

While this coarser, material work is being done there is going on at the same time a moral and spiritual work. The distinction I have made in this discourse is merely nominal. It does not really exist. Every act is moral, all work is more or less spiritual. The blacksmith who shapes the heated metal and the preacher who speaks from the pulpit are both of them engaged in work which has a moral element. In the case of the smith the material element is more prominent, in the preacher's work the spiritual. We are all of us working in the spiritual field whatever our occupation be. Some are working to good purpose with sharpened tools, used with skill; others are mere dawdlers, their work does not count for much though it on the right side. Some are a positive hurt and detriment to the world.

God works in the material world. We believe in that religious pantheism which teaches us that God is immanent in nature, that in every physical change which this earth undergoes His power is made manifest; that in the processes of growth and development, in the unfolding of the bud, the painting of the flower, the shaping of the leaf, his hand is seen. There is a Providence in the world and all its forces animate and inanimate are controlled by him. Nations at his bidding arise and fall. The material prosperity of the world is his work and civilization marches at his command.

But it is for spiritual results that God looks. The temporal is good but it is temporal, and when time shall cease it will fade away. It is the fruit that remains and is gathered into the storehouse when the stalk and leaf and wrapping slough off and rot. In all God's working there is this in view—moral perfection and spiritual development. We sometimes lose sight of it—God never does. Some of us never think of it, it is always present to his thought. We become engrossed in the getting of food, He thinks of the life. We are anxious for the raiment, He cares for the body. We minister to the sense, He serves the spirit. With anxious solicitude of love He watches to see the higher and more beautiful qualities evolve from the rougher elements of our life. Not to make men rich but good is His aim. Riches take to themselves wings and flee away, but goodness abides forever. Not that the earth may not be fertile in all her fruits, her surface covered with large and wealthy cities, her marts of commerce thronged with buyers and sellers and all the roads of trade filled with the products of her prosperous sons, while education and comfort and luxury shall be the common enjoyment of all—not for that does God work, but that righteousness may cover the earth even as the waters cover the deep. A great work that of bringing the world to God. Like all work it is unfairly divided.

There are some noble workers tilling the soil, rooting up the weeds and hastening on that time when the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. But the number of workers is small, only a fraction of the whole. The work seems to progress slowly. There are giant evils; intemperance and social impurity and public dishonesty and impious blasphemy and poisonous scandal—these and many more like wild beasts are skulking in society to ravage and devour, and sometimes we grow disheartened. The work is too great. These beasts are too strong and savage for us, we cannot beat them down. The harvest is too plenteous and the laborers too few. We cannot reap it, we feel like giving up.

So did Paul, brave spirit though he was. He was "cast down" and "perplexed." He felt like giving up, but he tells us he always kept one thing in mind; Jesus never gave up. His feet faltered not in that awful road that brought him to his doom. His beautiful face blanched not in view of that fearful scene of humiliation and death. Jesus died. The Lord Jesus died. The Prince of Life gave up his life, and so would he "always bearing about in body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." But with all our despairing and perplexity, comfort ourselves with these words—God is working too. He is with us and behind us. He is pledged to carry on the war till victory come. We are not alone, we are co-workers with Him.

And when the work is done, the pile complete, when in the white light breaking forth from the throne everything will stand forth clearly revealed—then shall we find that our labor has not been in vain. The work we have done in pulpit, in school, at home—anywhere, shall be recognized and honored, and the cup of cold water, even, given in the name of a disciple shall never lose a disciple's reward.

## Correspondence.

### MR. HALL'S LETTER.

DEAR EDITOR.—My letters must necessarily be on different subjects from those I have heretofore written upon, while I am confined to one place. It is difficult to know what to write about, and yet be faithful to my trust to the Missionary Society. Just now something needs to be said, and said very plainly and strongly on the condition and prospects of our society. I am not by any means disposed to take a gloomy view of the situation. In common with other institutions and interests, both secular and religious, we have felt and are feeling the pressure of

### HARD TIMES.

There is no evidence of any diminishing zeal in the