

The Christian Messenger.

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Religious.

GIVING TO THE LORD.

BY THE REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

There is no Christian duty which is performed in a more slovenly manner by many good people than the duty of giving money in charity. Some give lazily to whatever and whoever begs the most lustily; they are quite as likely to encourage imposture as deserving objects, for they are too careless to inquire and discriminate. Some give money fitfully, under the spasmodic inspiration of an eloquent appeal; others give only when their digestive organs are "all right" and they are in good humor. A third class give for ostentation—like the selfish curmudgeon who bestowed a hundred dollars on a town clock because he "liked to give his money where he could hear it tick."

There are a sensible few who give by system and give on principle—and give, too, with discrimination. This is the way in which the late Arthur Tappan bestowed his liberal benefactions. The popularity of the object never bribed him, and the unpopularity never deterred him. He held his wealth in trust for Jesus Christ, and lived up to an honest, conscientious stewardship.

James Lennox, Esq., of New York—whose benefactions for the last thirty years have amounted to a larger sum than Mr. Peabody's—has also set an example of judicious distribution, as well as of princely liberality.

The Bible not only counsels generous giving, but systematic giving. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul makes this recommendation: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This money thus saved out of the week's income was to be put into Christ's treasury. Now there are three vital principles involved in this method.

The first principle is giving by plan, and not at random. On each Sabbath the store was to be laid aside for Christian charity. There was also to be a regularity in the amount of the gifts. Instead of trusting to the caprices of the moment, there was to be a fixed rule by which to gauge the donation. That rule was: "As God has prospered him." The gift was to be in due proportion to the income. The widow's two mites weighed as heavy in the scales of charity as the golden shekels of the millionaire.

This method of giving by daily or weekly appropriations develops also the power of the little. Great aggregates are made up by accumulating of pennies and of dimes. This is the way that Romanism builds her stately cathedrals. This is the way by which Methodism raised eight millions of dollars during their "centenary year." By this method only can the Presbyterians hope to raise five millions as a "memorial" to the Lord in gratitude for their happy reunion. The thousands of Dr. Adam's and Dr. Hall's congregations must be supplemented by the dimes of the seamstress and day laborer, and of the worshippers in frontier cabins.

Years ago I knew of a poor mechanic who gave twenty-five gold dollars annually to Christian enterprises though his wages were but a dollar and a half a day and his household large! He put aside five cents a day for the Lord, instead of wasting it on beer and tobacco. His wife earned two dollars a week and laid by ten cents. The children occasionally picked up a few pennies by running on errands, etc., and they, too, were glad to drop their mites into the box, so they accumulated a half dollar per week, and became, spiritually, one of the richest families in the village.

Now, why cannot every Christian who reads this brief article "go and do likewise?" We ask another question: Has any follower of Christ the moral right to accumulate and invest great wealth? Are not successful earners bound to be generous and systematic distributors?

REV. ROWLAND HILL.

During the last two or three years of this good man's life he very frequently repeated the following lines of a well-known poet:

"And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry,
For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this I can find:
We two are so joined—
That He'll not be in glory and leave me behind."

"The last time he occupied my pulpit," writes his friend and neighbor, Rev. George Clayton, "when he preached excellently in behalf of a charitable institution, he retired into the vestry after service, under feelings of great exhaustion. Here he remained until all but ourselves had left the place. At length he seemed with some reluctance to summon energy enough to take his departure, intimating that it was probably the last time he should preach in W—. I offered my arm, which he declined, and then followed him as he passed down the aisle of the chapel. The lights were nearly extinguished, the silence was profound: nothing, indeed, was heard but the slow, majestic tread of his own footsteps, when in an undertone he soliloquized, —

'And when I'm to die, etc.

"To my heart this was a scene of unequalled solemnity, nor can I ever recur to it without a revival of that hallowed, sacred, shuddering sympathy which it first awakened."

When the good old saint lay literally dying, and apparently unconscious, a friend put his mouth close to his ear and slowly repeated his favorite lines:

"And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry," etc.

The light came back to his fast-fading eye, a smile overspread his face, and his lips moved in vain attempt to articulate the words. This was the last sign of consciousness he ever gave.

We could almost wish that every disciple of Christ would commit these lines, quaint as they are, to memory, and weave them into the web of His Christian experience. Confidence in Christ and undeviating adherence to Him can alone enable us to triumph in life and death.

A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE.

Some years ago a congregation in an English town was electrified by a strange request from the pulpit. They were used to hearing prayers asked by parents "for a child near unto death," or "for those who had embarked on the ocean." Sometimes thanks were returned in public, and the people were asked to join with the favored ones in acknowledging preservation from threatened calamity or death by the good hand of God. Sometimes those on whom that hand—still good—had been laid in chastening called to their fellow worshippers to pray for them, that they might acknowledge Him who afflicted not willingly, and be sustained by His grace.

But the request which we now refer to was of altogether another kind; it was new to them and new to us. "A young man who had just come into possession of a very considerable fortune asks the prayers of this people that may be preserved from the snares to be which it will expose him; and also that he may make such use of it as shall bless his fellow-men and glorify the great Giver."

Is it any wonder that the people started and looked about them to see who this wonderful young man could be?

The attentions and gifts which earthly friends lavish upon us are almost sure to make us love and honor them more. But not so with the gift of God. So perverse is our nature that His gifts too often lead us away from Him, and make us feel so strong in ourselves that we cease to look to Him as the source of our blessings. And that is why we are chastened to bring us in humility to His feet, until the subdued spirit learns to fear prosperity as a foe.

There is no place more dangerous to man than that mount on which the sun of earthly blessing continually shines.

He who builds his tabernacle there is very apt to set up within it gods of gold and of silver made by men's hands, and not only to forget God, but also to despise the less favored.

This man's mountain stands strong, and he settles down with a feeling that it will never be moved. He has no returns to make to God, no obligations to discharge towards his fellow men. He feels that nature puts forth her glories for him—the leaf and flower for his eye, and the fruits of the harvest for his taste. The sun and rain are to enrich and beautify his fields, the winds to bring his ship to port. He would not say it, but he feels that the earth was made for him. And with head lifted high, he goes on adding to his treasures, never asking prayers that he may be saved from the temptations to which such riches expose their possessor.

Sometimes such men are suffered to go proudly on, year after year, through mines of gold down to the very edge of the grave. But others are in mercy arrested in their mad career by the unseen and unacknowledged Hand that rules the world. The messenger of mercy comes in the flame that consumes or the storm that engulfs their treasure. Clouds gather over their mountain and obscure their fair prospect; sickness seizes upon their strong frames, and death lays their idols in the dust.

Some men, when thus chastened, madly curse God and say Let me die; but others see His hand in the gloom, wrap their faces in their mantles and descend into the valley to seek sympathy and counsel of those on whose low estates they had once looked down either scornfully or pitifully.

With all the temptations with which poverty is beset, its victims are fewer than the victims of unhallowed wealth. If the poor have reason to ask prayers for submission, surely the very rich have greater need to plead, as did this humble English gentleman, for prayers that they may be saved from the temptations to which their wealth exposes them, and that they and their possessions may be alike consecrated to God and His work on earth.

A godly man, rich and prosperous, is one of the noblest sights on earth. His equals in wealth and position honor him, and through him, the God he glorifies; while the poor and the afflicted look to him as to a brother, and they never look in vain. They never envy him; and are never censorious towards him, as history proves; for the past furnishes many illustrious examples of both men and women who were not only rich in this world, but rich also in faith and good works; whose names are a light in the world and as jewels to the church.

Well may all who have great gifts, whether of gold or of influence, call on God's people to pray that they may be kept from temptation and be used for the glory of God.

CHURCH MUSIC IN PHILADELPHIA.

—An advertisement of the Sunday services of a Methodist Church in this city, published in the *Star*, closes as follows:

One of the best quartette choirs in Philadelphia, under the direction of that magnificent tenor, F. R. Thomas, M. D., with Professor Harry Barnhurst as basso, and kindred talent as soprano and alto. Lovers of artistic music may enjoy a rich musical treat at every public service.

The *National Baptist* remarks upon this:—

The above advertisement included the statement that some one would preach; but the only invitation in it is addressed to "lovers of artistic music." Are their souls more valuable than others? We begin by saying that this was the advertisement of a Church. Can it be possible that this is a mistake,—that it is not a sanctuary of God where the Gospel of his grace is proclaimed and magnified, but rather a religious concert hall, where scientific

music is artistically rendered as "a rich musical treat?" Infinite grace.—how free it is!—priceless in a twofold sense! But it was never meant to go truckling after this fashion. A Christian Church should be ashamed of such a temporized proclamation, and a minister of the Gospel should feel that his divine calling is degraded if

EXAMPLE.

BY JOHN KEBLE.

We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more;
But for a thousand years
Their fruit appears,
In weeds that mar the land,
Or healthful store.

The deeds we do, the words we say—
Into still air they seem to fleet,
We count them ever past;
But they shall last—
In the dread judgment they
And we shall meet!

I charge thee by the years gone by,
For the love's sake of brethren dear,
Keep thou the one true way,
In work and play,
Lest in that world their cry
Of woe thou hear.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

ONTARIO ELECTIONS. HAVE CHRISTIANS ANY DUTIES IN REGARD TO POLITICS? PROBABLE RESULTS IN ONTARIO. EXCELLENT WORKING OF THE NEW LAW. CHANGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF "CANADIAN BAPTIST," &c.

Ontario has recently passed through the excitement and turmoil of the second election, under the new constitution, of representatives to the Local Legislature. Of the public interests and party issues at stake I shall not treat. This is not because I have any sympathy with the cry so often heard, generally perhaps for party purposes, that the religious Press should eschew politics, as belonging to a region whose atmosphere is too unwholy and its objects of sight and sound and touch too full of contamination, to be visited by the pure spirit of Christianity. Of course much depends upon the meaning of the word politics. But when understood, as it should be, in the nineteenth century, as including everything pertaining to the science of good government, I am unable to understand how either Christian men, or Christian journals, can free themselves wholly from responsibility on the matter. In proportion as such persons and such agencies hold themselves aloof from all interest, and refuse to exercise their just-influence in favour of what perhaps is Heaven's best boon to man, next to the true religion, viz, a righteous government, just in that proportion may we expect to see taking place in national governments something closely akin to that which has already taken place in many civic municipalities, notably that of New York City over the border, though it is to be feared that there is little necessity for crossing the boundary line to find suitable illustrations on a smaller scale. When we shall suffer Christian men and Christian principles to be largely or wholly eliminated from election processes and, as a consequence, from our local and general parliaments, the righteous doom of Paris and of France will not be far distant. One can hardly help fearing, from revelations occasionally being made at both local and dominion head quarters, that some progress slight as yet, we trust has already been made in this direction.

But the points raised and the principles at stake in the Ontario election can scarcely, I suppose, possess much interest for Nova Scotians, who, no doubt, find sufficient occupation in watching the progress of their own local affairs. To some of us concerned for the good name of our House, to put it on no higher grounds, the result is so far satisfactory as it seems to pledge a speedy termination to the reign, as local prime minister, of one, who, whatever may be his character in other respects, has ac-

quired an unenviable notoriety as using the language of profanity and Billingsgate, almost as his vernacular. We trust his successor may have at least a decent respect for the proprieties of social intercourse and the externals of Christian morality. The issue of the contest is satisfactory to many friends of good government in another respect inasmuch as it foreshadows an immediate return to strict party government. It may be no compliment to human nature, yet it will be accepted as a fact by most persons not belonging to the waning circle of a late very able writer in the *London Quarterly* on "The Political Lessons of the War," that party government pure and simple, is the only safe and effective government for a free and enlightened people. Such we have not had hitherto since Confederation and the number of persons, whose brave patriotism, constraining them as it did to sink all narrow and partisan considerations, has afterwards met with a substantial reward in this life, has been somewhat startling. The chain of coincidences is quite as suggestive as curious.

I can hardly close my remarks on this subject without some grateful reference to the improvement in the mode of conducting elections, brought about by the new and excellent election law of Ontario. The closing of all bar-rooms and places for the sale of intoxicating liquors, on the day of voting, is a provision fraught with blessing to every class of society. It must have saved in the aggregate an untold amount of oaths and blasphemy, of unseemly brawls, of blind and brainless voting, to say nothing of the probable saving of heads and limbs and life. And then the stringent regulations to prevent bribery or undue influence, making the providing of conveyance, treating, and all such petty means of working upon the feelings of the free and independent elector, bribery within the meaning of the statute, seem to have had on the whole a most excellent effect. Thanks to the mother country for setting us so worthy an example in this wise, though long delayed, species of legislation. We only hope it may soon be followed throughout the whole Dominion.

The *Canadian Baptist* comes out under new auspices. The property and interest in it of the recent proprietor have been purchased by the newly formed "Baptist Newspaper Company of Toronto," and Rev. W. Stewart B. A. Pastor of Bond Street Church, and appointed responsible Editor. From the ample pecuniary means at the disposal of the company and the well known ability and energy of the new Editor, it seems not unreasonable to hope for a considerable improvement in the paper. Its present basis is, we learn, far more stable and satisfactory than when the last Proprietor and Editor, Rev. H. Lloyd, M. A., bravely undertook its management. But the Baptists in Ontario and Quebec are growing, it is believed, in numbers and intelligence, in a ratio at least equal to that of other denominations and their organ must keep fully abreast of the body. I am glad to notice in the first issue under the new management, a portion of a column devoted to "The Lower Provinces." I trust this department may be increased either by enlarged extracts from the *Messenger and Visitor*, or by correspondence, or by both. As one of Blue-nose descent I feel deeply anxious to see the members of the great Baptist family in the West brought into a better acquaintanceship with their brethren in the East. Surely, if they are to be one people nationally, and especially if they are already one in faith and practice, in work and purpose, this is worth laboring for. I have been gratified at what is being done in this direction by the *Messenger* from time to time, and cannot but think sometimes that the Nova Scotia Baptists, know more about us and our work in Ontario than we about them. Time I doubt not, will accomplish this desirable end, but much may be done to hasten it.

J. E. W.