

**AS BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS.**

**NO. 4.**

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN AS REAPERS IN  
THE GOSPEL HARVEST.**

Now we wish to talk a little to those sisters in Christ who have some talents, however great or small, which they desire to make use of in the interest of the great harvest work. We have nothing to say at present to those Christian women who find both the center and circumference of their desires and efforts to do good, within the comparatively narrow sphere of home, except that they are living far below their privilege, and that selfishness, and not the glory of God chiefly, is the mainspring of their efforts whether they yet realize the fact or not.

Let us not be too quick to conclude that we have no talents. All the called ones have at least one, though the majority have more. Remember that health, money, time, influence, mental activity, education, and every advantage we possess, is a talent, to be used or abused. And while we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, neither should we underrate our abilities. We should think of ourselves soberly, and take as nearly as possible a correct estimate, in order that we may make the best possible use of our powers.

We have heretofore shown the principles which should govern Christian women in all their work – that modesty of demeanor, dress, etc., should always be observed, and that every thing approaching a boastful, heady, high-minded spirit should be studiously avoided. Bearing this in mind, let us inquire then – In what way can we do harvest work to the best advantage?

On this point several suggestions might be made. They will not fit every case and some of them may be impracticable in many cases, but we can make use of any or all of them as we find ability and opportunity. We should not forget that the strongest influence is generally that which comes closest to the heart, and here is woman's opportunity. The truth may be presented ever so clearly and eloquently in a public discourse, and the majority of its hearers will soon forget it in the multitude of other cares. But a woman whose heart is filled with the truth and the spirit of the truth, can drop in for a neighborly call and brush away the rubbish of care, water the seed with a little Christian sympathy, warm it with the happy sunshine of her living faith, and loosen the soil about it by tenderly showing how helpful such a faith is in lightening the cares of life, and how much it has done for herself in this way.

A woman's natural and quick perception, too, generally shows her how far to go, and when to stop. Cultivate this faculty; it is a natural talent to be used for the Master's glory.

Then, is any one sick in your neighborhood? You are generally welcome with your helping hand, your cheerful smile, and words of comfort, both to the sick and to the anxious friends who watch over them. Let your words be seasoned with the hope of the gospel, in such measure as may be most helpful to them, while your kindly offices give them confidence in your Christian spirit of love and self-sacrifice, and prepare the soil for the reception of the truth. Sometimes you will find it expedient to thus prepare the soil by more or less acquaintance before you drop any of the seeds into it. In this be wise and harmless, as the Master directs, but not too slow and over cautious else you will fail of your important work.

Then remember, "*the poor* you have always with you;" and generally they are the class most ready to receive the truth. Some of them may be rough and rude and by no means congenial to your tastes. And when you were of the world you may have shunned them,

and thus incurred their displeasure. Ah, what a mission you have here! and what a test, too, of your standing, and measure of your growth. Stop first and measure yourself, before you think of what you can accomplish in this way. Is your former pride crucified, so that you would not be ashamed to be seen with that coarse, uncouth neighbor, or to be called her friend, if thereby you can feed her with the bread of life? Would you be ashamed to say before your friends, as the Lord said to Zaccheus (Luke 19:5), I will dine with thee to-day, or Thou shalt dine with me? Have you learned to mind not high things, but to condescend to men and women of low estate, for the privilege of helping them up? (Rom. 12:16.) – and that, too, not in a condescending, patronizing way, but with true sisterly sympathy and love, manifested in your kindly courteous manner, plainness of dress, and simplicity of home appointments?

If so, you can carry the blessed tidings to many a lowly, and to many a wretched home. And among them you will occasionally find one of the Lord's precious jewels, perhaps unfortunately united to a depraved character who calls himself husband, though he never knew the meaning of the name, and never filled the office. Crushed under a load of care and sorrow, and shunned by the more fortunate, what a comfort and blessing you may be, with your true friendship and the good tidings of great joy.

Then there are children in your neighborhood. The children of the rich you may not be able to reach, but the children of the poor may be reached, if you use tact and discretion. You might gather a class of children about you to meet with yours at stated times, and then tell them the old, old story in as pleasing and simple a way as you can. Inspire the little ones with the hope of the glorious restitution of all things to Edenic glory and beauty. Paint the glowing details before the simple mind of a childhood and let them carry it home, being careful not to give meat too strong. Your own children, too, carefully instructed, may be little messengers of God. If they like the service, tell them they are God's little angels (messengers) and

that all their little services are appreciated in heaven, where their names are written and they are personally beloved.

As to your children's associations, you need to bear in mind that "evil communications corrupt good manners;" and, therefore, in the impressible period of childhood it will not do to let your children mingle indiscriminately with others, much as you may love the parents and desire to show yourself friendly to them and theirs. Indeed they will be better, especially in these days, to be kept to themselves as much as possible. And if your principles on this point are made known to your friends, they will not misunderstand, but will probably endeavor to imitate you. On very special occasions, however, you might find it expedient to call in your neighbors' children, even if they are rude and ill-mannered, that yours may treat them kindly and show themselves friendly. Under your eye, politeness and kindness and good feeling will readily take the place of rude ways. The strongest characters to resist evil are not those who never meet it, but those who do meet it, and overcome it. If your children at school and in the neighborhood meet rude children, and their rudeness is never commented upon or discountenanced by you, they will surely imitate it. Yet such comments should always be with charity and pity, and should never be made before others. While you teach your children to dislike the evil, teach them also to love and pity the evil-doer, as God does, and to study how they may help them. Be on the alert for all such opportunities, and by so doing you will develop strong characters able to resist the evil, which sooner or later they must meet, and to overcome it with good. Thus trained, you will soon have them as active co-workers with you and with God in the great work.

If worldly ambitions for your children as well as for yourself, have been sacrificed – as they must be with the faithful, consecrated ones – and your chief desire for them is to have them faithful, humble and competent servants of God, you have here a grand opportunity to prove your faithfulness – or vice versa; and it will affect all your

plans for them. As a servant of God you will bring them up as near to his idea as possible, teaching them that the adornments of the mind and heart are the chief adornments in God's sight.

Another quiet unobtrusive way of working would be to visit the various churches, particularly their prayer and conference meetings and the Methodist class meetings, dropping a *seasonable word* where you can, and observing those who appear to be most earnest and devoted to the Lord, in order that you may acquaint yourself with them, or hand or mail them something to read, or visit them.

Then again, there are both friends and strangers near and far, who may be reached both by personal letters and printed matter. Here lies a wonderful fruitful field of labor – practically unlimited. Mark, too, your privilege of spreading the cheerful meal – not elaborately, but plainly, and such as the humblest might imitate – and calling in, not your friends and rich neighbors, but any of God's children without respect to their earthly condition, who may be blessed by such a season of communion with saints. And verily, you shall not lose your reward, even in the present life. Remember, too, the old proverb which you can apply to advantage in the Lord's service, viz., If you would have friends you must show yourself friendly. Teach the little ones too, to enjoy and assist in such hospitality with you; and show them that **[R1104 : page 5]** this is the way, God's way, for us to find real happiness – in blessing and serving each other.

On such and on all occasions discountenance everything approaching gossip, and show most decidedly that you have neither an ear nor a tongue for any such thing, and make some features of the truth, or of the harvest work, the topic of conversation.

In such ways the busiest mothers may find places for profitable investments of their talents. With such at his coming the Lord finds his own, with interest. **[R1105 : page 5]**

Then, in addition to these ways, in which it would seem very many could engage, there are the more fruitful means, such as those free from domestic encumbrances find – in canvassing town and city and country, and spreading the truth broadcast in printed form, leaving it to do its blessed work in silence, or to be watered and cultivated by some neighborly Christians who see in this their opportunity for service. But the above means will be open to the greatest number.

Some, not fully understanding the spirit of consecration, may feel inclined like a certain class mentioned in one of our Lord's parables, to at once make excuse, saying, "I have no time, no money to spare for feasting friends and neighbors, too much opposition at home to claim such privileges, no talent to talk of the truth. I do not like to associate with people I have always considered beneath me, or to have my children mingle with theirs. I have no special aptitude to serve the sick, and my neighbors are generally well again, before I know they have been sick, etc."

Well, then my dear friend, the principle difficulty with you is that you are not very anxious to find work in the vineyard; and if so, then you are not wanted there. Where there is a will, there is always a way to do something. You have not much time, but by economy of labor, in simplicity of house-keeping, of cooking, of dress, etc., by regularity and system, by seasonable times for rising and retiring, etc., and in various ways you can gain some time. If you have but little means, do not be too proud to be hospitable in a plain simple way. The Lord and his disciples often had nothing more than bread and fish. You have opposition from the worldly-minded in your home, but why allow all your rights to be rudely trampled under foot? If you have faithfully served the interests of husband and family these many years, or if as a young mother and wife, you are doing so now, it is your right and privilege to extend your simple hospitality to your friends as well as theirs. And you should claim and use the right. As your children grow up let them see that you expect their services, and

while they are growing speak of the time when you will need it. Train them to the idea of relieving the cares of father and mother as soon as they are able. And as they are able, put little responsibilities on them, and use the time so gained in the Master's service. Some selfish, worldly husbands need to have this thought kept before them, too; for many such will see a faithful wife plod on year after year under burdens which they would not touch, and then feel that they are greatly wronged, if she seeks to have them lightened, when such a thing is possible. But remember that our first allegiance is to our heavenly Bridegroom; and where his counsel is called in question, there is but one proper course, and that is, loyalty to him at any cost. For this same reason, that you may have more time for the Lord's special work, be *less particular* than you would prefer to be about non-essential features of your housekeeping. Do not be too hard to please in your house assistant. She will not do the work so well, or systematically as you have done it yourself; but be satisfied with the best she can do under your direction and training.

You will probably find, too, after faithfully making the effort a few times, that you have a better talent for talking of the truth than you now know of. Indeed you will often surprise yourself; for the Lord has promised you a mouth and wisdom that none of your adversaries can gainsay or resist. Sometimes you will find your opportunity best used in reading to others, or in merely talking enough to introduce the reading matter, and to lead your neighbor or friend to investigate.

The excuse that you do not like to associate with some of the humble ones, savors both of the spirit of the world, and also of a seeming necessary prudence; and therefore it may be well to consider it carefully. The first thought is of the old nature – an outcropping of its pride and high-mindedness. Resist it, remembering the Master's words: – "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of

heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child (a humble teachable believer, or one likely to receive the truth) receiveth *me.*" – Matt. 18:3-5.

Thus, in very many humble ways, the watchful faithful stewards will find opportunities to invest their talents with a good hope of considerable interest. He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much. (Matt. 25:21,23.) Study to show yourself a workwoman approved unto God.

MRS. C. T. R.

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