

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

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TERMS AND NOTICES.

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Religious Intelligencer.

ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 13, 1872.

CHRISTIAN WORK A PRIVILEGE.

Christian work is too often a hardship. Christians talk about it as such. Its trials, disappointments, rebuffs, discouragements are largely dilated upon, while its bright side is carefully concealed. It is to many a duty necessary to be performed, and not a blessed privilege to be delighted in. Men need to love the work they engage in, in order to be successful. Christians ought surely to love the work given them to do. A late number of the Star has a good article on this subject. It says:

"Christian work is a privilege, whether we have risen to this height of calling or not. So few noble men and women we find it. With all the load of hardships which were laid upon the shoulders and heart of Paul, and the list which he makes out in 2 Cor. 11: 23-28 is a fearful one—he thanks God with an abiding surprise that he counted him worthy of being put into the ministry, and declares that the loss of all things is counted as loss and dross, in comparison with the excellency and glory of the gospel service. And Paul is far from being alone in this estimate. His genuine successors have appeared in every age, and they have glorified almost every ecclesiastical circle. They have been the same and heroes of the church, and not less so than their names find no place in the calendar or the pages of the historian. They were quiet heroes whom God had made to care for crown immortal. They were lights in their own sphere which made the true path plain to perplexed feet, and they have gone up to brighten the external firmament and take their places among the stars that shine forever and ever."

And Christian work was not meant to be a privilege merely to the favored few, nor in a peculiar sphere, nor in some brief and exceptional period. Men may find it so now and here. It keeps what is peculiar to it through all time, and it comes to every earthly life with the grandest of opportunities. Even the humblest Christian is really a laborer with God, and working with him in the very highest department of his work. He is Christ's disciple and helper, aiding to bring to the complete and final triumph of that kingdom whose cause is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is wearing the mantle and succeeding to the honors of those great souls whose work has blessed nations; whose way has left a path of light to many centuries, whose names make the air of a continent fragrant, and whose names have been watchwords for a thousand years. It is perhaps doing more for himself than for others even while he is laying himself out for their sake, for every true and noble thing done to help and bless an other opens the way of giving new power and blessing to the doer's own spirit. For it is a law of Christianity, that he who watereth others shall be watered also himself, and it is not seldom that when we only sprinkle another's thirsty soul out of our scanty store, our own soul is drenched and saturated as with the baptism of a glorious August shower.

It is in this genial, cheerful, sunny, glad, jubilant spirit that our Christian work needs to be done. We want to learn to go to it for the great joy and honor and privilege of life, carrying hearts so full of light and gladness that the face will beam like sunshine, and the joy break in melody from the lips. We want to find our privilege in our work, instead of our burdens and crosses. No matter what or where the work is, this grateful and glad element should attach to it. Whether it be preaching the gospel on a small scale, or leading a class of rude and heedless children, or seeking to elevate and vitalize a prayer meeting that is running into indifference or routine or stupidity; or desiring to speak and swayward brethren for their good; or seeking to lift the poor out of poverty, and the vicious out of recklessness; or giving money to aid good causes till the gifts eat out luxuries and impose self denial;—no matter what the form or sphere of the service may be, the value and preciousness and power of it will depend greatly upon its generous heartiness and its glad enthusiasm.

If it have these elements it will not fail. He who acts, not half reluctantly for the least and easiest part, but generously and bravely for what demands heroic and strenuous large results, will triumph both in feeling and in fact. Such a soul will have even the might of its silence broken, with songs. It will effectually rebuke the dandlers and laggards and cowards, and rally the foolish and ungodly. It will unfold the divine beauty of religion and set free its victorious power. It will interpret Christ's statement, that his yoke is easy, while that yoke is worn, and then turn the darkened chamber of death into a field of victory.

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

This subject (says the Montreal Witness) was a few years ago brought prominently before the Christian public in a series of prize essays, as well as by pulpits and press. As a result of this, numbers of the people have been led from principle to give to religious and charitable purposes a tenth of their income. A considerable number belonging to the different Evangelical denominations, now practice "system in giving," just as those numbers that seek to live the "higher Christian life," or who identify themselves with such reforms as Temperance.

Still they are few, comparatively, who take the advanced ground of systematic giving. Few churches have the importance of this matter brought before them. We are glad, therefore, as the pulpit may have a delicacy with dealing with it, to see that the religious press has taken it up. We are gratified to find the subject before the readers of the Witness by a Christian merchant, who having for years experienced much of the blessedness of thus giving, and witnessed in his advantages to others, has furnished us with several interesting facts illustrating the blessings such liberality brings even in this life. We should be glad, if space were admitted, to publish his communications unabridged. We are pleased to know that there are not a few in Canada belonging to churches of the various persuasions who unostentatiously devote a tenth of their income to religious and benevolent uses.

One, a representative case, is that of a Montreal merchant who, ten or twelve years ago, when he commenced business with a small capital, vowed, like Jacob at Bethel, to give a tenth to the Lord. He has prospered so greatly that last year his title amounted to more than £10,000, and by many churches. Another example of liberality hardly less interesting is that of a military officer who, a few years ago, made a weak church in Ontario dependent on missionary aid. His pastor preached a sermon on the duty of Christians to give at least a tenth to the Lord, when he was led to increase his contributions to that proportion. His example gradually produced a spirit of liberality among his fellow-members, so that the church has now become self-supporting, strong and prosperous. We have come only to add one or two other examples. A Canadian merchant, who, for a number of years, did not give a tenth of marriage fees, as he did of his regular salary, promised to God to give that also, and in one year that amounted to more than during the three previous years.

A wholesale merchant in Canada commenced business a good many years ago with little capital, and has been giving a tenth ever since he commenced. When a commercial crisis came some years ago, his principal creditor in England got alarmed at the little money that was remitted by him, and sent a partner to investigate his affairs. In turning over his ledger he found a statement

promising to God a tenth of the profits of his business. On this the creditor said he would go no further in the examination as he was sure things would come out all right. That merchant is now worth \$500,000."

We regret that we have no space for other instances our correspondent sends us in similar racy language, of Canadian Christians whose systematic giving is connected with business success.

Any one who gives a tenth of his income from the covetous feeling, merely, that it will be a good investment for his money and help to make him rich, is very likely to fail of his object, as he does to. The name are likely to give from that motive. And at the same time give systematically from pure and Christian motives, which numbers do not succeed in business. All rules have their exceptions; and other elements enter into business success. But aside from the class of facts collated by our correspondent, the duty of giving on Christian business principles rests on other and independent ground.

We see that there is room for one objection to this, and much of the literature on "Systematic Beneficence," viz., that it is an Old Testament arrangement supported by the Old Testament motive of expecting to be rewarded with blessings in this life. The same objection is raised in regard to the example given in the Sabbath manual of the judgments given in the Sabbath manual of the Sabbath-breaking still the rule of setting apart a tenth of our property like a seventh of our time for the service of God is supported by arguments drawn from the New Testament, and its observance is followed by the spiritual blessings more properly belonging to the Christian dispensation.

The reasons in favor of adopting business principles in "religious giving" are many and obvious. From want of it deserving charities languish. No satisfaction or spiritual benefit result to the donor himself; and of funds actually collected a large percentage is wasted on agents and the machinery of collection. Systematic giving was the rule enjoined in the New Testament as it was in the Old. The primitive Christians were directed to "lay by them in store" a certain proportion of their income, as the "Lord prepared them." This could not have been less than a tenth, when in every preceding age it had been that proportion, and among the Jews was nearer a fifth or third.

Christians have certainly as much reason for giving as had the Jews, for their obligations are greater. They have more wealth than had the Hebrews who were a poor people. There is more need of funds now for the aggressive objects of Christianity. And there is certainly as much danger to the young age of "covetousness and conformity" to the world as there was to the young age of "righteousness and conformity" to the law of Moses. The Seminary managers have already made some offer of the property to the Trustees of public schools in Fredericton. The Baptists are evidently anxious to concentrate their educational work, which is a good idea.

For the Religious Intelligencer,
WHAT WE SAW.

BY ED.

The place of writing is on the train from Saint John westward; the time one day in November.

Looking from the windows on either side, the view is not over attractive, unless ruggedness and the most complete barrenness be attractive. The fires have some time recently been this way. Blackness and bareness mark the trees. With so little without to take and hold the attention, one naturally turns within, and is occupied with what is there. And is there not enough? What sights are here! How much to amuse, and how much to disgust! How much to make glad, and how much to make sad! How much to excite sympathy, and how much to stir indignation! Very much there is to learn. And since to learn always, everywhere, and from everybody and everything, is the duty of every one, we should not do well to let this opportunity pass. Let us tell you what we see, and what we think of it.

Just ahead of us is an old gentleman, of venerable appearance. He has a kind, fatherly look. He is evidently satisfied with himself and his surroundings. His business must be a legitimate and safe one, else that quiet, self-complacent expression would not be so unchanged upon his not-over-handsome face. At least three score winters have passed over him, and his locks are quite gray. His nasal organ is large, and his ears are of goodly proportions. (Neither of these, it is remembered, is a bad sign.) But he has any business? and if so, what is it? It does not rest heavily upon him, whatever it may be. He occasionally addresses himself to several young women who are seated near him. We notice that his interest in them is not simply the interest which one passenger feels in another. They are not his daughters, surely. That is impossible; for both their ages and their looks deny that they have a common paternity. Yet he takes them all under his wing, marshals them into the dining room at Vanceboro, and, after they have satisfied themselves from the not-over-bountifully supplied table, he foots the bills for the whole party. Is he a sort of philanthropist? Is this his peculiar way of "doing good with all men" (and women, too)? or is he widowed, and in search of a young wife to cheer his later years? This last cannot be the case, else he would confine his attentions to one, instead of distributing them amongst so many. He certainly must have eyes to business. We notice that his interest in them is not simply the interest which one passenger feels in another. They are not his daughters, surely. That is impossible; for both their ages and their looks deny that they have a common paternity. 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