

The Christian Helper.

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"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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A WORD IN SEASON.

Are we not often struck by the thought, that we do not take advantage of the thousand and one opportunities that occur in our every day life, of speaking a word for Jesus! Most of us are "not slothful in business," and while we are at business we concentrate our mind so strongly upon the subject in hand, that we fail to remember the rest of the injunction, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Can we ever look back upon any one day and congratulate ourselves upon having taken advantage of every opportunity it afforded of doing good in this way? Scarcely any of us will venture to say so even of one single day, let alone the many days that go to make up the term of our life. It is a stupendous and saddening thought, that souls are being continually lost because Christians fail to speak a word in season; and it seems to us that if we could fully realize the anguish that is often experienced by weary, longing souls thirsting for the truth, when we allow an opportunity that they have purposely put in our way, to pass unheeded, we would be careful to let no chance slip of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. "But," say objecting Christians, "such a thing is not customary; we would be afraid to intrude such a subject on a stranger unless requested; it might be taken as an insult and be productive of harm where it was intended to do good; and more than this, people would call us fanatics, or crazy on the subject of religion." No doubt there is some force in all these objections, but after all the fact still remains that great good can be done in this way; and the rebuffs would be more than repaid by the magnitude of the reward. Of course, in this as in almost everything else, "zeal without knowledge" is more productive of harm than good. Our enthusiasm should be tempered by discretion; and our endeavour should be to make the lesson we are desirous of teaching fit into the conversation so naturally that it would

seem incomplete without it. A friend of ours on entering a railroad train some time since found that every seat was occupied. He passed along the aisle looking carefully for some one obliging enough to offer him a share of his seat, but most of the passengers were so busily engaged in looking out for themselves that they had no thought for a stranger. A pleasant looking young lady however made room for him, and after thanking her for her kindness, he entered into a general conversation with her, which in a short time (as he is ever on the alert for souls) he contrived imperceptibly to direct to a higher theme than those which usually form the staple of railroad conversations. On being asked if she were a Christian, the young lady burst into tears, and answered that she was not, but that she desired to be one. She then opened her heart to our friend and told him that she had been under conviction for some time, her sins weighed heavily on her, and she could get no rest. She had often resolved to speak to some of her Christian friends about it, but somehow or other, when she came to talk with them there seemed to be a lack of sympathy or interest, and she left the word unspoken and thus prolonged her misery. When she saw him enter the car she trembled with excitement at the idea that she might open her heart to him (for she knew him by sight, although she had never spoken to him,) and see if he could shew her the way to peace. In the half hour's conversation which followed he was so directed in his remarks as to bring peace to her troubled soul, and she left that car happy in the knowledge that her sins were forgiven, and rich in the possession of a Saviour's love.

"Well, but this is an exceptional case," you say, "and the result is not astonishing when you consider that both were anxious to talk on the same subject; but you might enter a railroad car a hundred times and never again achieve such another success." True enough, *but you should try*, and if you failed to succeed the fault would not rest with you. An honored brother of our denomination told us that one evening he entered a railroad car which was very much crowded, and had to ask a rather fast looking young gentleman if he might have the privilege of sharing his seat. On the young man acceding to

his request they entered into a conversation, in which the young man informed him that he was a commercial traveller, representing one of the largest houses in Canada. He had been doing a good trade, and was evidently in high spirits about the prosperous career which was opening before him. After giving this information, he asked our friend what business he followed, and was somewhat astonished to learn that he also was a commercial traveller, and that he travelled for the oldest, wealthiest, most respectable and best paying house in the world! The young traveller was astonished, and his curiosity aroused—for our friend does not put on half as much style as some travellers we have met—and in reply to his further interrogations, was informed by our friend that he travelled for "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God." This curious way of introducing the subject secured a willing listener to the gospel message. We do not know the result; but have no doubt that the seed thus faithfully sown, would in due time bring forth a harvest to the glory of Him who has said that He will not allow His word to return unto Him void.

WEEKLY OFFERING.

Beyond doubt the weekly offering system now well established in so many of our churches has proved very successful. The regular and stated contributions of the church in weekly sums has, in most cases provided the church with a sufficiency for its expenses, and ensured greater promptness and certainty in the payment. The contributors have given *more*, and felt the giving *less* than under the former regime. We observe to our regret that there is creeping into the churches a disposition on the part of some of the members not to pay their contributions weekly, but to pay lump sums quarterly or half-yearly. True, in certain instances, it saves trouble to the individual and is no loss to the church, but we see in it a tendency that unless stayed will eventually undermine and nullify the objects sought to be attained in the present system. It is the first step toward a return to the old and unsatisfactory state of the church treasury that formerly existed. Wealthy members