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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

Alone with Jesus! Leave me here,
Without a wish, without a fear;
My pulse is weak, and faint my breath,
But is he not the Lord of Death?
'Tis all the same when he is nigh,
And if I live, or if I die.

Alone with Jesus! Ye who weep,
And round my bed your vigils keep,
My love was never half so strong;
And yours—O I have proved it long!
But when had earthly friends the power
To comfort in a dying hour!

Alone with Jesus! O how sweet
In health to worship at his feet!
But sweeter far, when day by day,
We droop, and pine, and waste away,
To feel his arms around us close,
And in his bosom find repose!

Alone with Jesus! how secure;
Vile in myself, in him how pure;
The tempest's howl, the waters beat,
They harm me not in my retreat;
Night deepens—'mid its gloom and chill
He draws me nearer to his will.

Alone with Jesus! what alarms
The infant in his mother's arms?
Before me death and judgement rise;
I turn my head and close my eyes—
There's naught for me to fear or do,
I know that he will bear me through.

Alone with Jesus! Ear.h grows dim—
I even see my friends through him;
Time, space—all things below, above,
Reveal to me one life, one love—
That One in whom all glories shine—
All beauties meet—That one is mine!

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

No. III.

"AS GOD HATH PROSPERED HIM."
"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). This saying, uttered by the Lord Jesus, is not recorded by any of the evangelists, but was handed down by tradition, and was current everywhere among the disciples. Much that the Lord said and did had been forgotten; but this was a golden sentence. The Church would not let it go into oblivion, nor should we err, probably, if we were to conclude that the Spirit of God, foreseeing the inroads that covetousness would make in future ages, so controlled the minds and memories of men that these words were preserved as a precious legacy for believers in all lands for all time. It is as if the Saviour had said, "If you wish to enjoy the full happiness which the gospel imparts, be givers—liberal, constant givers. So will you be like God, 'the blessed God' (1 Tim. i. 11)—the infinitely happy One, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not" (James i. 5), and 'openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing' (Psalm cxlv. 16)."

The institution of giving is not peculiar to the new dispensation. When the tabernacle was to be erected in the wilderness the Israelites were invited to contribute, and the spoils which they had gathered from the Egyptians were consecrated to Jehovah. So large hearted were they that the lists of donors had to be closed, for "the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (Exod. xxxvi. 7). The collections made by David and his princes for the temple at Jerusalem were almost incredibly magnificent, and the king expressed his astonishment in devout language. "Why am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. xxix. 14). The Babylonians plundered the people so unmercifully that those who returned from the captivity were comparatively poor; yet their contributions for the restoration of the temple were by no means insignificant. They "offered freely for the house of God to

set it up in his place; they gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver"—about six hundred thousand dollars (Ezra ii. 68, 69).

In the first fervour of thankfulness and love the Christians at Jerusalem surpassed all that had yet been recorded in the annals of human benevolence. Some special effort was requisite for the assistances of converts who had flocked to the city to attend the solemn feasts, and whose detention there for a time was desirable, that they might be instructed in the gospel and prepared for missionary work in the countries to which they respectively belonged. There was no command, no compulsion. Those who sold their houses or lands did it of their own accord. It was a wonderful outflow of goodness. The saints at Jerusalem impoverished themselves by this extraordinary effort, and they become in their turn recipients, when the gospel reached "the regions beyond." The hearts of the christianized heathen were opened by the grace of God, and those who had before "lavished gold out of the bag" for the support of their vile idolatries "made a certain contribution for the poor saints" at Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 26).

There were no Societies in those days. Every church was a society in itself, and managed its own affairs, benevolent operations included. Our modern systems were unknown. Many centuries were to pass away before the advantages of united benevolence and zeal, in a large scale could be realised. In addition to providing for the ordinary expenses of their own worship and work, which they were bound to do, because "the Lord ordained that they who preached the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 14), the churches cared for the poor, and they assisted missionaries who passed through their places of abode on missionary tours. See 2 Cor. i. 16; 3. John 6, 7; Rom. xv. 24. The distress at Jerusalem in consequence of the famine was the occasion of a general collection in all churches respecting which the Apostle Paul gave the direction to the Corinthian church which has been regarded as equivalent to a Christian law: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store—as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2).

Whether it was intended to be a law or not, it must be granted that there is an eminent suitability in the arrangement. Christian service and Christian work are peculiarly appropriate to the Lord's day. On that day we celebrate his death and resurrection, and it is fitting that our celebration should wear a practical aspect. We unite in acknowledging that we have "freely received," and it is proper that under the influence of gratitude and love we should "freely give." In many instances, too, the frequency of giving is an advantage. Many a one who would shrink from engaging to give five dollars a year, because he could not spare such a sum at one time, would have no difficulty in contributing ten cents a week. The habit of giving being thus formed, the amount given is imperceptibly increased, till at length it is found that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth," or, as John Bunyan said—

"There was a man, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away the more he had."

We belong, then, to a giving dispensation. Is there any specified proportion? Under the law, and even before the law, a tenth was accounted a fair proportion: See Gen. xiv. 30; xxviii. 22. Every Israelite paid tithes, besides first-fruits and freewill offerings, and the restraint from tillage of the land every seventh year. It would hardly be deemed a becoming thing for a Christian to give less. But a certain, unvaried amount is not looked for. The Apostolic rule is, "as God hath prospered." This presumes variability. If the ordinary average income of a man enables him to give a dollar every

Lord's day, a week of unusual prosperity should be followed by a large tribute on the next "first day." What the amount of the tribute shall be is left to conscience. But let every one see to it that the voice of conscience is listened to and obeyed.

John Howard said—"Our superfluities should be given up for the convenience of others; our conveniences should give place to the necessities of others; and even our necessities give way to the extremities of the poor." His own life was a commentary on his words.

"As God hath prospered." We are sometimes disposed to glory in the benevolence of the times. Doubtless there are some exemplary cases of great liberality, flowing from great gains. But Christians generally do not give "as God hath prospered." The wealthy are especially in fault. Very few of them observe the law of proportion. In fact one is probably near the mark in affirming that the benevolent funds raised in Christendom are derived principally from the middle classes and the poor.

And yet it is to be feared that there are great shortcomings even in the middle classes. Our well-to-do brethren, farmers, tradesmen, or mechanics, do not give according to their means. A dollar a year from every church member in our Convention would furnish a fund of 28,977 dollars, which would give us ten thousand dollars for foreign missions, ten thousand dollars for home missions, and the balance for miscellaneous objects. But the contributions of the churches in the Sandwich Islands, where Christianity is little more than fifty years old, exceed two dollars a year for each member! Ought we not to be equal to them?

"As God hath prospered." Then it must not be "grudgingly or of necessity." Such offerings will not be accepted by the Lord. It was a homely way of teaching a lesson in true benevolence which was adopted by the king of one of the islands of the Pacific ocean, which had received Christianity. A missionary meeting was held, and the king was in the chair. The collection consisted of pigs, poultry, and produce, for the people had no money. A man went to the meeting, bearing a pig on his shoulder. He had no heart in the work, but felt it necessary to give something to preserve his reputation. "There! he exclaimed as he threw the pig on the ground "I have brought you a pig." "Take it away," the king replied, "God does not accept angry pigs!"

"As God hath prospered." A recent writer has made these remarks:—"One reason why Christianity has so little success in the world is because professing Christians subordinate it to so many other considerations. Local residence, occupation, friendship, marriage, are settled, and the question of religion goes for little or nothing. It is compromised, and a compromise is close to a surrender. Were it the ruling principle with Christians, it would be on the sure way to the world's throne, though it might be through suffering." That writer is perhaps an unbeliever, and pleads the fact to which he refers in excuse for his unbelief. So in old time the name of God was "blasphemed among the Gentiles" through the unholy conduct of the Jews. Men rise early and sit up late—they tax their brains to the extremity of endurance—and invent all manner of schemes for making money. What do they do with it? Do they recognise the claims of the gospel, and give to God his share in the first instance? Or do they spend it all on themselves, indulgences, luxuries, splendours? Here there is room for the workings of conscience. Christian, "How much owest thou thy Lord?" Reckon it up, if you can. No! you cannot reckon it up. "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand" (Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.). And now, borrow the Psalmist's words. "What shall I render unto

the Lord for all his benefits towards me" (Psalm cxvi. 12)? Then, before your hearts grow cold again, make your calculations, and ask what proportion of your store ought to pass under a vow of consecration.

"As God hath prospered." If all Christians in every part of the world were to obey this precept, honestly and conscientiously, we should soon see a general revival of godliness, and believers would "gird up each other to the race divine," and converts would "fly as a cloud."

"As God hath prospered." Every church contains great diversities of character. There are some generous souls, some niggardly ones. Should not the latter be dealt with, if not in a direct way of discipline, by such methods of persuasion, remonstrance, or reproof as may touch their hearts, and produce, by God's blessing, a desirable change?

"As God hath prospered. Let us all resolve to set about it at once.

"That man may last, but never lives. Who much receives, but nothing gives; Whom none can love, whom none can thank, Creation's blot, creation's blank.

But he who marks, from day to day,
In generous acts his radiant way,
Treads the same path his Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God."

—Dr. Gibbons.
SENEC.

CIRCULAR.

TO THE CHURCHES COMPOSING THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND P. E. ISLAND:

Dear Brethren,—

Under the guidance, we trust, of the Great Redeemer, who said "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," we are about entering upon a new career of Foreign Missionary effort. A decision has been reached by our Board, in favor of establishing a Mission among the Karens in the kingdom of Siam; and we expect that our pioneer Missionary band will embark for their field of labor during the ensuing Autumn. It will, probably, comprise three families, as it is desirable that the number should be sufficiently large to ensure mutual strength, encouragement and comfort.

For the outfit and passage of these families, for the purchase of the land and the erection of buildings, and for many incidental expenses inseparable from an enterprise like this, a large outlay of money is requisite. It is a work for which a broad foundation must be laid, if we expect large results. An inadequate supply of resources would greatly cripple our effort and retard its progress.

The special object of this circular is to direct your attention to the importance of system, in all your efforts to furnish the pecuniary support necessary to achieve the success of our contemplated independent Mission. We would urge upon you the adoption of some plan, which is not to be presented as a theory for admiration, but to be brought out in worthy practical results. A small sum given regularly by every member of our churches will ensure a total sufficiently large to sustain a very respectable Foreign Mission. A contribution of two cents per week becomes a dollar a year. Our membership in the Maritime Provinces is, in round numbers, thirty thousand; so that by the adoption of this simple plan, there would flow into our treasury just as many dollars as the aggregate membership of our churches, viz: Thirty thousand dollars.

Now who is there among us that cannot contribute two cents weekly, to give the Gospel of Christ to the perishing heathen? A donation of a dollar a year should be at once resolved upon by every Baptist in these Provinces. We do not, of course, suggest that your contributions should be limited to this sum, but whatever amount be determined upon, that it be systematically laid by for our Foreign Mission.

In order that our people become thoroughly aroused and interested, much, indeed, nearly everything, de-

pends upon the ministers. If the pastors of our churches do not take up this work with earnestness and enthusiasm, the denomination had better abandon the project of an Independent Mission, and resume the old leading strings of the American Missionary Union. But if the ministry undertake patiently and persistently to present the claims of the heathen to their churches, the results will be adequate to the demands of the enterprise before us.

We would suggest as an additional practical measure, that at least once a month, the subject of Foreign Missions be in some manner presented to the people, either by a sermon, or by reading Missionary intelligence, delivering addresses, and offering supplication for the advance of the Redeemer's kingdom; closing always with that tangible expression of love to the Lord, and for the heathen, a liberal collection for Foreign Missions.

Dear brethren, we commit this matter to your consideration, feeling assured that to those who are actuated by the Spirit of Christ, no effort for the salvation of souls will seem burdensome.

In behalf of the
Foreign Mission Board,
W. B. Boggs,
Secretary F. M. Board.

PERSONAL WORK FOR CHRIST.

This is the great want of our times—personal work, visiting from house to house, conversing with and praying with professors and non-professors. The Harlan Pages are few and far between. Yet this personal evangelizing work must be done, or the gospel will not reach the masses.

The American Tract Society understood the necessity for such work and struck the key-note to this evangelizing agency in sending out its colporteurs, not as mere venders of religious books and tracts, but as evangelists or personal laborers in Christ's harvest field.

Great and glorious have been the results of the Society's colportage. In many instances a single colporteur has been evidently instrumental in the conversion of more souls in a single year than have been brought to Christ during the entire pastorate of many clergymen. Such labor is not only needed at the West in our new settlements, but it is needed everywhere in quickening the churches, aiding the pastors, and in reaching and evangelizing the outlying population. The ministry feel the need of it.

The writer is prompted to say this from his own personal experience in the ministry, having himself been greatly blest, his church quickened, neglecters of the sanctuary drawn to the house of God, and sinners converted through the help rendered by one of the Society's evangelists. We need an army of such working Christian men—men constrained by the love of Christ—to go out and labor among the people who are fast becoming neglecters of the ordinances of the gospel. The emergency must be met by personal work for Christ. What our most favored churches need, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, is the faithful performance of this self-denying work.—*American Messenger.*

A CLOWN'S SERMON.

A sermon, preached in Virginia, by John Robinson's Clown, is thus related by one who was present:

It was in the evening, when the performance was about to close, the clown stepped forward, and, in a solemn tone addressed the vast assemblage present, among which were hundreds of professing Christians of the different denominations, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian, in the following style:

"My friends, we have taken about six hundred dollars here to-day—more money, I venture to say, than any minister of the Gospel in this