

Hints and Helps for Workers ; or Thoughts and Gatherings from the Study.



THE "United Presbyterian" said it, we repeat it with a hearty Amen, and pass it on to whom, as the lawyers say, it may concern. "I have been an entire year in the church and have not made a single acquaintance." The man who said this was furious in his complaints of the congregation that thus neglected its members ; but the blame should be the other way, for a man who can stay that long among a set of Christians without compelling them to know him proves that he is of little use.

AN Australian paper gives some good ideas on SPASMODIC CHRISTIANS, and we pass them on :—

Dear friend remember there are certain Christians who seem to suffer continually from a kind of religious spasms. At least, if they are not always convulsed, their intermittent state is only characterised by that torpor which is a certain sign of a renewal of the attack. The class of Christians is one which, starting with the best possible end in view, uses the worst possible means to accomplish its purpose. They being by asserting—with some degree of truth, it may be—that there exists in the religious community to which they happen to belong a dead and alive condition of things not at all to be desired, and they at once set about rectifying it as far as their individual connection with the work is concerned. They first of all utter dire lamentations for the falling off in the spiritual life of the Church, and their voices may be heard lifted up in the prayer-meeting deploring in woeful terms their own decadence and that of their fellow worshippers.

A short time passes, and the place that knew them knows them no more, and you see nothing of them.

How many pastors and deacons have to mourn over the possession of these spasmodic Christians in the Church. At a time of religious revival they flourish abundantly, and whole-souledness make simple Christians envy their state of transport and their extraordinary enthusiasm. But by-and-bye, when the popular evangelist has gone to another spot, and the work of building up the converts commences, our spasmodic friends are *non est*. Plodding, patient, every-day labour is out of their line. Either outbursts of excitement, or doleful lethargy ; and not only does their example act detrimentally to the best interests of a Church, but they too often look with a supreme contempt upon those who, by loving care and watchfulness, by a kind word spoken in season, or by a gently action timely performed, do more to win men and women to the Cross of Christ than all the paraphernalia of religious excitement ; and often wound, by invidious comparison and self-righteous speech, those hearts which, while conscious of their own weakness and imperfection, are yet laid upon the altar of sacrifice, and whose possessors believe it wiser to limp day by day along the path of Christian service than to lie in the hospital for incurables, sighing for ever, "O had I the wings of a dove," and mourning their inability to fly. Great public meetings are not religion. Loud applause, splendid singing, emotional praying, are not religion. Earnestness,

however desirable, is not religion. "Pure religion before God and the Father is this, that a man visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world."

God loves intensity. The faithful and true witness saith to the Church at Laodicea : "I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." The Corinthians, if they were not as religious as the Athenians, were at least in earnest, even if only in selfishness and sin, and the Lord said unto Paul, "I have much people in this place." It is sometimes said that a man will be a better man in after years for having "sown his wild oats," as it is called, in his youth. This is absurd. Nevertheless it is true that a man who goes into sin with all his heart will make a better man when converted than he who has no heart to give to sin or to anything else. Mere theorists, lackadaisical grumblers, and idlers, are of no use either in the Church or out of it. It is perhaps the saddest fact within our knowledge that there is such a large proportion of Laodiceans in the Church to-day. A few members of each congregation usually carry on the work of the church while the rest stand by and criticise. The Athenians were grand at criticising, but the Corinthians were alive and at work.

Let us never forget that our Saviour chose as His most intimate friends the three most intense natures among his followers—Peter, the forward and fallible, and the two "Sons of Thunder."

Let us all aim to do something says an exchange : "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver ;" a tract given in love may win a soul to Christ and cover a multitude of sin. The following shows the value of one tract :

"Nearly thirty years ago, in a time of revival in the Walnut Street Baptist Church, in Louisville, Kt., two Christian woman, Mrs. J. Lawrence Smith and Mrs. W. W. Everets, went forth together to visit from home to home, and to distribute tracts and to invite sinners to the house of God. Very near the church building they found the family of a theatrical actor, and, in the circle they addressed a slender, youthful son already on the stage. To him also they gave a tract and an invitation. He accepted both, read the tract and went and heard the gospel preached, and soon was saved. His life was now immediately changed, as well as his heart, and he promptly consecrated himself to the ministry and to labor for the salvation of others in preaching the gospel. Thus George C. Lorimer, D. D., was won to Christ and the service of his kingdom."

Again we would urge christians to be kindly affectionate one to another, and not to forget to entertain strangers in God's house, the following may impress some. The minister of a fashionable church preached a beautiful sermon on the subject : "*Shall we know each other there ?*" He drew the picture of a very beautiful heaven. We would walk in the sun-lit groves, by the music of waterfalls, and gaze out upon Amaranthine fields. "And then, too, we shall know each other there," said the minister ; and then added, "ther'll be no stranger in the New Jerusalem ; we'll all be friends." "Beautiful !" said Deacon Sham, as he trotted down the aisle. "A lovely sermon !" said