

rupted communion in secret with God Himself. To give up to pressing calls of public duty, the sacred season which has been dedicated to prayer and meditation, is as if, because a labourer had an unusual demand on his time and strength, he should go without his food. Time is always wasted which is saved from the hour of secret devotion and prayer: "Come ye into the desert and rest awhile," said our Divine Lord, although "many were coming and going." He knew, that even for Apostles, leisure for the cultivation of the inner life was absolutely essential to all success.

This primary lesson for Church workers deserves to be enlarged on, but we only give "Hints." An hour spent in the study of the Collects of the Church will reveal the striking truth, that this is one chief lesson of them all. There is no strength, no holiness, no life, no good work, save only as God's help is believed in, depended on, and prayed for*. If this, our first hint, be steadily acted on, both in times of spiritual comfort and enjoyment, and in times of spiritual depression, there is little doubt that the reader will be a true, and if God will, a successful Church worker. External usefulness will be in proportion to the diligent cultivation of our own hearts, of the inner life of the soul.

II. REMEMBER THAT YOUR WORK IS PART OF ONE GREAT WHOLE.

A true servant of Christ is in danger sometimes of flagging in his efforts because his work is uninteresting or unimportant in his opinion, or because he sees no fruit for his labours, or because he is isolated from Christian sympathy, and stands alone. There is surprising strength and courage for such in this thought. You are but as one labourer on the wall of Jerusalem. To you is given one, perhaps small work: but its smallness is no proof of its unimportance. God seems in nature to take as much pains with small things as great, the microscope tells us this. You are not doing much or noteworthy work, let us suppose. But think, with grateful love, how many labourers he is employing thus. How small a proportion of the honeycomb is reared up, and filled by a single worker in the hive. But the result of a thousand workers' humble labour is one of unspeakable order and sweetness. Unknown to you, hundreds of thousands are linked by a spiritual bond with you, and they depend on you for labour and intercession as you on them. Imagine you saw all Christ's true helpers gathered on a vast plain, to build the "City of God." Would it not draw all the bitterness from isolation or from the smallness of your task to know your hands are building (as he wills) part of the one great whole; and that to you, as truly as to those in higher or happier positions, shall be due at last, by His Grace, the completion of the City.

III. CONCENTRATE YOUR EFFORT

Should you live in some country parish, it may be necessary for you to undertake several duties in connection with the work of the Church. In towns and cities however, it will be possible for you, and if possible, it will be best to throw your strength into one or two objects. No one does a work so well, as one who gives his best thought to it. A certain sort of eager enthusiasm, a tendency even to regard your special occupation as of exceptional importance, will do no harm. A fond exaggeration of the good which may accrue from your earnest effort, will be a most pardonable weakness, if indeed, it be not a source of strength. If any person, having family and social duties to do, self-education to continue, and friendships to cultivate, thinks good-naturally or enthusiastically that she should visit

the hospitals, or the poor on week days, teach in the Sunday-school, and sing in the choir, besides collecting for a school or Church fund, all these social and sacred duties are likely to suffer; there will sooner or later be a flagging in some, and work will be badly done. It is as bad to neglect home work, as Church work, and indeed worse, for the former is your obvious natural duty, while others could do the latter.

If you would maintain calmness, a reserve of physical strength, a high and true discharge of family duty, the home offices of religion, be not diffusive in your Church work. Take up one or perhaps two things, being guided by friends, or your minister in your choice, and try always so to arrange your occupations, that your whole time may not be occupied by them. Restlessness, haste, unspirituality, and perhaps a breakdown of health, or of religious interest, will follow the neglect of this hint.

IV. REMEMBER THE VALUE OF UNION.

You may have to work alone, and without sympathy. But if you are associated with other workers, value and maintain Christian fellowship. The coals of fire which would die out and grow cold if separated, promote each other's mutual glow when brought together. In every well organised parish or society, there are opportunities provided of union among the workers. You should make the greatest use of these. If there be a Church Worker's Association, Guild, or Union, you will be wise to join it. If there be meetings of teachers or district visitors, or collectors for missions, &c., you should at any reasonable inconvenience be present at every meeting. You both gain and give help thus. Even if you think you learn nothing, your presence strengthens the band of workers, your absence disheartens your fellow-labourers and the clergy. There are many Sunday-school teachers who will not take the trouble to arrange domestic matters so as to attend a "Teachers' Meeting." We beg of you not to follow their example. There are parishes where district visitors go on in their useful, but isolated labours, and never come together for mutual advice and prayer, and to strengthen the pastor's hands. The Church of England has had too little internal organization, and therefore has been accused of speaking with a "yea and nay," or of being a "rope of sand." Your part may not be to form an organization, but to form a part in one, to be a unit in a union. Resolve, we beseech you, to promote actively and patiently the interests of union. The advantages are, strengthening of mutual faith and courage; united intercession; opportunity of talking over difficulties, or recording successes; the receiving of directions from the officers of the union; promotion of similarity of thought and work. It is a great weakness when Church workers are, intentionally or not pulling different ways.

Lastly, the great bond of union among Church workers is the Holy Communion. While they above all should try to be present at special and week-day services as an example to others, and for personal retirement from the world and prayer, they need more than others the continual strengthening and refreshing of their souls, and the maintenance of the abiding fellowship of the Body of Christ in this Holy Feast. It is a great help where there is an occasional special celebration to which all the Church workers are particularly invited.

V. EXPECT OPPOSITION.

Just in proportion as your work is true and spiritual, it is sure to be opposed. And remember, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits, margin) in high places." (Eph. vi. 12.) This is a great reality. If you have not proved it, probably your work has never been real. When a Sunday-school teacher, a mission preacher or assistant, a Scripture

reader or Bible woman, a lay agent, anyone heartily serving Christ, begins to succeed and do real work, "the enemy cometh in like a flood." Doubts will be suggested to the worker's mind—"Am I myself a child of God: am I forgiven?" Or even worse and more terrible suggestions may be made than any thought of personal unfitness. Expect this. In a sense accept it as a testimony that God is working. Satan disturbs most the truest worker and work. It was the excellent advice of a well-known mission preacher to meet boldly all such suggestions by saying "Satan, I know who and what thou art, and all these suggestions will only drive me closer to my Refuge, Christ. Get thee behind me!" If any reader is sore perplexed by doubts and fears in doing God's work, we implore him to recognise this as a reality. The opposition of the Evil One was brought to bear on Christ, and his only reply was, thrice over, "It is written, it is written, it is written." Knowledge of Scripture commands and promises, determination to flee for refuge to the Rock of Ages, and a bold rebuke given while clinging closer to a Saviour's arm, will have the desired effect.

Human opposition is sometimes hard to bear. Remember however that God's work is always unpopular when it is real. The careless hate to be disturbed. The sleepily and wordly do not tolerate earnestness. They always have a sneer for enthusiasts. But be strong, Christ had the same things to bear. Yet aided by a little, and only a little human sympathy, strong in a sense of duty, sure that this world is but a shadow soon to fly away, and clinging to continual prayer to His Heavenly Father, He as man, overcame the world. Take Him as your example and consoler, when you drink of His cup of contradiction.

VI. DO NOT DESPOND.

Many a time in youthful days, as a Sunday-school teacher in a city, the writer would have given up his class in despair, but for these words, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him." (Ps. cxxvi. 6). Patient Faith is never in vain. Unless there is some remarkable unfitness, such as others can judge of, for your work, you should persevere, ever trying to learn more fully the art of love and prayer, and patience to do it well.

Do not despond, for:—

1. Sin and ignorance and apathy in others, are not your fault. You are come to try to diminish or remove evils which you have not caused. Do not then blame yourself if you see sin and ignorance still prevail.

2. All good work is gradual. The clergyman or teacher who desponds of good fruit after two or three year's sowing, has not reflected that all great things are of slow growth. Quick vegetation seldom is strong. The rings which are added year by year to the trunk of a yew tree, are very thin, nearly imperceptible, but the tree grows thus, and lasts its thousand years against the one brief season of the rapidly swelling gourd. Besides, impatience sits ill on the mind of one who believes that God is the worker. If the work was to be human in its beginning, direction, and result, you might fitly despond if you did not soon succeed. But if it is Divine, Divine Wisdom and Power must be left to control, to hasten, to delay, to work in secret, and to give success when He pleases. You must give of your best, and He will then do His holy will. Be patient.

3. Christ and all good men have fought their way to success through disappointment. Are you to be an exception?

Ponder these three remedies for despondency, and go on! Be brave! The eyes of God are on you, the Spirit of God within you, and the Crown before you. Those who are God's true workers, are working for something higher than success.

(To be continued.)

*See especially the Collects, written for Church workers evidently, for the following Sundays:—Fourth in Advent; first after Epiphany; fifth after Epiphany; Sexagesima; Easter; fifth after Easter; first, fourth, seventh, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-fifth after Trinity. See also the Communion Collect "Prevent us, O Lord, etc."