

THE NECESSITY FOR A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN
SPECIAL ADAPTATION

TO THE POOR:

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED IN RENSHAW STREET CHAPEL,

LIVERPOOL:

(WITH A PROSPECTUS OF THE OBJECTS AND PLAN
OF THE PROPOSED MINISTRY.)

BY

JOHN H. THOM.

LIVERPOOL:

PRINTED BY WILLMER AND SMITH, CHURCH STREET.

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S E R M O N I.

THE NECESSITY FOR A MINISTRY IN SPECIAL ADAPTATION TO THE POOR.

MATTHEW XI. 2. 5.

Now when John heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him; Art Thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them; Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

THESE things were to prove to John that "he who should come," *was* come; that in the similitude of the Spirit, as of the power, of God, the Christ indeed was on the earth. They were a series of proofs drawn from facts, in an ascending order, and with accumulating force, a climax of demonstration that the Spirit of the Lord God was upon *him* who did such things.

The argument which the Christ left John to gather from these facts, he on another occasion drew out in express words—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, *because*," mark the *because*, beautiful argument of a beautiful Theology, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The Spirit of the Lord was indeed upon *him*, who understood *that* to be his mission. We need not miracle to prove that God was in him, and he in God.

What is remarkable in these passages is, that Jesus makes the strongest proof that he was the Messiah of God to consist in his bringing *a gospel to the poor*, arguing of Heaven's truth, that if it was accommodated to the poorest, it must be *universal*, as he argued of Heaven's Providence, from the sparrow's flight calculated, and the hairs of the head numbered, that *it* must be *universal*. In these things the lesser includes the greater, and to preach such a doctrine was to make out a claim to be the fitting representative of the Father of all. In fine harmony with the character of his mission, as an evidence of his being the Sent of God, above miracle, above cleansing to the leper, above sight to the blind, above hearing to the deaf, above the very dead raised, there comes to close the climax, the crowning and the diviner fact, "that *the poor* had a gospel preached to them."

And to the poor, Christianity was indeed *a gospel*, glad tidings of great joy. It taught them the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of God. It taught them, that externals are a false standard, both of their own worth and of God's favour, for that men are measured by their souls, and loved in heaven, not according to what they have, but according to what they are. It taught them, that they have the best blessings of God, an immortal mind, with scope to educate it. The loftiest have or can have no more. It taught them the only secret of happiness—to be able to reverence their nature in themselves ; to gaze within and feel the solemn joy of being trusted with such gifts and responsible for their use ; to find God and the germs of heaven in their own spirit, and to make their treasure-house of that deathless place. It taught them to endure all things, not because death was at hand and heaven was coming, for that is heartless and impious comfort, but because all things were of God, and might be so used as to give them more of the happiness of heaven hereafter, because more of the holiness of heaven now. It taught them, the severer their post, the more glorious their fidelity, and that *his* is the truest greatness who takes it in the face of the most disadvantages, even as the widow's mite, because it was the widow's *all*, was a nobler offering than piles of wealth that hardly decreased the remaining piles of those who had abundance. It taught them in these spiritual purposes of discipline, *the impartiality of Providence*, and *that* was to preach a great gospel to the poor.

And the poor heard it and rejoiced. They left all and followed it, and it was unto them an exceeding great reward. Blessed were they, in spirit, and theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven. *In* them and *by* them did Christ reign, forming them to be his instruments. Was not that doctrine which out of humanity's poorest elements could make Martyrs and Apostles, the power of God unto Salvation? Was not this the noblest kind of proof—to show what the truth could do on the most unpromising materials? Politically, Judaism had, for the slave and the poor, its year of Jubilee, but morally and in essentials, Christianity is unto them, Jubilee for ever.

And that adaptation to the poor, the adaptation of the physician to the sick, which the Christ asserted as richest evidence that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, must in every age be an evidence, and I believe, *the* evidence, of the quantity of the Spirit of Christ which that age possesses. . It is the condition of their poor that determines the morality of a people. Our physical refinement indeed is to be estimated from an examination of the highest and most luxurious classes, but our religion, our spirit of humanity, from an examination of *the lowest*. What we are intellectually, mechanically, materially, is to be seen in what is called our civilization, which means the progress we have made in making art and nature minister to our physical comforts;—but what are we as *Christians*, that is, as brethren of men, and children of one great Father, is to be seen in what those who live by the people and wield the influences of society, suffer the

people *morally to be*. The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of human brotherhood, of mental and moral equality, recognizing the aptitude of all to be inwardly happy and blessed, and consequently the condition which the high suffer in the low, the influences which the powerful exert upon the weak, those that have upon those that have not, the moral standing and grade which the rich determine for the poor, the instructed for the uninstructed, measures the degree in which Christ is in the midst of us in the power and operation of his Spirit, for it measures the degree in which we live as brethren, and strive to equalize our Father's gifts of mind.

Well, then, on this* day of Christian remembrance, what question more appropriate than to ask whether the true Christ is still with us, or whether *we* must look for another, by asking whether the Christ that is in us has wrought the works of Christ, and preached a gospel to the poor? Where are they to be seen? Look around you. Are they worshipping by your side? Or if not here, think you, they are now in other temples, or in the temple not made with hands, hoping and adoring, subliming their nature by lifting it up to gaze on Jesus, and feel their bonds with God? I doubt not there are many such. I doubt not there are many poor whom Christ has made rich; many destitute who yet have all things; many orphaned who are not Fatherless; many widows who give their mite; many wasted

* Preached on Christmas Day.

bodies that tabernacle celestial minds; many narrow chambers that are gates of heaven; many with hardly a footing on the means of earthly subsistence, who, in that life which consisteth not in the abundance of the things a man possesseth, are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. But it would be a sentimentalism disgusting and weak, arguing an ignorance of the religion of the poor, which could only have its source in guilty indifference, to pretend that this was a faithful picture of the spiritual wealth of the poverty of England. It is a picture of *the few*; and darker colours must paint *the many*—to whom the reality is too real; who see their earthly lot in its bare earthly light; whose physical poverty no ray from the soul graces and makes rich; whose griefs no Providence administers; whose toils no moral purpose sanctifies; whose homes and hearts no peace of God inhabits; who *are* but what they *appear*, physically destitute and tempted, without being spiritually gladdened and upheld.

Why are not the poor religious: are you ready to ask? There is a prior question, however, and it must be put to yourselves. “Why have not the poor the gospel preached to them?”—“Why are not the poor religious?” Is religion so native to the soil? Does it grow spontaneously, just where it is wanted? Is it heartlessness, or is it ignorance we so often hear inquiring, and never without shuddering, “Why are not the poor religious, *it would be such a good thing for them?*” Are the necessities of those who live by their hands, who rest but for sleep and awake but for

toil, are ignorance, and the feeling of being a degraded class, and the fear of physical want, and ungraced homes, and unsightly associations, fit fosterers of the soul? We know that *educated* man can make a glory even out of these, and turn them to the uses of the mind; but we know also that it is only the spiritual element that offers this sublime resistance, and wears, like Christ, the crown of thorns, and that *uneducated* man sinks under them, a material being crushed beneath materialism.

Why do not the poor come of their own accord to the preaching of the gospel? Because they do not appreciate and understand their own moral nature. Because the wants of the mind have not assumed in them the forms of desires and appetencies. Because the love of knowledge is not in them a thirst; and a draught of truth a refreshment; and the thought of God a luxury to the soul. Is this so rare a thing as to be peculiar to the poor; or is there any thing so privileged in their lot and condition that they should be *more* religious than others, and without instruction, without a teacher sent to them, be able to draw from the hard rock of poverty the streams of living water? The poor do not come to the preaching of the gospel, because before they will go in quest of it they must feel a want of it—a desire of the spiritual affections for spiritual nourishment, an appetite of the soul for truth, which the mind must experience before it will seek the means of its gratification. *Exclusion* from blessings is not the way to make our nature crave for them. The less we know,

the less we care to know. The soul conforms to its condition. You must give it a taste of something better, before it desires to rise. The most degraded are always the most contented with their lot, for to know little is to have few desires. Leave them to themselves and you leave them to live and die as they are. You cannot expect men to do what they have no motive for doing; to seek a morality and a piety, of the beauty of which they have no inward perception, and for which their hearts do not hunger. You must excite the moral appetite, before it will crave and stimulate to exertion, and perform its spiritual function. If the poor will not come to the gospel, the gospel must be brought to the poor. Christ did not tarry in his beneficence, till men of their own accord desired what was good. He *made the desire*, by going about doing it.

Upon whom then does it fall to do this good office for all who want, to raise this moral appetite in all who are *so* poor as never to have felt its cravings? If the body hungered not, it must die; and if the soul hungers not, it sleeps; but blessed be God! one word from Him, one taste of His truth, can raise it out of that sleep. But who is to speak that word? Or who is to send others that they may speak it? Politically, officially, perhaps you will say, it is the business of the Church? It exists for the sake of tendering a religion to the poor. On this ground it was established; and on this plea it continues to ask support. It is good for this only, if it is good for anything. But this work the Church never did. The

poor do not come to it. And it does not go to the poor. Or, naturally expecting most religious sympathy for the poor from that class of Christians who have most general affinities with the poor, perhaps you will say that Methodism must preach to the people. Methodism did it, but does it not. Methodism has changed its character. It is no longer a Missionary, and power has gone out from it. Success has killed it. It lives at ease, no longer going forth to seek and save what was lost, but stalled in its churches, a second hierarchy in the land, a poor copy of the worst features of its more respectable original. Who then is to do this work? Whoever would prove that he has the Spirit of Christ, as Christ proved that he had the Spirit of God. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."

It is especially in vain, my friends, *for us* to expect that the poor in their present spiritual condition will come to the gospel as *we* preach it. A certain amount of moral development, of moral appetite, will excite men to go in quest of moral food, but still *the kind* of food they will desire must always bear a relation to the degree of their cultivation; and their minds must have an existence more independent of the senses and the imagination, before the intellectual style of preaching which is heard in our pulpits is fit preaching for the poor? Are we then to alter our style of preaching, because it does not meet the present wants of the poor? By no means. "There are manifold operations of the same spirit." Different minds need a different measure of instruction and different moral

applications, and you must not deny their appropriate food to any. You must no more neglect to provide for the cultivated whilst you preach down to the poor, than you must speak to the poor in the words of an unknown tongue, hovering in the air, above their heads, whilst you seek to plant a barbed arrow in the convictions of cultivated reason, or to supply with truer beauty and purer impulses the finer sensibilities of instructed conscience. You must preach in a different way to each: but you must provide for both.

I hold it then as a great principle in religious economy, that different instruments must be brought to different kinds of work; and that to make good *your* Christianity, you must provide a distinct Ministry for the poor.

Do not misunderstand me to say that our views are not fitted to make a blessed religion for the poor. I think them eminently so: but then you must find for them an entrance to the poor through those avenues which are open in the poor man's mind. Where the intellect is not cultivated, there are but two ways of introducing moral truth; through the senses and the imagination, or through the affections. Now upon the senses and the imagination we, as a class of Christians, have comparatively no hold. We have nothing of that external decoration, that material and symbolic language, which has a charm perhaps for all minds, but is especially dear to those whose eyes are seldom turned inward upon themselves, to find the great world of spiritual reality in the facts of their own consciousness. We have

little in our services of the consecration of sensible influences; little, I think too little, of solemnizing effect; of that mystic mingling of form and sound, which in the temple of our weekly worship might excite the same emotions that thrill us in the house not made with hands. Neither have we a creed fitted to subdue and enslave the *imagination*; to carve itself in fearful images on the religious passions; and to present vivid objects to the emotions, whilst it gives no truth to the mind. Since the imagination and the senses are thus shut against us, what remains but to seek an entrance to poverty *through the affections*. If you are to convey Christian truth into the hearts of the poor really and effectually, it must be through their moral wants and feelings. And how are you to find out these, except by coming into close contact with *individual* minds; preaching, not to congregations, but from house to house; dealing not in *general* statements, which it requires some exercise of mind to bring to bear on the circumstances of our own experience, but carefully searching out the very feeling you are to address, the individual lesson you are to give, the individual irritation you are to soothe, the individual spring of better feeling you are to cleanse from its gathered evil, that it may send up the waters of pure and purifying emotion, and become a fountain of regeneration in the soul. Thus must you preach the gospel to the poor; and in order to preach it thus, you must have a **SPECIAL MINISTRY** for the poor. Not through their intellects are they yet prepared to take in the Christianity you preach. Therefore you must give

it to them through their *affections*, but to have access to their affections you must meet them in their homes, acquaint yourselves with their moral experience, and look through their eyes into their hearts.

And for these reasons, though I think it an obligation on every class of Christians, to have an administration of moral influences with pointed reference to the aptitudes of needy minds, I think it a peculiar obligation upon us, because less than any other class do we provide for them in our public services, and because not being intellectually interested in the views we value, and not finding them impressive to their imagination or their senses, unless by this power of individual application, they are recommended to their affections, and fitted in as opportunity offers, to their own moral experience, they are shut in at every avenue, intellect, affection, senses, from the access of the truth. I say not this with the remotest desire to have the gospel preached to the poor controversially, but with the desire to have it preached *really*, to plant some truths and treasures *in the mind itself*, inward fountains of holiness and hope, and not merely to carve on it sensible images, and present to the religious passions outward visionings of faith.

But whilst we follow Christ in using this test, whether the Spirit of the Lord be upon us, and the spirit of brotherhood within us, we do not mean that you are to be individually employed in preaching the gospel to the poor. You are to do it in the most effectual way, and that is not to do it singly and separately, but on a well-considered plan, and with

combined powers. Our ordinary Ministers cannot undertake this work. It cannot be told you too distinctly that they cannot be Ministers to the poor, if they are to be any thing else besides. A few visits they may pay; a few families they may know, just far enough to enable them to administer physical relief, but not far enough to enable them to administer moral relief. No—they cannot give themselves to the visitings, to the conversations, and the prayers necessary to acquaint them with the history and moral experience of many hearts; they cannot bring to the work the freshness of unexhausted sympathies; they cannot ponder in their silent thoughts the individual cases which have come before them, studying them, and seeking how they may best minister to and serve them; nay, they cannot even have the invigorating satisfaction of the feeling that this is their appropriate duty, if they are also to have their lives and sympathies pledged *to you*, and, as conscientious men, to make solemn preparation for an effective ministration of the influences of this place.

Then again I say, and I have chosen this day for saying it, you must provide a SEPARATE MINISTRY, consecrated to the poor. With all the direct applications of spiritual motive that besiege and urge you to good, *you* do not always find that your moral nature is in a state of activity and health, ready to work well. With all the indirect fencing about-of moral restraints, which guard you against evil, you do not always find that you stand securely. Then what think you of the poor—with no direct applications to make them love

the good, and with hardly any indirect restraints to keep them from the evil? Are they so privileged that they can do with less moral assistance than can you? Or rather ought it not to be a part of *your* Christianity to give Christianity *to them*?

I had thought to present a sketch of the appropriate work of a Minister of the poor; but as this may be left to your own suggestions, let me rather ask, where are we to find fitting instruments for this work?

I would say then, rather abandon it altogether than consign it to an inferior man. He must be no hewer of wood and drawer of water, who is to inspire the very poorest with worthy views of their nature and their destinies,—who is to sympathize with the sources of their weakness and through that sympathy to infuse strength,—who is to discern with the piercing eye of Christian regard, the spark of good not yet extinct and to fan it into flame. He must be no ordinary man, and have no ordinary knowledge of human nature, who is to make his way with a permitted gentleness to rude rough hearts,—who is to correct without irritating,—who is to deal faithfully with the bad without having the door of usefulness closed against him,—who is to give wise and true counsel in all the trying circumstances of humanity's most destitute condition,—who is to strengthen the things that remain but are ready to die,—who is to take his stand on the one sound spot of the evil heart, and work the leverage of the moral world.

It is necessary, also, for the success of this work,

that it should be supported by the public, and in order to be supported, it must stand high in their estimation, and therefore you must entrust it to a man who will stamp on it his own character, make it honoured, and by the charm of his moral power draw towards it the enlisted sympathies of other hearts. And instead of giving, who would not receive glory from his connection with such a blessed and holy office? Who indeed is worthy of it? My only anxiety about its success is from the difficulty of finding the needed wisdom and love united in the same mind, the sympathy and the sagacity, the philanthropy and the prudence of Christ.

But, my friends, whoever is to be the workman, you must be persuaded to become its originators. The office may call out the man. Let it be known that there is such a work waiting to be done, and drawn by his affinities the fitting person may offer to do it.

Let no one-sided view of difficulties and objections close your mind against this project. I know that the political economist will say that the salvation of society depends on other principles. Grant it: but has *that* gospel been preached to the poor? Has *he* sent missionaries to teach it to them? Let him do so. I know others will say that National Education must be the salvation of Society—and grant it; but has *that* gospel been preached to the poor? Have they been persuaded to desire it? Has the thirst of knowledge been excited in them by a taste of its sweetness? Or rather, is it not at this moment contemplated as the

most serious practical difficulty in the way of educating the people, that so little is their desire for knowledge, it could only be forced on them by coercion and police? Then, is there not, in reference to education, an appetite to be created, and a gospel to be preached?

Finally, my friends, I recommend this Christian interest to your most favourable regards. I solicit for it your best thoughts. I ask on the subject of it your communications, your views, your co-operation. I ask to be informed of those who think well of conveying the light to those who are in darkness. Recollect that this is no untried experiment,—for it has the sanction of an ample experience. You cannot say that it is impracticable, for in fact it has been realized. Indeed I should almost deem it both a literary and a moral plagiarism, were I to close without mentioning the name of Dr. JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

I know that in proportion to the whole work to be done, *you* cannot do much. But you may support one Minister, and here, as in Boston, other classes of Christians may be excited to do the same, and combination work its perfect work.

Would to God that when other classes of Christians say to you, “you have not the true Christ,”—“look ye for another,” you could answer as did your Master—
“THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.”

SERMON II.

THE EXTENT OF THE FIELD, AND THE NATURE OF
THE WORK.

MATT. ix. 37.

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

It is ascertained from a comparison of the statistics of large towns, that not more than two-thirds of the population have any connection with the ministrations of religion. This, moreover, is the most favourable statement of the case, the maximum proportion, and I have reason to believe, that there is not one town in England, of which it could be said, that two-thirds of its inhabitants have any visible connection with the influences of devotion.

In proof of the correctness of this numerical statement, we may cite the case of Boston, in the United States, both because it is a specimen of the most favourable kind, and because the religious statistics of that city have been taken with extraordinary care. Boston contains about sixty-five thousand inhabitants. Supposing each family to

average five individuals, Boston will possess thirteen thousand families. Now for these thirteen thousand families, there are only forty-four places of worship. Allotting two hundred families to each place of worship, there will appear to be something more than four thousand families unconnected with religion, in that city, which Americans signalize to the world, and we believe justly, as pre-eminently the City of Schools and Churches.

We present this as the most favourable specimen the world contains of a city practically asserting the claims of man's spiritual nature, and holding visible communication with its recognized influences, and this choicest specimen exhibits one third of the whole living apart from any known means of spiritual education or moral appliances.

Let us apply the same principle of calculation to the place of our own homes, and register the results.

Liverpool we shall suppose to contain a population of two hundred thousand; which is under the truth, but we wish to make it obvious that we present no strained statement. Taking again the same proportion of five individuals to a family, we have forty thousand separate families living within the bosom of this great community. Now what provision is made for any public and recognized operation of loftier influences on these tens of thousands of households? We have, in all, about seventy places of worship, and from an examination of the capacity of each, I find that a considerable number have but a very limited power of accommodation.

The American statistics allot two hundred families to each place of worship. Let us, however, that we may be free from all appearance of exaggeration, allot three hundred. Let us suppose three hundred families attached to each church or chapel of the seventy which the town possesses, and we may state as the result, that of our forty thousand families, twenty thousand are living in connection, and twenty thousand are living out of connection with the means of religion. I state this, not to make prominent the comparison with Boston, so unfavourable to *us*,—that even supposing our churches to be of one third larger capacity than hers, she severs from religion only one third of her population, while we sever one half,—but simply for the sake of putting you in distinct possession of the statistical fact, that within a circle of less than a mile's radius from this place, there exist twenty thousand families, one hundred thousand beings, that have, and under our present arrangements can have, no bonds with morality or God, except such as gush up in their own hearts. I apprehend that this would not be believed, were it not for the demonstration of figures. Our moral impression of ourselves would reject it as a libel. It would sometimes be well, and perhaps it might present us with results as unexpected, to submit our characters and our doings, the proportions of our evil and our good, to so simple a test as the showings of arithmetic.

But let us, to provide against the chances of error, make a large reduction upon these twenty thousand heathen families. Let us suppose that a considerable

number, though indisposed to the services of religion, are not therefore irreligious,—that they require not the sympathy of fellow-worshippers,—that they nurture their own nature, pursue their own inquiries, are sufficient to themselves, and wish for no interpreter between their own souls and the face of the living God. Let us suppose that another considerable number are content with the Theology of nature, and prefer for their Sabbath worship the temple not made with hands,—and though they bow not here, bend beneath the heavens,—and ask no revelations of a God but the revelations of their own spirit,—and read no scriptures but the Eternal's handwriting on the tablets of the heart,—and listen to no teachings but those of conscience, a preacher that utters no jargon words. Let us make a third reduction on account of those who, though not directly nor permanently, are yet indirectly or occasionally under influences that break up the depths of the soul, and keep the soil of our virtues fruitful and fresh,—families that, though not pious themselves, are blessed with pious kindred who hide not themselves from their own flesh but precipitate the wealth of their hearts on the barren places within the circuit of their social walk;—parents who are sanctified by their own offspring, whose children, pupils in our schools, become teachers at home, and carry prayer where prayer was never heard, and ask questions in their innocence awakened to intelligence, that go farther into the soul than could any other missive of Providence, whether of weal or woe, and are mightier to flood with penitence and shame a

mother's or a father's heart, than any preaching of wrath or mercy from the tongue of angel or of man,—that portion of our poor, which perhaps is considerable, who, though out of the direct beamings of religion, are yet by some of the unintended agencies of society, the chances of man, but the dated missives of God, not unfrequently brought within the region of its light and warmth. In consideration of these reductions, let us strike off *one half* from that amount of heathen families, which is the result of a calculation conducted simply on the principle of church accommodation, and we have, after every reduction that can be claimed, and far more than ought to be conceded, still remaining ten thousand families, the minimum of heathenism that is embosomed in the midst of us. Truly the the harvest *is* plenteous; and the labourers few. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

That those who are living apparently and outwardly without God in the world, are actually and inwardly living without Him, can, I fear, hardly be doubted. This is a state of things so dreadful, so abhorrent to our moral taste, that men can hardly be persuaded to look upon it steadily. Our moral tastefulness comes in to check our steadfast gaze on ought at once so hapless and so hopeless, and we shift away from the uncomfortable contemplation. **THERE ARE TEN THOUSAND FAMILIES WITHIN THE HEART OF THIS COMMUNITY, EXISTING IN A CONDITION OF PRACTICAL HEATHENISM,—and no man will think on it, or realize it. How long**

are such things to be? Is this curse of our civilization never to be removed from us? Are the extremes of society for ever to be presented in such frightful juxta-position,—wealth and want, sanctity and sin, living together, but making no approach to each other,—profusion, ignorant of the very existence of the poverty that utterly prostrate and friendless is mourning alone, dying or wishing for death, not a stone's throw from the rich man's door,—and the temple of God overshadowing whole dens of darkness whose clustered abominations no eye but His explores? Is this to be for ever the moral character of our large towns,—places where stuper and apathy, and the animal nature retire back from our public streets, and, congregated together, live in dense concealments, abandoned to their own ways and instincts, and with no influence to shine on them from God or man, except what they make for themselves. Is this for ever to be the price of our civilization, worse in this one feature, oh, far, far worse than the wild freedom of savage life, where blessed purity from the unpoisoned breath of Nature, and awe of the Great Spirit, who sighs in the wind and whose word is destiny, cleanse the heart with a noble though an erring worship,—and where man though stationary never sinks into brutality, though darkened is yet faithful to his light?

It is weak or wicked not to meet this evil, and look it steadily in the face. What faith man must have in the providence of God when he can leave such things to regulate themselves, and not tremble for the results. One

might be tempted to think so; but, alas! to call it *faith* would be a most bitter sarcasm. The evil we leave to God to remedy, we have no faith that God *will* remedy, for we know that God wills nothing of moral good, except through man's operation. There is nothing of moral evil which has not also its moral remedy, and to find *that* and apply it, is our mission upon earth, and our preparation for heaven. The faith that humanity and God ask from us, is a faith that will justify its own confidence, and that trusting it and Him, will work for the one, and beneath the eye of the other, doubting neither. The faith that worketh by love will, by the result, prove that it was not deceived. Neither humanity nor God will fail it. Then leave not this evil to God, unless you wish to show that you distrust God. *Work* to wipe it away, unless you deem that all such labour is in vain in the Lord, and that God does not wish it wiped away. Do as Christ did when he looked on the multitudes and had compassion, because they were as sheep having no shepherd. Pray and do. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into his harvest; and then immediately after *choose* your labourers as he chose his Apostles, and *send* them forth. This was Christ's faith in God. He prayed and strove. He asked for labourers, and he set himself to find them.

But supposing your Apostle chosen, a man whose heart is in this work, who is fitted for it by sympathy, by wisdom, by personal holiness, by a knowledge of human nature, by the unwearying

energies, by the burning, simple, eloquence of love,—what do we contemplate as his peculiar task,—what are to be his objects and his modes of action? I understand that something more is needed of specification than I had supposed. I shall try to be definite.

In the first place, the Minister of the poor is to find, and he will find them for the seeking, such families as are unvisited by any pastor, unattached to any congregation, abandoned to their own courses, with no provision for instruction, with no external aids for communication between their souls and God. These he is to find. These he is to connect himself with. These are to be his charge. He is to be the minister of outcasts: and the friend of sinners. To those who will not come to the gospel, he is to go in the spirit of the gospel and preach it unto them. Those in whom the spiritual nature has sufficient vitality to feel its affinities with God, and to seek voluntarily development and strength through the sympathies and aids of other minds, he is to pass by. Such belong not to his charge. No one, who, of his own accord, proclaims himself a spiritual being, is to be a subject of this Ministry. Worthy or unworthy, a worshipper in any of the temples of any of our sects, and who is therefore supposed to be already provided with a pastor, must not be considered as within the province of this work. This Ministry should have a peculiar and well-defined territory. Let it perform a work which no one else is performing or attempting. It will find unclaimed wastes in the heart of the vineyard. Let it go where

no one else goes. Let it not go to souls that are awake and stirring on their own behalf, but to souls that are asleep and will never awake themselves. Let it not go to those who want, for those who want will seek, but let it go to those who are so spiritually poor that they want nothing, and therefore seek nothing. Let it go to those who desire not God, because they know not God, and live without Him in the world. These are its subjects. Let it awake them out of their sleep unto death, and give them life and light.

Do you ask me what authority has any man to seek, unsolicited, such a connection with the poor? I answer, no authority but that which Christ had when *he* preached the gospel to the poor;—no authority but the deep ineffaceable want in human nature, which, though it stagnates, never dies, and has still unfrozen fountains beneath the deepest crust;—no authority but that of the *right* of every human being to have an education above the animal and the opportunities of *a man*, and that where there is a right to *have*, there is an obligation to *give*. The voice in his heart which sends any to that work, will find an echo in the hearts he goes to, which will abundantly accredit him, and acknowledge his **RIGHT** to speak in the name of the living God, and on behalf of the inextinguishable soul.

This connection, however, of the Minister of the poor with the godless reclaimed to God, should not be a permanent one. His object should be to bring the spiritual nature into such a healthy state that it will seek nutriment for itself; to create an appetite

that will crave for the sweetness it has once tasted ; and then he should leave that living soul, and pass on to awaken others out of their sleep. The Minister of the poor should be what the physician is to the sick. He should seek to bring back the energies, the constitutional activities, the healthful appetites of nature, and then he should retire. Our ordinary ministry should be like nature itself, a provision for those whose healthful cravings lead to strenuous seekings, and who do spiritually hunger and thirst. Let the Minister of the poor make it his first aim so to create a religious sentiment, and give energy to the moral principle, that they will be careful and anxious for their own preservation ; and then, reverencing the liberty of the mind he has awakened, let him consult it about the religious teacher, or class of religionists, to whom it desires to be attached ; and let him aid it to form such a connection, and ensure its being permanent and effective. His connection with the individuals of his charge should terminate as soon as he has imparted to them the desire to assert and provide for their own spiritual being, and deposited them safely in the care of a real and faithful pastor. He need never enquire after them again, except to assure himself that there has been no backsliding, and that the new pastoral connection is real and true. Thus might he move on through the wastes of our town, placing behind him at every step reclaimed ground, and passing on to the unbroken wildernes, to claim it in the name of humanity and God.

It will be seen that the plan so far sketched does

not contemplate any ministrations of religion to the poor, except from house to house. Pulpit services are no part of the *peculiar* work of this Ministry. As soon as there is a desire for the public offices of religion, let the Minister for the poor use his influence to form for these members of his charge, an efficient connection with some one of our existing places of worship. But it will be obvious that in a multitude of cases, this will not be easily accomplished. Many will listen, and gladly, to the Minister who visits them, who could not be persuaded to take such a positive and self-committing step as the resolute entrance into a worshipping assembly, their very strangeness to which excites indefinite fears. Many will congregate in some neighbouring and unambitious room, whom nothing could induce to exhibit their poverty in our churches, or to intrude themselves where they know of no accommodation, and dread to be repulsed. For these reasons, though by no means deeming it wise to have permanent chapels exclusively for the poor, yet as a preparatory and disciplinary measure, I conceive it would be necessary to have a room for worship in the neighbourhood of each mission, where those not yet attached to more stated ministrations might be induced to come. Congregations solely of the poor, I should look upon as a great evil. Let them be persuaded to attach themselves to any of our worshipping assemblies with whose forms and style of thought they have affinities, and thus place themselves within the influences of brotherhood, of a

practical sense of their spiritual equality, within the solemnities and appliances to awaken reverence, with which cultivated man surrounds himself, when in the courts of worship he draws nigh to God.

I deem it unnecessary to enter into all the offices of Christian friendship and of invaluable aid, which an efficient minister might render to the poor. He must have languid sympathies, and a cold moral imagination, to whom they are not liberally suggested. A sympathetic and sagacious counsellor in the emergencies of life, there are few of us so favoured as not to feel would be an aid for whom every day even *we* could find occasion. But where there is stupid sin to be startled with a kind but thrilling voice,—where there is confirmed indulgence to be won from its inveterate habit,—where there are thick temptations to be stemmed and turned aside, and feeble resolutions to be sheltered,—where there are children to be provided for, of all characters and conditions,—the pure to be kept from contamination,—the trembler on the brink to be saved from falling over,—the young in years, the seared and the soiled in vice, wept for by broken-hearted mothers, to whom no one on earth is such a source of woe and terror, as their own guilty child ;—where there are thousands whose daily work provides the daily meal, and whom, already on the very verge of subsistence with nothing on which to fall back, one day's sickness or want of employment precipitates into pauperism ;—where there are all these and others about to rush on the same reckless course, that might be counselled, forewarned, excited to a better ambi-

tion, we have no scope for the *details* of service which an accomplished Minister, devoted, sagacious, practical, sympathetic, might render in this work.

I know not how it may appear to others, but for myself I confess that I can see no element of weakness, or cause of failure in this scheme. I mean, of course, if it is ably worked. I am aware how distrustful many have been made by the results of their own experience of the efficacy of visits to the poor. But let them remember, that the visits from which we expect much fruit are not few and far between, made languidly, by people little fervid or earnest, who deem themselves very good and gracious for taking so much trouble, and the poor very ungrateful for not being overpowered by their kindness, whilst at the same time they are hardly more than present in body, with their hearts and their chiefest interests elsewhere.

The ministry from which alone we venture to expect great good, must be that of a man who will consecrate to it his life and his mind, who takes it as his mission on earth, who knows no other interest so dear to him, who lives in it and for it, who thinks on it by night and by day, and whose education and mental training have qualified him to act upon human nature, to penetrate its secrets, to read its indications, to gather its love upon himself, to sympathize with the sources of its weakness, and to supply its wants.

Let the Christianity of this great community through all its sects and sections, supply but fifty such agents, and the gospel will be preached to the poor, and the poor will be made rich. I say fifty;

and you will perceive how lightly such a provision would press upon the community, when I tell you that your proportion, I mean of our whole sect, would be but *one*. We cannot, as a religious body, be reckoned at much more than the one-hundredth part of the entire religious community. Let *us* then but support one **MINISTER FOR THE POOR**, and let the rest of the religious community do likewise in their proportion, and we shall have one hundred Ministers shedding Christian influences on the sinner and the poor. But let us suppose that the other sects do but half as much, and we shall have fifty Ministers to the poor,—and I believe it would suffice.

No Minister I conceive could profitably embrace within his charge more than two hundred poor families. You will find, if you make the calculation, that it would be physically impossible for him to pay one beneficial visit in the week to each of such a number. Two hundred then, should be the extreme; and again, supposing that we possess ten thousand uninstructed and abandoned families, it would require only fifty agents, acting in combination, thoroughly to compass this work. Let it be known, that two Ministers for the poor in each Ward of the town would leave not one soul in this community without a Christian friend and monitor, whose influence would be constant on his heart and home. At what cost might this moral machinery be erected? Say fifteen thousand pounds. It would be abundant. **FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS**—to carry the lessons of conscience, the voice of Jesus, the appliances of morality and God to every lane and

cellar—to every court and garret—to every heart of man that beats in the recesses of each dark and hidden chamber!

Oh, would to God that religion was in such a condition amongst us, that even in this we could so far hope for harmony and the silence of an abashed sectarianism, as to permit, with safety, our local government to take this work upon itself, and to do it perfectly. It would be the noblest example that ever a social community held out to the cities of the world. But this is hopeless. The work must be performed by fragments, and *you* must do your part. I pray for you, and pray for yourselves, that the Lord of the harvest will put it into your hearts, “to send forth labourers into His harvest.”

APPENDIX.

PROSPECTUS*
OF THE OBJECTS AND PLAN OF
A MINISTRY FOR THE POOR,
PROPOSED TO BE ESTABLISHED IN LIVERPOOL.

I.—A STATEMENT OF THE OBJECTS OF THIS
MINISTRY

THE Ministry for the Poor has for its object, to seek out the spiritually neglected; to bring the influences of devotion and virtue into living communication with those who are now excluded from the outward means of moral and religious culture. The destitute who cannot provide, and the degraded who do not desire, food for their better nature, are to be the subjects of this charge.

* This Prospectus being printed separately for a more extended and gratuitous circulation, is little more than a condensed expression of the statements already made. It was thought that even of those who read the Sermons, some might desire to have the scheme presented thus briefly to the mind and to the eye.

II.—A STATEMENT OF THE NECESSITY FOR THIS MINISTRY.

To the class just described who are too poor or too degraded to provide moral influences for themselves, a large portion of the population of every great town must be referred. It is calculated that never more than two thirds of the population of our towns are in a condition to put themselves in communication with the ministrations of religion; and that the remaining third are abandoned to themselves, with with no moral appliances, with no remembrances of duty or God, except such as their own unaided nature may supply.

Taking the population of Liverpool as 200,000, this proportion exhibits nearly 70,000 individuals, or 14,000 families, given over to practical heathenism. If the extent of accommodation in our places of worship is a fair test by which to estimate the numbers who desire to place themselves beneath a moral operation, the statement just given is greatly too favourable. There is not accommodation for more than one half the population,* even supposing, what is far from

* Our present church accommodation might be made sufficient by the method adopted by Roman Catholics, and by the Reformed Churches of Germany; viz. having in our places of worship a succession of services throughout the whole of the Sunday, and, of course, as far as would be necessary, by a succession of ministers.

being the case, that our places of worship were all well filled. But to keep far within the limits of an extreme statement let us suppose that there are only ten thousand families within the bosom of this community insulated and outcast, unvisited by any moral influence, except such as spring up within themselves,—and if a waste so large in the heart of the vineyard moves us not to send labourers into it, no amount of desolation would avail to prove the necessity.

An additional supply of church accommodation, and of stationary Ministers, is not the remedial apparatus that can be brought to bear upon this evil. Our supply of these is already beyond the demand. What is wanted on the part of these ten thousand families is not temples to frequent, but the desire to frequent them; not the outward supply but the inward demand; not more of religious accommodation, but more of the religious sentiment. If our places of worship are too few for our population, it is the effect not the cause of an inert spiritual nature in the mass of our poor. The building of churches has no tendency to create a desire for religious services, and consequently another kind of ministerial operation, of a more individual and aggressive character must be applied to those in whom the spiritual sentiment is dead. Our

present stated Ministry is for those who already spiritually hunger and thirst. The new Ministry, proposed to be established, is to awaken those who sleep, to create a religious want where now it is not, and to excite an appetite for spiritual knowledge by giving the soul a taste of its sweetness.

It is not possible that the pastors of our stated congregations can perform this service for the poor, without an indefensible neglect of their own appropriate duty. The claims of their own charge, private and public, are by solemn obligation their first consideration; and these are enough to consume entirely their powers and their time.

There appears, therefore, an immense work to be done, which our fixed apparatus of moral influence does not reach, and to which accordingly a **NEW AND SPECIAL MINISTRY** ought to be adapted.

III.—A STATEMENT OF THE MODES OF OPERATION TO BE EMPLOYED IN THIS MINISTRY.

1. The Minister of the Poor is to seek for families abandoned to themselves, unconnected with any appointed agencies of devotion, unsupplied with stated appliances to keep the soul in communication with God. With these he is to connect himself. To these he is to fulfil all the offices of a religious teacher, and a Christian

friend. To these he is to devote himself, feeling, that so long as they are under his charge, he has no other work upon earth, than to consult for their wants, to study their interests, and wisely to build them up both in inward character and in outward respectability. The field of this Ministry is strictly limited. It is the moral waste. It claims no part whatever of the cultivated soil. Those in whom the moral nature is sufficiently developed to assert its own existence, to seek life and light for itself, are not within the province of this Ministry. That part of the harvest is to belong to it, which no other labourer gathers in. To the poor who shrink from an exposure of their poverty, to the feeble and the aged who *cannot* come, to the degraded who *will* not come to the preaching of the gospel, he is to go and preach it unto them. He is to win their affections and their trust; he is to awaken them to their own nature and destinies; he is to influence and guide their children; he is to sanctify their temptations and trials; he is to teach them the moral meanings of existence; he is to rear them into moral and physical independence, to elevate their social ambition, to teach them self-subsistence, to inspire them with confidence in themselves and in God. He is to do for them whatever a sagacious, earnest, sympathetic, influential friend can do for humanity's most destitute condition.

The report of juvenile delinquency lately issued from the municipal government of the town, exhibiting 1200 children already adepts in crime, is a most painful demonstration how much right influences are needed by those whose tenderness of years makes them the most favourable subjects for a successful moral operation. Nor this only: the guilt of *children*, more than all other symptoms taken together, proclaims both the destitution and the depravity of *parents*.

2. It is not contemplated that the connexion of the Minister of the poor should be permanent with the families of his charge. He is to foster the moral principle and the religious sentiment, until they are strong enough to support themselves; and then he is to leave those living minds and to pass on seeking others who are still dead to the moral purpose of their being. It will be his aim to rear the spiritual nature into such strength that it may safely be left to sustain itself. When this is attained, the Minister of the poor respecting the liberty of the being he has excited to moral sensibility, will consult him concerning the religious communion he is disposed to join, and the Christian pastor he desires to be connected with, and will use his best efforts to secure such a connection, and to provide for its being efficient and real. To awaken and

strengthen the spiritual nature must be his single aim. When it is awakened, it must be permitted to choose for itself, which of the existing forms and ministrations of Christianity is most suited to its own wants. The Minister of the poor shall have completed his task with each individual, when he has caused his moral nature to crave on its own behalf, and placed him under the care of a faithful pastor of his own choosing. The Minister of the poor need afterwards only satisfy himself from time to time that the effect has been permanent, and the new pastoral connection true.

3. The Minister of the poor will possess the fullest opportunities of becoming acquainted with the economic condition of the families he visits. He will have the power of directing the beneficence of individuals and of institutions to worthy objects, and of shielding the deserving poor from the ignominy and suspicion which the impostors amongst them too often bring down on the whole body of the destitute. He will possess that knowledge of the moral concomitants of a case of poverty, without which it is impossible to administer the aid that permanently elevates.

4. The distinguishing character of this service, from which most is hoped, is the dedication to it of a devoted and educated Ministry, as their sole

work and mission. It is believed that the apathy, and alien habits, and spiritual supineness of the mass of the poor, will not yield to any moral operation less earnest and sustained. The failure of benevolent persons, who, in the midst of other occupations and interests, make time for some occasional and random communications with the poor, involves no necessity of failure on the part of a Minister consecrated to the poor, who will have no other object in the world, whose heart and whose life will be spent in the service, who will take it as his work on Earth and his crown in Heaven,—who is gifted with prudence, with zeal, with sympathy, with the eloquence of love,—and whose education and mental discipline have revealed to him the wants and laws of our nature, enabled him to understand its varying states, to interpret its indications, and to act on it with beneficent power. Evils will yield to this devoted ministration, that would be inaccessible to any feebler or less constant operation.

Lastly, the number of Ministers for the poor that would be required to bring the whole of our neglected population within the influences of morality and devotion, must be determined by the numbers of the outcasts. Each Minister might embrace within his charge about two hundred families. It is not doubted that if but one Minister was in successful operation, the

argument for multiplying the supply would become irresistible. The example, if signalized by the approval of experience must be imitated, and the work spread itself, until the whole field is occupied, and the labourers adequate to the harvest.

FINIS.



