

Our Young People

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THE C. E. TOPIC—Oct. 30.

HOW GIVING REACTS UPON ME.—Prov. 3: 9, 10. 2 Cor. 9: 6-11.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

A rich woman dreamed that she went to Heaven and there she saw a splendid mansion being built. "For whom is that?" she asked; and the answer was, "For your gardener."

Then she went on and saw a tiny cottage being built, and asked, "For whom is that?" The answer was, "For you."

The rich woman was filled with dismay. "Why," she said, "my gardener has always lived in a little cottage. He might have had a better house, but he gave away so much to miserable poor folks. But I am used to living in a mansion; I wouldn't know how to live in a cottage."

Then came a significant reply: "The Master Builder is doing his best with the material sent up."

The effect of giving upon ourselves, our character, our happiness, our prospects, is not, to be sure, a very lofty consideration, but it is an important one, and very effective. If people knew how much good it would do them to be liberal, they would give generously just to better their own condition, perhaps; but soon they would come to give for the love of others and of God.

A banker gave his boy half a dollar to invest as a lesson in business, telling him to put it out at interest, and if he did it wisely, his capital should be increased.

The boy came across a poor lad, who was ragged and hungry, and gave him the half dollar. When the banker heard of this he rebuked the boy for his lack of business sense. "But," said he, "I'll try you once more. Here is a dollar. See how well you can invest it."

The boy burst out laughing, "My Sunday school teacher told me," he said, "that giving to the poor is lending to the Lord, and she said He would return it double; but I didn't think He would do it so soon."

Indeed, it is often literally true, as George Herbert wrote, that

Who shuts his hand hath lost his gold;
Who opens it hath it twice told.

Or, as Whittier sings in the same strain:

Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give.

And yet there is no immediate or necessary connection between giving to the

poor and increase of our own wealth. If there were, men would all give from selfish motives, and there would be no real giving at all. Let us thank God that there is not.

But even when giving leaves us poorer in worldly goods, it vastly enriches us in the goods of Heaven. It broadens our sympathies. It widens our experience. It blesses us with gratitude. It bestows on us the mind of the Master. It gives us an insight into divine things. It comforts us when sorrows come. It wins the loftiest of all honors, the praise of God.

When it will do all this for us, and do it certainly and ceaselessly, is it not amazing that our gifts are so small, so inconstant and so grudging?

THE BROWN TOWEL

"One who has nothing can give nothing," said Mrs. Sayers, the sexton's wife, as the ladies of the sewing society were busily engaged packing the contents of a large box, destined for a western missionary.

"A person who has nothing to give must be poor, indeed," said Mrs. L., as she deposited a pair of warm blankets in the already well-filled box.

Mrs. Sayers looked at the last named speaker with a glance which seemed to say, "You who have never known self-denial, cannot feel for me," and remarked, "You surely think one can be too poor to give?"

"I once thought so, but have learned from experience that no better investment can be made, even from the depths of poverty, than lending to the Lord."

Seeing the ladies listening attentively to the conversation, Mrs. L. continued, "Perhaps, as our work is finished, I can do no better than to give you my experience on the subject. It may be the means of showing you that God will reward the cheerful giver."

"During the first twenty-eight years of my life, I was surrounded with wealth; and not until I had been married for nine years did I know a want which money could satisfy, or feel the necessity of exertion. Reverses came with fearful suddenness, and before I had recovered from the blow, I found myself the wife of a poor man, with five little children dependent upon our exertions."

"From that hour I lost all thought of anything but the care of my family. Late hours and hard work were my portions, and to my unskilled hands it seemed at first a bitter lot. My husband strove anxiously to gain a subsistence, and barely succeeded. We changed our place of residence several times, hoping to do better, but without improvement."

"Everything seemed against us. Our well-stocked wardrobe had become so exhausted that I felt justified in absenting myself from the house of God with my children for want of suitable apparel. While in this low condition, I went to church one evening, where my poverty-stricken appearance would escape notice, and took my seat near the door. An agent from the West preached, and begged contributions to the Home Missionary cause. His appeal brought tears to my eyes, and painfully reminded me of my past days of prosperity, when I could give of my abundance to all who called upon me. It never entered my mind that the appeal for assistance in any way concerned me, with my poor children banished from the house of God by poverty, while I could only venture out under the friendly protection of darkness. I left the church more submissive to my lot, with a prayer in

my heart that those whose consciences had been addressed might respond. I tried in vain to sleep that night. The words of the text, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom,' seemed continually sounding in my ears. The eloquent entreaty of the speaker to all, however poor, to give a mite to the Lord, and receive the promised blessing seemed addressed to me. I rose early the next morning and looked over all my worldly goods in search of something worth bestowing, but in vain; the promised blessing seemed beyond my reach.

"Hearing that the ladies of the church had filled a box for the missionary's family, I made one more effort to spare something. All was poor and threadbare. What should I do? At last I thought of my towels. I had six, of coarse brown linen, but little worn. They seemed a scanty supply for a family of seven; and yet I took one from the number, and putting it in my pocket, hastened to the house where the box was kept and quietly slipped it in."

"I returned home with a light heart, feeling that my Saviour's eye had seen my sacrifice, and would bless my effort to do right."

"From that day success attended all my husband's efforts in business. In a few months our means increased so that we were able to attend church and send our children to Sunday school, and before ten years had passed our former prosperity had returned fourfold. 'Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,' had been given us."

"It may seem superstition to you, my dear friends, but we date all our success in life to God's blessing, following that humble gift of deep poverty."

"Wonder not that from that day I deem few too poor to give, and that I am a firm believer in God's promise that He will repay with interest, even in this life, all we lend to Him."

Glances of deep interest, unmixed with envy, were cast from the windows at Mrs. L., as, after bidding the ladies adieu, she stepped into her luxurious carriage.

Her consistent benevolence had proved to all that in her prosperity she still retained the same Christian spirit which, in her days of poverty, had led to the bestowal of the brown towel.

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Sayers, "if we all had such a self-denying spirit we might fill another box at once. I'll never again think that I am too poor to give."

—From *Kingdom Tidings*.

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Josiah Allen's children have been brought to think that sin of any kind is just as bad in a man as in a woman; and any place of amusement that was bad for a woman to go to was bad for a man.

Now, when Thomas Jefferson was a little fellow, he was bewitched to go to circuses, and Josiah said:

"Better let him go, Samantha; it hain't no place for wimmen or girls, but it won't hurt a boy."

Says I: "Josiah Allen, the Lord made Thomas Jefferson with just as pure a heart as Tirzah Ann, and no bigger eyes and ears, and if Thomas J. goes to that circus, Tirzah Ann goes too."

That stopped that. And then he was bewitched to get with other boys that smoked and chewed tobacco, and Josiah was just of that easy turn, and would have let him go with 'em. But says I: "Josiah Allen, if Thomas Jefferson goes with them boys and gets to chewin' and smokin' tobacco, I shall buy Tirzah Ann a pipe."

And that stopped that.

"And about drinkin'," said I: "Thomas Jefferson, if it should be the will of Providence to change you to a wild bear, I will chain you up and do the best I can for you. But if you ever do it yourself, turn yourself into a wild beast by drinkin', I will run away; for I never could stand it, never! And," I continued, "if I ever see you hangin' 'round bar-rooms and taverns, Tirzah Ann shall hang, too."

Josiah argued with me. Says he: "It doesn't look so bad for a boy as it does for a girl."

Says I: "Custom makes the difference; and we are more used to seeing men. But," say I, "when liquor goes to work to make a fool and brute of anybody, it don't stop to ask about sex; it makes a wild beast and idiot of a man or a woman, and to look down from heaven, I guess a man looks as bad layin' dead drunk as a woman does."

Says I, "Things look differently from up there than what they do to us—it is a more sightly place. And you talk about looks Josiah Allen; I don't go on clear looks, I go on principle. Will the Lord say to me in the last day, 'Josiah