

checks and presents aggregating hundreds of dollars in value—her estimate of the value of the comfort and help that she received from that sermon and several conversations whose aim was her spiritual growth.

A lecturer cannot be secured for less than \$30 a night and they average a-out \$85, and yet the average pastor is as bright as the average farmer and puts as much scholarship and helpful instruction into each of his hundred sermons a year as the lecturer does into his lectures. An ignorant person attending church regularly and listening attentively to the carefully prepared sermon of his pastor will, in a few years, have received a liberal education.

Our churches are not generous enough toward their pastors. I do not doubt it is because they are thoughtless rather than because they are mean; but such thoughtlessness is not far removed from meanness. When pastors, who are doing faithful work, cannot afford to go to the State Convention, and cannot afford to buy this and that red book when they have bestowed priceless blessings on their flocks, one feels justified in expressing indignation.

O, why are men so blindly parsimonious in this matter? The starved horse has little heart or strength to do such work as would be exhilarating to him under other conditions. The poorly-fed furnace cannot properly warm the house. The minister whose shoes are down at the heel, whose coat is fringed and whose poor rubber collar is cracked cannot influence a community a tenth part as much as he could if well supported, and mere gratitude, mere patriotism, mere love of our young—a score of motives ought to prompt people—will prompt thoughtful people to generous support of the pastor.

Seymour, Ind.

And I must work thro' months of toil,

And years of cultivation,

Upon my proper patch of soil

To grow my own plantation,

I'll take the showers as they fall,

I will not vex my bosom;

Enough if at the end of all

A little garden blossoms.

—Tennyson.

"The wretched discontent which makes people so miserable themselves and such destroyers of happiness in others is only the natural result of the habit of discontent indulged through years. Anyone who is conscious of such a misanthropic disposition should be so ashamed of it that he will at once set about conquering it and transforming his gloomy spirit into one of happiness and joy. God help us in such efforts to do his will and to grow into the grace and beauty of Christ. Let us all determine with God's help to learn the lesson of joy."

How Shall We Give.

By Charles H. Harrison.

IT is remarkable with what precision the New Testament set forth the principles which underlie Christian giving. This subject has been most ably and exhaustively discussed by Dr. A. L. Vail in his "Open Letters on Christian Stewardship," which appeared recently in *The Baptist Commonwealth*. Dr. Vail strikes deep below the surface, and has uncovered many rich and shining veins of truth. These letters are a most valuable contribution to the literature of the subject; and if published in permanent form would doubtless receive, as they deserve, a wide reading.

The writer has been recently much interested in three phases of Christian giving as outlined by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians, namely, the spirit, the law and the method I described.

In Second Corinthians 8: 1-15, there is emphasized what might with propriety be denominated the Macedonian Spirit of Giving. The Apostle commends the Macedonian Christians to their Corinthian brethren, because they "first gave their own selves to the Lord," and having done that "one supreme act of consecration, the lesser deed of giving from their "extreme poverty"

came easy and natural.

In this Macedonian spirit of giving is seen in full an unbiased operation what Dr. Vail calls the "Doctrine of Totality." The giving of ourselves implies the giving of all we have and are. Having in a real and absolute sense given ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, at once our personal and property relations to His Kingdom are fixed and established forever. Hereafter we may not huddle as to what we shall do or how much we shall give—ability and opportunity become the measure of obligation.

In second Corinthians 9: 6, 8, is found what may be called the Harvest Law of Christian Giving. According to this law we are not to "give grudgingly or of necessity." The Apostle names no specific amount which the Lord's people are to give. He does not say one-half, one-fourth, one-tenth, one-fifth. No. The gift is to bulk with our heart. "Let every man give according as he purposeth in his heart." It is the heart gift that God wants. If our gifts have no heart in them they will not count in His treasury at all. If in this hearty spirit of love we can only sow sparingly as to the amount, we shall still reap abundantly; if from larger means we sow abundantly, yet shall we also reap abundantly, alike in the fruit of personal character and of saved souls. For somehow in the divine economy it is evermore made plain that the quantity and quality of the harvest will be coincident with the kind of husbandry we exercise in giving. It was the heart quality of her giving that made the widow's two mites bulk so enormously in comparison with the supposed magnificent gifts of the rich men—she cast into the treasury "more than they all."

Are we, then, justified in saying that God does not want gifts improperly bestowed? If the gift lack heart, if it be given ostentatiously, if it be prompted by self-interest, will God gather no harvest to His glory from it all? We may not answer negatively; for we do not know. Yet it seems not improbable that a gift he does not want will carry with it no large blessing. A blessing may indeed come to the recipient; but it is certain that the giver can hope for no reward. There will come to him no harvest of blessing in personal character and life.

Let us be careful lest we commit the unfortunate and wicked mistake of that rich and covetous church-member, who excused himself from giving on the ground, he said, that "God loveth a cheerful giver," and as he did not feel that he could dispense his substance in a cheerful spirit, he regarded himself as under no obligation to give at all. His church took the position, very wisely, we think, that he was a fit subject for church discipline, and as he would not or could not change his view, after patiently "laboring with him," excluded him from Christian fellowship. He has since died. It is to be hoped that a merciful and all-knowing God, with keener discernment of the motives of the human heart than his brethren of the Church militant, has not seen it necessary to "shut him out" of the Church triumphant as well.

In First Corinthians 16: 1-2, Paul announces the Apostolic Method of Christian Giving. (a) It was to be systematic. A stated time was designated. It would seem that the Apostle "gave order" to the churches of Galatia, as also to this Corinthian Church to make their "collection" on "the first day of the week." And it is to be observed that this "collection" was to be individual and particular. "Let each one of you lay by in store." There was to be no mere "dropping of pennies," no dodge of a collection box; preparation was to be made in advance; each one was to do something according to a clearly defined rule.

The "first day of the week" in the circumstances of these ancient Christians was doubtless the best time to secure the largest results, or it would not have been prescribed. It might not suit our modern notions and habits so well. But it is an apostolic precedent, and establishes for all time the principle that each church-member should have a fixed, systematic, invariable period for making contributions for the Lord's cause. How few Christians avail themselves of this wise and only safe method against haphazard, impulsive and inadequate giving!

(b) It was to be definite in amount. As we are left in no uncertainty as to a definite principle of time which is fundamental in Christian giving, so neither can we go astray as to the amount

which it is incumbent upon us to bestow. "Each one is to lay by him in store, as he may prosper." A systematic time and a prescribed amount are alike determined by this apostolic "order." And to this rule the Apostle does not seem to have left any room for filing exceptions. If then in his giving the Christian should adopt this "Apostolic Method," and apply it according to this "Harvest Law," and practice it in this "Macedonian Spirit," the Lord's treasury would be filled, the financial difficulties which embarrass the cause of Christ would disappear, and, incidentally what a marvelous revolution in the activities and successes of Christ's Kingdom would come to pass!—*Cynard, Pa.*

JONAH AND THE WHALE

On alighting from the train in a town where I was to preach not long since, I was accosted by the landlord of a hotel in the following manner, "Hotel, mister?"

"No, sir, thank you. I am expecting to be met by my brother, who will convey me to an appointment."

"Preacher, eh?"

"Yes, sir, I am a preacher."

"And what are you preaching?"

"The Gospel of the grace of God."

"You don't believe that fish story, do you?"

Which one? I said.

"Why Jonah and the Whale."

"Certainly I do; and why shouldn't I?"

Waving his hat in his right hand (which encumbered one of the flattest heads I ever saw), he reared back on his assumed dignity of superior knowledge and undertook to sweep me off the face of the earth, to the amusement of a vulgar crowd of boys and men, who looked upon him as their oracle, by saying, "Why, sir, it has been demonstrated by science that a man cannot live twenty-four hours in a whale's stomach, on account of the gastric juice!"

"My friend, did you ever read the account of Jonah and the fish carefully?"

"Don't know that I ever did."

"Well, go home and get a Bible, and read carefully the account of this prophet's rebellion, and his awful fate, and see if the record doesn't say?" "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish for the swallowing up of Jonah," and if the Lord prepared a fish, it was just as easy for him to take out the "gastric juice" and put in a "bay window" for the comfort of Jonah, as to make you, with as flat a head as you have, with sense enough to keep it out of the fire."

The laugh turned, and so did our "blatant infidel," and during my four years' residence in that town afterwards I never was accosted in a similar manner by this man, who often went to hear me preach.

People talk of "giving up" when they become Christians, as if they were to be losers, but the promise is of added riches.—*Drummond.*

Generally speaking we let what is most original and best in us be wasted. We reserve ourselves for a future that never comes.—*Amiel.*

A childlike trust of heart, that can take a hand and wondering, walk in paths unknown and strange, is the prime requisite of all religion.—*James Martineau.*

"It is a noble and great thing to cover the blemishes and excuse the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his stains and to display his perfections, to bury his weakness in silence, but to proclaim his virtues upon the housetop."

A traveller in China asked a native if he had ever read the Gospel. "No," was the answer, "but I have seen it. I have seen a man who was the terror of his neighborhood with his curses and his violent temper. He was an opium-smoker, a criminal, and as dangerous as a wild beast. But the religion of Jesus made him gentle and good, and he has left off opium. No, I have not read the Gospel, but I have seen it, and it is good."