

other spirit is only offering Him corrupt fruit. Go to a man and ask him for assistance in the Master's work, and after a good deal of murmuring he gives you a dollar with a grudge. You may be sure that man does not pray the Lord to accept and bless his free-will offering, because his offering is not a gift to God at all.

STUBBORN-WILL OFFERINGS

go not into heaven's treasury. We would never think of insulting our earthly friends as we do our Maker. We would cease to prize friendship's gifts if given on compulsion. We cannot look for God to accept less. Now, I hold that church entertainments for the purpose of raising church funds are the outcome of unwilling giving, which is without question an evil, and we all know what kind of fruit comes from an evil tree. Making all due allowance for the intellectual and social elements in these entertainments, is not the primary object, in the vast majority of cases, the bolstering-up of some neglected scheme of the Church—the building fund, the Sabbath school library, or some other interest? Now, why has any scheme got behind? Just because every member in the congregation has not been obedient to God's command, and given willingly as the Lord has prospered him. Some may have been obedient, but not all. Show me a congregation in our land where every member gives as God commands, and I will show you a congregation which never needs to raise one dollar by a tea-meeting. On the other hand, when I see a flaming poster, announcing a grand entertainment in a certain church, no matter whether Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or any other—"an excellent tea provided, good music, and numerous speakers; admittance twenty-five cents. Proceeds in aid of the Building Fund"—and at once I know of a congregation which practically does not approve of Israel's mode of meeting the expenses of the tabernacle. Some congregations feel crippled for giving to the Schemes of the Church because of the heavy debt upon them, which, in some cases, is made imperceptibly less as often as the annual tea-meeting comes round. It is more than probable that if every member in those congregations had been giving as God commands, since their churches were built, their burden would be gone. Let us do the same, and inside a year we shall see a like result. We have all seen little children getting into trouble by not doing as their parents bade them. They thought their own way of doing a certain piece of work better than father's or mother's, hence the trouble. So it is with God's children. All their troubles spring from disobedience—the trouble of hampered congregations not excepted. Our Heavenly Father tells us plainly how we are to support His Church and cause, and when, like disobedient children, we choose our own way of doing it we are brought into straits.

Then I am opposed, further, to this popular means of getting money for the Lord's work because it does not remedy the evil—unwilling giving. How can it? The fruit cannot improve the tree. A long trial of soirees, picnics, etc., has been made, and are those congregations which paid fifty dollars of their debt by them ten years ago more ready to bear their free-will offering to the Lord's work this year? No; rather the opposite. When a child gets into trouble through disobedience, the best way of getting out of it is to begin at once and do its parents' bidding. And so, if we find our congregations getting into difficulties—churches not paid for, libraries in debt, etc., let us see if we are doing as God requires us, and if not, why in the name of reason or conscience do we try to better our condition by leaving the cause of the trouble untouched? Now, the cause of our church deficits is disobedience to God's command as to how, and how much, we ought to give. Then, what must we do? Why, remove the bad cause, which is done not by making a little by tea-meetings, but by giving willingly as the Lord prospers us. "But," said a friend to me once, "giving at a tea-meeting is willing giving." Yes, I know it is. But willing giving for what? For your own enjoyment. If any one could even imagine such is giving to the Lord we would ask, why, then, not give it at home or on the collection plate on Sabbath? In this way, nothing would be consumed by expense. But the truth is, the money

IS GIVEN FOR SELF-GRATIFICATION

as much as the twenty-five cents paid for a dinner or the hearing of a lecture. If we are going to reckon all we spend upon ourselves as given to the cause of God, then not only do we give tithes, but some of us

give all we have. This would make the man who looks best after his own interests the most liberal towards God. Let us apply the same principle to ourselves. Here are some fathers who have sons just about to start out into the world for themselves. One is going to give his son a farm, or set him up in business, and he says to him, "Now, my son, I am going to give you a fair start, enough to make you comfortable. I ask no interest from you for the money I have given you, but I shall look for gratitude returns from you just to show your filial regard for me. The year you make little I shall look only for a trifle, and in a more prosperous year for a little more, and it will be all returned to you at my death." Now, suppose that son goes on and is favoured in his business and becomes very fond of social and intellectual treats, and spends four or five dollars a year on entertainments and then says: "I shall reckon that amount as my gratitude money to my father." I ask you, father, what would you think of the gratitude? In your son's heart you would think there was love for money, for entertainments, and for his father, in the order named. But we use our blessed Master worse. He gives us all we possess and asks from us gratitude money, and then some of us go and spend it on ourselves and reckon it to His account. Oh, what grace to bear with such insults! If I reckon my quarter, half dollar, or dollar, paid for an evening's entertainment, as given to God, why should you not consider those five dollars you paid for books, the hundred dollars you paid for a buggy, or the fifty dollars you spent on a pleasure trip, as offerings to the Lord's work? "Oh," says one, "the object is different, it is a worthy one. Then, if the object is a worthy one, it is deserving of your support without a tea-meeting. "Yes, but we use tea-meetings as a means." The means God appointed for Israel were far more simple and less expensive—direct giving. "But we know," says another, "that the whole amount cleared at a tea-meeting will be placed by the entertainment committee in the treasurer's hands, and go for church work." If, then, a company of men and women, known as "The Entertainment Committee," is so liberal as to give all the profits which its good management has made out of a tea-meeting, would it not be well for all the members in the congregation to take a lesson from such beneficence and contribute at least a *tenth* of all their other gains to the Lord's work?

(2) The second requirement in the injunction of the passage referred to is *direct* giving. "Speak unto the Children of Israel that they bring Me an offering." It was to the Lord the offering had to be made, not through the hand of the goddess of pleasure, but directly to His appointed servants. This is sure to follow willing giving. Let a man be interested in any work or object and he is willing to give to it, and once willing to give, he gives directly. Candidates for political honours do not suggest social gatherings to augment the treasury with quarters. No; there is a quicker and more satisfactory way of doing business. You give your sums, large or small, directly. And why? Because, the well-being of your party lies upon your heart. Much of the tens of thousands of dollars Canada spends annually at her agricultural and arts exhibitions is given willingly and directly, simply because men are interested. A man buys a farm, sets up business, or enters a profession. All take money, and he gives it directly. Why? Because he regards the farm, the business, or the profession worthy of himself and his means. But when we have churches to build, Gospel ordinances to maintain, and poor benighted heathen to evangelize, too often we are straitened, and if relief comes, far too frequently, it is by proxy. And why? Because, the good of Zion, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls do not weigh upon our hearts. Jesus did not think the ransom of our souls too dearly bought with the price of His own blood. Alas, alas! that professing Christians should ever think that salvation too dearly purchased by the direct and willing giving of their gold and silver! I know there will be perfect joy in heaven, but if there is anything one could imagine that would make a saint weep as he receives his golden crown and shining palm, it will be the remembrance that ever he needed a worldly allurements to induce him to give for his Master's honour. Never think of supporting Christ's cause in a way you would not like to be supported yourselves. I once was explaining to a brother clergyman the reason I did not attend his entertainment. I said I did not think it the right way of raising money for the Lord's work; to which he replied that he would

not object to his people making money for church work by entertainments as long as they would not

PAY HIS STIPEND IN THAT WAY.

And I venture to say there are very few of us but would enter the same protest if our congregations offered to support us by any such means. But are the offerings of the people for the supply of the Lord's servants any more sacred than the offerings for the erection of His Sanctuary. God's commands respecting the means for building the tabernacle were just as explicit and sacred as His injunctions for the maintenance of the priests. So should it be with us. Every department of the Church's work is holy, and we ought to support it as such.

The second of the passages quoted (Ex. xxxv. 20-21) says: "And all the congregation of the Children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle, and for all His service and for the holy garments." The first result was obedience to the divine command. This requires no words of comment. God's will in the matter of supply for the tabernacle was made known by Moses, and that will seems at once to have been regarded as the wisest and best, and the people's ready compliance with it is fully detailed in the remaining portion of the chapter. Then the next result was a very pleasing one to all the people. More than was necessary was at once and freely given. The complete cost of the tabernacle was covered, so that Moses' second orders were not to stir up delinquents but to ask the people to stay their offerings. "And Moses gave commandment and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying: Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing." That is so good, many words would spoil it. It is a verse we never would have seen in the Bible had Israel, like many to-day, disregarded God's command and adopted the modern method of paying for the tabernacle with the proceeds from public entertainments. I would rejoice to see every congregation of our land, of all denominations, following Israel's example for one year, and compare results with the tea-meeting system. If the tea-meeting system be the right one, one year's neglect of it will not kill it. For the honour of God, for the prosperity of the Church, for the good of Zion, for an example to the world, for our own spiritual growth and comfort, let us choose the Lord's appointed way for the prosecution of His work and the extension of His Kingdom.

OUR GREAT HOME MISSION WORK.

Rev. Dr. Cochrane, Convener of the Western Section of the Home Mission Committee, has sent us the following appeal for publication. It shows the necessity of liberal and immediate liberality, if our work in the older settled districts of Ontario and Quebec, is to go on as it has done for the last few years:

British Columbia, he says, is now calling upon us for men. It is very much in the position that Manitoba was, when in 1870 we began operations in the North-West. At that time our cause in Manitoba was small indeed compared with what it is to-day, but by the generous contributions of the Church in the older provinces, and the effective work done by our missionaries, "the little one has become a thousand." British Columbia, although perhaps it may never reach the position of Manitoba and the North-West, is deserving of help. It is now calling for aid, and we would be recreant to the call of Providence if we did not to the utmost of our ability respond to the demands made upon us. Letters in my possession from the Rev. J. S. Mackay, of New Westminster, the Rev. D. Fraser, of Victoria, and from members of our Church in other districts, plead earnestly for the Presbyterian Church in Canada to give them supply of Gospel ordinances. Whether the committee shall be able to do so or not, depends upon the returns made to the Treasurer by the 20th of March. To find suitable probationers and ministers who are willing to go is easy, as there are now several applications in the hands of the Convener.

That British Columbia is very soon to be settled by emigrants from Ontario and Quebec, as well as from Scotland and Ireland, is evident from the prominence given to the country in the daily papers. Correspondents from San Francisco and other cities in