) of a clergyman, with his well-filled church, whose hearers are all, or nearly all, his parishioners ; and with his moderate parish, whose parishioners of church-going age, are all, or nearly all, nay to a bare majority, or even but a considerable fraction, his hearers also. Under such an arrangement, there would be facilities afforded, and influences brought into play, which, in the present general and fortuitous economy of things, have no existence whatever. Let the residence of the minister be close on his assigned territory, and, if possible, within its limits ; let him proceed on the understanding, that he has mainly, if not exclusively, to do with his parochial families ; let him, by his frequent re-appearance in the midst of them, become the object of their frequent recognition, and so, at length after the lapse of not many months, the personal acquaintance of a goodly number, if not of all, of his people ; let this acquaintance ripen into grateful and confiding friendship, as his attentions have time to multiply, and his daily errands of Christian benevolence to their homes have at last forced a way for him, to the hearts of the occupiers ; let him by his habitual part in the christenings, and the burials, and the school examinations, and above all, at the sick and dying beds in the parish, implicate the very idea of his person, and utterance of his name, with the strongest instincts and affinities of each domestic circle that he has ever gladdened by his presence ; and, most important circumstance of any, let it be imagined, that these parishioners with whom he

thus mingles through the week, are the hearers whom he addresses on the Sabbath, and so let him go forth amongst them, with the conjunct power, made by their very union tenfold more effective than either would be apart—and who does not see the very high position which such a man occupies for wielding a moral ascendancy over the population of whom he is, at one and the same time, both the minister and the pastor? And it may be difficult to explain (but it is not the less real on that account) the prodigious virtue which lies in its being not a scattered, but a compact and contiguous population—in consequence of which the direct influence which passes between the clergyman and his people, is mightily aided by the sympathy of a common feeling, and a common interest among themselves. As the matter stands, juxtaposition forms no security whatever for acquaintanceship—insomuch that the members of distinct households might live for years under the same roof, unknowing and unknown to each other. We know of no expedient better fitted to overcome this alienation, to annihilate this moral distance between our contiguous families, and more especially in the plebeian quarters of the town, than the re-establishment of this local, or strictly parochial system, in the midst of them. Let next-door neighbours be supplied with one common object of reverence and regard, in the clergyman who treats them alike as members of the same parochial family; let his church be the place of common repair upon the Sabbaths; let his sermon, which told the same things to all, suggest the common

topics, on which the similarly impressed might enter into conversations, that begin and strengthen more and more the friendship between them ; let the intimacies of the parish children be formed and ripened together, at the same school—these all help as cementing influences by which to bind this aggregate of human beings into one community, and with a speed and certainty, now by many inconceivable, to set up a village or domestic economy, even in the heart of a crowded metropolis. It will at once be seen, with what force and celerity this consummation would be hastened forward by the movements of a clergyman, who, in the cultivation of his parochial domain, that home-walk of his daily and delightful labours, would have countless opportunities of grouping together the inmates of every little vicinity ; and who, in their very relation to himself as a common centre, would come to recognise and to feel the affinity of a certain mutual relationship to each other. And here, perhaps, that reciprocal influence will be better understood, by which the week-day attentions of the minister to his parish are sure to be followed up, when there is room and opportunity, by the Sabbath attendance of the people upon his church. If he have but obtained an initial footing of this sort in his parish, the example will spread,—passing, as if by infection, from one neighbour to another ; and he, reaping the fruit of his perseverance as a house-going minister, in yearly accessions to himself of a church-going people. If he will only bind himself to them as his people, they will at length bind themselves to him as their minister.

The collective voice, the collective habit of the parish will be upon his side, till attendance upon their own parish church, and their own parish minister, will come at last to be recognised and acted on, as one of the established proprieties of the vicinage with which he has to do. It was so in Edinburgh and the other towns of Scotland, for many years after the commencement of Presbytery; and had it not been for the mighty increase of population left unprovided with any corresponding increase of churches or clergymen, along with the sacrifice that was afterwards made of every parochial principle or privilege in the matter of seat-letting, we might still have beheld in our city parishes, the spectacle of so many unbroken masses, with the habit of Sabbath attendance on their own legal place of worship, in full vigour and operation among the families. It is difficult to imagine, indeed, how, under such a system of local surveillance, headed by the minister, and powerfully seconded by the auxiliaries of an eldership, each looking after, and with no very oppressive and formidable labour, the state of his own manageable district,—it is difficult, we say, to imagine how, under an economy like this, the families of our working classes, at all times alive to the observation and moral suasion of their superiors, could in any sensible numbers have fallen away from the habits and the decencies of their forefathers; and, far more, how the present frightful degeneracy and disease should have ever taken place, breaking out into the frequent and ever-enlarging spots of a foul leprosy, till at length we have spaces in many a

town, and most distinctly in our own, comprehensive of whole streets, nay, of whole parishes, in a general state of paganism. An entire disruption has taken place between the people and their minister,—they never at his church, he seldom or never in their houses. We speak not of those public nuisances, those haunts of open and declared profligacy wherewith the town is infested, and which it is for the civil authorities to put down; but we speak of the deep and dense irreligion, which, like the apathy of a mortification or paralysis, has stolen imperceptibly on the great bulk of our plebeian families; and which, under a rightly-sustained parochial regimen, the mild, but effective sway of parochial authorities, could never have taken place.

10. The causes of this woful departure from the good old way of our forefathers, we shall attempt afterwards to expound,—satisfied if, at present, we have succeeded in giving some idea of what we hold to be the right ecclesiastical arrangement for a great town. It lies in the restoration of that parochial system, under which ministers might concentrate all their week-day labours on the houses of their own local and assigned territory; and people, with a preference for its sittings on easy terms, might repair to their own church, so that the congregational and the parochial shall, as far as possible, be reduced to one and the same family, under the guidance and guardianship of one and the same spiritual head. In this way, the united influences of the ministerial and the pastoral, or of the pulpit and household duties, are

conjoined, not only on the same people ; but, what is of capital importance, on the people of the same locality,—who, in virtue of being operated on through the week by the same recognised and respected functionary, both in separate families and in contiguous groups of families, are brought under the powerful influence of those social or gregarious principles in our nature, which, with all the force and certainty of a moral epidemic, will impress upon them the same habit, and lead them, as if by one common impulse, to one and the same general observation. In other words, it needs but the assiduities of the clergyman, and of his various office-bearers, to secure at length the general observation of church-going ; or give to the people a general direction, on the Sabbath, to that house of prayer, whence there emanates upon them, through the week, the manna of so many precious attentions, grateful to their hearts for the kindness which prompts them, and felt all the more profoundly from the sacredness of their object,—linked as it is, with the best and highest interest of themselves, and of all who are dearest to them. A population cannot long withstand an influence like this, if only kept up amongst them with sustained and busy perseverance ; and with all the greater speed and certainty will they infallibly give way, in that they are a local or contiguous population. Such is the prolific virtue that lies in the mere principle of juxtaposition. Eighteen ministers in Edinburgh, though only of average talent and zeal, if each acting with concentration and effect on his own appropriate vineyard, would

possess in each the power to wield a tenfold greater ascendancy for good, than the same number, even though of the most gigantic abilities, on the present chaotic and chance-medley system of general congregations, under which the clergyman wears out a fortuitous and floundering existence,—lost and bewildered among the thousand random urgencies of his miscellaneous and ill-assorted task, a task completely irreducible to order, and of which he can see no issue in any definite or satisfactory accomplishment.

11. The goodly arrangement on which we have insisted requires three conditions for the fulfilment of it; first, that the pulpit and household duties of the clergyman shall be conjoined on one and the same people; secondly, that the people shall live contiguously together in one and the same locality or parish; and, thirdly, that the parish shall be of such moderate population as to admit of being thoroughly cultivated both ministerially and pastorally. The last of these three conditions is often treated of vaguely and indeterminately, and so with the effect of imparting a certain vagueness to the reasonings which are employed on this subject. And yet we hold that there is a certain and an assignable limit, capable of being stated with numerical precision, beyond which the population of a parish becomes excessive; so that every addition thenceforth to the families, if not provided for by larger ecclesiastical means, causes a distinct moral injury to the parish. In fact, the attentive reader will have already perceived that the two first conditions determine the third one;

but, for the sake of the important ecclesiastical principle which this question involves, we shall attempt a fuller explanation.

12. The question, it will be understood, is not how small the population of a parish ought to be, but how large it ought not to be. In regard to the former question, it were hardly possible to avoid its being pronounced upon vaguely and variably. A devoted clergyman could operate with fuller effect, and a greater Christian benefit to each family of his charge, if he were engaged with only a thousand instead of fifteen hundred people. My excellent friend, the Rev. Charles Bridges,* of Old Newton, Suffolk, finds, I am sure, most ample occupation among those six hundred people whom he may be said to have domesticated into one parochial family; and, were it not for his still more important services to the Christian church at large, would show, by his incessant labours, how possible it were to make out a most beneficial expenditure of all his strength and all his time amongst them. There can be no doubt that two diligent and devoted clergymen would render a greater amount of Christian good among twelve hundred people than one clergyman only: or, in other words, that a parish of this population might be advantageously broken into two. And it were difficult to say how far down the sub-division might be beneficially carried. In

* Author of a precious commentary on the 119th Psalm; of a book on the Christian Ministry, that cannot be too much read by students of divinity and clergymen; and of that interesting religious biography, the Life of Miss Graham.

that direction the question is an indeterminate one. And it is of less consequence, as in this age, not of increase, but of reductions, we are not called upon to determine it. In these days, there is no practical necessity for assigning or setting up a limit to guard against the evil of our having too many clergymen. But the spirit of our times demands that the limit should be distinctly and convincingly pointed out against the evil of having too few clergymen. In that direction, fortunately, the question is determinate.

13. We have already attempted to show how insignificant, in point of effect, the household ministrations of a clergyman are, when not backed by the impression of his pulpit ministrations; or, rather, with what tenfold efficacy a clergyman labours among the people when the two are compounded together. Or, in other words, the population among whom he labours through the week should not exceed beyond a certain proportion the population whom he can make, with average strength and exertion, to hear him on the Sabbath. It is thus that, in regulating and defining the proper census for a parish, regard should be had to the average compass of the human voice. This is an obvious and withal a definite principle, leading to a definite arithmetical result. If, on the average, it be enough for a man, engaged to the limit of his strength in the studies and visitations of the week, that he preaches to a thousand hearers on the Sabbath, then the maximum number of his parishioners, or number which ought not to be exceeded, becomes a matter of computation.

If the half of every population should be at church, then the whole population corresponding to a thousand hearers should be two thousand ; for beyond this number the full attentions of a clergyman, as comprehensive both of the ministerial and pastoral, come to be impossible. We do not fix on this as the number at which the maximum of good accrues to a parish, but as marking the extreme limit, beyond which, if there be any excess, a most distinct and definable evil would accrue to it. We do not speak of two thousand as the amount to which the population of a parish might be advantageously extended ; but as the amount to which, for the sake of raising a defence against a peculiar and withal powerful and clearly assignable cause of great moral injury, it ought to be confined. For ourselves, we cannot doubt that a much greater amount of Christian and moral good would be effected, by an ecclesiastical system in our cities of well-served parishes, consisting of a thousand each, rather than two thousand ; or, assuming a population of two thousand for each parish, by every such parish having two ministers in a collegiate, rather than one only with a single charge. But the question, as we said before, is not how small the parishes, or how great the number of clergymen, ought to be ; but how large the parishes, and, consequently, how small the number of clergymen ought not to be. The problem is, to assign the limit in that direction ; and the virtue which we affirm to lie in the conjunction between the pulpit and household duties of the same minister to the same contiguous people,

supplies a most intelligible principle for the determination of that limit. Let two thousand be the greatest number that a clergyman can both ministerially and pastorally overtake, and we can state with precision the palpable effect of the addition even of one hundred to this previous population. By the postulatum, he preaches only to a thousand, and, corresponding to this, he can give the full benefit of his pastoral ministrations to two thousand. But to the additional hundred he can do neither the one nor the other. He cannot preach to them; and, should he charge himself with the performance of household duties on their behalf, this not only withdraws a part of his strength from the work of pastoral ministration among the original families, but it subjects him to an expenditure of strength among new families, far less beneficial and productive than before. They are in the condition of his parishioners, but not his hearers; and, agreeably to our former explanations, he works with greatly impaired effect amongst them. It is precisely at this limit that he experiences a sensible and sudden reduction of his influence. There is a mischief here done *per saltum*; and then do his parishioners begin to be aliens from that minister who ought to be the Sabbath counsellor and week-day friend of one and all of them. There is a certain assignable point, then, at which the transition is not a gradual one; at which families begin to form into what may be termed an out-field population; at which the parish church refuses to take them in, and, of consequence, the parish minister suffers an instant loss of

ascendancy—giving rise in every parochial community to a certain number, greater or less, of moral outcasts, suffered to wander beyond the pale of ecclesiastical surveillance ; and we may add, in the now thoroughly ascertained impotency of the Voluntary system, without any security for an ecclesiastical influence of any sort being brought to bear upon them. It is woful to think that the moment we touch on the limit of a fully-peopled, and pass beyond to the state of an over-peopled parish, this evil is sure to alight on those who are the least able or the least willing to make their escape from it. In a parish, for example, of three thousand people, what class of residents will the thousand belong to who are left out from the benefit of that influence which can only be extended with full effect to two thousand ? The ablest to pay for sittings, and the willingest to avail themselves of their parochial privilege, will be the surest to maintain their occupancy in the church, and so to monopolize the best attentions of the clergyman—thereby excluding from the good of an Establishment the most helpless and the most needy, or the very description of families whose moral necessities it is the appropriate object and the highest glory of an Establishment to provide for. It is thus that the excess of a parish frustrates the special design of an establishment ; and, by a strange fatality, inflicts its first and deadliest mischief upon those on account of whose benefit it is that an Establishment is particularly and pre-eminently called for. When a parish becomes excessive, the church might continue full,

but a certain number is necessarily left out ; and what most cruelly traverses the purpose of an Establishment is, that they who continue are precisely those who might with the greatest safety have been abandoned to the Voluntary system ; whereas they who fall off are precisely those whom that system does not reach and never can reclaim. From their want of wealth, and their want of will together, they are the first to make room for others in the competitions of an over-peopled parish ; and little do they think, who tamper with the question of limits, and make so little of a few hundreds more than the parish church can accommodate, or the parish minister can overtake—little do they think, with what inevitable certainty they are consigning a portion of society to the out-fields of heathenism. By every instance of an over-peopled parish, the good of an Establishment is counteracted in regard to those on whose account an Establishment is most imperiously required. Those families are the first to suffer which stand most in need of it ; and so the Establishment is paralyzed, not in regard to a subordinate, but in regard to the most vital and important of its functions. The unprovided surplus of every parish is of that very description on whom it is most necessary that the aggressive forces of an Establishment should be brought to bear ; but who, in virtue of the supersaturation, are the first to recede from this wholesome operation, and the surest to be found at an irreclaimable distance away from it. Never then was there a more grievous paralogism or cross-purpose, than first to

have an Establishment, and then to have parishes with so many families beyond the possible reach of its influence,—*an outlandish and degraded caste, having all the lawlessness of gypsies, without their locomotion ; living within the parochial boundaries, but all recklessly and at random, because beyond the authority of any parochial regimen; impregnating each neighbourhood with moral disease, and superadding to the numerical mischief of so many worthless households that wide-spread influence, wherewith, by the very contagion of their presence and example, they induce a general relaxation of principle, and deteriorate the whole tone and character of their surrounding society.

14. It was the parochial system, and that alone, which could have retained the bulk of our city population to their primitive habit of attendance on the ordinances of religion ; and, *a fortiori*, now that they have fallen away from this habit, it is the parochial system, and that alone, which can recall them. It is only by each clergyman taking special possession of his own parish, and charging himself overhead with one and all of its families, that there can be aught like the working of a

* It is first setting up an apparatus, and then removing to an impracticable distance the main object of its erection. The only consistent way of following up the device of an establishment, is to have small enough parishes,—seeing that the principal design, and, indeed, the chief argument for such an institution, is to include within its grasp those very families which in too large parishes are the first and surest to fall away. And, accordingly, in the overgrown parishes of cities, out of these families there has necessarily been found a refuse population, which the Establishment, because of its inadequate extension, does not, and which the Voluntary system, because of its inherent feebleness, cannot overtake.

general effect upon the population. The measures should be forthwith entered upon, by which he might be enabled as speedily as possible to operate amongst them in the joint capacity of their minister and their pastor, in order that his week-day services might be seconded, or rather made ten-fold more effectual, by his Sabbath ministrations. In reference to all the existing parishes this re-tracing operation must at the best be a very gradual one ; but we trust that the few practical explanations which we are now to offer, may convince the reader that there is nothing impracticable, not even difficult, in any single step of the process ; and that, therefore, on the whole, the process should not be stigmatized as a Utopian one.

15. It were indeed Utopian to expect of any people who have lapsed into a general habit of non-attendance, that the appetite or demand for the ministrations of the Gospel could be created amongst them in a single day. It were in utter violation, therefore, of all the laws and likelihoods of our nature—to think of substituting all at once so many parochial congregations, in place of the existing general congregations. A precipitate and instantaneous dismissal of the latter, in the sanguine hope that they would be replaced *per saltum* by the former, would leave us for years to come with very small and fractional congregations in a great number of our churches. It is not excepting in times of sweeping revolution, that great changes are effected by quick and desultory movements. It is in society as in nature ; every great march of improvement is a gradual and pacific

one—like the silent motions of the firmament, the insensible but sure progress of the seasons, or any other of those beneficent cycles which take place in the works of creation. But, again, distinction must be made here between the setting up of a machine and the working of it. Time must be allowed ere those effects can be fully realized which we anticipate from the working of it. But no time should be lost in the setting of it up. The regulations should be made now, and the facilities should be ordained now, without which a general never can be transformed into a parochial congregation. After which the transformation will proceed gradually, and it will take years before it is consummated.

16. The first of these regulations is a rigid preference for the sittings to the actual and residing parishioners, at every term of seat-letting—before which the present extra-parochial occupiers must successively give way. But, as we have said already, the growth of this parochial demand must be gradual, and so the dispossession of the actual sitters would be alike gradual. The parochial demand, in fact, would be of more or less rapid growth, just as the ministers attended more or less through the week to the families of their own parishes. Those of them who had a taste for the cordialities of parochial intercourse; and rejoiced in their now growing acquaintance with groups of contiguous householders; and took a delighted interest in their own proper and parochial concerns; and enjoyed that sensation of relief, along with that actual experience of a far more

productive beneficence, to which their withdrawal from the bewildering generalities of the town, and the concentration of their efforts on the manageable institutes of a small manageable section of it, would infallibly give rise—Such of them who had the true spirit of localists, and preferred the certainties as well as charities of a home walk to the perplexities of a chaos, choosing rather to do a few things well, than encounter the fatigues, and at the same time be mortified by the utter fruitlessness of being overwhelmed with many things,—men who would not feel that they had lived in vain, if they had put a new face, and set up a new habit in a parish of two thousand people—Such ministers as these would multiply all the faster their parochial hearers, and earn sooner than the others the superior comfort as well as superior ascendancy which never fail to be the effects of a parochial congregation. Even with them I should hold it a great achievement, if, during the process of transition, they added a hundred parochial sitters to their churches in the year ; and, rather than any sudden revolution, I should greatly prefer those full and final developments which are at length arrived at by the stepping-stones of a process that is strictly tentative and experimental.

17. It will be seen at once that there can be no effectual opening to such a process without a general lowering of the seat-rents. My own wish even for the largest towns is, that, to the extent of two-thirds of the accommodation in every church, the sittings on the average should not exceed three shillings each. One should like that not

only individual seats, but family pews, were accessible to the bulk of the population. It were a most desirable state of matters to bring it within the compass and means of the working classes, that whole seats should be taken by whole households ; and that in family groups of worshippers, becoming every year more frequent, there was comprehended a large and ever-increasing proportion of the body of the parish. The hopes of the rising generation stand essentially connected with a growing juvenile attendance on the lessons of Christianity ; and, in this view, we know not an object of greater moral importance, than seat-rents sufficiently low for the accommodation of the common people, not in individuals but in families. If two-thirds of every church were afforded at the rate which is now proposed by us, we should object less to a market price for the remaining third ; and should rejoice, indeed, on more accounts than one, if this market price were to rise indefinitely—by the humbler classes in every parish availing themselves of their preference to the uttermost, and monopolizing the low-rented seats so as to make the competition of the higher classes all the more intense for the seats which remain to them. In this way, instead of a conflict as now, there would be a most delightful harmony between the moral prosperity of the town, and the monied prosperity of the corporation.

18. But after all these facilities have been granted, the interesting question remains—What are the likelihoods, that, with the church now open to the bulk of the parochial community, but with that

community at present in a state of desuetude and distance from all the ordinances of the gospel—what are the grounds for believing, that a minister with all his activity and zeal will succeed in reclaiming them? We have already, I trust, made it manifest, that in as far as this glorious achievement depends upon human effort, the likeliest and most productive of these efforts is a habitual forth-going on his part among the habitations of his people. If he go much among them through the week, the unfailing result in time will be, that they shall come much about him on the Sabbath. This is the ligament, and we know not a more important one in the whole mechanism of human society, by which to elevate a degenerate population, and again to place them on that higher moral platform from which they have descended. There is no romance, there is a sober and home-bred reality in all the steps of this operation. On the very first movements of the clergyman, he will meet with the smiles of encouragement and welcome from every quarter of his parish, with a thousand promises of attendance on his church, many of which in the first instance will not be realized; but, with every month of perseverance in the assiduities of his office, he will find a lessening reluctance on the part of his people, and that even the obstinacy of their practical heathenism is not unconquerable. It will at length give way under the power of his sustained and duteous attentions. Providence will open a door for him, even to the most ruthless of the families; and, implicating his presence with the sicknesses and the

deaths and the funerals of every household, he will, on the sheer efficacy of his Christian worth, and with no other engine by which to make his way than Christian kindness, obtain an ascendant over the hearts of his people, only to be won by the omnipotence of charity.

19. The incredulity which prevails in regard to the moral power of the parochial system, is the pure result of inattention to all those lessons which experience gives of our nature. We ask these doubters to reflect on the mighty change, we might term it the mighty elevation, that would take place on the condition of our plebeian city families, could it be said of every one of them, that they had a Christian minister for their personal acquaintance and their friend. Now, the clergyman who would parochialize, might, without excessive labour, win this honourable and highly influential relation for himself to 500 families. It is not an airy imagination that we speak, it is a sober and every-day experience, when we affirm the immense good that such a man could work in his little kingdom, by the mere efficacy of moral suasion among its inmates and its occupiers. There is no man whose professional business places him on higher vantage-ground, than is possessed by him who marries, and baptizes, and ministers the holy sacrament, and stimulates the education of the young; and speaks home on the Sabbath to the consciences of the very people with whom he companies in the various acts and exercises of Christian beneficence through the week—in readiness at every call of family distress, and through the various organiza-

tions of parish schools, and parish library, and local associations of religious philanthropy, and monthly meetings of the agencies, which have been devised by his wisdom and public spirit for the good of his own assigned territory—collecting around him the Christian worth that already exists in it, and propagating a wholesome influence, even to its most hidden recesses, and its heretofore most impregnable strongholds of vice and irreligion. There is no aggregate of human beings that can long withstand the influence of such manifold attentions and applications as these, and certainly none that could stand out for ever against them, if but constantly and determinedly persevered in; and more especially if concentrated by the same man, on the same vineyard of contiguous habitations. We greatly wish that we could make the good of this last circumstance as palpable to the reader as it is of importance in itself—we mean the concentration of all these united influences on the families, one and all, who reside within the same geographical boundaries. The whole gist of our argument lies in the difference it makes to the power and tactics of an ecclesiastical system on cities—whether it shall be a mere system of congregations, or a system of parishes, and so of distinct parochial and territorial managements. Under the one system, the people are left to seek out their own minister, and *so many* seek him out accordingly. Under the other system, the minister is bound to seek out, not so many, but all the people within the limits of his allocated domain; and what we affirm is, that in every large town, with parishes small

enough and ministers many enough, this would create the numerical difference of thousands and tens of thousands in our church-going population, and having their families brought under a moral regimen, now unfelt and unknown by the great mass of the commonalty. It is this consideration which makes us so resolute in the cause of keeping up the full number of our clergymen within the city of Edinburgh; and extending, by every possible means, the number without the city, for the benefit of those immense suburbs which have accumulated around it. No popular outcry can dislodge the impression from us, that by consenting to the reduction of our clergymen, we should incur the guilt of a most heinous profanation. In face of all the obloquy which has been heaped upon it, we affirm ours to be a great moral and Christian cause. Our ecclesiastical apparatus might be made greatly more effective; but we can on no principle whatever consent to the abridgment of it. It is capable of receiving a large addition to its force; but cannot admit, without a great moral loss to the community, of any subtraction from its magnitude. In contending for an Established Church, and for the integrity of its endowments, we feel as if embarked on a struggle of pure and high patriotism—believing as we do, that the cause of our venerable Establishment is pre-eminently the cause of the common people.*

* We are sensible that many things would need to be added or extended, ere a full exhibition could be made of the parochial system, with all its powers and all its advantages. More particularly, we might have insisted on this distinction, that in the system of general congregations, it is extremely difficult to uphold

20. We have offered a most feeble and inadequate representation of this *great* subject, having come greatly short even of our own sense of the worth and magnitude of the cause. We confess ourselves to be most intensely set on the restoration of the true parochial system in our cities; and that because it bears with such signal effect on the reformation of the common people—that highest object which can be proposed either to the Christian philanthropist or to the patriot. Our hopes we admit to be sanguine; but we believe them to be solidly founded—because resting, under the blessing of Heaven, on the power of Christian truth, when combined with Christian charity—the one spoken Sabbath after Sabbath by the minister from the pulpit; the other brought to bear through the week, in a thousand nameless but most endearing

them undiminished and unimpaired, but by the superior attractiveness of such powerful and extraordinary preaching as can only be found among the few; and hence when a new general congregation is formed, it is often at the expense of fractional diminutions on all the previous ones. Whereas, to uphold a parochial congregation, nothing more is requisite than such Sabbath and such week-day ministrations, as any man of common intelligence might give, if he have but those principles of Christian worth, and feelings of Christian charity, which, along with industrious habits, are not confined to the few, but found, it is to be hoped, among the many. In other words, the system of general congregations can only be upheld by powers which are rare, whereas the system of parochial congregations is maintained rather by principles which are frequent. And besides, a new parochial congregation is not built up at the expense of previous ones. It is formed out of new materials. The parochial system may be said to create its own customers. It generates a demand commensurate with the supply; and so can be extended, as commerce is, by the opening up of new markets of a certain kind, without injury to any pre-existent interest. The system of general congregations stops at a limit which leaves out the great majority. The parochial system of congregations can be made co-extensive with the wants of the whole population.

attentions, by the same minister on the families of the parish. The man who performs his ready visit at every call of distress, and prays at every dying bed, and ministers at every funeral, gracing and dignifying by his presence each group, however humble, of parochial mourners who assemble to carry a neighbour to his grave,—in one word, who strikes in on every occasion when human hearts are most alive to the charm of sympathy, and most susceptible of a good and a holy impression from the services of religion,—such a man, backed by the sacredness of his character, and having to do at one and the same time both with the feelings and consciences of his people, could not long, if the promises of the gospel and the laws of our nature abide unrepealed—could not long be withstood, even among the most depraved and the most degenerate of families. What Howard experienced of the omnipotence of kindness in the worst of prisons, he would be much surer to experience and exemplify in the worst of parishes; and at length earn for himself such an ascendancy over the vineyard of his allotted labours as would subordinate the great bulk of its occupiers in willing obedience to his sway. Every thing, we are profoundly sensible, depends, under the operation of the divine Spirit, every thing depends upon the minister; and a thousand times more upon his moral and Christian than upon his literary qualifications. If he do succeed, it will be the achievement of principle and not of talent, the triumph of Christian and heaven-born worth, and not the triumph of high or heaven-born genius.

In a word, our confidence is not in great powers, but in great piety; and however desirable, when we can find it, to obtain the union of both—yet Heaven, we foresee, will put a most impressive mockery on all our hopes, if, trusting to eloquence or general attraction, we shall prefer the man with these pulpit accomplishments alone to recommend him, to him who, plying daily and devotedly at his allotted task, is chiefly known among the families as the best friend of themselves and their children, and venerated by all as a man of faith and of prayer.

