

Leaguers in Church Work

BY SAMUEL FARMER.

At the outset it would be well to note the difference between work and worship. Worship should not be looked upon as work, and church work cannot wholly take the place of worship. They are distinct, but must go hand in hand if they are to be acceptable.

John Ruskin has drawn a little picture that shows that thanksgiving may become positively distasteful.

"Suppose," he says, "you saw your sister cast out of your mortal father's house; starving, helpless, heartbroken, and that every morning, when you went into your father's room, you said to him: 'How good you are, father, to give me what you don't give Lucy!' Are you sure that, whatever anger your parent might have just cause for, he would be pleased by that thanksgiving or flattered by that praise?"

The work of the church is not simply to attend prayer meetings, or any other meetings that are for the purpose of worship.

What, then, is church work?

In the 25th of Matthew there is a vivid picture given—I was an hungry, naked and thirsty, and ye clothed Me, fed Me, and gave Me drink. This, then, is church work—to clothe and feed those who are hungry in body and soul. When we have done this we work, we can attend prayer meeting and thank God for the opportunities that life presents in working that His kingdom may come. We may attend and should attend these meetings in order that we may gain strength and encouragement to do the work of the church, but we must never for one moment suppose that in attending these services we are doing sufficient work of any kind.

We often hear men say that the work of the church is to carry the message of the Gospel to the people. In some cases that is true, but for most of us the work is to make that message a real living fact. We must convince men that we mean business.

To this end we must become citizens who know our country and love it, but are not blind to its dangers. We must become men and women who know how to transact business fairly and pay a fair price as we go. We must know the Bible well enough to be able to teach men the message there is in it for them and for ourselves. We must know Christ to be a Friend who gives us inspiration and happiness.

We must speak in the language of to-day when we give this message to our fellows. The "old-time" message is all right, but the words that clothe it are worn threadbare. Our religious speech should be just as direct as that which we use upon any other subject. What we say to men about religion should be of real value to them in aiding them to be better men.

There are people who go to the Bible and read it for the purpose of proving a theory; who love to argue about the second coming, the future state, the total depravity of man, the personality of the Trinity. These discussions are as useless to needy souls as a lecture on sanitation would be to clean a house. Talking about work will never do it. Arguing about matters which cannot be changed and which do not affect our relation to the facts of life may be interesting to those who enjoy this species of debate, but are useless in lifting men nearer to God.

When the Leaguer can live among men so that they will ask him the reason for the hope that is within him, he is doing church work. When in his business he promotes honorable dealing, he

is doing church work. When he guides and helps the weak, he is doing church work. When he puts heart and brain and hand into the laws of the land, so that they promote right living, he is doing church work.

In every community the work is different. In some places the Christian must be able to keep his temper on the field of sport. There he must not act the Pharisee and thank the Lord that he is not tempted by a baseball bat. In some places he must show that a man may be temperate in all things. An Epworth League should be a school of instruction, training workmen that need not be ashamed, workmen who can sow beside all waters, who can put their hands to the plough and not turn back; skilled workmen who can tenderly nurture the young lives about them so that they, too, may grow up and bear much fruit.

The work of the church is to save men and keep them safe from sin. The relation of the League to this work is that the members should fit themselves to undertake this work at the earliest possible date. The harvest is great, and the workers who really understand what is to be done are few.

Port Perry, Ont.

"Do to-day's duty, fight to-day's temptation; and do not distract yourself by looking forward to those things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them. Enough for you that your Saviour, for whom you fight, is just and merciful, for He rewardeth every man according to his work. Enough for you that He hath said, 'He that is faithful unto death, I will give him a crown of life.' Enough for you that if you be faithful in a few things, He will make you ruler over many things, and bring you into His glory for evermore."—Charles Kingsley.

Generous With Roses

A pleasant story about Andrew Carnegie is told by a tourist from Scotland. At Skibo Castle, Mr. Carnegie had during the summer a beautiful rose garden. There were thousands of red and white and yellow roses always blooming there, and the villagers were free to saunter in the garden paths to their heart's content.

One day the head gardener waited upon Mr. Carnegie.

"Sir," he said, "I wish to lodge a complaint."

"Well," said the master.

"Well, sir," the gardener began, "I wish to inform you that the village folk are plucking the roses in your rose garden. They are denuding your rose trees, sir."

"Ah!" said Mr. Carnegie, gently, "my people are fond of flowers, are they, Donald? Then you must plant more."

A Chinese Christian asked Archdeacon Moule how many clergymen there were in England. Archdeacon Moule asked how many he thought there were. "It is a little island," he replied; "perhaps there are a thousand." He was told: "More than twenty thousand." "Then," said he, "you can easily spare a thousand for China!"

A Mournful Epitaph

A well-known and efficient Epworth League official sends us the following communication. For evident reasons he does not wish his name published.

"One Sunday evening, some weeks since, a country parson of the Rip Van Winkle type, after a drowsy Sunday evening service, was partly awakened by the discovery of a local antiquary.

"By the aid of a lantern he set out to explore the bowels of the back room where the odds and ends—so dear to the heart of the caretaker—were to be found. Dusty and musty as was the atmosphere, the somnolent brother's Roman nose scented some gruesome discovery, when his eye rested upon the sole desecration which rupt company with the cobwebs. It was a craped-draped certificate of the enrolment of what was once the local League. Whether this had been done sorrowfully or sarcastically, we cannot say. But inscribed on a black-edged card, in a corner of the frame, were the words:

Born
In a Revival,
1904.
Died
Of Heart Failure,
1906.

"We have been told that heart failure is the polite expression used by the friendly coroner or sympathetic doctor to record the sudden passing of many an opium fiend, or drunkard, or of one whose nervous system has been shattered by the use of nicotine, and is not so mysterious a disease as it might seem, scarcely ever causing death without previous intimation.

"So, fellow Leaguer, heart failure in you or your society may be the result of sin, the presence of which is no secret. Death, however, from such a cause, being preventible, let us diagnose and prescribe the remedy. 'If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small.' Yet we find in many instances the self-reliant courting temptation finds himself unprepared for its violence. Symptoms of great weakness, and unreadiness for sudden exertion appear. An irregular heart action is very evident, following a lack of proper spiritual nourishment, necessary for pure development of Leaguer as well as League. Why this debilitated condition? The surmounting of difficulties requires strength and backbone. The poison of sin, the discord of rivalry, the loss of spiritual power in the officary, and oftentimes the non-support of the individual members in the carrying to a successful issue of proposed schemes and plans, certainly effect the work of an individual.

"Such problems can only be solved by special treatment. As in the individual suffering from heart trouble, rest and stimulant is prescribed, so in the society, the possession of 'the peace which passeth understanding' coming. As in the individual, the possession of God's will, is essential, together with the appetite for things that are satisfying and enlarge our vision of life. Unselfish endeavor, loving and persistent service, constant replenishing of the worn tissues, an abundant supply of courage, with 'a measure of realization that we are in eternity to-day, and that it is never too late for any good thing to happen,' are requisites, if attained, give us the joy accompanying work well done and the merry heart that 'doeth good like a medicine.'

"Instead of the cobwebs of doubt and inertia, open wide the doors and windows of the heart and soul, allowing God's sunshine to dispel the darkness, and with new life and vigor go 'out into the highways and compel the young people to come in.'"