

The Old Meeting house.

We love the venerable house
Our fathers built to God;
In heaven are kept their grateful vows,
Their dust endears the sod.

Here holy thoughts a light have shed
From many a radiant face,
And prayers of tender hope have spread
A perfume through the place.

And anxious hearts have pondered here
The mystery of life,
And prayed the eternal Spirit clear
Their doubts and end their strife.

From humble tenements around
Came up the pensive train,
And in the church a blessing found,
Which filled their homes again.

From faith and peace and mighty love,
That from the Godhead flow,
Showed them the light of heaven above
Springs from the life below.

They live with God, their homes are dust,
But here their children pray,
And in this fleeting lifetime trust
To find the narrow way.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Giving as a Duty.

BY THE REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D.

Some of the requirements of Scripture are treated as of secondary importance, because they are not prefaced with 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not'; while in fact they are no less positive and peremptory than those others which were written with God's finger on the tables of stone.

Such, for example, are the many precepts which appertain to benevolence, to almsgiving, to the paying of a just proportion of one's substance for the propagation of the Gospel and the support of the sanctuary. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters' is none the less binding as a statute because it is furthered by the gracious promise, 'and thou shalt find it after many days.'

It is often said by those who wish to excuse themselves for parsimony that their first duty is to themselves and to the members of their own household. This has a prima facie look of truth; nevertheless it is false. A man's first duty is to his God and to the church which is the bride of God's beloved Son. Otherwise selfishness is a holier passion than gratitude.

There is no saying that covers a greater multitude of shortcomings than that mean proverb, 'Charity begins at home.' Now it is true that 'if any provide not for his own and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.' But how much better, pray, is he that provides for his own wants and his own household yet never seeks, through prudence and self-denial, to share his income with God and his fellow-men? Did the woman of Zarephath do wrong to offer the prophet a portion of her meal and oil until she had first made sure that her child and herself would not suffer by it?

On the other hand, I believe it might be shown, by a process of moral computation, that benevolence is the very best provision against hunger and nakedness. No man ever yet grew poor by lending to the Lord. There is no better investment. It is a policy of insurance whose benefits accrue to one's children's children.

John Bunyan wrote,
"A man there was—and people called him mad—
The more he gave away the more he had."

Is it not always so, that the more we give away the more we have? How else shall we construe the word of promise? 'Blessed is the liberal man; the Lord shall make his bed in sickness; his horn shall be exalted.'—'He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.'—'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over.'—'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is met and it tendeth unto poverty.'

But, after all, the duty of giving is based upon no mere selfish consideration. We ought to give not that we may be, but because we have been blessed; not for self's sake, but for love of him who, for our sakes, became poor that we by his poverty might be made rich. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. What shall we render unto the Lord for this unspeakable gift? Is any offering of gold or frank incense or myrrh too large to measure our gratitude? Is anyointment of spikenard too costly for the anointment of his feet, the feet that were shod with the sandals of salvation?

Sharing with others what the Lord has bestowed upon us is an acceptable form of thanksgiving. God's blessing is always a gratuity; but none the less does it call for its meed of praise; and praise has no expression in human life but love and benevolence.

It is wrong to regard our wealth, be it little or great, as ours in fee simple; it is ours only in trust. We are God's stewards; and for the proper use and

investment of every farthing assigned to us we shall be called to a strict account. If we array ourselves in purple and fine linen, while the poor go naked and shivering, if we dwell in houses of cedar, while the ark of God is within curtains; we are guilty of appropriating to our personal use that which did not belong to us. 'Ye have robbed me,' said the Lord of hosts. And ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed thee?' In tithes and offerings! For every penny of our wealth is stamped with the divine image and superscription: 'The gold and the silver are his. Render therefore unto God the things that are God's.'

It should be remembered, moreover, that duty, by assiduous practice, becomes the highest pleasure of life. Thus giving comes to be a joy.

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

The fact that miser and misery are words of cognate derivation is not without significance; for a closed hand is the outward mark of leanness of soul.

I had rather be an Italian harp-boy, living on the charity of those who love the harmony of sweet sounds, than to be a millionaire with a soul delighting only in the music of clinking coin. The happiest man that ever lived on earth was One who had not where to lay His head; and He revealed the secret of His peace in the words, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

He was the great Giver. He came from heaven to bring good gifts to men; sight to the blind, peace to the troubled soul, rest to the weary and heavy laden, light and life to all that were in darkness and the shadow of death, a cup of God's cool water for the parched lips of those that were thirsting after righteousness.

And, to the end that these good gifts might bear the name of self-denying love, he gave his tears for sorrow, his blood for sin! He gave his life a ransom for the lost. Loving to give, he freely gave us all. He that would be truly happy must, in this, be Christ like, 'willing to communicate.' It was one of the favorite sayings of Marcus Aurelius that 'an unshared pleasure could not be enjoyed,' and Ausonius declared that 'an ingrate was earth's ugliest product.' Put those two maxims together and you have the reason why an illiberal man is miserable. His heart is a prison-cell where a spirit, that was made to rejoice in love and liberty and light, is bound with the iron chains of selfishness and ingratitude. There are no windows outward, through which his captive soul may sympathetically behold the joys of his fellow-men; no windows upward, through which he may gratefully look to the God at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore.

But the generous man whose eyes are turned both outward and upward, who denies himself that he may help the needy and spend and be spent for his Master's sake, who forgets himself in his eagerness to hear the widow's thanks and God's 'well done,' this is the man whose life is blest with a peace that passeth knowledge.

"But for one end are riches worth your care;
To make humanity the minister
Of boundless Providence, and teach the breast
The generous luxury the gods enjoy."
Chris. Intelligencer

The Imperative Call.

The divine call comes to living men in this present day as really as it came to the saints and heroes of other days. Happy the soul that hears and responds. Whatever the cost of implicit obedience, the rewards of time and eternity will compensate a thousandfold. God utters to-day an imperative call to our nation and to every voter of our nation. Certainly every thoughtful person must recognize the fact that one of the very highest duties of every voter is to take an active part in the political affairs of his day and generation. He cannot be justified in standing aloof from the struggle and conflict that are present and imminent. It is the voter's duty to vote, as really as it is the Christian's duty to pray. In the discharge of this duty every one must answer to his own conscience and to his God. It is a matter of vast importance that every vote cast should tell for the best good of humanity, and for the glory of God.

We are now on the eve of a most eventful election. The leadership of a great nation like ours involves as immense responsibilities as ever rested upon human shoulders. In some measure each voter must share this responsibility. May God help the people to be steadfast, and calm, and wise in such an hour as this. May God save us from fickleness, frivolity, passion and recklessness.

But can we push Christian work in all its manifold activities while the

whole country is excited, interested and pre-occupied with a great national election? Yes, certainly, this is not only possible, it is the very thing that ought to be done. It is among the highest of all duties. It is of the utmost importance that the interests of the kingdom of God on earth should be most enthusiastically sustained and promoted. The kingdom of God is greater than Canada, greater than all the nations of Christendom, and so it must be the object of the loyal, steadfast and constant support of every Methodist and of every other Christian. It is part of the duty of every Christian voter in the Dominion to see that, so far as his action is concerned, only good and true men shall be elevated to positions of authority and power. All administrators of our municipal, Provincial, and Dominion affairs ought to be men who fear God and work righteousness. It is the duty of all Christian voters to vote for such men. At the same time it must never be forgotten that Christian people, whether voters or not, ought to be constantly concerned for the progress of the kingdom of God. The bedlam of political conventions, the stress of heated and acrimonious political discussions, the vilest of yellow journalism, the distractions of party cries, must not be allowed to confuse, disturb, mislead, bewilder or frighten the people of God. They must do their voting wisely and in his fear, and, at the same time, and all the time, press forward in all the work of the church. Social meetings must not be neglected; the Sabbath services must be faithfully attended; the collections must be remembered and sustained, and in many cases increased by liberal benefactions. Especially and pre-eminently there must be such entire, glad and instant consecration and devotion to all spiritual activities as will surely witness to the world and to all angels, that the supreme effort and ambition of God's people is to vigorously and earnestly press the battle for the conquest of this world for Christ and speedy and complete victory.

All this means that pastors and people ought to plan to commence revival services this autumn, just as soon as possible. It should be a fixed determination of every pastor and member of the church to do everything that mortal man, filled with the power of all the fulness of God, can do to wake the slumbering church, to alarm the careless in Zion, to bring back the wanderers, and to lead penitent souls to Christ. Go with a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, endued with gracious ability for all good work, and plan at once for a campaign that shall never end until victory comes and multitudes are saved with the great salvation.

Let all the people be ready to answer the calls of the silver trumpet or the ram's horn as the leaders of God's embattled hosts make ready for the conflict. By all means let every voter do his duty, and cast his vote for the best possible results, but let every Christian who is a voter, and every other Christian who is not a voter, enter upon revival work long before the chilling frosts of autumn, long before the first snow-flake falls, long before the howling blasts and cruel storms of winter; yes, long before the fateful day of election. We must not let the political turmoil hinder personal consecration and persistent effort. Oh, that God, by his Spirit, may call his people with a voice that shall be heard, and to which a ready response shall be given, that so the closing months of the nineteenth century may be made forever memorable as the supreme months of this most wonderful century.

"The world cannot withstand
I am ancient Conqueror;
The world must sink beneath the hand
Which arms us for the war;

"This is the victory,
Before our faith they fall;
Jesus hath died for you and me;
Believe and conquer all."

—Adapted from the Michigan Christian Advocate.

The Debt Paid.

Henry Clay was at one time considerably distressed by a large debt due to the bank. Some of his friends heard of this, and quietly raised the money and paid off the debt without notifying Mr. Clay. In utter ignorance of what had been going on, he went to the bank one day, and, addressing the cashier, said, 'I have called to see you in reference to that debt of mine to the bank.'

'You don't owe us anything,' was the reply.

Mr. Clay looked inquiringly and said: 'You don't understand me. I came to see you about that debt which I am owing the bank.'

'You don't owe us anything.'

'Why! How am I to understand you?'

'A number of your friends have contributed and paid off that debt, and you do not owe this bank one dollar.'

The tears rushed to Mr. Clay's eyes,

and, unable to speak, he turned and walked out of the bank.

This is a faint image of what Jesus Christ has done for us. He has met our obligation to God's law. He has purchased eternal life for us. Blessed Saviour, we cannot express our sense of the greatness and the tenderness of thy love. Let our tears, our sighs, our sobs, let our broken utterances and our self-reproaches, tell thee what our lips cannot speak. We are bought with a price; therefore let us glorify God with our bodies and all our powers.—People's Paper.

A Trouble-Breeding Doctrine.

Bishop H. W. Warren of the Methodist Episcopal church, writing in Zion's Herald, asks some searching questions of those whose faith respecting the second coming of Christ is so intense that it dominates all their thought and acts.

He remarks: "But have not the greatest evangelists of England and America suddenly lost power when they began to preach the near second coming of the Lord and declared that they lay down every night expecting to hear the last trumpet before morning? What fervent pastor has found the efficiency, grace and graciousness of his individual members increased by embracing this doctrine? What minister has not lost power when he has gone into a hopeless jungle of dates, symbols he did not understand, and vagaries that to others betokened an unbalanced mind? Foreign missionaries find their work torn down and no other worthy work built up by a sudden influx of Adventists who are only zealous in grafting their one idea on Christians, and not engraving heathen on Christ. The Church was nearly wrecked about the close of the first century by this expectation, and has suffered incalculably every time it has emerged since then."

A Cornish Cobbler's Sermon.

'He first findeth his own brother Simon.' Now, I am sure it is a good plan to go looking after one soul. Every soul in the world do belong to our Lord. He made 'em, every one, and he bought 'em, every one, with his precious blood. 'They's his every way, and the devil is a thief. I've often thought what a poor master the devil's servants have got. Why when he came up to tempt our mother Eve in Paradise, he hadn't got any bit o' little to bribe her with, and all he could do was to tempt her to steal her Master's apples. He hadn't got anything at all of his own. Andrew didn't say, 'I'll try to do all the good I can,' and then do nothing, because he couldn't find anything to do; but he say, 'There's Simon; I'll go and catch him.' That's the way; pick out one soul and set your heart 'pon it; begin to pray for that one and go on trying till you've got it; and then try for another. We might do a good deal o' good in the world if we didn't try to do so much. I've heard folks a-singin', an' meanin' it, too—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small."
An' because the realm o' nature wasn't their's they didn't give anything at all.—Unidentified.

Does It Go Deep Enough?

In attempting to redeem the arid plains of New South Wales, resort has been had to artesian wells, and it is noticeable that the deeper the bore the more affluent the result. One well which had been in use for some time but was insufficient in flow was sunk to a depth of over 4,000 feet, and now it is widely surrounded by a veritable garden. We have seen 'lawns' in some of our Western States which had just enough water to grow pusley but not enough to grow blue grass. And the trouble with much of our religion to-day is that it does not go deep enough to secure an adequate supply of living water. The result of feeble faith is a feeble consolation in trouble, a feeble support in trial, and a doubtful victory in death. Religion makes the most of that life which makes much of it. The disciple who neglects family prayer, forgets the exercises of the closet, and attends with indifferent attention one public service on the Lord's day, will never show the real fruits of the Spirit. He has water enough to kill the sage-bush and the cactus, but not enough to produce the almond and the rose. What the soul needs is not to reach those streams that are supplied by mere surface drainage, but to tap those deeper fountains whose sources are the great cool lakes that lie hid among the mountains of God.—Interior.

A wish is but a leaf through which the tree breathes; it rustles, whispers, withers and is forgotten; a will is the fruit summing up the juices of the tree, sending forth seed that embodies the secret of the tree and will reproduce the life if the soil wishes as the tree wills.—O. P. Gifford.

Complete Only in Christ.

Human character and human conditions are made complete only in Christ. The character which rejects or does not openly and heartily welcome Christ is a bad character. Men were made for fellowship with God and communion with Him. Estrangement from the good God, who is our Maker, or antagonism to Him, is a mark of spiritual degeneration. Conditions and prospects are bad for the man who does not possess, in his character and temper of mind, the Christ-spirit or Christlikeness. He is destitute of life in the most important element of his being. He is the subject of unsatisfied longings and cravings. The nature of man not only needs Christ, but calls out for Him, and cannot rest satisfied without Him. As Christ is the life and satisfaction of man, who is made in the image of God, but fallen by sin, so He is also the real element of power in man—power to do himself good, or others good, real, permanent, and lasting good. Life, peace, and power are found alone in Christ. These are marks of the "perfect man" of whom the psalmist sings.—The Examiner.

Heart Failure.

The Herald and Presbyterian says:—We see people breaking down spiritually. What is the matter? How does it come? Here is a man who gives up his interest in religious life and activity. He is seldom seen in the house of worship. He remains away from the place of prayer. He seems benumbed, or paralyzed, in his spiritual faculties. You appeal to him unsuccessfully to take his place in the work of the church. You seem to be talking to the dead. He seems to have slipped out of the ranks of the living. The trouble is with the heart. He has suffered his love to grow cold, so that his heart action is very feeble and scarcely different from death. His heart needs strength. He needs revival and renewal. Right in his heart should be welcome the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Without this divine restorative he is feeble, useless, with dull and flickering life.

It is easier to go six miles to hear a sermon, than to spend one-quarter of an hour in meditating on it when I come home.—Philip Henry.

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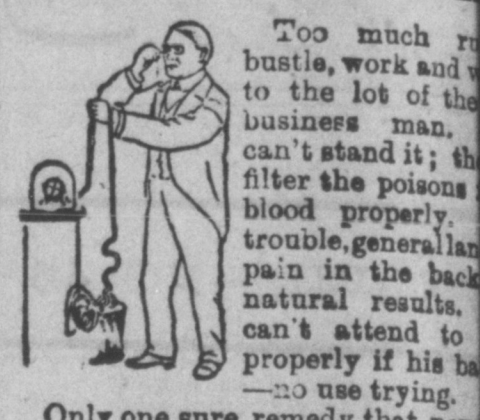
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