

W. C. T. U. Column.

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

PAPER READ AT THE W. C. T. U., FREDERICTON, N. B.,
BY MRS. MINNIE D. DYKEMAN.

I thought from the first I could not write a paper. I did not have the courage. It would be just the old, old story. Then I heard that still small voice, is that the Master's will? The lack of courage showed the lack of the fullness of the Spirit. The Spirit-filled soul knows the fear of God and knows no other fear. May I be thus filled. God's method of blessing His children is not to sell, but to give. Money is the great symbol of the power of happiness in this world, one of its chief idols, drawing men away from God, a never-ceasing temptation to worldliness, to which the Christian is daily exposed. It would seem that when we consider the goodness of God to the world, sacrificing His Son for us, should we not give back a great deal to God in return for His great goodness to us? Even a tenth seems like a small thing when we consider the sureness of His promises. No word of His has ever failed. It was not that Elijah was such a wonderful man, but he trusted in a wonderful God. Some people's chief associate is a bank book. Soon will they have to leave all behind. Then will they learn to their eternal sorrow the meaning of Jesus' words: *"Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."* Alone they will be, their investments bringing no returns in Heaven.

A man was asked after he had tithed but three months how he was making out. He said "Fine." "How is that?" he was asked, "you used to be complaining that it was hard to make ends meet and could not keep out of debt; now you have no complaints." His reply was, "Nine-tenths with God's blessing is better far than ten-thousand-tenths without it." I feel it's a subject that should not be scoffed at; it's the teaching of Christ, *"this ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."* We must be careful what motive we have in giving. It is absolutely necessary that we be on our guard against desiring to give for our own glory. We must seek to give for one supreme reason, for the glory of God. If self is at the root of our motive at all, God will most surely block our way to the fullness of blessing. If we are thinking in our hearts that it would be saving money and be a good thing to get this blessing for our own happiness, or even that we might in any way have the pre-eminence, our eye is not single, our whole body is not full of light; for God's glory and for God's glory alone must be our watchword as we proceed with our search after the fullness of the Spirit. That is what is lacking in the lives of so many that they can't see (or don't want to) the right way of giving, an unwillingness to give up all to God. We must let Him use us as He wills. When we have our hearts cleansed with His most precious blood, we will be willing to let God take possession, and not only give His own, but we will let Him guide us with what remains. How many are there who, if Heaven and righteousness could be bought for a thousand pounds, would give it. No money can buy those, but if they only knew, money can wondrously help on the path to holiness and heaven. Do you ask how? Money given in the spirit of self-sacrifice, love and faith in Him who has paid all, brings a rich and eternal reward. Day by day, give as God blesses and as He inspires. It will help to bring Heaven nearer to you and help to bring you

nearer to Heaven. One of the commonest experiences is the handling of money, and nothing will sooner show whether our consecration be a reality or a sham, nor will anything serve more quickly to accentuate and enforce the life of consecration than to spend our money daily beneath the sway of those principles which it is so easy to enumerate and so difficult to practice. A long-time and appreciative worker in Missouri asks, Why is it any more wrong to contribute our baking to be sold for the church than for a bakery or a restaurant to give money to the church of which its proprietor is a member? The answer was: The Lord's work ought to be supported by free-will giving and by nothing else. Nothing but such giving is recognized or enjoined in the scriptures. When people buy the cakes and pies that good women have baked for a church sale, these purchasers are not giving to the Lord as they ought to, if they desire to help at all. They are getting a large return for their money. Thus the spirit of giving is corrupted by every church sale. The motive of the women who bake and work hard is good, but their method is harmful. The case of the bakery is entirely different. People are not asked to purchase its wares in order to help the Lord's work. They buy in order to meet their own needs; the idea of giving is not confused with the transaction. If the proprietors of the bakery then wish to give to the church a portion or all their profits, their action is an outright gift. Giving is giving, and buying is buying, and the two things cannot mix. When the public is asked to buy in order to help on that which ought to be supported only by gifts, the public is being robbed of its giving privileges. Tithing is not giving. The Bible gives us two sources of revenue, tithes and free-will offering. Tithes are like any other bill we owe, and ought to be very much more important, while offerings are voluntary and are donated. In tithing we are on the plain of justice. The scriptures say: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me;" and again, "Thou shalt not steal." "Oh," you say, "that is different." I fail to see why it is different. To rob anyone is to steal, and it is a far more serious matter to rob God than it is to rob man. It is true, where nothing is given to us God requires nothing from us; but it is equally true that when anything is given God expects us to render a strict account. The Gospel comes to the poor with its wonderful blessings. In Mark xii we have the account of a poor widow who cast in a very small amount. The Saviour looked on and instead of disapproving or forbidding, He commends the self-sacrificing spirit manifested. How many are there who, if asked to give a certain amount, \$5, \$10 or \$50, as the case might demand, to carry on some great missionary movement, would willingly give the amount? I am not prepared to say; but this I will say, they all will go to church and sing: "Take my silver and my gold."

Not a mite would I withhold."

It is not the amount we give, but the spirit we give in. If we give ever so little in love for Christ, it will multiply and do great things, and it is the only way we can give cheerfully. Thus giving will be an act of worship, and in that way will we honor the Father, exalt the Son and give to the Holy Spirit the fullest opportunity to do through the church a blessed work for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. In 1 Cor. 16, 2, we find these words: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him." Do you see any system in this? Shall we pass over such teachings lightly. I know it

hurts when we have to give, but it is better to hurt now than later. 2 Cor. 9, 6 reads: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." This is literally true temporally and spiritually. It seems to me, if there is anything in this world displeasing to the Master it is a selfish Christian. Such never develops into a missionary. Men spend nearly two thousand millions of dollars every year in the United States for intoxicating liquors. If they would entirely abstain from liquor and should spend this same amount of money every year in the cause of religion and righteousness, the whole nation would soon be free from vice and crime and poverty and suffering and sickness, it would be a transformed country. The Tribune, of Chicago, confesses a vivid interest in hearing of certain churches which have "let up on socials and sales and numerous other devices for raising money," and are now financing their affairs by the simple method of having every member give as God prospers them; and in this way all branches of the church can be run more intelligently. That is to say, this great news-gatherer, alert for things new and novel, finds it strikingly, almost sensationally novel, that the churches are beginning to be systematic and business-like in paying their way through the world. Oh, if our churches would only put a stop to all this wrong method of raising money for the church of God!

Dear sisters, are we not to blame in a great measure? Are we firm enough in what we honestly believe is right? and we have the word of God from Genesis to Revelations to support us. When we go and purchase things sold in the house of God, sit down and buy a meal to help the cause, let us consider what He says: "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." That shocks some, I suppose. It's only the schoolroom. It was dedicated the house of God. What are we going to do about it? Are we going to encourage it by patronizing such? Would to God we might get away from all such schemes and plans and methods and movements gotten up by men and women, and get to our knees and read our Bibles and be led entirely by the Holy Spirit. We are able, abundantly able, to take the city, the country, the world for Christ, when we surrender all to him.

We only purpose using a column or a column and a half for the W. C. T. U. articles, but the articles have been good, and we have allowed them to overrun. The ladies, like we preachers, don't know just when to stop.

THIRSTY SOCIETY WOMEN.

It is reported that some of Washington's society women frequently motor to Baltimore for luncheon, the reason being that President Wilson has put a ban on women drinking in Washington, and that the new laws prohibit women from drinking in public. We should think the President would discountenance such a practice, and the pity is that he has no authority to prevent their going to Baltimore to satisfy their thirst. A society woman who has nothing better to do than to motor from city to city for the privilege of drinking in public, ought to be sent to a reformatory where she would be taught something better with which to occupy her time. We trust the time may come when such a woman will be regarded as any other vagrant.—*Presbyterian Advance*.

"All life which would not grow stale and monotonous must feed itself upon God."