

From the Journal of Missions.

GOD A CREDITOR.

There are some who, when applied to in behalf of missions, are always ready with the excuse, "I am poor," or, "I am straitened for means just at this time," or something else equally true and equally indicative of benevolent feeling. What such men want is, not more money, that would only make matters worse; not more exhortation to liberality, of that they already have superabundance; but more grace, more of the life that is from Christ and in Christ. It would be better for such men, as well as for the world, if they could sell some of their possessions and buy therewith more of a spirit of doing good.

But there are others of an entirely different spirit. They love every good cause; their whole heart is in each effort for the salvation of men; but they are poor, really so, perhaps extremely so. It may be they are in debt, and, feeling that the property in their hands does not really belong to them, they do not know whether it would be right to gratify their benevolent feelings. They fear lest the cause of Christ should suffer through what the world might call an unwarranted if not an unlawful liberality. Such might be reminded that nothing really belongs to them, that in every thing they are but stewards. But as it is the misconstruction of the world that they are afraid of, let us turn to the world for the solution of their difficulty.

It is an established principle among business men, that when a man fails, as it is called, his creditors are entitled to his available property, in exact proportion to the amount of their claims. And if his assets do not suffice for the payment of each, one is not paid in full and another left wholly unpaid; but all fare alike. The assets are equitably divided among them all, and each gets the same percentage of his full claim. This is a universal rule; no one disputes its equality; and business men would at once dispute any deviation from the principle.

Now apply this, their own rule, to the case before us. A Christian is in debt, and unable at the moment to meet all the demands of his creditors. He owes so much to A, B, and C, for value received; but then he also owes to God. He owes him for life, for the support and continuance of life; for the creation and preservation of every member of his body and faculty of his mind. He owes him for all his mercies; for that very value received that came through A, B, and C; and especially does he owe him for the unspeakable gift of his dear Son. Do not say because that it is a gift, therefore it involves no debt. In view of it as the chief mercy, the Apostle calls the presenting our bodies as living sacrifices a reasonable service; and we are told Christ died for us that we should live to him. And such debts, where the obligation exists without a written bond, men of the world call debts of honor, and insist on cancelling them first of all. Now on what principle of worldly justice would men shut out altogether the claims of so large a creditor? And if they are shut out, on what principle can they maintain any other claims? And remember, I am not pleading for an exclusive regard to the claims of God, as they plead for an exclusive regard to their own claims; but for a proportionate regard to all.

Perhaps they are afraid God will claim too large a share, and so diminish theirs; but they need not fear. God is neither selfish nor unfair, nor disposed to take advantage of them in any way. If, on the one hand he says, Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse; on the other, he also says, Owe no man anything. He enjoins the payment of the debts due to those very men who would rob him of what is due to him. And while he does so, he is very lenient in the collection of the great debt those men themselves owe to his goodness. So far from losing, I am persuaded that he who allows the claims of God to be regarded equally with his own, will never be the loser; while those who refuse the consideration of his claims, will just as surely not be gainers.

The same principle applies to those who are supported by charity. For while in one sense they are supported by the church, or the town, or the State, in another they just as truly owe their support to God. And if any such are disposed to make an extra effort, or practice self-denial beyond their fellows for Christ's sake, he who would disallow it is not only a meddling in other men's matters, but is guilty of positive wrong to society as well as to God. Would that all the inmates of our poor-houses had the disposition for such efforts and self-

denial. There would be fewer of them, and those few easier managed, more contented, more cheaply supported, and more grateful both to God and man. It is not the Christian who would forbid such to contribute their mite for their Redeemer. And he who passes by the money spent in drunkenness and other vices by the ungodly poor, to find fault with the offerings of the Redeemer's poor, will have an account to render in "that day" to Him who commended the poor widow for the offering of all her living, and handed down that commendation for the instruction of every age in every land.

Rules for Visitors and Travellers.

As the season for relaxation and travel approaches, we republish the following rules, which were published years ago, from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Bedell, of Philadelphia. They are worthy of careful attention from those who would attend as earnestly to the wants of the soul as to those of the body.

IF RESIDING IN THE COUNTRY,

1. Never neglect your accustomed private duties of reading, meditation, self-examination, and prayer.
2. Never fail to attend some place of worship on the Lord's day, unless prevented by such circumstances as you are sure will excuse you in the eye of God.
3. Never entertain invited company on the Lord's day, and pay no visits, unless to the sick and needy, as acts of benevolence.
4. Never engage in any thing, either on the Lord's day or any secular day, which will compromise your Christian consistency.
5. Seek to do good to the souls of your family, and all others within your reach.
6. Always remember that you are to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

IF TRAVELLING,

1. Never, upon any plea whatever, travel on the Lord's day.
2. Make your arrangements, if possible, to stop in some place where you can enjoy suitable religious privileges.
3. If at a public-house or watering-place on the Lord's day, do not mingle with indiscriminate company; keep your own room as much as possible, and be engaged in such a way as may make the day profitable to your soul and honorable to your God.
4. Every day find or make time for your private duties of reading, meditation, self-examination, and prayer.
5. Carry tracts and good books with you, to read, distribute, or lend, according to circumstances.
6. Seek for opportunities to do good to the souls of those into whose society you may fall.
7. Never, by deed or conversation, appear to be ashamed of your religious profession.
8. Remember you are to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Faith's Hard Fight.

It is not easy, I grant, to walk by faith.—"Who is sufficient for these things?" What need have the best of us with increasing earnestness to cry, "Lord increase our faith!" Among things seen to love the unseen—to be in the world and not of it—to live below and yet to dwell above—never to forget our home yonder in the sunniest hours of a home here—to obey the apostolic injunction, for them who have wives to be as though they had none—for them that weep to be as though they wept not—for them that rejoice to be as though they rejoiced not—for them that buy to be as those which possessed not—for a king to remember that he is but a beggar at his prayers—for a Lazarus at the gate to remember that he shall be a king in glory—to believe that God is kind when his hand is smiting and this flesh is smarting—to be content that Christ came down into our garden and plucked the sweetest flower in unblown bud or blossom, even to place it in his own bosom—when the screws go into the coffin, and the mould rattles hollow on its lid, to rise to the scene where the spirit shines and sings in glory; these, I grant, are no easy things.

Faith has a hard fight of it, but she shall have a grand victory—a rough passage of it, but she shall have a happy landing. Angels throng the shore—Jesus, with a train of saints, awaits the believer's coming. To those who mourn departed saints, we say, "Weep not for the dead." Happy are they who are anchored in the desired haven—they are with the Lord—they are at home—they are at rest; and is not that better than to be left to battle here with fierce tempests, and a troubled sea?

Looking Forward.

The happiness of the men of the world is ever prospective. It consists not in what they already possess, but in what they hope to obtain. Their eyes rest upon something in the future, which their imagination has painted and their hope invested with unusual charms. When they have arrived at that point and attained that object, they propose to themselves an actual enjoyment of which they now have but an ideal conception. We blame no one for looking forward for the desirable good; we only lament that men do not look far enough into the distant future. Vanity and vexation of spirit are inscribed on things in possession; they cannot satisfy the craving desires of the soul. Experiencing this, it is folly to suppose that the next year or the next will so alter the condition of earthly things as to make them satisfying. Men of the world do not look far enough into the future.—Should they elevate their view so as to pass over all terrestrial things, and look for the chief good in heaven, they would not be disappointed. Happiness is in reserve; look forward to it; remember, however, it is not in time, and that it is the world's cheat that would persuade that it is. It is a resident of heaven, and they only shall attain it, who now seek God's favour and secure an interest in the Redeemer, who has purchased and laid it up for them that love him.—*Presbyterianian.*

What is Happiness?

"Every thinking man," says Cecil, "will look around him when he reflects on his situation in this world, and will ask, 'What will meet my case? What is it that I want?—What will satisfy me? I look at the rich, and I see Ahab, in the midst of all his riches, sick at heart for a garden of herbs. I see Dives, after all his wealth, lifting up his eyes in hell, and begging for a drop of water to cool the rage of his sufferings. I see the rich fool summoned away in the very moment when he was exulting in his hoards. If I look at the wise, I see Solomon, with all his wisdom, acting like a fool; and I know that if I possessed all his wisdom, were I left to myself, I should act as he did. I see Ahithophel, with all his policy, hanging himself for vexation.—If I turn to men of pleasure, I see that the very sum of all pleasure is that it is Satan's bed, into which he casts his slaves. I see Esau selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage. I see Solomon, after all his enjoyments, leaving his name a scandal to the Church to the latest age. If I think of honor, take a walk in Westminster Abbey, there is an end of all inquiry. There I walk among the mighty dead. There is the winding up of human glory. And what remains of the greatest men of my country? A boasting epitaph. None of these things can satisfy me. I must meet death, I must meet judgment, I must meet God, I must meet eternity!"

Remarkable Examples of Bible Reading.

Many of the anecdotes compressed within the following paragraph, it is easy to verify; and every reader will acknowledge the value of the lessons which they are intended to teach. Remarkable as some of them are, not one approaches what is related and earnestly believed in the East, of a famous Mohammedan; namely, that, during his confinement in the prison of Bagdad, where he died, he read over the Koran seven thousand times!

That we may see, says Dr. Plumer, what can be done in becoming acquainted with the Bible, let us look at a few facts. Eusebius tells us of one who had his eyes burnt out in the Diocletian persecution, and who repeated in a public assembly the very words of Scripture with as much accuracy as if he had been reading them. Jerome says of Nepotian, that by reading and meditation he had made his soul a library of Christ. Theodosius the younger was so familiar with the word of God, that he made it a subject of conversation with the old bishops as if he had been one of them. Augustine says that after his conversion he ceased to relish even Cicero, his former favorite author, and that the Scriptures were his pure delight. Tertullian spent much of his time in reading the Scriptures, and committed large parts of it to memory. Beza learned all Paul's Epistles in Greek so thoroughly, that when he was eighty years old, he could repeat them in that language. Cranmer is said to have been able to repeat the New Testament from memory. Luther was one of the most indefatigable students of the Bible that the world has ever seen.—Ridley said, "The

walls and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness that there I learned by heart almost all the Epistles; of which study, although in time a greater part was lost, yet the sweet savor thereof, I trust I shall carry with me to heaven." Sir John Hartop, a man of many cares, made the book of God so much his study, that it lay before him night and day. A French nobleman used to read three chapters of the Bible every day on his bended knees, with his head uncovered. Joshua Barnes is said to have read a small pocket Bible a hundred and twenty times over. Roger Cotton read the whole Bible through twelve times a year. William Romaine studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life. John Boyse, one of the translators of our Bible, had read all the Scriptures before he was five years old; his mother read them through twelve times. I have read of more than one of whom it was said, that if the Bible had been lost the whole might have been recovered from their memories. In short, was there ever an eminent Christian, who was not remarkable for his study of Scripture as he had opportunity?

Emigration vs. Popery.

Among the various singular phenomena now visible in Ireland, and the divers results arising from emigration, there is one for which the public were not prepared, but which is now beginning to excite very general attention.—When Popish peasants repair to the British colonies, they are both accompanied and preceded by priests, by whom special care is taken to retain them in the fetters of Romish superstition; so that emigration is not a loss but a gain to the empire of Antichrist. With improved means of subsistence, while they cease not to increase and multiply, they can afford to pay the priesthood on an ample scale.—Thus, the cause goes on prosperously in the British colonies; but it is much otherwise in the United States, where they are poured into the heart of an active, reading, thinking, talking, independent community, and thus placed in an atmosphere which penetrates to their inmost soul, rousing within them a spirit of manhood issuing in their spiritual emancipation. It has been asserted that the vast majority of Popish emigrants to the United States have renounced the creed of their fathers. This fact has become known in Ireland, and is engaging the serious attention of the priests, who heretofore encouraged, but now denounce emigration.—They are reported to be utterly confounded by the revelations of the American missionary, Mr. Mullen, who has transmitted to Ireland the true state of the case.—The result is, that the priesthood are banding together to check the progress of the exodus. Nothing is being left undone, by altar denunciations and otherwise, to stay the progress of the mighty movement across the Atlantic. Even the more moderate priests and bishops among them, as the Right Rev. Dr. Haly, are manifesting the utmost dread of the consequences, and resorting to practical methods to avert them. The subject seems to have come home with special force on Dr. Haly and his clergy, since the emigration from that diocese has been enormous, whereby their flocks are thinned and their gains diminished. To the praise of the emigrants, it is stated, that they are sending home large sums of money to their relatives to aid them in effecting their departure; an event which is taking place in every part of Ireland. Thus, help is coming to truth, and the friends of truth, from a quarter least thought of. It remains to be seen how far the power of the priests will succeed in checking the spirit of emigration. Reasoning from the past, there is ground to fear that the success may be but unhappily too great; nevertheless, already the best results have been effected. It will be in the memory of many of our readers, that Dr. Dyer stated, at the recent meeting of the Sunday-school Union, in Exeter-hall, that, if the priests and the Pope were wise, they would beware of sending their people to the New World, since the inevitable result was, to a large extent, that they at once doffed the badge of their thralldom, and asserted their rights as men to think for themselves.—*British Banner.*

WE DO NOT OBSERVE.—If the stars were to appear but one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and preserve for many generations the remembrance of God which has been shown! But every night come out these preachers of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.