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No 76

Motto for the Year.—Workers together with Him.

PRAYER TOPIC.

For the Home Mission Work in these Provinces, that the Students going forth may be greatly helped and blessed in winning souls.

Suggested Programme for June,

Suggested Programme for July.

Prayer by Leader.

Singing.

Reading Malachi III.

Prayer by several on Topic.

Reading Tidings.

Appointment of Delegates for Associations.

Sentence prayers by all who will for God's blessing on Associations and Weak societies.

Arrange for Bible Reading for July on giving Roll call.

Doxology.

Dismiss by Prayer.

Prayer by Leader

Singing

Reading 1st. John 4th.

Prayer by several on Topic.

Reading Minutes.

Bible Reading on Giving.

Reading Tidings.

Appointment of Delegates to Associations.

See that all dues are pd; also Reports and Tidings paid for and every thing ready for Convention.

Close by Lord's prayer in Unison.

Three Collectors.

"I really think we have reason to congratulate ourselves," said the Secretary of the Plainville Woman's Mission Circle to the President, as they walked home from the meeting, "on having at last secured new collectors."

"Yes, indeed," was the reply. "I've puzzled my brains not a little over it, and I am truly thankful those two young ladies were willing to accept the office. And did you notice, Mrs. Foster seemed really glad to be appointed? Strange we hadn't thought of her before. With such collectors as Mrs. Foster and Miss Burns something will be done. I presume Alice Bennett will do the best she can do. As you say, we have reason to congratulate ourselves."

* * * * *

"I might as well begin to-day, I suppose," said Miss Laura Burns, to herself, a few weeks after the meeting. "It's a lovely day, just right for my new fall suit," and she closed her book with a regretful sigh and a glance toward the window, through which the October sunshine streamed.

"Besides, it will soon be time to begin Christmas presents, and I must get this out of the way first—I do dislike having a disagreeable thing about, waiting to be done—I can never take a bit of comfort till it is off my mind."

"I almost wish," leaning back in her comfortable rocker,

“that I had declined to serve as collector, but they were all so anxious, and spoke so appreciatively of my influence and ability that I thought I wouldn't—especially as I saw Alice Bennett had no notion of declining. If such a shrinking timid girl, with as little force of character as she has, can be collector, I guess I can,” and Miss Burns smiled complacently.

“'Tis true I haven't seen much of her this last year, but she doesn't look as if she had changed much; such girls rarely do. I must say, Mrs Wade can't be very discerning, if she is our pastor's wife, or she wouldn't have proposed her for a collector. As for Mrs Foster I don't know her personally. She looks bright and intelligent enough, but she seems so nervous and hurried all the time. I don't much wonder, for someone said she had done her own work ever since she was married, and her sewing, too.

“Poor woman! How does she think she's going to find time for anything more? Well, I shall have to do all the more if they don't get much, and it's quite evident they won't.

“Where is that list of names they gave me? I wonder if I know them all! Ah, here it is! Let me see, thirty-two names--thirty-two dollars—I may as well say thirty-five, it sounds better, and I can get the other three dollars easily enough. If those other two collectors were only a—a little different, somehow, we might do something; Three times thirty-five—why, over a hundred dollars! Dear me! they only raised last year fifteen dollars in all!

“What could have been the reason? I wonder who they had for collectors. Some one said they'd moved away, married, died, or something, I don't remember which, and it's a good thing they did, for they couldn't have amounted to much.”

“Fifteen dollars” she repeated a little later as she adjusted her bonnet before the mirror, “just think of it! I don't wonder that the President felt that something must be done. I'm sure I hope, with her, that the three new collectors will bring life and vigor and money to the society, but I doubt it somewhat in Alice Bennett's case. I shall do all in my power, however.”

“It is pleasant to work when one's efforts are appreciated. Undoubtedly I shall collect much more than a third of the whole, whatever that may be, for I certainly believe, with Mrs Wade, that a great deal depends upon the collector.”

So with an air of assurance, Miss Laura Burns drew on the gloves that so exactly matched the stylish costume, and passed out of the house to begin to walk the rugged way of

the collector.

At nightfall she returned in a most unenviable state of mind. With flashing eyes and burning cheeks, she walked straight to her room; shut with a decided bang the door behind her; threw into an ignominious heap, the bonnet and wraps which were usually removed with care; flung into the waste basket the crumpled list of names and wrathfully exclaimed, "I don't thank the minister's wife, or the president either for getting me into such an abominable affair! I was never so treated in my life! If I had dreamed that collecting was anything like this, I wouldn't have attempted it. Why they actually treated me—some of them—as if I were a beggar. Well, that ends it. I shan't try it again. I've too much respect for myself. I'll send this wretched two dollars and a half to the Treasurer, and then I shall give myself no further concern. They can get another collector, or they can go without; but there'll be no more collecting done by me, ever;" and up to the present time, Miss Laura Burns has rigidly kept her word.

* * * * *

"Ah, well, I'm in for it now," thought young Mrs Foster, as she hurried home from that missionary meeting.

"It means work, of course, but I don't mind that; I'm glad to do it, for I do like to see things MOVING, not standing still. We certainly did need new collectors. I don't mean to be uncharitable, but there's no reason in the world why our contributions should be so small. Our President seems in earnest and we have interesting meetings, and I'm sure Mrs Wade does all ANY pastor's wife can, with four children and so many other things to attend to. I'm inclined to think the trouble is with the collectors. If they presented the needs as they ought, people would give, I'm sure of it" and the gate shut behind her with a sharp click, as she ran up the steps of her home.

"There's one thing, Mrs Foster said to herself a few minutes after stirring the fire and beginning to prepare the evening meal, "I won't be a half-way, hap-hazard, put-off-till-the-last-minute sort of a collector. I'll go right to work at once," her eyes sparkling with determination," and see if we can't have one well-informed collector. I don't know how Alice Bennett and that proud Miss Burns will manage I'm sure—it doesn't matter. I don't mean to begin till I'm thoroughly prepared by study to work in the right way. I can begin to-night too, for 'tis Harry's evening at the stove, and I shall be all alone."

So this energetic little woman bustled about from kit-

chen to pantry, until preparations were completed and the table invitingly spread in the cosy little dining-room. Then a pile of magazines was taken from the sitting-room closet, "The story of Baptist Missions from the book shelf and several packets of leaflets and periodicals from the desk.

"I wonder if I have anything else, she murmured. "Why I thought it was later, glancing at the clock ; "I'll have time to run over to Mrs Wades before Harry gets here It wont take but a minute, catching up hat and shawl, "and I must have the Missionary Review of the World ; it might have just what I wanted in it, may be Mrs Wade will think of something else, too. I must just study up the field, at home and abroad, so as to find out the needs—the special needs, the difficulties and—and everything. I suppose I know about them in a general way, but I must be able to particularize. If I reach people's purses, I must touch their sympathies ; and to do that, I must carry information, and THAT'S just where so many collectors fail. People wont give to things they're not interested in, and they cant feel interested in things they dont know about, thats evident. If that only would read for themselves, or attend the meetings, but they wont, so Im going to read for them, or at least for those on my list. Ill get all the interesting information, telling facts, touching incidents and pressing needs I can find. and then Ill tell them in such a way that the dollars will be forthcoming," and she nodded her head triumphantly, as if the result had already been reached, and hastened to the parsonage.

No pains were spared. During the quiet hours of that evening and of the weeks that followed, heart and brains were actively engaged in preparation for her work. The pastor was consulted, the public library visited, tracts and leaflets sent for letters to prominent workers written, books borrowed and papers eagerly scanned, all for the "telling facts," and "touching incidents" which were to reach hearts and purses alike transferring the contents of the latter to her own outstretched hand.

As she mused, the fire burned. Never had the need of the great world-field seemed so great, never the condition of heathen women so deplorable. "O if our women only knew she would exclaim ; and her purpose to tell them grew and strengthened as she thought and studied.

She frequently consulted her list of women that she might have something to fit each of the uninterested ones for Mrs Foster, as she often affirmed, didn't believe in "hap

hazard work in anything." A sad picture of degraded womanhood in Alaska was stored in her memory for one, a reference to China's millions in darkness for another. A plea for India's suffering little widow would be sure to touch some hearts; others would be stirred more by the woes of "Afric's darkened daughters." So Mrs. Foster went on. Never did general map out his movements beforehand more accurately, or plan more faithfully with a view to the final effect, than did Mrs. Foster; but truth compels me to say, that before her calls were half completed she learned what collectors and generals alike admit viz, that to plan is one thing, to execute is another. She did, indeed, wax eloquent here, grow pathetic there and plead earnestly with another; only to be endured by one with an illconcealed expression of impatience, to be answered by another, with a polite, "Is it possible Mrs. Foster, you believe that?" or to be presented by another with a grudging quarter when "she might have given five dollars as easily," so this collector declared afterwards, to her husband.

Mrs. Foster was too energetic to be quickly wearied; too earnest to be easily discouraged; too brave to give up till she had called upon all the women; but she was puzzled. She had honestly tried to do her best, but the result was so unlike what she had planned. Not that she had entirely failed, no no. A few of the uninterested women had seemed stirred at her words and had given her all they had to spare—at least, that is what they said. Auntie Smith's eyes had kindled at her earnest words and she had doubled her dollar. Mrs. Warner handed her five dollars, with an evident desire to get rid of her, Mrs. Foster thought. The Brayton girls would hand her something soon if—if they didn't forget it, which "was just what they intended to do," said this collector, impatiently.

As for the Doctor's wife, in whose ear a pathetic tale had been poured, she had sweetly murmured, "Ah, yes, very sad, but they become accustomed to that, don't you think?" quickly adding, "Did you attend the concert last evening? Wasn't it fine?"

Mrs. Foster, in the quiet of her chamber, looked at the thirty-two names on her list; saw that only eleven had contributed; counted again the money in her hand; thought of the thirty-two dollars she had expected; said in a choked voice, "Only eight dollars and sixty cents!" carefully put it back in the envelope and—yes, burst into a flood of tears. What if the treasurer did say, as she received the money, "Almost four dollars more than last year from your section;

you've done well." Mrs. Foster felt dissatisfied; and after laying the whole matter before Mrs. Wade, anxiously inquired, "Why hasn't my plan worked better?"

Mrs. Wade's eyes were full of sympathy as she replied "May it not be because it has been YOUR plan? Did you have much of Christ in it?"

"Why, I—I—O Mrs. Wade, I don't know," stammered Mrs. Foster.

"Did you pray much, dear sister, for yourself and for those women on your list?" was kindly asked; but the collector could answer only with another burst of tears. It was suddenly revealed to her. She hadn't prayed particularly for those women or for herself; she had worked instead. She had followed her own plan and depended upon it for success, she sorrowfully confessed.

"Why didn't I realize it before?" She murmured regretfully. "Now the year is gone—wasted." Oh, no," interrupted Mrs. Wade, "not wasted, when we have learned so much. He has made you dissatisfied with your plan, your way, and now—" "Now" broke in Mrs. Foster, "Oh, ask Him to show me His way and I'll follow that hereafter."

* * * * *
"O Mrs. Wade," exclaimed Alice Bennet, as they walked home from the same missionary meeting. "I'm afraid I can't do it, after all."

"Oh yes, you can do all things through Christ, don't you know, Alice?" "Yes, but, Mrs. Wade don't you think a collector ought to have some special qualifications? I'm afraid I haven't a single"—"wait a minute, dear," and Mrs. Wade smiled into the troubled face, "let me see; you have leisure, influence, good health, a cultivated mind, a warm heart, an earnest desire to advance the Master's Kingdom, and over and above all—Christ. What more does a collector need?"

"Well," responded the young girl, "you know they have to meet so many people. I shan't know what to say to them, I fear."

"Is that it? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say," quoted Mrs. Wade just as they reached the parsonage.

The girl's face brightened as she said "good night" and walked thoughtfully on. Will he do that? she said to herself. Will he really teach me what to say? Then I can do it—for Him. and she quietly slipped up-stairs to her own room, for a little talk with Him about it, before meeting others; and after that it was settled. Then as

her eyes fell on the calendar, she remembered that just a year ago that very day, a dear schoolmate, with flushed face and trembling lips, had come to her saying, Alice, the Master is come and calleth for thee, wont you go to Him? Surely, the young girl mused, He taught her what to say to me, and she recalled how deeply the words had impressed her so that she arose quickly and found Him. Strange, she said the next day to her pastors wife, that you should have used those very words at the missionary meeting yesterday. I felt then that I should have to do it, though I couldnt see how until you quoted that verse coming home; nor could I feel quite willing till I—I had prayed over it, and then I said: If He calls, of course I can go—if He gives me words, of course I can speak for Him in collecting as well as in anything else. It isn't my work. it's His, isn't it?" "Yes, indeed" responded Mrs Wade, "You've learned the secret of making all work easy. You may safely leave the result in His hand."

In this spirit, Alice Bennet had taken up the work of collecting. How diligently she studied her Bible with special reference to her work, and how earnestly she prayed for fitness, during the weeks that followed, only God and herself knew; how she increased in Christian character was evident to more than one; and how she daily grew more sweet and helpful and Christlike was noticed by all in the dear home circle.

More and more, as she distrusted her own ability to do this work, or any other, did she draw close to Christ and seek His wisdom and strength. More and more she became impressed with the thought she had somewhere heard: that the highest motive for missions is not the need of the heathen—though her heart ached for them; not the reward that is offered, though her heart bounded at the thought of it; but *the command of Christ*.

So a spirit of perfect obedience to Him—which is the missionary spirit—became her chief desire for herself and for those women on her list. How her heart yearned after them! Daily she took their names from her Bible and collectively and individually carried them to God in prayer. Do you wonder that she began to love those women? "O how can I help them see and feel," she would frequently say, "that Christ calls them to this service; that mission work is His work, the building up of His kingdom! If they can realize that, how glad they'd be to give their money,

their time, their effort and, yes," she added a moment later with shining eyes, "even themselves since it is for Him," She often prayed, "Dear Lord, open thou their eyes; go thou before me; speak thy words through me, and the glory shall be thine."

Not a single call, not even the preliminary ones, when she went about, "just to get acquainted with the women," did she dare to make without a special prayer for guidance.

Do you wonder that this collector was fitted for her work, in answer to earnest, pleading prayer?

Do you wonder that God's spirit did prepare the way before her? and that, as she called here and there, not daring to trust her own way or her own words, it seemed to her the Lord Jesus Christ walked by her side and really did tell her what to say? He had given his words, you remember, was it strange that He fulfilled it?

Do you wonder, either, that as she left this humble door and that, one would ejaculate, "Blessings on her sweet face and loving heart!" or another, "There's a Christian if there ever was one!" or another standing one day at the gate to watch her out of sight, "I just can't bear to think of her going 'way off as a missionary!" "No more can I," responded the neighbor who came up at that moment, "though I know she would say we ought to be glad."

Of the thirty two women on Miss Bennett's list, five had long been regular contributors to the cause of missions, and six had given spasmodically. Do you think it surprising that of the remaining twenty-one who had never been interested, fifteen became members of the Women's Mission Circle before the year ended or that one of these had organized a mission band, or that another had offered herself a candidate for missionary service, or that the Treasurer received from this collector's hand forty-seven dollars? Surely not, when you remember Who had worked with her.

"Oh! I am so glad," she said to Mrs Wade, on their way to the annual meeting. "Yesterday, just as I was going to carry the money to our treasurer, Mrs Lane came to me with five dollars, a thank offering, because her oldest daughter has just become a Christian, and I had to go and put another one right with it because, O, Mrs Wade, when Christ called her," and glad tears rolled down the collector's cheeks, "He spoke through me! My heart is full of joy that He has helped me do a little of His work, I shall never doubt again, dear Mrs Wade, that I can do all things "through Christ which strengtheneth me."