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OH WORD, HOW IS THY TRUTH CONFESSED!

A shelter—spent and tempest-driven
 Mid winter's strife—
 I sought ; and found—the boon of heaven—
 Eternal life !
*Oh Word, how is thy truth confessed !
 Who seeketh part shall find the whole !
 I asked but for the wanderer's rest,
 And found the traveller's goal.*
 I asked some kindly door to ope for
 My weary head ;
 The heart of Love I dared not hope for,
 Stood wide instead.
*Oh Word, how is thy truth confessed !
 Who sues for little all has won ;
 I, that would be thy winter guest,
 Was thy beloved son.*
 —From the German, by Herr Merivale.

MONEY AS A TALENT.

No one, we think, would doubt for a moment that money is, in the fullest sense, a talent committed to our trust to be laid out by us as something belonging to God. But comparatively few have entered into the reality of the thought, and really regard every penny that they have as not their own, but His.

We will clear away, at the outset, two possible mistakes on the subject.

Many confine the idea of God's property to only a portion of their means, much or little, according as they are 'well off' or otherwise. Whatever they think that they ought to give in what they call 'charity' they look upon as God's share, as

it were, of their income; and all the rest they regard as their own, and spend without any very definite reference to God.

On the other hand, we maintain that, not any portion only, be it great or small, of our income belongs to God, but absolutely the whole of it, without any deduction whatever. 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts' (Hag. ii. 8). This is often quoted by those who want money, as a reason for asking Him for it; but not so often by those who have money, as a reason who they should look upon every single penny of it as absolutely and entirely His. People mostly use the words to prove that money entrusted to other people belongs to God. But they do not so readily apply them to all that they have themselves; and very often not even to that which they regarded as belonging to God before it came into their hands, but which they seem to regard very much as their own, when once they get hold of it.

The view which we contend for was fully understood by David when, referring in his prayer to the offerings made for the Temple, he says, 'Of Thine own have we given Thee' (1 Chron. xxix. 14). What was given for the Temple was a special offering for a special work for Him, but all that remained, not given for the Temple, was equally His.

Now for the other mistake to be removed. This view of the matter brings all, without exception, within reach of our remarks. Some might suppose that a chapter on using money for God has not much to do with them. They have very little of 'this world's goods,' as people call them. They think that the rich have money for God, but that they have little or none. This mistake, however, arises from their having already adopted the former one, which we have just sought to remove. If they really looked upon all that they have as belonging, in the fullest sense, to God, they would see that they have money, however little it may be, to be spent for Him.

We shall return to this thought presently, but will first deal fully with the question of devoting a fixed proportion of our income to the service of God in such a way that it could be spoken of as 'given to Him.'

This is a subject of the very first importance. Until Christians awake to a deeper sense of what is not only their privilege, but also their positive duty in this respect, they will fail to give to the Lord money which they ought so to give. And several serious evils will result.

1. They will themselves lose, at the Lord's coming, much of the 'reaping,' which in this matter is to be proportionate to the 'sowing' (2 Cor. ix. 6), when He rewards 'every man according to his works' (Matt. xvi. 27).

2. They literally hinder the work of the Lord. He is not, of course, dependent upon our money; but He graciously condescends to use it in carrying out His work. And, humanly speaking, work has often to be left undone for 'want of funds.'

3. Christian workers are driven to seek money from worldly and unconverted people by hard begging, or, worse still, by bazaars and similar doubtful expedients. If even Christians only understood how to give, all this would not be necessary. Large sums now spent otherwise would at once be available for God's service.

Only they find it easier (hard even as it often is) to get money out of others than to give it themselves, and so they seek it in this way.

But we very earnestly invite attention to the following suggestions on this subject.

We have no mention in Scripture of bazaars, fancy fairs, concerts, etc., to raise funds for God's work. The only method there recognised is that of genuine, freewill gifts, the giver receiving no return for his money other than the promise of God's reward. Gifts like this, and not money squeezed and coaxed out of people who would not otherwise give, but the return of some fancied equivalent, is what the Lord delights to receive. But Christians know that cold-hearted professors are always ready to supply funds in return for excitement and pleasure, and so they fall back upon them, often actually professing to object to them, because they say that they cannot raise money without them. They abandon the God-honouring methods of faith and prayer, and encourage people in a principle as discreditable to a real Christian profession as it is dishonouring to God. We often doubt whether work which requires such methods is really God's work at all.

Under the old dispensation, God expected His people to devote a tithe or tenth part of their increase in a very special way to His service. It was observed as a religious privilege or duty long before the Law (Gen. xiv. 20, xxviii. 22). It was embodied in the Law; and special blessing was promised to honouring the Lord with the first-fruits of all increase (Prov. iii. 9). The withholding of this was denounced as robbing God (Mal. iii. 8, 9). And in this latter passage God invites His people to 'prove' Him by 'bringing all the tithes into the storehouse,' and to see if He would not bless them abundantly.

Here, then, are two distinct and most important principles as to giving to God, which were not merely a temporary rule under the Law, but a custom from the earliest ages. A definite portion was specially devoted to God's service, the amount not being left to momentary inclination, but settled beforehand. And the gift was a first-fruits, a first charge, that is, on all increase, and not settled by considering how far it could be spared.

We will now turn to the New Testament for its teachings about giving. It is to be in exact proportion to the income. 'As God hath prospered him' (1 Cor. xvi. 2) is the rule. 'According to what a man hath' is the measure required while 'a willing mind is the spirit for giving' (2 Cor. viii. 12). And thus we have what each one should 'purpose in his heart; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver' (2 Cor. ix. 7). Moreover, very definite promises are held out to the giver. He is said to sow, after which he is to 'reap,' either 'sparingly' or 'bountifully,' according to the sowing (2 Cor. ix. 6). Clearly, then, it is both the privilege and the positive duty of the Christian to carry out these scriptural principles in the disposal of his money. Let us briefly dwell on them.

1. There should be a definite amount devoted to God's special service. The amount each must settle for himself; but it must be in proportion to his income. We think as a general rule that all should follow the Scripture principle and

appeared to the boy, considered, repeating were up there, to him, "What if lying about one reap become high ch the rift?" No Even should it st draw him from and beguile the r, and from all id mounted them r. The pile was ne more, and he ously he groped search was only are of no use. A himself from the n on the steps. ough of them; ited to complete o his work anew, one with all his he felt it move, ficient fo detach cked, indeed, so re tired than, in ieved himself to early morning, mall portion of l he tasted, and painfully over nearly half-an- ls trembled from s arms and legs aten. However, s refreshed, the so far gone, and ardour. This ying in his blind e by shaking it, and thought it ig out the earth ssiduously, as if , when suddenly w his left hand the air; he had d, sharp object stone that lay led, and was ed it not. He what had come , after cautious damp earth, he old iron chisel. lost it in the hundred years order at length oor imprisoned

ised," he cried as free." ight out of the ne on which to asure, freed it he arches, and hew and break astle were fixed ew hither and , the door gave s, a push, and f ecstasy, Max rison into the

's "Pellets"—the coated—cure sick nd bilious attacks