

man out of a heart of love is willing to give freely of his money it is one of the surest evidences that God has control of his life, and that his worship is real. When he thus gives because he loves God he is honoring or worshipping God in the highest sense.

One can conceive of no greater inconsistency in religion, than to behold a person professing to love and worship the Lord, and then refuse his responsibility and shirk duty when it comes to the matter of giving. Even the placing of a ten cent piece on the plate once a Sunday will not lift that man from suspicion. No person has his relationship to God fully adjusted until he has settled the money question. He will have to settle upon some definite proportion of his income, and give that regularly and systematically in the fear of God. It is only then that full blessing can be derived from giving. Haphazard and spasmodic giving neither honors God nor brings much blessing. There is good evidence in the Bible that the correct proportion should not be less than one tenth of our net income. No better plan for the financing of the work of the Lord has ever been devised, and it has the distinction of being God's own plan of finance, and it cannot be improved.

One may go to church, repeat prayers, listen to the sermon and go through the forms of worship and go away again without leaving one bit of tangible evidence that his heart has been moved or that he had the least care for the advancement of the Kingdom. But, if when the offering is taken, he joyfully and thankfully gives largely of his money as a token of his desire to honor God and forward His cause, he is then showing one of the most convincing evidences of true worship, according to the definition that says that worship is "chiefly and eminently the act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being."

Giving will express itself as real worship in still another way. It takes a strong and active faith to be a giver, and faith is one of the chief elements of worship. Worship would be impossible without faith. In no way will one's faith be shown any better than by his regular giving. It becomes a bond or link to bind him to God. It will prove a test and a measure of our faith. When you can face a dozen personal needs, claiming more than ten tenths of your income and yet in the face of these pressing needs you can still take out first God's portion and trust Him to make up all deficiencies, and thus place yourself upon the promise that He will supply every need, this is faith, and the kind of faith that constitutes true honor to God, and so includes true worship. It takes a practical consecration and a living faith to give in the pinch of hard times, but the promise is "Give and it shall be given unto you", and this promise belongs to rich and poor alike.

The taking of the church offering is often looked upon as an interruption in the solemn service of worship, and something to be hurried out of the way to give place to other things considered more important, when in truth, the offering of our gifts to the Lord, when done for His honor and with a spirit of adoration, is one of the truest forms of divine worship. The words of the poet will apply nicely here, where he makes our blessed Master say:

"The Holy supper is kept indeed  
In whatso we share with another's need;  
Not what we give but what we share—  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—  
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me."

Jesus, Himself, associated works of charity so closely with worship that he said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." James made faith and works of charity inseparable when he said, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." So if our offerings for the needy are done unto Him, then our acts of charity become acts of homage and worship to our Lord and Saviour. When God bore testimony to Cornelius he associated alms giving with worship when he said, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." The wise men of the East came to Jerusalem seeking Jesus, and saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him." And when they had found Him in Bethlehem and when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold and frankincense, and myrrh." Their adoration and worship terminated in offering their costliest gifts, and their giving was as truly a part of their worship as their falling down before Him. Thus it has ever been and thus it will ever be that where there is sincere and fervent love for Christ there will be the offering of gifts to Him, and where offerings are made in the love and fear of God, and for the glory of the name of Christ our Saviour, here also is an act of divine worship.

H. C. MULLEN.

Note—This theme was suggested by one of the ministers at a minister's meeting at Weymouth, N. S., recently and the writer was asked to prepare a paper on it for the next meeting. The above article is the result.

H. C. M.

### JOKING PREACHERS

Rev. Francis B. Markell

Recently in looking through a bound volume of the Earnest Christian for 1866 and 67, published by Rev. B. T. Roberts, Rochester, N. Y., we ran across an article entitled "The Joking Preacher," which we quote. The article was written by Bishop Hamlin and is as follows:

"You speak of wit and humor, of jokes and anecdotes among ministers. Alas, I cannot dwell there. If there be not a speedy end of that, the Church is marred, if not undone. I can only say, 'Keep away from those joking preachers or get them converted to God.'

"Swearing and joking are somewhat different, and the former is reputed more profane; but as to religion, after much experience and observation I have no doubt that they are equally sure to kill religion out of their souls, make the heart, as far as spiritual graces are concerned, a desert waste. A friend suggests a thought, namely: 'When I was young, Methodist ministers were so solemn in all their words and actions that sinners trembled in their presence. But now the most worldly and wicked can meet some of our preachers and play off their jokes on them, as if sure of being received in the spirit of, "Hail fellow, well met."'

"Is it not too true? O, my brother, let us die rather than contribute one syllable or glance to perpetuate those practices, which are breaking Zion with breach upon breach, and threaten her with fearful overthrow! Let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation." Signed, Bishop Hamlin.

For ourselves we are praising God for one who dared to speak his solemn conviction on that

subject. We trust the article reprinted in the Wesleyan may be a warning to many preachers and evangelists who are popularizing a joking ministry. How many evangelists at the present are given to the joking method of preaching and how often have we heard unsaved people say, "He spoils his message by his foolish joking." No sooner does some message of the Gospel begin to penetrate the heart than a flippant joke is told and the conviction dissipated in a roar of laughter."

Just yesterday in speaking to another about the above message, by the bishop, we were told that a prominent man in this community used to say that the preachers would send us to hell so fast that you could not see us for the dust flying, then they would crack a joke or tell some funny story and any one would know that they did not mean nor believe what they were saying.

Is not the bishop's message food for thought and meditation in these days when a joking ministry is becoming prominent and popular? Why not study the sermon of the master Preacher and His apostles and follow their method. There is no place given to lightness, nor foolish joking, or story telling.—*The Wesleyan Methodist.*

### MEDITATION

Rev. Marcus Dods

Meditation has always been, and must always be, reckoned among the most indispensable means of grace. Since ever saints were, their saintliness has been in great part due to a habit of meditation. Without it, the other means of grace remain hopelessly outside of us. The Word does not profit except the mind be actively appropriating ~~you,~~ message and revolving it.

Prayer is but a deluding form, that means nothing, expects nothing, and receives nothing, if meditation has not provided it material. Unless a man thinks upon life and tries his ways, his confession can but prove the scum from the surface, leaving the heart burdened and polluted; for the graver sins do not float, but sink deep, and must be dragged for with patience and skill, if not discerned through a very rare natural and simplicity of character.

It is in the stillness and quiet of our hours of reflection, when the gusts of worldly engagements and desires have died down, that the seeds of grace are deposited in our souls. It is then that our thoughts are free to recognize reasons of humanity and cause of thankfulness. It is then that the thought of God resumes its place in our souls, and that the unseen world reasserts its hold upon us.

It is then only that the soul, taking a deliberate survey of its own matters, can discover its position and necessities, can assert its claims and determine its future, can begin the knowledge of all things by knowing itself. So that "if there is a person, of whatever age, or class, or station, who will not be thoughtful, who will not seriously and honestly consider, there is no doing him any good."—*The Wesleyan Methodist.*

We must learn that our best and most steadfast friends are invisible, namely, the dear angels, who with faithfulness and love, moreover with all helpfulness and true friendship, far surpass all the friends we have whom we can see. Thus in many ways we enjoy the fellowship of the heavenly spirits.—*Martin Luther.*

With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.—*Abraham Lincoln.*