

Sunday Reading.

ADOPTING THE TITHE.

The Lesson of Systematic Giving Taught by One in Humble Life.

When Dennis mentioned the matter for the first time, I was almost indignant. We were sitting at the fireside one evening—he had been reading the paper, and I was almost dozing over a dull book—when he looked up quite suddenly and said: "I have been thinking, Clara, that you and I should begin giving systematically."

"Giving systematically to what? I asked in genuine surprise, and endeavored to look wide awake and interested."

"Why to the church and missions and so on," explained Dennis.

"Give what?" I asked again, setting my lips a trifle firmer, and making it just as hard for poor Dennis as I could.

"Money, of course," he answered. "You know what I mean, dear. Suppose we keep a tithe-box. At present, we really give nothing worth speaking of."

"Whatever are you thinking of, Dennis?" said I, "to talk so soberly of giving, when you know we have not nearly enough to live on as it is? It is more of a problem every day, with our income, to make ends meet."

I looked meaningfully around the plain, little room, with its modest, lonely-looking furniture, and reminded Dennis of the rent which was overdue, and the many things we both needed. I even quoted Scripture to the effect that if any provide not for their own he is worse than an infidel; and, being fairly started, soon talked both him and myself into a very dissatisfied frame of mind. It all ended in Dennis saying:

"Oh, well, no doubt, as you say, what is impossible, and that ends it. But I do wish we were able to give something."

A serious illness came to me, and as I needed constant care, Dennis, who was very busy in the office, proposed that we send for a young girl whom we had become interested in, as a child, in the Orphans Home. I knew she had experience in attending the sick, and rather unwillingly consented. Maggie was a capable, well-trained girl, and had a peculiarly gentle and pleasing voice. I loved to hear it so well that during my convalescence I kept her talking on one pretext or other most of the time. In this spirit I asked her rather languidly one day what she kept in a little pasteboard box I had several times noticed in her hands.

"This is my tithe-box," said Maggie, turning her honest blue eyes full on me. "I was just counting the money over to see how much I have for the missions next Sabbath."

"Why, child," said I "come here and sit by me; I want to talk to you. Do you mean to tell me you give a tenth to the Lord?"

"The girl was rather surprised at my vehemence, but she answered simply: "Why, yes, ma'am. I am very sorry it is so little I can give, having only my earnings. Sometimes I think it would be nearer right if I, whose whole is such a trifle, should give one-fifth. There is so much need of money, you know. It is different with rich people; one-tenth of their money is a great deal, and so much good can be accomplished with it."

I winced under Maggie's ingenious argument—such a decided inversion of mine—but she, sweet child, all unconscious of my thoughts, went on to tell me of the good matron at the Home, who had taught her as a little child that she had a father in heaven ready to be more to her than the father or mother she had lost.

"She told me," said Maggie, "that when Jesus left this earth, after his resurrection, he put the missionary work he had been doing for three years—and for that matter, all his life, the matron said—in our hands to do for him; and he said plainly that every one of us who love him shall show it by what we do of the work he loved. If we cannot preach or teach, or give all our time to him here or over the seas, we can at least give a part of our money to him. She liked to give a tenth, because that was God's own plan for the people he loved, and so must be the division of one's money that pleases him best."

"It is all right," the dear matron said one day, "to give a tenth of our all; and after that, if we can spare more, we can call it a gift." She gave us a tithe-box, and the very first money I earned, all my own, I put a tenth in it.

"So your matron thought that every one should give a tenth to the Lord, Maggie?" "No, ma'am," was the quiet answer. "She did not say we ought to; she did not think of it in that way. But she said that, like the other plans the good Lord has made for our every-day living, it is really all to make us good and happy. We are so glad when once we begin to give in that way, and the nine-tenths which we keep are blessed of him with the one he accepts, so it is lifted above being ordinary money, and does us far more good."

My mind was busy with those sweet words long after Maggie had left me, and the question came:

"If she can give out of her pitiful poverty, what is my excuse?"

Yes, I saw clearly now. I had been in the wrong, and a stumbling block to my husband. So, in the evening, as we sat cozily by the fire again, both happy in my returning strength, I said to Dennis:

"I have learned a lesson which makes my illness a blessing, dear. Shall I tell you of it?"

And then I told him of Maggie's ministering to my soul as well as to my body, and showed him a little box on which was written "tithes." Dennis did not speak at first, but a glad look shone in his eyes, and he clasped my hand very tenderly.

"The Lord's hand is in this, Clara,"

he said at last. "We will pledge a tithe of all God ever gives us, over this little box, won't we?"

It would be half truth to say that we never miss the money. It has brought us a blessing. Though we are not rich, and probably never will be, we are content, which is far better, and need to fret about matter no more. "Oh, Dennis," I said the other day, "how well worth heeding that suggestion of yours has proved!"

CHRIST'S LIFE WAS UNIQUE.

It Is Not True that the Saviour Was but as Other Men Are.

Rev. Dr. John L. Campbell, of the Lexington avenue baptist church New York, talked on the above topic recently. Christ's life was unique in that it was the theme of distinct and specific prophecy. His coming had been foretold hundreds of years before. The Old Testament was finished about four hundred years before the Christ in era. We know that it contains the fullest prediction of the advent of a Messiah. The four gospels alone have two hundred and twenty passages, either directly quoted from or alluding to the Old Testament. He was to come during the time of the fourth great kingdom predicted by Daniel; that is, in the days of the Caesars (Daniel ii., 44). He was to appear before the scepter departed from Judaea; that is, before the death of Herod the Great (Genesis xix., 10). He was to be born of a virgin (Isaiah vii., 14). In the town of Bethlehem (Micah v., 2). The innocent were to be slain (Jeremiah xxxi., 15). He was to be in Egypt (Hosea xi., 1). He was to be despised and rejected, (Isaiah liii., 3.) and yet He was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles (Isaiah xlii., 6.) So minute are these predictions that we are told of the very animal He rode when He entered Jerusalem at the time of our text, of the precise sum paid to the traitor, of the indignities of His trial, of the disposition made of His garments, of His thirst and the vinegar they gave Him to drink, of the associates of His death, of His great lonely cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" of the character of His burial. All these, and multitudes more of details are given with the greatest definiteness ages before He was born.

From the opening promise made in Eden that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," down to the closing prophecy in Malachi, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple," we have a whole system of completest prediction matching the life of Jesus, as the wax matches the seal with which it is stamped. Now, this could not be the result of collusion, or sagacity, or accident. Nothing like it ever took place in the case of any other. And it was because He was Himself different from all others, and came into the world to accomplish a special mission.

He is unique in his claim. Elsewhere we have spoken of the thrilling silence which reigns over His youthful years, spent in secluded Nazareth, so unlike the ways of men, so worthy of the Son of God. There is the calm, dignified unfolding of a heavenly flower. I look into the life of Paul, or Augustine, or Bunyan, or Newton, or Wesley, or Judson, or any other distinguished man of God. I find that the piety of each began with confession of sin and sorrowful contrition for the past. There is some definite experience when the old sinful life is cast aside and a new life begun. Not so with Jesus. Never once in all His life is there the slightest consciousness of the least unworthiness of any kind from the beginning of His life up to its close.

So perfect in every relation of life, so wise in speech and so pure in conduct, so large in compassion and so intense in beneficence, so replete with everything that charms into attachment and rapture. He was the incarnation of universal loveliness.

A True Gentleman.

"I beg your pardon." With a smile and touch of his hat, Harry Esmond handed to an old man, against whom he had accidentally stumbled, the cane which he had knocked from his hand. "I hope I did not hurt you. We were playing too roughly."

"Not a bit," said the old man. "Boys will be boys, and it is best they should be. You didn't harm me."

"I'm glad to hear it," and lifting his hat again Harry turned to join the playmates with whom he had been frolicking at the time of the accident.

"What did you raise your hat to that old fellow for?" asked his companion, Charlie Gray. "He is only old Giles, the huckster."

"That makes no difference," said Harry. "The question is not whether he is a gentleman, but whether I am one; and no true gentleman will be less polite to a man because he wears a shabby coat, or hawks vegetables through the street, instead of sitting in a counting room." Which was right?—Christian Statesman.

Pay Your Debts.

One of the best ways to keep things moving and to put fresh life into the community is to do more debt-paying. The man who has the money in his pocket, or lying in bank, with which to cancel his notes, and then excuses himself from payment on the plea of hard times, is not only searing his conscience and running counter to the honest and manly instincts of his nature, but is doing an injury to the many. His non-payment prevents his creditor from paying his bills, and he hinders another from doing so, and thus it goes.—Presbyterian Observer.

God's Own Instruments.

It is long before we understand that evils arising from no fault of our own, that the sins and infirmities of other men are part of God's appointed discipline, intended to act as a special chastening for the attainments of the higher forms of sanctity. * * * We are slow to apprehend that these "pricks in our eyes and thorns in our sides" are God's own instruments, fraught with unpeakable virtue if we use them aright, for

the attainment of great spiritual improvement, through the constant self-discipline which their endurance requires; even if they are the occasions and provocations of unceasing sin. If we refuse to bear with others as we need to be born with ourselves.—Canadian Churchman.

TEMPTATIONS TO GAMBLING.

Dangers Which Beset Young Men and the Way Mischief Makes Itself Felt.

When a young man makes his first bet, or put up a young wager on a match or a race, or when he risks his first penny at a card-table, he puts a coal of fire into his bosom that is not easily extinguished. It may kindle into a conflagration which, in the tremendous language of Scripture, "will burn into the lowest hell."

All games of chance have a dangerous fascination. As Dr. Farrar has truly said, "There is a gambling element in human nature; and it must be watched against just as much as you should watch against any natural sensual appetites. With the excitement of a game of hazard comes the strong temptation to risk a stake on the game; as soon as the first stake is laid down, conscience goes with it, and literally the devil has a hand with you in the game. Here is your peril. The excitement sets you on fire. If you win, you play to win more; if you lose, you play on to make up your losses. Before you know it you are a gambler. The safe place to stop is—stop before you begin."

There is more gambling (often behind locked doors) among young men in lodging houses and social clubs than parents or employers dream of. Many of the larcenies in stores, count-rooms and banks—some of which are "hushed up" to save reputations—are committed in order to cover up losses at the card table. Many young men are tempted to take "a flyer" in mining stocks, or some other volatile stocks that are playing up and down in the market. I have known half a dozen school-boys to "pool" their pocket-money in order to make a venture on a share or two of stock. The temptation to dabble in stocks has ruined several young men of my acquaintance. One of my objections to the mischievous inter-collegiate foot-ball matches (which wholesome athletic exercises does not require) is that they are attended with such a fearful amount of betting, gambling and hard drinking. I know whereof I speak when I say this.

The dangers to young men are increasing from these causes:

First—There is a growing passion for getting-rich suddenly and easily.

Second—The gambling element is insinuating itself into the trade of the country; and "pools" and "corners" are becoming too common for good business morality.

Third—The rapid increase of luxurious and extravagant living influences the gambling spirit.

The very word "luck" is a dangerous word.

Florence Nightingale View.

Florence Nightingale, as is well known, has always related to be interviewed. Many years ago an American journalist asked her to give personal details of her life. In reply she wrote a most beautiful letter, from which, as it may be new to most of my readers, I make a brief extract. "I could not give you information about my own life, though I could it would be to show you now a woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God by strange and unaccustomed paths—to do in His service what he did in hers. And if I could tell you all, you would see how God has done all and I nothing. I have worked hard—very hard—that is all, and I have never refused God anything, though, being naturally a very shy person, most of my life has been distasteful to me. I have no peculiar gifts, and I can honestly assure any young lady if she will but try to walk, she will soon be able to run the appointed course. But then she must first learn to walk, and when she runs she must run with patience."—British Weekly.

The Best Things.

The best things in the world do not come to us ready-made. . . . Truth must be searched for with patient toil. Beauty must be wrought out with painstaking devotion. Food and raiment must be wrested from the furrow and woven in the loom. And all our social and political institutions must be fought for on the field of battle, defended in the forum, and vindicated in the courts. Even our religious faith must be thought out anew in the soul-conflicts of each generation, or they become mere words of words, devoid of life and power.—William DeWitt Ayds.

Golden Rule Proverbs.

No tent so good to abide in as content.

Let conversation be a mine, and not a show.

Second-best living is treason to God and man.

Laugh at your ills, and you'll save doctor's bills.

When death turns up the light we shall see Christ.

Dare not reprove once till you have praised ten times.

Seek one, gain one; seek 100, gain one hundredth.

If you would know yourself, forget yourself; remember Christ.

The Inquisitive Child.

Every house is a kindergarten. Every child asks questions; and when we get out of patience with him we are foolish and the child is wise. The kindergarten takes the inquiring mind for granted. The want has been inspired by God, and the child's idea is not to be sacrificed in order that he may be taught a system of ethics.—Rev. Lyman Abbott.

A Message from God.

"Return we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and . . . quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." Psalm 80: 14-19.

The Work of The Heart.

One of the most remarkable things about the heart is the amount of work it does. Considering the organ as a pump whose task it is to deliver a known quantity of blood against a known 'head,' it is easy to show that in twenty-four hours a man's heart does about one hundred and twenty-four foot tons of work. 'In other words,' says a contemporary, 'if the whole force

expended by the heart in twenty-four hours were gathered into one huge stroke, such a power would lift one hundred and twenty-four tons one foot from the ground. A similar calculation has been made respecting the amount of work expended by the muscles involved in breathing. In twenty-four hours these muscles do about twenty-one foot tons of work.'

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IN A CHAIN FACTORY.

Condition of the English Women Who Work in Such a Place.

Through a doorway and we come in a chain factory; a square apartment of good size, lofty, with plenty of windows and 10 or 12 forges, says All the Year Round. To each forge were apportioned a blower and a worker. Hammer, thud and clatter ruled the roost and the heat from the forges was considerable, of course, though I stood in the middle of the factory among the piles of made chains.

The workers looked up but did not pause for a moment. The iron rods, molten, were fast being thrashed into ovals and welded one within another, and sweat ran from the bodies of the men and lads.

Mr. Smith, for my instruction, put one of the men through a series of questions. He answered cheerfully, but, as it seemed to me, by rote. He was a skilled worker, and by toiling with hands and feet for nine hours a day could earn something over a sovereign a week.

But I was more struck by the look of the girls in the factory. Bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked and smiling, these three or four maidens—aged 12 to 15—were a surprise to me. Yet for nine or ten hours daily they work a bellows apiece in close proximity to a fire. One of them was knitting while she treadled. They were grimy, of course. But they were nevertheless, an agreeable surprise to me.

Mr. Smith, however, declined to leave me thus contented.

"They won't be like that long," he said. "They'll be turned into the flat-chested women-men the all are that work at these cursed forges. They'll marry one of these days go from church to the chain or nail work and grind on an on like that for the rest of their lives; and it they bring children into the world they'll set the poor little wretches at work like themselves, and so it'll go on to the end of the chapter. Ignorance doesn't express their state. They are just made to be imposed upon."

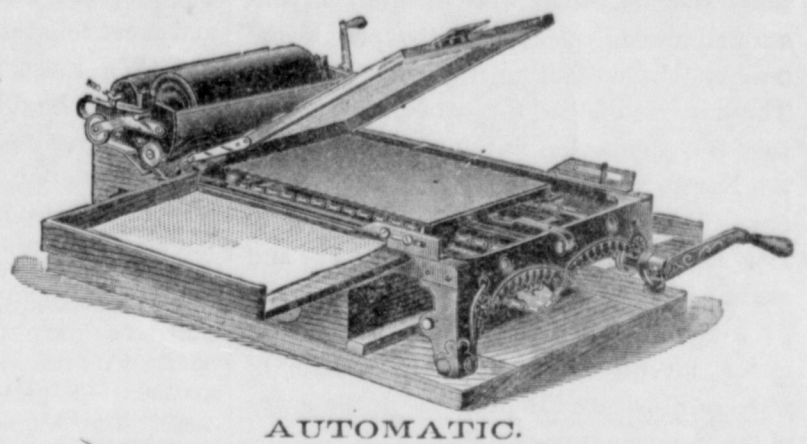
Self-Respect.

Mistress (reprovingly)—I saw you throwing slops out the back door, today. New Girl (with dignity)—I wouldn't live with a family wot throwed em out th' front door, mum—

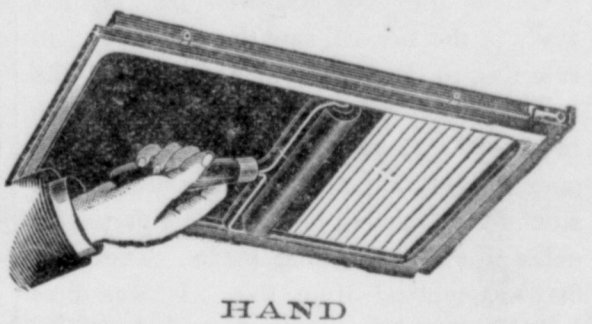
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