

THE CHURCH'S NURSERIES FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

I.—THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

HERE are the germs of nearly all Christian service. I am not about to speak of the Sunday School in its direct object—the good of the children, but in its indirect—the training of the teachers. In this point of view it will be seen that the Sunday School is a great Christian nursery, wherein servants of God may be prepared for large-hearted Christian usefulness in the future.

Here the gifts of the Holy Spirit, perhaps imparted contemporaneously with the baptism by the Spirit into the one body, are often developed, nurtured, and matured in young men and women. The young teacher is not thinking of this part, yet it is so. He (or she) begins to study the Bible with greater definiteness, that he may prepare the lesson he has to give. Week after week this goes on, and he is laying up stores of further Scriptural knowledge, and is searching out what God says in His Word on a variety of subjects. He read his Bible before, and he listened and studied. Now he has to teach, and there arises increasing discrimination. This will affect the whole future course of service, and he will show whether he has a gift for definite teaching, as well as the ordinary power of saying good things.

He had before perhaps taken an interest in others through knowing them a little, because they were connected with friends or dependents. Now he is given a class of children of whom he may know not one; and not because he knows them, and is in some way linked to them, but simply from love of God's Word and the Saviour it reveals, and because the children need instruction, he strives to impart his knowledge of God to them. He has now a work of his own to do amongst human beings—something to think about, to pray about, in addition to his former line of life. He goes out of himself, and beyond his friends, his social circle and their interests, into the regions as yet to him unknown. Then he begins to hear the sound of his own voice before others—his class, his fellow-teachers, his Superin-

tendent. Some men, for want of preliminary training, when advanced in life, but inexperienced in speaking, almost lose their heads on hearing themselves speak in public for the first time, and are never at ease whilst so engaged.

The Sunday School teacher has to think of suitable words, words which his class is capable of understanding, like the wise preacher (Eccles. xii. 10), who sought to find out acceptable words—and this in itself is an important training for the future. He commences his teaching life aright—not as a born orator, though he may be such, and oratory may afterwards have its place; and not in a declamatory style, which would be utterly inappropriate; but he falls naturally into the true tone of teaching; and he will find that if he has knowledge to impart, then accurate and forcible words, spoken in a gentle spirit, tell.

He has to rule as well as teach, and he will develop, whether he will be a mere lecturer, or a ruler in the Church of God.

He has to visit the absentees, to talk in a friendly way to their parents, to encourage and admonish. Whilst thus occupied he sees the surroundings of other persons besides those he is calling upon, and obtains a knowledge of their condition and need, not by report, but through personal contact.

Whilst thus engaged he is also developing pastoral gifts, if he has any, besides the qualities common to all Christian people. Also he meets with discouragements. All are thus disciplined; and it has to be settled at an early stage of our career if we, with God's blessing, will overcome difficulties, or whether difficulties shall overcome us; whether we will only go forward animated by the stimulant of prosperity, or will regard trouble as a reason for more prayer, better preparation, and greater earnestness and thoroughness in ourselves.

He listens to addresses. Some day he gives one, and shows if he has any gift to be trained in the way of public speaking. Teaching goes on amidst some measure of noise, and if an address is given there may be occasional disturbance. But this also affords good training, initiatory and preparatory for, perhaps, open-air speaking amidst occasional excitement. Also the teacher giving an address finds that if he wants to have and to hold the attention of three or four hundred children, he must take care to have something to say really worth hearing, and something suitable to the audience.

If a person understands children aright, he knows that, though they will laugh at small anecdotes, and can be amused by trifling observations, yet every child's mind has its own deep cravings. The inner spirit of a human being, though a child's, is really looking out for something to meet its need; and this, truth only

can supply. And it is afforded both in the pages generally and in the stories of the Bible. Nothing can be more interesting than these stories, and, at the same time, there is wrapped up within them such precious instruction. No speaker, duly prepared, could desire to have a more interesting, more important, or more attentive assembly than hundreds of children, if he himself has the ability to speak to them. Indeed, he may test his own knowledge and powers by his ability to hold their attention.

In the School precious Christian friendships are formed, often of an enduring character. In fact, it seems to me that, if we give the freshness of our days to the Sunday School, the Lord manifests His marked approval of it. Have not many readers found it so? Can they not trace a divine influence for good then obtained which has beneficially affected themselves, and their families also, during their whole future career? Such is my experience, looking back to Sunday School days 40 years ago.

Godly parents and others can aid the whole Church of God, and especially the young life of the Church, most beneficially, by taking a warm-hearted interest in well-conducted schools; whilst young Christian persons themselves will find that the labour and self-denial, which are unquestionably required, will be accompanied by a present blessing from the Lord, and will ever produce a recurring harvest of good until the time of God's harvest-home. It becomes the older ones to speak well of His Name, for the Lord's glory, and for the encouragement of those who are to fill their places.

II.—YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES.

NEXT come Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations; for much of what follows is suitable to both.

Now, it immediately appears what an important elementary training ground was the Sunday School. It fitted for another step. He who was a teacher in a school easily falls into his place in the Association, and is ready for further progress; whilst the young man who never taught in a Sunday School, though he will doubtless get a blessing, and can by self-rule and diligence make up his lost ground, yet, at first, he is behind the man who, as a teacher, has already acquired knowledge and experience, and matured his opening abilities and spiritual powers. However, it is not too late for a new hand if he is whole-hearted for the Lord.

It is a capital plan to give every member something to do. There is one mode in which all can and should help, even from

the beginning to the end. Every local Association should keep an alphabetical list of all the young men in its own neighbourhood (London and great towns need their special arrangements), with their addresses. Every member should co-operate in this work. Too much should not be expected of the Secretary. Every one, even a novice, could contribute valuable aid by putting down such names as he can think of, and by giving them to the Secretary to arrange and enter in a book, doing this again and again. And then, not looking to the Secretary to do everything, the work might be allotted amongst several members, that each one may bring his influence to bear on one, two, or more of such persons to interest them in the institution, not merely by giving them printed notices and such like, but by the living voice, inviting a visit, and speaking, from experience, of its goodness and helpfulness.

I again refer to my special point, the training of God's servants. The young member, in addition to finding recreation and deriving good in many ways not now considered, also attends the Bible Class. He sees other young men there; he reads aloud, and is also a listener; he hears others make their remarks. In time he utters his first few sentences before his young companions; and the President, if a judicious man, will confirm all he can, and the first time or so, pass by any crude thoughts. These first attempts are very interesting. A step is taken. A railway train stationary, and one moving an inch, represent very different conditions. Again, he hears others pray. He would rather not pray aloud. However, an occasion arises when the right time seems to have come, and he prays. As time goes on he speaks more, and a subsequent speaker perhaps thinks differently, and takes his observations to pieces, proving from the Word of God that though some good things have been said, yet they have been rather exaggerated, and that the passage does not actually mean what the previous member said. In the school, as teacher, he had it nearly all his own way, and said what he liked, though perhaps he was occasionally puzzled by some scholar's question. Now he finds he must indeed be exact, or he will be set right by some more accurate man. All this is capital training. Mischiefs are done by persons in older years giving, in their well-intended addresses, inaccurate interpretations, attaching imaginary lessons to words, instead of extracting and applying their true sense.

Though a member passes through this refining process, yet he finds himself the better for it; and he finds also that whatever position he shows himself fitted to occupy, is most cheerfully and thankfully accorded to him by his Christian brothers. No good work appropriate to the institution is unacceptable.

Everything connected with the young life of the Church should be done with vigour. The presence and aid of a few older men are valuable, but care is needed that the numbers should not become disproportionate. The tendency of such a state of things would be to overpower the younger, and rather hinder their development, which should be one main object. I hold that a Y.M.C.A. should be mainly, though not exclusively, worked by men really young—the maturest of them taking the lead.

Largeness of heart is now cultivated. Before, the young Christian went to his Church or Chapel, or his Church's or Chapel's Sunday School. So far well; now further, he sits between an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian, or a Wesleyan and a Baptist, and he values them both alike. Soon his experience goes beyond that. He sits between he knows not whom, Churchman or Dissenter, and he perhaps never hears nor inquires where they attend on Sunday. It is not a subject that is gone into. He finds himself loving these also, in fact any and all who love the same Saviour. This principle he had heard of before, even heard it advocated on platforms once a year; but had never seen it practised otherwise or more frequently. Now it is the regular thing, the atmosphere in which all breathe. He finds it becomes quite congenial to his own spiritual sense. All this is excellent training, though undesigned. If he is thorough, he will become a large-hearted man, free from crotchets, thankful for all the good there is in all God's people, and welcoming the service of all who serve Him.

I observe that a member of a Y.M.C.A. often becomes a handy Christian. Is there an open-air service, he will distribute tracts, if that is desirable; or take round the hymn books; or choose a suitable hymn, perhaps set a tune if required; or pray in public for God's blessing; or speak; equally pleased to speak or to be quiet, whatever appears to be the Lord's will. The nature of the service is no cause of stumbling to him. Is there something to do? that is the first point; then let his brother do it if he sees well; if not, he is ready, if the thing is desirable and desired. In all this, while the present is being blessed, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are being matured for further work. Without thinking about his gifts, but only observing that there is work for him to do, and trying to do his best, he is causing others to perceive his embryo gifts; and he himself is learning by experience in what way God is beginning to aid him and to use him, even if He does not permit him to see much prosperity yet, lest he should become lifted up. Persons sometimes say, how can I tell if I have received a spiritual gift? I would counsel, observe how God uses you, and follow on.

Some remarks on the preparation and delivery of an address will take a wider range, and are reserved for a subsequent paper.

In harmony with an observation already made respecting the working of an Association, I would express, allowing of course that there may be a difference of judgment on the point, and that the condition of different places may make a difference, that I consider that not only should a Y.M.C.A. be worked mainly *by* young men, but *for* young men outside of its organization as well as inside.

It is important to keep in motion both the receptive and the aggressive element of such societies. By the former I mean its work within its own walls—its own members; by the latter I mean that when an Association has taken root a little, it should also pursue and increase continually its aggressive, exterior, missionary labours. It will of course always desire to draw in any young men who would be suitable to itself as members; but a Y.M.C.A. may become (and I think I observe its dawn) an expansive element for good far beyond the range of its members. Members or not members, lads, youths, and young men have souls, and bodies; and there are numbers of them, and many of a lower class than the ordinary members of an Association. A thoughtful mind can observe such persons or search them out; a friendly hand can help them; a kind word has its place. How many are ready to devour the next trashy paper with its graphic immorality and evil tendencies! City missionaries distribute much counteracting pure literature, but still in a general way amongst all. Good. Why should not a Christian Association for young men make it one of its special cares, for instance, to distribute good reading papers *amongst all young persons in the neighbourhood?* Suffer a small illustration. Say that the reader is continually walking in a town in a given direction; you pass a lad, a shoeblack, day after day, week after week; finally you miss him, your opportunity to communicate with him is over. On the other hand, suppose that the reader is thoughtful, you not only wish to get good, but to do good; and that, both to those who associate with you, and generally to all not far from your own age. You consider that boy, and have a kind thought for him; you give him a kind look. Another time you give him a good word; you produce in his mind the idea that you care for him; you give him a good and attractive paper. Another time you see him reading some mischievous magazine, and you drop a word of warning and advice, which he does not spurn, for you and he have become friends in a sense, and then you miss him. He has passed on. Now contrast the vast difference. If you acted as first contemplated, you had an opportunity, you let it slip;

perhaps the very omission was hardening to you and to him. On the other hand, you were a steward of God for good. A kindly eye, an encouraging word, good reading, how softening! how calculated to be a blessing! Too simple for many. A privilege open to each one.

But I do not write to indicate modes. It is the two great principles of the universe to which I would direct the mind. In nature all bodies are centripetal—they gravitate towards a centre; yet also they are impelled by some centrifugal force—the whole universe is moving on together. Take any Church of Christians, or any Association, and let them be occupied with the work within the body, to the exclusion of the work without—the missionary character—and see how they first grow and then become dwarfed in spiritual stature. On the other hand, let any body or any individual go much outside of self for the good of others, and see how God uses that man or that society. The general principles are shown in the conduct of the Lord, who, while tenderly caring for the little flock, went about (1) “doing good,” and (2) “healing all that were oppressed of the devil.”

Let us all meditate upon that great example more and more continuously, and strive to bring our lives into harmony with it; and though it is not to be supposed that all sorts and classes can judiciously be gathered into one Association, still in some way let all the Christian young men in a place seek the good of all other young persons in their own neighbourhood, according to the pattern in the days of Nehemiah, when the priests repaired every one over against his house. Let all cast themselves into the Lord's treasury with their stock of kind hearts, *and kind looks*, and good words and deeds, a rich mind of social, mental, and spiritual powers and resources, to provide a general fund of Christian usefulness, and dispense it with vigour and genial cheerfulness. So, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, shall tens of thousands more be benefited by the Young Men and Young Women's Christian Associations and their world-wide branches. All praise to God; and also, all honour be to the channels of His goodness, the founders, who need not be named.

ON PUBLIC ADDRESSES.

EXPOSITORY and miscellaneous Addresses of a Christian nature are chiefly, though not exclusively, in view in the following observations. The ability to express oneself easily, pleasantly, and usefully in public is a great power for good. The practice has increased, and is increasing, both indoors and out of doors. Perhaps the latter may increase still more, and the matter may become more weighty.

Trained qualification is necessary for all continued work. We may act successfully in a business or service, to which we are almost strangers, once in a way. Even so, we may speak profitably now and then. But if anyone believes that God would have him instruct his fellow-men, it behoves him indeed to seek fitness for the work; and to take it up as one needing preparation in spirit, in knowledge, and in expression.

Let me divide the subject into two parts: First, the preparation of an Address; and second, the delivery of it.

I.—THE PREPARATION.

Bear with some elementary observations. The basis of a good Address is *knowledge*. Exhortation is good, very good, very needful; yet its place is subsequent. You have first to sow the seed of knowledge. If not, no harvest will result. I was sitting by a working man who was near a speaker, when he told me he had been listening to the address, but that there was very little in it; and I think he was right. We will not say whether the same remark would apply to numerous other addresses. Let it not be an accurate description of our own words.

The importance of *knowledge* is very traceable in Scripture. See, for example, Proverbs x. 14; xiii. 16; xv. 7; xx. 15; and for the highest knowledge see John xvii. 3. Consider also the order of the model sermons in the Acts of the Apostles. After just linking the external circumstances (which are often helpful as an introduction), the apostles commenced with the word of knowledge. They testified—gave information as witnesses—and always about God, His character, words, work, and salvation.

Therefore, as knowledge is so important, obtain it from its right

source. If historical, then from reliable records ; if natural, then from the works of God ; if religious, then from the Word of God.

As regards the latter, it is an excellent plan in preparing an expository address (than which nothing is more valuable for a regular, as distinguished from a casual audience) to take some sheets of foolscap paper, fold them in half, lengthwise, and write out a passage of Scripture on the left half. Search the original language yourself, if able. Then test your labour by the Revised Version, and by the thoughts of others. Having arrived at the literal and general meaning of the words and phrases so far as you can, pray for the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, that you, having a spiritual mind, may discern the things of the Spirit. Then begin to make notes on the right-hand side. Take immense pains. Feel that you are about something which is worth doing well. It is the solid instruction in the Word of God that trains the children of God, and its absence tends to produce a dwarfish style of Christianity.

Let us recollect that there are certain means whereby we can be awakened from the deathly sleep of the soul. These are—(1) Words of Divine truth ; (2) pressed home to the conscience, heart and mind ; (3) spoken by lips of love ; (4) and in the power of the Spirit of God. Whether the hearers are finally converted or not, persons so addressed are thereby thrilled to the very centre of their being. It is then for them to act upon their inward convictions.

Do not *press* a hearer into a condition of peace. It is far more judicious that such a one should even have his anxiety deepened, and should cry out, to quote the words of Isaac Watts:—

“O thou that hear'st when sinners cry,
Though all my sins before Thee lie ;
Behold them not with angry look !
But blot their mem'ry from Thy Book !”

Also, urge *practical* repentance, according to the principles enjoined by the true forerunner of Christ in Luke iii. 10-14, for thereby is a repentant mind perfected. It is well written:—

“He, who repenting, *turns* from wrong,
Adds joy unto the angels' song.
He who repents, and yet doth ill,
Hath need of true repentance still.
For true repentance ever means
Not merely sorrow for our sins,
But that our souls those sins condemn,
And *turn* for evermore from them.”

If the spirit is thus exercised, then the provision of peace, on repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who toiled, and suffered for our sins, will be precious.

Regarding poetry, some minds, perhaps very many, are inwardly touched and moved by occasionally quoting a verse. It should not be frequent. Thus, such a verse as the following (which is better *spoken* than *sung*, it is really too solemn for singing) is awakening, startling; it is calculated to come right home to any listener, leading him in his soul to exclaim, "Great God forbid!"

"Ah, who shall thus the Master meet,
And bring but withered leaves?
Ah, who shall at the Saviour's feet,
Before the awful Judgment-seat,
Lay down, for golden sheaves—
Nothing but leaves? nothing but leaves?"

We ought to return to a larger measure of that kind of public speaking. By the preaching of John the Baptist, Wesley, and such reformers—true Elijahs—the man himself was, through the Word, shown to himself. His life and secrets appeared to his thoughts in a way that he had never viewed them before. Yes! there should be powerful, unaffected, wrestling appeals, reaching the heart, awakening the conscience, commanding, winning to repentance. But then the whole soul of the speaker himself *must* be in the words declaring the truth. Sin and atonement, perdition or immortality, condemnation or forgiveness, the Kingdom of Christ or the power of Satan, remission of sins and the gift of the promise of the Father, must be felt by the preacher, as deep, deep realities.

If an address is to be given by a person who is gradually coming forward, it may profitably be written out entirely beforehand—profitably to himself. Appropriate expressive words and sentences will be more readily forthcoming through such preparation. But then, an address (as distinguished from a lecture, which must often be read) should not be read, nor repeated as a matter of memory. The mind, previously aided, should now be left free. Yet a speaker of mature experience will have in his mind a contemplated framework, while one of less experience may have notes.

Anecdotes are good now and then. Let them be *strictly true*, and within your own knowledge. They often degenerate into very small talk. Do not repeat other persons' stories. If speakers did but know how thoughtful hearers shrink from the oft-heard words, "There was a story which dear Mr. So-and-so once told," &c., they would avoid such stories, or merely give the point needed to illustrate the truth to be enforced.

The appropriate condition of one who preaches the Gospel is—In spirit, to be repentant, yet peaceful, happy in God, and grateful for his own reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ; in tone, to be reverential towards God and affectionate towards man; in mind, to be full of matured thought; in temper, to be earnest; in

position, a *man amongst men*, and also an *ambassador from God*. As the former, a living man, full of sympathy, full of energy, of like passions, affections, and needs, *on a level* with those who hear. As the latter, a herald of glad tidings, a personal witness of their power, full of spiritual light and life, seeking the glory of Christ, and the good of the listeners, *in advance of those who hear*. Let it ever be kept in mind that the preacher has a twofold duty to perform. He has to preach the Gospel, and also to call sinners to repentance.

Also make a point of this: Hold two or three minutes communion with the Lord in your own room before you finally go to His service. I commenced this practice when I became a Sunday School teacher in the year 1849, and have followed, and do still follow it, before going to any Christian labour, be the obstacles what they may; and I can tell younger friends of its blessedness in every point of view. To commence the service of God with good habits in our early days will, by His grace, affect us beneficially throughout our course; even as the training and inclination given to the twig of a young fruit-tree is traceable in the shape of the fixed and fruitful branch in after years.

II.—THE DELIVERY OF AN ADDRESS.

Speak in a natural tone. Some persons, as soon as they speak to God in public prayer, or to their fellow men, alter the key of their voice: avoid this. Also, the tone should be gentle, not rough nor patronizing, the speech of a true gentle-man. Let the voice at the commencement be just sufficiently loud for the most distant auditor to hear comfortably.

If this be difficult, seek to accomplish it by distinctness of utterance, not by shouting. Commence slowly, not weakly indeed, yet gently, thoughtfully, giving place to the Holy Spirit to co-operate. Avoid a rush of words; speak as before the Lord. Realize that Satan is the opposer; consider that man's best interests may be affected by what you say. Indoors, in general, read the Bible, if the subject is scriptural. In the open air, a person must consider whether it is desirable to read. If it is, (and I have found it so,) read a moderate quantity only, and with reverence. Seek that the meaning shall be *felt in yourself*. Excitement, if it exists in an open-air audience, will often calm down under the influence of the thoughtful reverential reading of the Word of God. Only, to be of real

good, the Word must be read with true intelligence. It is a great matter that the reader should enter into the sense of the words himself, and be living upon, and in accordance with them; for then the very tones of the voice will help to convey the vital spirit of the passage. May not the disciple be in measure like His Master, who said, "with the words which I have spoken to you, Spirit is, and life is."

Be true. It is possible to speak untruthfully in most graceful language. See the oration of Tertullus in the Acts of the Apostles, nearly every sentence of which contains a falsehood.

Would you agree with me if I say that to do good a speaker must be liked, or at all events, he must be worthy of being liked? Certainly the converse will hold good—that there should be nothing in himself, his spirit, his words, his tones, his dress, his manner, which is calculated needlessly to offend.

Action has its place. Probably most speakers of energetic minds would feel fettered, and become impassive, unless, however unintentionally, some part of the body moved with the mind. But working with the shoulders, beating books or desks, putting the hands behind the coat, doubling fists, and so on, should be shunned. Such speakers little think how objectionable these habits are to persons of mental power and proper feeling; whilst hearers even though they gape with admiration are really unprofited. The white handkerchief just drawn out of the breast pocket, the diamond pin, the metal chain shaking before the hearers' eyes—all these things should not be seen on the speaker; though, of course, he should dress thoroughly well, appropriately to his condition in life.

Never use the precious power of public speech on an unworthy topic. Speak the truth, and uphold the cause of truth and goodness—the cause of God. It will be a bitter reflection hereafter if we have spoken on the wrong side.

It seems inherent in some persons, even really godly men, to be not only pleasant, but to possess a humorous turn of mind. They have a keen sense of the ludicrous themselves, and enjoy communicating it to others. Audiences laugh almost irresistibly at their anecdotes or allusions, even at meetings called in the cause of God. Of course this must be a hindrance to the Holy Spirit's operations; and such a mind may need severe self-discipline to overcome its easily-aroused inclinations. Suffer, therefore, a word of exhortation—that, while cultivating a genial cheerfulness, a warmth and glow, and admitting greater freedom on miscellaneous topics, you should beware of saying or relating anything which may create levity.

Do not be long. Never weary an audience. If you have really

something to say worth hearing, they will probably, sitting or standing, be fixed motionless as statues by the truth spoken in telling words. But if you observe that they become restless, either take up a fresh point or close as soon as you can ; and make the event an occasion for seeking amendment in yourself.

Suffer a remark which will become to you of greater importance than may at first be thought. If you are about to speak on a spiritual subject, be very careful to be moderate in your diet. If the body has much solid food to digest, or if the brain is affected by the fumes of liquid food, spiritual service will be hindered. For years when I had a Sunday afternoon service, I never took anything more than cold meat, potato and water for my dinner.

In conclusion, I would say—on a general subject give free scope to any oratorical powers you possess, after sowing the word of knowledge ; but if the subject is scriptural, hold oratory in great control. Indeed, throughout, let the human element be kept under ; and finally, let the divine only remain before the soul of the hearer. Human applause—or the power of the Spirit of God—which will you seek ?

EXHORTATION TO OPEN-AIR WORKERS.

The following exhortation (revised and omitting the particular circumstances) to a little Band of Christian Workers on recommencing their labours for the Summer, may be seasonable to others.

SEEK in all you do to increase everywhere a sense of God. Not merely that there is a God, but that He is living, loving, caring, listening. If then you pray in public, collect your minds ; be calm ; pray, really speaking to Him ; if you read His word, let it be with seriousness and reverence ; if you speak, let it be as God's messengers, representing Him.

As the latter, do not begin about *man*, what we are, but about *God*, what He is ; what He has provided ; what He has promised.

Lay well the old foundations—that God, in His great love and tender mercy, has provided for our forgiveness, our healing, our deliverance ; for our holiness, our present peace and eternal happiness. (Tender wisdom is needed to approach the soul of man.)

And all this, through a righteous foundation—the obedience, and the sufferings of Christ. Make known “that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself;” and now sends forth His servants to beseech men to be reconciled to God. Speak, as one who is himself thus reconciled, and at peace. “Oh! to grace, how great a debtor!”

Show that the first two gospel blessings promised are, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Keep *both* these in mind, and proclaim that these two blessings are given by God on our repentance towards Him, and on our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—such being the irreversibly appointed way.

But, seeing that respecting Divine things the soul of man is asleep, it must be awakened; and the inevitable, startling and awakening truth is, that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *the judgment*. This awakening is not effected by our loud tones, but through the truth spoken with solemnity, intense seriousness, deep feeling, full belief. With such labour the Spirit of God works. And in fact unless He works, all our efforts will be in vain.

And as to the operations of the Holy Spirit, I would counsel you do not pray for the out-pouring of the Spirit so as to imply that it did not take place at the Day of Pentecost. But recognizing that as an existing, continuing fact and truth, pray that His promised offices, for instance as specified in the 16th of John, in the conviction of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, may be abundantly fulfilled.

Point out definite personal sins, and trace them to the root of a fallen nature. Point out erroneous ideas of religion, and trace them to ignorance of God and His word. Paul told the Athenians that he who is created ought not to have wrong thoughts of Him who created him.

Also do not point out merely that an immoral action is wrong, but further, that it is wrong in this way—that it is contrary to God—the holy God, the loving God, the righteous God, the Author of our being—our Judge. It is sin against Him, and it grieves Him.

If, whilst so speaking, some around look cold, or cloudy, or smile, or talk—be patient. The soul of man is a wonderful thing; also allowances must be made for the young or frivolous. Perhaps, after all, it may prove that such hearers only presented an incorrect external appearance to mislead their companions; and were inwardly in a groping, inquiring, seeking condition, who were taking in the truth spoken. This is often the case. Be encouraged.

Whilst warning has its place, see that you encourage. Make

also much of the daily life in business. The proper occupation of work, when blessed of God, affords good opportunities for honouring God ; for nurturing in us parts of His own character—as righteousness, goodness, faithfulness ; and for cultivating a trustful, faithful spirit. Deep, close fellowship with the Lord, is often nurtured by temporal difficulties and pecuniary trials.

Touch upon your own experience now and then, but not too often.

Let us be ready for the Master's use. Not forward to thrust ourselves into service, yet not slow to go forward when He opens the path. Many a Christian man has something to say in his Master's cause now and again. Yet to speak, and speak, and speak again, week after week, needs frequent meditation on the Bible, and prayer, and thoughts incidental to our coming in contact with the mind and affairs of others. He who would call others to repentance, must himself be, not indeed miserable and sad, yet in a contrite spirit ; saved not as a saint, but as a repenting, believing sinner.

An occasional reference to some topic of Christian, National, or Parochial importance, which may have happened during the week, may enlist attention and be seasonable.

Eyes are upon all. And those who come a little or much to the front are especially marked. They, of all men, should so live as to be known in their neighbourhood to be right-minded persons—kindly, just, truthful, industrious ; gentle, yet courageous ; courteous, patient, temperate. Something, indeed much, of the Master may be illustrated by the life of His servant and witness.

Just a word as to the distribution of tracts and books. I would advise this to be done in moderation ; and that, in general, before giving them away, they should be read and approved by yourself.
