

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### SYSTEMATIC GIVING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SUPPORT OF MISSIONS.

It may be conceded that in the Scriptures there is no law of proportion precisely laid down there is no statement so definite that a departure from it would be like breaking a command of the decalogue. This is in accordance with the entire reasonableness of the revelation from our Father in heaven. The varying circumstances of life are such, that what would be a moderate proportion of giving in one case would be an unreasonable proportion in another. For a man with two thousand per year to give a tenth of his income, may be very moderate; but to expect a man with one hundred pounds to give at this rate, may be unreasonable. The general principles of giving enunciated in Scripture are well known. Every one is to give as "God hath prospered him;" each one is to be the judge for himself of the extent of that prosperity, and what he is bound to give in consequence thereof. Every one is to give "according as he purposeth in his heart—not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." And we are told for our encouragement to give liberally: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." These general principles of giving are laws leading us, if we are earnest Christians, to the right side of giving—that is, rather to err on the side of giving too much, than on the side of giving too little.

A Christian community, say the members of a church organization, should in the aggregate give at least one-tenth of their united income to religious and charitable objects. Supposing this admitted, the question arises as to the distribution of the responsibility of raising this sum in the aggregate.

Manifestly there must be great variety in the rate—some must give far more than a tenth. Some cannot give so much, and yet the united contributions should be equal to a tenth. Let me try to illustrate what I mean.

To meet his share of the responsibility, a man in average circumstances should give a tenth; a man whose circumstances are under the average, less than a tenth; and a man whose circumstances are over the average, more than a tenth. Let me suppose a man in average circumstances to be a man having an income of £200 or £300 per year, with a wife and two or three children, the whole family, including the head, being healthy. In such a case, let the man give a tenth of his income for objects beyond himself—that is, for benevolent purposes, including the support and extension of the Gospel. Some may say such a proportion for that income is too much; but I do not think it is. The case is that of a husband with wife and average family—say two or three—all healthy, with nothing to disturb the future. But if the husband lose his health, or if serious illness of a permanent kind affect the household, such calamities would warrant a diminution of the proportion. In like manner a diminution would be warranted if the family were to be enlarged without any increase of income. In the tenth thus devoted I would include such items as help to poor relations, and legal assessments for the poor. If, in the case supposed, a tenth is the right proportion, it is clear the proportion must rise in the larger incomes. An income of £2,000 or £3,000 a year can afford a much larger proportion, and it would not be unreasonable that two-tenths or one-fifth of income should be given in such a case. Then look at the smaller incomes. It is plain to me that an income of £100 cannot generally afford a tenth—and probably not more than a twentieth, or five per cent. could be given—while in the case of families having only £50 or £60 a year, two and a half per cent., or sixpence per pound, would be liberal.

The general principle I am contending for is, that a Christian community should, as a whole, give one-tenth of their united means, and I am illustrating how each head of a family may determine his share of the general rate. We are all aware of the immense variety in the circumstances of different people, and that in some cases two mites, which make one farthing, is great liberality, while thousands from very rich men may not be equal liberality. The lesson to us

from the Scriptures is a proportion of ten per cent. *on all*, not a rate so low as one per cent. or five per cent., nor yet so high as twenty per cent. or thirty per cent. If this idea of proportion were to rule the Christian world, how much greater means would be at the command of the Church for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom! Much more than double of what is given would require to be given. There are, perhaps, not a few now who rule their givings in this manner, but the great mass of Christians do not, and give very much from usage and hap-hazard.

Let me next look at systematic giving—that is, giving according to a regular plan or system. We have a very distinct lesson on this point by the Apostle Paul. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." I shall not look at the particular object the apostle had in view in this storing, but at the mode he recommends—a mode that evidently is applicable to other objects. Paley said about this text "I understand St. Paul to recommend what is the very thing wanting with most men *the benevolent habit upon a plan* that is, upon a deliberate comparison of our fortunes with the reasonable expenses and expectation of our families; to compute what we have to spare, and to lay by so much for charitable purposes in some mode or other." Let a man determine what proportion of his income he can give for charitable and Christian purposes; let him do this "as God hath prospered him," and let him periodically and regularly lay aside the sum that he devotes for this end. With the mass of men who are dependent on week or fortnightly wages, the clearly convenient plan is to literally carry out the apostolic plan of laying by weekly the proportion devoted to the cause of God. Men in business, who cannot know weekly what income they are making, must lay aside the proportion at greater intervals, when a balance is struck; but they can easily carry out essentially the same principle, by devoting a proportion of their means as God hath prospered them, and giving weekly and otherwise, as providence may shew.

Church members should shew their interest in the denomination by supporting its schemes—and no scheme of the Church deserves their support in a larger degree than its missions. The claims of missions must be put on a higher ground, for is it not the command of the Master, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"? The divine Saviour has appointed no instrumentality for the extension of the Gospel but those who have accepted Him as their Lord, and He expects them to make known His great salvation to the ends of the earth. The Church has done little in this matter compared with what it should have done, and with what it shall do when it awakes to the extent of its duty. The true mode of doing the duty is by systematic giving for the extension of the Gospel—by giving regularly and liberally for missions—by contributing at least monthly, and by carrying out the apostolic precept of every one giving "as God hath prospered him."—*J. Morton.*

### THE MOTHER OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

Mrs. Garfield is the first mother of a President who has ever seen her son's inauguration. Other mothers possibly may have been alive to hear the news, but this eighty-year-old dame had more than a right to be at the capitol on that day. She had "blazed out," as woodsmen say, the road to it from the log cabin in Cuyahoga county. Such a history of motherly courage and patience and faith is not rare, to be sure, in any farm house, but there was something more than this. What the Ohio law is as respects the widow's estate and the distribution of even a small farm property does not appear. In Pennsylvania, when a farmer dies without a will, the intestate law opens the way to breaking up the home, the little property is sold out, and the children parcelled out among administrators, if the mother has not money enough to keep them with her. Many an industrious farmer woman, who could get along if she were left to decide, must be turned out of the Pennsylvania farm when her husband dies and see it parcelled out, so that her "thirds" are often to her the loss of her all. It was not so in the Orange township farm house. The father of Garfield died a young man, leaving a small farm, encumbered with debt, in the woods, with twenty cleared acres around it. What was remark-

able in Eliza Garfield at that day was her strong will. She put aside the well-meant but mistaken advice of friends and determined that neither the house should be sold nor her children scattered. With four children, one a slip of a boy, and the future President a baby, she worked the poor farm so that it yielded a living. At nights she taught her boys. Probably it was well for the young Garfields that they were not deluged with "children's books." The book-shelf held but few, but how those histories and scanty biographies must have sunk in and taken root in the long, quiet winter evenings. The children of the rich don't have such advantages as the lonely farm-house and the energy and brains of that little widow woman gave her sons. It was fifty years ago when the widow Garfield started the experiment of carrying on the Orange farm, and bringing up her son to wholesome independence. At the end of the half century he carries her to the White House, the first mother of a President who ever lived there. It is something to be proud of, not that the farms of the west and the east rear such women, for that we all know, but that one of them has lived to see the reward of her wood chopping and planting, her saving and her teaching, of her courage, in short.

### CHILDREN OF PIOUS PARENTS.

The Hon. George F. Betts, a well-known and able lawyer of the city of New York, read a paper before the New York Historical Society, on the late Chancellor, Erastus C. Benedict. Speaking of his ancestry, Mr. Betts said:

I know there is a popular sentiment that the children of religious parents are more apt than others to go astray and become atheists or profligates, and that this is especially so with the sons of clergymen. It is a fallacy, a gross and unfounded perversion of the truth. It is contrary to reason, to revelation, to fact. Those who recognize as the natural sequence of events that the children of Mahometans should become Mahometans, and of Buddhists Buddhists, that the children of Romanist or Protestant parents should follow the religion of their fathers, yet ridicule the belief that the religion thus ingrained with the earliest thoughts and moulded into the young formative life can be a vitalizing power to control and regulate the being. Experience shews that it is. That the child with the example of true faith and an humble walk daily before him, is the most apt to adopt these as his patterns, and to strive to emulate them. The membership of our churches, our theological seminaries, our pulpits, derive their largest, most constant, and most reliable supply from this source of the religious household and the influence of the home family circle. And while there are doubtless striking exceptions which attract attention, and by their noticeable character have given currency to the fallacy; while there may be found an Aaron Burr descendant of Jonathan Edwards, yet it would be as absurd to attribute to the religion of the parents the atheism or profligacy of the child as to argue that because John Newton came to the ministry from the deck of a slave-ship, that slave-ships would form the best school for furnishing ministers of the Gospel. If there be any truth or power in the idea of heredity, let us claim and have the benefit of it for Christianity also, and not allow all its power and its logic to be used exclusively against it.

GOD had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.—*Augustine.*

BLESSED are the homesick, for they shall at last come to the Father's house.—*Heinrich Stilling.*

DR. CAIRD says that it is not the fact that a "man has riches" which keeps him from the kingdom of heaven, but the fact that "riches have him."

THERE are two classes of people in the Church: the one is made up of those who do the hard work of the Church, the other of those who sit by the fire and find fault.

Eyes that the teacher cannot school  
By wayside graves are raised,  
And hearts cry, "God, be merciful,"  
That ne'er cried, "God be praised."

—*Mrs. Browning.*

THAT was a bitter answer which Thomas Aquinas gave to Pope Innocent IV. The Pontiff had pointed complacently to the Vatican treasury and had said: "You see that the day is past when the Church could say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "Yes, holy father, and the day is also past when she could say to the paralytic, 'Take up thy bed and walk!'"