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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Unprofitd.

"The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Heb. lv. 2.

"The word preached did not profit them,"
The pastor sadly thought;
When, having spoken solemn words
With deepest import fraught,
He heard, in passing down the aisle,
The laugh and merry jest,
From some whom he had prayed might be
Led to the Cross and blessed.

"The word preached did not profit them,"
In prayer the mother cried;
"Oh, bring my wandering children, Lord,
In Jesus to abide!
Oh! let the dew of heavenly grace
Prepare their hearts to bear
Good fruit, from seed that has been dropped
By faithful servants there."

"The word preached did not profit them,"
The earnest teacher said,
As in the faces of her class,
Indifference she read.
Oh! help the earnest efforts Lord,
Of pastor, teacher, friend;
And on the sermons, words, and prayers,
A heavenly blessing send.

"The word preached did not profit them,"
Ah, well the Saviour knew!
For where his faithful people meet,
He comes with blessing too.
He heard the preacher's earnest words,
And saw the careless way
In which the ones for whom he prayed
Had turned in jest away.

"The word preached did not profit them,"
Recording angels penned;
Although the service of his house,
They willingly attend.
Ah! may they hear his call before
The day of grace be past;
And may the word preached profit them,
And save their souls at last.

Association Annual Letter.

Hearty and Individual Consecration to Christ, the great need of the Church.

THE ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

It was recommended by the Association that this, their Letter, be read to each church, by the Pastor or Church Clerk as soon as convenient after publication.

Dear Brethren,

It is impossible in this brief letter to do more than remind you of the great work which we, as a denomination are endeavouring to do in the department of Home and Foreign Missions, and in that of Education. It must suffice to say, that never was there greater need of hearty effort, united and individual, in these various departments of our denominational work than at present. At the same time there never was greater encouragement for Christians to pray, to labour, and contribute of their wealth for the success of all these objects. Great and effectual doors in all these departments are open to Christian zeal and consecration. Let them have our sympathy and our hearty support.

In particular, however, we wish to present the duty of Christians to work for Christ in connection with the churches to which they severally belong. That it is the duty (not now to speak of the matter as a privilege) of every individual Christian, to do what he can, according to the ability which God hath given, to advance the cause of Christ in connection with the church to which he belongs, is a fact which should only need to be stated in order to receive hearty endorsement at the hands of everyone who looks to Jesus as his Saviour. In principle it will probably be cordially admitted by every Baptist, but by a very considerable proportion of the membership of our churches, it seems to be practically ignored. Saved by the blood of Christ, as we profess to be, enlightened by His truth, sanctified by His spirit, and sustained by His grace, rejoicing in the one common Lord and Faith and Baptism, trusting in the same God and Father of all, and looking toward the common inheritance; shall any of us be found so ungrateful as to ignore the claims of Christ upon us, as our Lord?

Every Church of Christ is an aggregation of units, and all the work which it does must be accomplished through the individual men and women who compose its membership.

If a Church of Christ is to be sustained and made a power for good in any community, it must be by the blessing of God upon the efforts of its members. If a minister of the Gospel is to be supported, if houses of worship are to be built, and kept in repair, if in general, the financial interests of the church are to be cared for, it must be done through the executive wisdom and united contributions of its members. If the spiritual interests of the church are to prosper, if the prayer and conference meetings are to be made a means of good, if Sabbath Schools are to be manned, equipped and sustained, if the spirit of missions is to pervade the Church, it must be accomplished by the blessing of God upon the individual and united efforts of its members.

Who can say, I have no share in the responsibilities herein involved? There are very few indeed, who cannot do something to advance the material interests of the church. To a good many of His children, it is true, God has not given much of worldly wealth.

But the Divine rule, it must be remembered, is "according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not." He who can give only a little will be abundantly blessed in giving that little, and he who can give much will fail of the blessing which he should receive, if he withhold more than is meet.

In many cases, however, the burden of maintaining the financial interests of the church falls upon a comparatively few, while many upon whom there rests equal responsibility, give not at all, or only with a niggard hand. If only each individual Christian could be aroused to the recognition of the duty which rests upon him to contribute for the work of the Lord according as God has blessed him, how soon would the treasury of the church be generously replenished with the donations of grateful contributors!

Again, What Christian is there who can say, "I can do nothing to advance the spiritual interests of the church." There is no true Christian, however humble in station or ability, who does not exert some salutary influence upon the world. The religion of Jesus is life, is light, is power from above. Wherever that life is, it will manifest itself, wherever that light is it will shine, wherever that power from above cometh it will make itself felt. Everyone, who lives a life of faith in Jesus, does something, at least indirectly, for the spiritual interests of the church and community in which he is placed. The Christian wife and mother, burdened with many cares, and able to devote little or no time directly to work for Jesus, yet filling her home with a Christian atmosphere, teaching her children by her pure and patient life, not less than by her gentle words, to believe in Jesus, and instilling the principles of Christian truth into their hearts, is doing a holy work, the results of which cannot be estimated. Let it be fully admitted then, that everyone who lives a Christian life, though he may make no public effort for the advancement of the cause of Christ, is thereby exciting a holy, though it be a silent influence, upon the world. But a loyal, earnest hearted Christian will not be contented with this only. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If the heart is filled with love to Jesus, that love will find expression in persuasive words and self-denying acts in order that others may be brought to Christ. There are very few who cannot do something in the way of publicly proclaiming the truth. Of course it is not the duty of every one to mount a pulpit and preach sermons, but every man and every woman who so loves the worship of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as to make some sacrifice to attend upon the preaching of the Word, thereby preaches a sermon to every indolent professor, whose seat is vacant in the House of God. Every Christian who makes it a principle of his life to be present at the prayer meetings and monthly conference of his church, in spite of personal or business inconvenience, thereby proclaims that he esteems his allegiance to His Lord above his business interests or his personal ease. Many Christians try to excuse themselves from taking active part in social religious meetings by pleading want of talent or learning or confidence. But the great need of our churches is not so much talent and learning (though these are not to be despised) as a hearty consecration to the service of the Lord. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Have you not observed that the broken and stammering utterances of some trembling Christian who speaks out of the fulness of the heart, are always more effective than the lengthy addresses of those who are supposed to have a talent for public speaking. What a wonderful change there would be in almost every church, if only all its individual members should come clearly to recognize the responsibilities, and faithfully to discharge the duties resting upon them as servants of Christ. If only all the tithes were brought into the store house what abundant, and overflowing blessings would be poured upon the churches. Depressing debts would be lifted, dilapidated churches and parsonages repaired—unpaid salaries made up, finance committees relieved of embarrassment, many a pastor's heart encouraged, and the missionary funds generously replenished. Sabbath Schools would be filled with some to teach and many to learn. Vacant pews would be crowded with devout and happy worshippers, there would be more power in the preaching. Prayer-meetings would be a source of comfort and strength to every Christian. And a power for good to all who should come within the circle of their influence; then should the church "arise and put on her beautiful garments; and it would be said of her, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners."

If it is true that to every one some ability has been given to work for Christ, it is true, also, that there is opportunity for the exercise of all the talents, wealth and energy which the church possesses. There is much work to be done. Systematic effort is necessary. So far as possible the church should organize its forces in order that it may employ all its strength and make use of the talents which are most suitable in the various departments of its work. The pastors who shall achieve the best success must recognize the necessity, not only of working with unremitting energy, but also setting others to work, and the church which shall arrive at the best permanent results, other things being equal, is that which organizes its strength and heartily and systematically co-operates with its pastor. Nothing can compensate for the lack of this. The most brilliant talents, the most untiring energy and the most fervid zeal, on the part of the minister can, at best, only in part make it up. The minister as a servant of Christ owes allegiance to his Lord in common with all his brethren and sisters in the church, and they also in common with him.

The great principle is this: By virtue of his relation to Christ, every Christian is bound to give his life to the service of his Lord. His whole life must move within this grand circle of consecration. Whatever else he may be, he is, beyond and above all else, a Christian. The Christian Carey on the shoemaker's bench in England, and the Christian Carey, a missionary of the cross in India, are one and the same. The life of "the consecrated cobbler" moves within the same circle as that of the consecrated missionary. By leaving his shoemaker's bench to do the work of a missionary in India, Carey did not leave behind him the allegiance which he owed to his Lord, nor did he on the other hand assume any duty or responsibility resting upon any other man or woman. He simply stepped at the command of his Master from a narrower to a broader field of christian effort and usefulness. It is simply impossible that any one Christian

can assume the responsibilities or perform the work of another. It is absurd to suppose that any man, by virtue of the relation which he sustains to a church as its pastor, can stand in the place and perform the duties of the hundreds of Christian men and women who may compose his church.

The pastor, by virtue of his engagement with the church, assumes a certain relation, and engages to perform certain duties. Thus he stands within a new circle of responsibility as pastor, and, in this respect, stands alone. But this circle is within, and concentric with, that greater circle of consecration to Christ, and within this he stands as a servant of his Lord, in common with all his brethren and sisters in the church.

Our church polity is exceedingly democratic in its character. It affords ample scope for the recognition of all the talent in the church, for its development and its profitable employment. All the affairs of the denomination, from the most important enterprises undertaken by its associated strength to the smallest matters in the working of every individual church, are open not only to the inspection but to the participation directly or indirectly of every brother in the church. It is to be feared however, that a very large number of the members of our churches regard themselves as spectators only, and not as participators in the work. But the church of Christ, according to the New Testament idea, is not an amphitheatre in which Christians gather to witness gladiatorial contests between their ministers and the powers of darkness, but an associated host commanded, disciplined—clad in the armour of God, and resolved on victorious conflict with said Powers of Darkness.

Aaron and Hur supporting the hands of Moses on the mountain top are often quoted as the type of the Christian in his relations to his pastor. But it is worth while to consider whether this is the most appropriate type of that relationship. It seems to us that the Christian pastor is not so much a Moses on the serene mountain top, as a Joshua in the plain amid the dust and heat of the conflict. The place for the Christian, who would strengthen his pastor's hands, is not so much on the mountain heights of prayer and contemplation as in the plain of battle fighting the Amalekites. For aught we can see to the contrary, Aaron and Hur might have continued to support the hands of Moses, if, like Lot's wife, they had been turned into pillars of salt, and become insensate as the stone upon which Moses was seated; and we greatly fear that there are a good many professed Christians who flatter themselves that they are upholding the hands of their pastors, after a scriptural model, whose efforts in the cause of Christ are sadly wanting in freshness and vitality.

And now in conclusion let it be remembered that though we have presented the subject chiefly from the light of duty, yet there is another point of view from which it is equally worthy our attention. The grandest privilege which is offered us on earth, is that of working for Christ. Brighter than all visions of wealth, of fame, or ease, this thought should be to the Christian. The days and years of glorious opportunity are passing, not again to return. When we come to view things from the standpoint of a dying bed, it will seem a greater thing to have had some part, however humble, in bringing the world to Christ than to know that to us had been given the pleasures, riches, and fame of earth.

Then let each individual Christian ask himself the question: In view of the priceless gift which I have received, am I doing all that gratitude to my Saviour, all that loyalty to my Master, all that consideration of the needs of the church should prompt me to do?

Concerning our Hymn Books.

The following is the Report of a Committee appointed last year by the Central Association "to consider the desirability of recommending any change in Hymn Books in use among the churches, consisting of Brethren A. P. Shand, S. Selden, Rev. Dr. Welton and Professor Gates, to give especial attention to the music; and Revs. E. M. Kierstead, S. W. DeBlois and S. B. Kempton, to examine the Hymns and their sentiments," presented at the recent session of the Association at Windsor:

The Committee respecting Hymn Books, beg to report that in considering this very important matter, they have examined the various books of Christian hymnology published for use in Public Worship, and they have been able to find none so suitable in all respects as the Baptist Hymn Book, published by the Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. This book is to be obtained in various styles from 50 cents and upwards, and one of these combines Hymns and Tunes, well adapted to congregational use, costing but 75 cents.

Your Committee would therefore recommend that, in all congregations of the Churches belonging to this Association, where any change is contemplated, that the Baptist Hymn Book be adopted, and in all churches where there are only a few books that the change be made as early as possible, so as to have a good and efficient supply of books to enable the congregations generally to join in the delightful exercise of praise more profitably.

We would further advise the Association to recommend said book to the approval and commendation of the Convention of the Maritime Provinces, and request that body to recommend said book to the Baptist Churches of these Provinces.

There is also a book published by the same Society for use in Social meetings—the Gospel Hymn and Tune Book—at 50 cents which your Committee would heartily recommend.

S. SELDEN, Chairman.

Our Sabbath Schools.

The following Report on the Sabbath School work was presented by the Committee on that subject:

Your Committee are duly impressed with the importance of Sabbath School work. They consider that no branch of Christian labor is superior to that which is given to the teaching of the young. Training imparted in the Sabbath reaches Society in all its general features, it acts as a preventative of crime and wrong doing in