

Mr. Sumner

Christian

Visitor



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"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

{ Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor

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MATERNAL INFLUENCE;

OR, MIDNIGHT REFLECTIONS OF A SAILOR.

"My soul is like the sea that cannot rest;
And while my eyes their nightly vigils keep,
Strange visions flit upon the deep blue wave—
Visions that seem to tell of childhood's hours:
One image leaves me not by night or day,
And the soft music of one little world
For ever thrills upon my listening ear.
If, when the heavens are hung with black,
I climb the slippery shrouds, with daring step,
Through the loud clash of warring elements,
And dirge-like tones that whistle through the sails,
There comes one soft, silvery note—'tis mother's!
Or if, at midnight, and a lonely hour,
I pace the deck, and watch the countless stars
That on calm ocean's bosom sweetly shine,
Each breeze that wafts our proud ship onward, bears
The name of 'mother' on its welcome wing.
Bless'd word! bless'd thought! Have I a mother yet,
That for her reckless sailor boy doth pray,

"And does the homely cot,
Where first she poured the fullness of her love,
And taught my infant heart the path above,
In that secluded spot
Yet stand beneath the covert of the wood?
And doth the voice of prayer yet cheer that solitude
Or is it hushed in death?
And have those silver locks, bowed down with care,
Found, in the grave, that rest the holy share,
When, with their yielding breath,
The spirit soars to realms beyond the skies,
While rests the flesh in hope, till God shall bid it rise?

'God of my mother! (if she wake or sleep,)
Oh! be the God and father of her son!
Though oft on these polluted lips thy name
Hath been the 'swearer's prayer,' though oft my crimes
Defied thy wrath, and dared thy thunderbolts,
And may have brought the hoary hairs of one
Thou lovest, my widowed mother to the grave;
Yet, by the blood of him who walked the sea,
Hear thou her prayers, regard the tears
Of her who gave me birth—not for my sake,
But for the Saviour's, gracious God forgive!
Forgive! and own as thine, a sailor-boy."

The following is the conclusion of an address delivered a few years since, before one of the American Missionary Societies. Its sentiments are of great importance, and particularly deserving the attention of Christians in this Province at the present time. The Bible way of doing things will always be found the most convenient, and the safest, and the Baptists are the last people who should doubt it.—EDITOR.

Charitable Contributions.

BY REV. DR. YALE.

"Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there may be no gatherings when I come.—1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Let us now make an application of this divine method of giving, which has been delineated.

1. Personal responsibility is an essential element of the divine method.

Our Lord does not intend that the individual shall be lost in the mass. His eye is upon the treasury. He observes every offering. The rich may cast in much. But his eye is upon every one. He orders every one of us, on the first day of the week, to lay by in store as he has prospered us. And he looks as carefully at the gift of the poor as at the gift of the rich. He kindly takes notice of the love, the hard labor, the self-denial of a poor disciple who presents a small oblation. The turtle dove, the young pigeon, the two mites, the hard earned shilling, given cheerfully, joyfully, with a heart overflowing with faith and love, attracts the notice of the "High and Lofty One." But if there be among his professed followers, one, or two, or any other number, who present no oblation, how do you think the Omniscient views them? They have no treasury for God. They lay by nothing in store. They have no present for him in their hand, nor in their house. He sees nothing in all they possess designed for him, unless connected with some self-interest. Do you think that Christ is pleased with such.—They may think, indeed, that the church to which

they belong does much; and they may think that they shall pass along with the church as being bountiful. But what theology, what logic is this! The church is bountiful; therefore every member is bountiful! Do such expect to die with the mass, to be judged with the mass, to be admitted into Heaven with the mass? Is it not written that "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God?" And does not the same authority order that "upon the first day of the week, every one shall lay by him in store as God hath prospered him?" As certainly as every member of the church is an individual being, just so certainly is every one ordered to lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.

2. *The divine method is feasible.* In regard to many plans there is doubt whether they will operate well in practice, because it may be difficult to carry them out. But there is no difficulty in regard to this; for only one person is concerned in carrying it out. He is not dependent on any one but himself. None need inquire whether the whole church or any considerable number, or even any other one, will do it. It is a personal matter. Nor can any one say he is not able; for it is only to lay by in store as God has prospered you. It is the simplest of all methods, and can be easily carried into effect by every one that desires to do it. Let there be but a willing mind, and you will do as did the contributors to build the tabernacle or the temple; or, as did the Gentile churches to relieve the poor saints at Jerusalem. A willing mind makes a cheerful giver, and God loveth a cheerful giver.

3. *The divine method is for the best interest of the church.*—Let every member try it at once. It will give new views to many on this most practical subject. It will greatly enlarge the mind. It will put every one on a desire to arrange his affairs with system. It will tend to inspire every one with energy. It will dilate the heart with joy. It will open a new source of enjoyment. And it will give an unwonted impulse to all religious feeling and action, and to the common business of life; for, as you adopt this *divine method*, you will feel more than ever before that you live for God, for the church, for the benefit of souls, and for a vast eternity. Your meditations, your prayers, your plans, your whole manner of life will be improved. You will at once become more like Christ in your regard to the great work of evangelizing the world; and, in many important respects, the aspect of the world, of time and eternity, will be changed. You will aim at higher, nobler, more enduring, and more glorious objects, for you will more readily understand the mind of Christ, and more justly estimate the superlative excellence of his kingdom and glory.

4. *The divine method carried out will furnish abundant supplies.*—If one cent a week from a million will furnish five hundred thousand dollars, as the contribution of the poor, what an abundant supply will be furnished when the more able and the rich shall lay by in store as God has prospered them. Fifty cents are but the tenth part of five dollars. If every one should adopt Jacob's vow, what an income would annually flow into the Lord's treasury! For every ten dollars one; for every hundred dollars ten; for every thousand a hundred! But we are not to suppose that the more able will be content to give no larger proportion than the poor. Where much is given, the love will be much. Where the Lord bestows bountifully, he expects to reap bountifully. And the pious soul that receives much from the Lord, delights to consecrate much to him in return. These can therefore be no doubts of abundant supplies, if the *divine method* be carried out.

5. *The divine method affords a test of Christian love.*—In some parts of the world, a man becomes a Christian at the risk of his life. So it was generally during the first three hundred years after the Christian era. And thus were verified the words of Christ to his disciples: Ye shall be hated of all na-

tions for my name's sake. He added, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life for my sake shall find it." But what is the test of love to Christ, at this time, and in this land?—It is not the name of Christ. So many are called Christians, that the name is far from being a term of reproach. It requires no self denial, no sacrifice, no cross, to assume the Christian name at this time, and in this country. What then is a test of Christian love? Is it orthodox doctrine? Is it moral duty or religious form? Is it penance or abstinence? Is it frequent or long continued exercises of prayer, preaching, or effort to persuade sinners to become such sort of Christians as everywhere abounds!—None of these, nor all of them together; for all these may be where there is nothing of the peculiarities of that love which would die for Christ. *But here is a test of Christian love.* When one hears the command of Christ, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and says, "Lord, here am I, send me," and goes forth. When another perceives that he is not qualified to go, but is willing to do as much at home, and deny himself as much, and suffer as much to encourage and sustain him that goes. This is Christian love; and this is precisely what is needed in this country at this time. For the sake of illustration, suppose that you were to devote yourself and your all to the missionary cause, just as the most devoted missionary of whom you ever heard, and labor at home instead of going abroad. You live in as good a house, and wear as good apparel, and spread as good a table, and regulate all your expenses, and improve all your time, and train your family just as you think it becomes your brother, the missionary, to do; at the same time you deny yourself as much, and do all in your power as much to promote the cause, as you expect him to do. In all these things you keep the Lord Jesus Christ in view, and seek to please him, and imitate his example, and bear his cross, and seek his kingdom. You also, as a true yoke fellow, work shoulder to shoulder with them who toil abroad; pray as they pray, and feel as they feel, and hope as they hope. Tell me now, is not this Christian love? Tell me again, does not the *divine method* lead to this very course? Is it not then a test of Christian love? Is not this the very thing is needed at this time and in this country? It is not a bloody test, to be sure; but is it not as surely a test? Admit, indeed, if it be demanded, that all this might be without love to Christ. We contend, too, that a man might "give his body to be burned" without charity; but this alters not the nature of the test. It still stands good for this purpose; and by this most Christian love, at this day, and in this land, be tried.

6. *Finally, Shall the divine method be adopted and pursued?*—For one, I answer in the affirmative.—I will not preach to others what I will not do myself. I have weighed this matter; and I beg you to allow me to say, without being thought ostentatious, that I have practised this method, substantially, for about thirty years. I do not say that I have literally laid by on the first day of the week, as God has prospered me; but that I have done the same as to the general amount. I do not say that I have loved Christ, or his cause, or the souls of men, or denied myself and suffered so much as I might have done. But I do say that I have, during these years, devoted a certain proportion, a tenth at least, of all that God has given me, to his treasury. Nor would I have said this publicly, were it not that consistency seemed to require it, for I wish to bear testimony that the *divine method* is good. It impresses upon the Christian a sense of personal responsibility; it is feasible; it is good to the one who follows it; it enables one to do his part in contributing to evangelize the world; it is a test of Christian love. And now, I must urge every one to adopt and pursue this method. The single fact that it is of God, is sufficient to recommend it to every one that loves God. Then the fact that it is called for at the present time to sustain

and carry forward the missionary enterprise, should recommend it to every one who loves Christ and the souls of men. It proposes that something be done; that it be done now; that every Christian should do it, and continue to do it. It is no oppressive method; but one of equality. It is no partial method; but one to be adopted by every Christian.—It is no fitful method; but one adapted to the exigency of the times, and adequate to all the demands of charity. It is no novel invention; but it has stood the test of ages. Nor is it just now discovered; for it is written in the ancient records. The author of "The Great Commission" urges it as appropriate to the present wants of the world, as well as of divine authority. We expect of our missionaries as much at least as this *divine method* requires. And why should not every one of us do as they do, and bring all our love and self-denial, and practical energy to bear upon this heavenly enterprise? "Who, then, is willing, this day, to consecrate his services to the Lord," and to a perishing world? "His God be with him, and make him a blessing to thousands of millions." Amen.

Nothing Without Christ.

All the riches, pleasures, profits, and preferences of the world are but emptiness; your wisdom, your parts; your children, your land, your revenues, without Christ, can amount to nothing—they are but like ciphers without a figure. It is said of believers, having nothing, they possessed all things; because, though they had nothing in the world, yet, having Christ, they have all things; and on the other hand, it may be truly said of the wicked and unbelieving, that, having all things, they possess nothing; because though they had all things in the world at their will, yet, being without Christ, they have nothing; all they have is but emptiness; yea, all they have is a curse, because they have not Christ.

But all good things in this world are but shadows of 'what is in Christ.' Outward riches are but a shadow of the unsearchable riches of Christ; outward life is but a shadow of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life; outward liberty is but a shadow of that freedom that is to be had in Christ. 'If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed,' John 8: 36—importing that no freedom is freedom in deed and in truth, but this; outward rest is but a shadow of the rest that is to be had in him; 'Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The sun in the firmament is but a shadow of the Son of Righteousness, and of his glory; roses and lilies are but shadows of His beauty, who is the Rose of Sharon! and the lily of the valley; rivers and fountains are but shadows of His fulness, who is the fountain of living waters; not a fountain closed, but a fountain opened to us; plants and trees are but a shadow of the verdure of Him who is the plant of renown, the tree of life. All things that have an excellency in them, are but shadows of Him in whom excellencies do concentrate. All the stars of creature excellencies are but shadows of Him who is the bright and morning star.—Ralph Erskine.

Progress of Mankind.

Eight centuries ago, England was as abject and wretched as the principalities of Asia now. Within that period she has become the most enlightened and powerful nation the world ever saw. Struggling, at one time, to obtain the Charter of her own liberties, and at another, to abolish slavery; now contending for the security of person and property, and now overthrowing king and government to establish her liberty, we behold her, in all these events, working out problems for mankind. This it is, which