

as part of the prepared material, from which are to be fashioned the tools of the vineyard, and the weapons of the armory.

The Christian, therefore, who prays for a blessing upon his studies, and who earnestly desires to consecrate every talent, need not fear that he is wasting time when he is solving the mathematical problem; when he is tracing the physical laws of the storm, and the glacier, the flood, and the geyser; when he is classifying the fronds of the fern, and grouping the stamens of the flower; when he is learning the language of the earth, and numbering the stars of the heavens. Although he may not for a time be able to see the ways and means, yet if his preparatory work be done in faith, nothing doubting, it will yet be turned to good account in the service of God. Only let him take heed that his work degenerate not into self-seeking and self-applause: let him watch for every opportunity of bringing therewith glory to God; and let him remember that without prayer, such things have been, and may be again, as idols in the way. "Apply, and rely" is the only safe motto.

Literary work is not always preparatory only: it may, even when of very humble kind, be important work for God. Is there nothing, however small, that you can do with your pen and your knowledge? Is there no little tract to be written? Is there no homely volume which might reach some hearts, and find entrance into some homes? Is there no translation which might give to a good thought wings like a bird to fly, from its own land and its own tongue? Remember the brief yet comprehensive advice which Sir William Jones received from his mother,—"*Try*." Search and see for yourselves what you can do. "She hath done what she could," is world-wide encouragement. Avoid the false humility of slothful self-depreciation, on the one hand; and the presumption of self-dependent knowledge, on the other. Work for God, and not for yourself, and the preparatory work will soon be found to assume its distinct place in the vineyard of God. Most of our readers are acquainted with the "*Memoir of Mary Jane Graham*," a remarkable example of sanctified genius and attainments. The following "*Prayer before Study*," was found among her papers after her death; and it seems so applicable to our subject, that we are tempted to transcribe it. No preparatory study will answer its end without a similar dedication, and dependence upon Divine teaching.