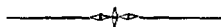


There is a great deal of learning in this book, and it is carefully got up. Dr. Wright has ably contrasted the Pessimism of "the sacred Jewish philosopher" with that of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, pessimists whose conclusions are destructive not only of faith, but of morality. The author of Ecclesiastes is vainly claimed as a precursor by this school, whose writings, beginning to be read in England, are one of the saddest phenomena of the present time.



ART. VI.—ODD CORNERS OF THE MASTER'S VINEYARD.

LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do? is a question which everyone must ask, if they really feel that they are not their own. But the answer to the question is not always evident, for the various circumstances of varied lives make it impossible to lay down any fixed laws as to what can or ought to be done by each individual. The object of the present paper is to suggest some "odd corners" in which opportunities of usefulness may have passed unnoticed.

Take first the case of the Christian man of business. His time is very fully occupied, his hours are late, and, except on Sunday, it seems impossible for him to undertake any real Christian work, and possibly on Sunday his own need of rest may render it more than ordinarily difficult for him to teach or visit, while it may well be that he feels the hours of that day are all too little to be devoted to his family. Is there any "odd corner" for him? It may be taken as an ascertained fact that those who have most to do are those who may most thoroughly be trusted to undertake any work of real importance, for they know both how to value and to economise time; and not unfrequently they have a machinery in their hands which enables them to carry out business other than their own with far less trouble than it would cost a private individual. May we not look to our Christian men of business to relieve the clergy of much of their finance business and account keeping? The writer of this paper has the honour of the acquaintance of a man of business whose time seems to be completely filled up, and yet he has managed to utilise the machinery at his command in such a way as to enable him to undertake, and admirably to carry out, the duties of treasurer to a large Church Missionary Association. Such men also are

invaluable on Committees, and a little mutual consideration will generally make it possible so to arrange the dates, hours, and number of committees to minimise the inconvenience of attending, to those who are much occupied.

Then there is the case of the man who has begun a well-earned rest from official or business life, who would gladly turn away from figures and statistics of every sort, and to whom the very making of an appointment is irksome, from its likeness to the drudgery which has occupied so many years of his life. Might not such men give a tithe of their leisure to God? Have we not here the very persons for Secretaries to small institutions, treasurers to schools, and similar posts. This work will involve self-denial, but it will bring a blessing with it. And it is by no means clear that such men may not be gifted with power to do direct spiritual work. The knowledge acquired in their more active life, of men and things, will make their work infinitely more definite, and, therefore, far more valuable, than that of those who have had no such training.

Some, however, are laid aside by shattered health. Is there an "odd corner" for them? It seems such a large one that it may be almost called a field of itself. Such persons have pre-eminently the power of setting others to work. They have usually the time which others lack, to enable them to follow closely the progress of the great agencies for good which are needing support; they can follow one or more with their interest; and then they can speak burning words to their friends and acquaintances, who have not the leisure or the inclination for such a study, which shall stir them up to take some real and active part where it is needed. Many a missionary has first been led to think of the mission-field by words spoken to him by one who is thus laid aside. Many a great scheme has been thought out, and prayed out, and set in motion, from a sick room, for there is an indescribable power in words spoken and suggestions made by those who cannot themselves "go forth to battle." And these remarks apply with equal force to the toilsome but necessary work of collecting subscriptions for special objects. This work, from the nature of things, generally falls on those who have already a great deal too much to do in the merely keeping pace with their spiritual work; and they are oftentimes sadly hampered in this, by the need for the other work too. But wherever personal influence is not required, the letter stating the nature of the work to be done, and its claims for support, may often be written by an invalid, or one precluded from active exertion, with even greater force than if it came from the pen of an ordinary worker.

It is not necessary here to touch upon the power that many such people have of influencing the world and the Church, through the press. It has often been well and wisely said that the Evangelical members of the Church of England, make less use of the press than any other people; and yet surely the power of the press is so great that it ought to be used to the utmost. But the subject of correspondence is one which needs more than a passing word. It has been brought forward before now in the pages of *THE CHURCHMAN*; and too much importance cannot be attached to the work of the Christian letter-writer. The work remains long after the spoken word is forgotten; and it may spring up and bear fruit, under circumstances the most unlikely. The busiest people have time to write some letters; and if every letter written is looked upon as a real work for the Master, none will go forth unblest. Each letter is an opportunity, and is an opportunity used or wasted.

There is a kind of letter-writing, which has already been most beneficial, and which seems to open an opportunity to many who perhaps do not feel prepared to write for the Press, and yet want to do some good with their pens, and this is the writing occasional letters for particular classes. The letters of Miss Weston for the Navy, and of Mrs. Best for the Merchant Service are now well known. They have been the means of much blessing, and the same idea may be worked out on a smaller scale, with great opportunity for good. For instance, some ladies who are not able to engage in active work, write monthly a certain number of letters for governesses who have not many friends or correspondents, and these monthly letters are looked forward to with the greatest interest, although the sender of the letter and the recipient are utterly unknown to each other. The letter which bears on the trials and difficulties of a particular life, and contains thoughts of encouragement and sound advice, is a most precious help, and one which many are specially qualified to give, who from their health or circumstances are not able to do anything else. The same idea might be, and perhaps is, already applied to servants. A monthly letter from an unknown correspondent may be of the greatest service, and is free from the grave objection which sometimes is felt to an occasional interview with an Associate of a Society, which has been known to lead to a certain amount of gossip.

But there is a work which at the present moment is being much pressed, and deservedly so, by the Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society, and which is essentially the work of the invalid, or the person whose health and occupations preclude the undertaking of more active business. This is

what is called the Publication Agency, in other words the undertaking to keep a list of those members of an Association who take in the Periodicals, the bringing them before the notice of those who have not previously known them, and the undertaking their regular supply. This work, unpretending as it sounds, is one that touches the very root of the question as to how we are to increase the funds of the Society, for all must feel that with increased interest will come increased funds, and the creation and maintenance of interest is not only to be accomplished by sermons and meetings, but by a more thorough use of the information which the Society prepares for all who are willing to read their most interesting Publications.

The great principle of gathering up the fragments comes into our subject. Our readers may remember the saying of John Wesley, that the reason of his never wanting was his never wasting, that he never even threw away a piece of paper or a piece of string; and this principle may find many applications in matters of Christian work. Children may be taught to utilize for the poor what would be otherwise thrown away. Scrap books for hospitals, or for the children of the poor, especially the "Text Scrap Book" now becoming so common, afford really interesting and useful work; even making "paper pillows" for the sick is a work by no means to be despised, especially if care is taken in the manufacture. At any rate we may be certain that if we adopt the principle of consecrating even our odds and ends to the Master's use, we shall not lack teaching as to how to do it best. "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" implies that He *has* something for each, and if we are coming to Him to know what it is we shall not be left in doubt.

JOHN H. ROGERS.

Reviews.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Ninth series of the Cunningham Lectures. By GEORGE SMEATON, D.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology, New College, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

IN these lectures Dr. Smeaton handles a theme the importance of which cannot be exaggerated, and, on the whole, in an edifying and instructive manner. There is no doubt that in modern times the office of the second Person of the Holy Trinity in the work of redemption has thrown