

According to your Ability.

"Every man according to his ability," is the Christian rule of giving and of working. It is not very faithfully obeyed. There are many persons who have great ability, yet do but little work; who have ample leisure yet give but little time; who have large possessions yet make small contributions. This is an evil that we have all seen under the sun. And there is another that is like unto it. There are a great many people who have some ability but who do *nothing*; who have not much but who give *no* time to the Lord's work; who have a little money but who put *none* at all into His treasury. Those who have a little and give nothing violate the Christian law just as truly as do those who have much and give a little. There are a great many persons, young and old, in all our churches, whose means and opportunities are limited; from whom not much ought to be expected; but they are able to do something and they do nothing. They are transgressors of the Christian law. They ought to repent and do works meet for repentance.

The Unfinished Building.

A LESSON FOR WORKERS.

One Sunday afternoon, when most of my Sunday work was over, I was sitting still, feeling sad and cast down. Turning over in my mind the *whys* and *wh* *refores* of God's dealings with me, especially some trials which had lately befallen me in connection with my service, and which seemed to be anything but for the glory of God, my heart sank lower and lower. Have we not all at times such feelings? Have not those of us seeking to work for the Lord our seasons of sadness, when in the depths of our hearts the words arise, "All these things are against me;" or (what is often more bitter to us), "All these things are against the work we love so much."

Perhaps often, too, we feel that our trial is harder to bear and less likely to bring blessing than any other. Dear fellow laborers, we know that these are unbelieving thoughts, we are ashamed of them at the time they arise, but they do come; and, alas, we often give them entertainment. Thank God the One with whom we have to do is very pitiful; He knoweth our frame. We may argue with ourselves, we may repeat over and over again all that we *know* is true, as to the Lord's ways and thoughts being so much higher than ours; as to the *end* being so sure and so perfect, that when we see it, we shall wonder how we ever doubted that He was ever leading us by the *right* way; but I believe there are times of sore trial and discouragement, when only the Lord Himself, speaking to our souls, can put to flight the army of subtle foes that seek to disturb our peace, and hinder our effectual service for the Master. He knows exactly the trial; He knows how much physical weakness and overtaxing may tend to increase it. He knows, too, when the trial He has sent is so real and deep and bitter that *only* He can help, and when the word "comfort" seems mockery except when spoken by His own blessed lips.

This Sunday afternoon the lesson came in a very simple way; but the comfort from it was so deep, that I knew He had given it, and I longed to pass it on to some dear ones, tried and cast down, weary and ready to faint.

Just outside the room in which I was sitting, a new building was going up; it was to add to the size and comfort of our house, and we had been looking forward to the pleasure and convenience it would be when completed. But for days we had been suffering much discomfort from builders and carpenters; we had to move

out of several of our rooms, and the dusty and upset state of every thing was very trying.

Then the building itself, how unsightly it looked that Sunday in its unfinished condition—scaffolding, pieces of boards, flooring half finished, met the eye, and, instead of a pleasant room, nothing but bricks and planks and broken pieces of wood were lying about. Was *this* the increased comfort we were to have?—less room than ever! any amount of dust and disorder; an ugly half built wall; a room without doors or roof! Nay this was indeed the present view of things; but how silly, how short-sighted, to say because of this discomfort, "We will give up the building altogether; instead of increased comfort there is less comfort than ever." And yet, dear friends, how often we think such thoughts of God's building, in which He says we are workers together with Him.

Only just before I had been feeling, "Could I have known of this trial, had I been able to foresee this hindrance, I would not have undertaken this branch of work." But what a flood of light and comfort came into my soul when I thought, "Why this is only my *present* view of things; when I see the whole, how perfect and beautiful it will be! These days of perplexity and weariness and difficulty are necessary, or the great work God has in view would never be brought to perfection." Then the thought arose, "But the things that try me most just now are things that seem directly to hinder the work I love so well." Is it so? Was the pulling down of the old wall, and the clearing away of the rubbish before beginning the strong firm walls of the new rooms, a hindrance to the building? Was it needful? And so our God in His infinite wisdom, which we are so unable to comprehend, often seems to allow hindrances, the pulling down of our dearly-loved plans, the rooting-up of our most-cherished wishes, which at first appear to undo all we have been trying to do for his cause. For what? Not to disappoint us in the end, but that He may give us a more glorious and blessed and perfect fulfilment of our desire to do His will; a granting of what we have asked for above all we could ask or think.

The way of the Lord is *perfect*. Oh! how imperfect, how poor, how unfinished would the work be were it left to our planning, to our doing, even with our hearts really warm and true to our Master. Let us rest ourselves on his strong guiding hand, and even as it will be *all* praise soon, let us now by His grace seek in everything to give thanks, and being of "good courage," He will "strengthen our hearts."

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bad may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

W. F. W.

in "Woman's work in the Great Harvest Field"

The Indian Village.

HINDUS live in villages and only in villages. We should as soon expect to find the cells of the honey-bee scattered singly here and there, as to find Hindu dwellings isolated and scattered throughout the country, as is the custom in other lands. A farmer will go to and from his fields for miles, but in the village he must and will live. The reason generally given for their objection to living in isolated places is, that they are afraid of robbers; but India is not more given to this kind of outlaws than other countries, and there must be some other reasons for this universal custom, the strongest of which probably is the custom itself.