

PERSIS.

In the 16th Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul has given us a long list of honoured names, names of men and women who wrought well whilst here, finished their work and have gone to their rest. Among this large record thus given, stands out very conspicuously, the name of an eminent Christian Lady whose biography Paul writes in half a verse: "Salute the beloved Persis who laboured much in the Lord."

This woman being a friend and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only shows by her outward conduct and character that she is one of his disciples, but further shows it by an intense desire to do something for him. She did not rest satisfied with wishing to do good nor yet with talking about doing good, but she went to work, and by every means in her power endeavoured to win souls to Christ. She underwent the severest toil not unaccompanied with pain and weariness, labouring with unceasing activity, feeling that she had a mission to perform. Rough was her task, arduous were her labours, and tender were her hands; the heart, however, was willing, and now she rests from her labours. Like the clustering constellations that shine with intensest lustre in the midnight sky, so she wears a crown yonder that sparkles in the spiritual firmament. And are we not taught the valuable lesson in looking at the example of this noble woman, that religion is not a thing of dreamy sentimentalism but of energetic, practical action? In our varied spheres in life we may not all be enabled to perform any splendid flaming or brilliant service to blaze and dazzle in the eye of the world. It may be quiet inner work which no eye but the eye of Jehovah can see; yet no matter how small or insignificant it may appear to us, it glorifies God. Persis in her own humble way laboured ardently for God. Possessing indomitable courage, unflinching zeal and a stout heart she goes forth leaning upon strength derived from on high. A loved woman, a lone worker in the hard field of the world, she toils on till her departing soul like the setting sun, disappears, only to shine in another and better world.

The christianity of Persis was a christianity of the highest type, it flowed from her inner life with Christ. And do we not want more of this Christianity in our day? Are we not too apt to be satisfied with merely becoming members of the church and then settling down into indifference. We become dead, cold and formal; we need to be roused up, to be fired with zeal; we want a more practical Christianity. Our zeal should be a sacred flame kindled at God's altar, and burning at God's shrine. Not a zeal for church membership, for party, for creeds, and dogmas, but a zeal like that which Persis possessed. She laboured much in the Lord. A zeal like that which Persis possessed is not characteristic of our day. True, there are energetic workers in all our congregations, but alas! do not the drones far outnumber them? A Church with a membership of upwards of 17,000 ought to do a great work for God: nay, only a few individuals like Persis within our pale would achieve a great deal. And is there not plenty of scope for work in all our charges; is there not enough to incite our zeal and draw out our energies? Many of our Ministers are overwrought; souls are perishing for lack of knowledge, men are found neglecting the means of grace, hundreds are travelling the broad road that leadeth to perdition; are there none like Persis ready to put forth efforts to tear the lost ones from their sins and win them to Christ? Strive to come in contact with those who may be strangers to Christ, labour for their salvation, and at last you shall receive the same high commendation which this noble woman received.

AUGMENTATION OF SMALL STIPENDS.

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The title of this paper speaks for itself. It intimates that more or fewer of our ministers have small stipends; and the dullest may perceive that small stipends mean large trials. A minister cannot, in adaptation to his circumstances, adopt such a simple and primitive mode of life as would compromise his position. His congregation would not like to see him in workmen's clothes; it would discompose them if he were occupying a hovel of a house; they would feel scandalized if the coarse attire of his wife and children made them the talk of the