

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME I

ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 26, 1899

No 26

NOTICE.

Subscribers to this paper who have found envelopes wrapped up in their paper, addressed to Rev. J. H. Hughes, with a perforated card in it for placing five ten cent pieces in, will please not use them in sending the fifty cents to pay for the paper, unless you register the letter. We fear that they are being tampered with somewhere on the way. Better send a postal note for fifty cents that is safer and cheaper. We hope that our friends who are behind with their subscriptions will please send them in soon, as we need the money to pay the printer. And be sure to sign your name, and give your post office address. Some have sent money but have given no names nor post office address, and some have sent notice that they do not want the paper but have not signed their names, and have not given their post office address. Now it is impossible for us to know who they are. We do not know who to credit the payment to nor do we know who it is that want their papers stopped where the name is not given.

Will those who have sent us letters without names or post office address please notify us by postal card. And if any one has sent us money since the beginning of this month enclosed in these envelopes found in their papers will you please let us know by postal card immediately as we have received none since the month came in.

Should Christians Pay Their Bills?

A good reasoner of an ethical turn of mind might strike out a strong case in the affirmative. Even Paul may be quoted as saying in a section of a sentence "owe no man anything." Perhaps he would not have been so bold if the credit system had been in vogue in his day, as it is now. There must be two sides to this question. else there would not be so marked a division among us. Christians are over much divided already, and by schisms of varied sorts are torn asunder, but it might clear up the situation if one more cleavage were made. Suppose we took rank in the face of the world as Bill-paying Christians and Nonbill-paying Christians; it would help to save the faith from imputations which the wicked world are too ready to cast upon the fair name of the Church. If the non-paying section openly declared it was not within the circle of Christian ethics to pay what they owe, they would gain a wide reputation for frankness, and be delivered from the charge of hypocrisy, now so freely made. The world loves honest speech, and would applaud their action. Then the other sort would not feel compromised by the peculiar ideas and customs of the rest, who hold that creditors have no claims upon them, and they would enjoy a monopoly of the esteem given those who hold and practice the virtue of honesty. The reason why we think there must be divergent opinions among us about paying bills is the fact that many say it is just as hard to collect money from Christians as from the heathen all around us. We never heard of a merchant opening an account with a man on the basis of his being a church member, and therefore a good payer. If reports, floating about town, in stores and banks, are half true, there must be many who have revised their creed and left honesty out of the category of virtues. Even our spiritual teachers, who are patterns in all things pertaining to godliness, and whose good works and still better speeches, are known and read of all men, are sometimes consigned to the collector's hands, and their names scratched off the merchant's list of honest men. If Christians, divided as we suggest, into Paying and Non-paying sections, the Non-paying would have no difficulty in procuring suitable ministers in full sympathy with their practices. It would be a searching test for the churches to have a consensus of opinion for grocers, bakers, milk-

men and tradesmen of all sorts and sizes as to whether church-members are safer debtors than others, and pay with greater certainty and promptness. It is a commonly stated fact that business people do not like to trust churches because of their slowness and indifference in paying. This is a burning shame upon the financial officers of the churches. The office books of religious papers afford a commentary red with shame on the slackness of their subscribers in paying their debts. Some let their subscriptions run on for years unpaid, and if requested to do what honest people generally do without asking, they exhibit their Christianity by writing ugly letters of resentment. It matters not to them that owners and workers on their papers suffer a thousand inconveniences and losses. The unpaid subscriptions of Christians who do not hold to the principle of paying bills are hampering the press of every denomination more than anything else to-day.

The other day we chanced to see the report of the American Baptist Publication Society, in which was stated that a good deal more than \$100,000 were in outstanding accounts. It appears to be nearer \$125,000. Nearly every dollar of this vast amount is owing by a Baptist Church, or a member of a church. They take the Society's books and papers, and let years go by without paying. Many large churches do this, and many individuals well off do the same. And to request payment is to give offence, and to be met with threats to go to non-denominational houses. We heard the other day that ethical preaching prevails; if so, ethical conduct is not the fruit of it. It would be the beginning of better things if our Baptist Hand-Book were compiled along the lines of ethics, and printed in parallel columns the churches under the heading Bill-paying and Non-Bill-paying Churches. Under which head would your church be found—under which would your name, good reader, be found?

—Baptist Commonwealth.

Suspicious People.

One of the most unfortunate habits of mind with which a man can be afflicted is that of suspiciousness,—a disposition to distrust one's fellow men. Of course, a certain amount of circumspection is needful in going through the world; but to treat it habitually as a place of ambushade, to be always on one's guard against trickery or fraud, to be evermore shy, suspicious and distrustful, to have a lynx's eye for spots and blemishes in other men, while, at the same time, blind to their excellences, is inconsistent with the Golden Rule, and is certain to provoke a retributive sentiment on the part of those whom this practice wrongs. It is well known that there is an instinct which leads every man to take his own mind for a microcosm, or mirror of human nature; and, therefore, our opinions of others are determined almost entirely by the passions that sway ourselves, and we believe only in those motives of action of which we are ourselves capable.

An ambitious man most keenly and unerringly detects in other men the vice to which he is most prone, and with which he is most familiar himself. He thinks that the great aim of all men is to gain place or power. Does a man boast or threaten much? He is generally a coward, who thinks that all his fellow men are governed by their fears, as he knows himself to be, and so he works by intimidation. The more exalted a man's motives, the higher regard he will have for others; for it is himself that he sees in them. "The root of guilt flowers in suspicion;" but the good man is not only willing, but anxious, to think well of his fellows, and it is always with pain that he is compelled, by facts too flagrant to be overlooked, to distrust or think meanly of them. "The feeling of distrust," says Racine, "is always the last which a great mind acquires; he is deceived for a long time."

There is a cold-blooded maxim of selfish worldly men, that, if one would get on in the world, he must be suspicious, at first, of all men with whom he mingles in society. "Treat every man as if he were a rogue, till he proves himself honest." Were this a condition of success, success would not be worth attaining. The true policy, on the contrary, is to treat every man as honest until your commerce with him has proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, that he is a rogue. It is true that, by acting on this policy we may be occasionally cozened; but, in the long run, we shall find our faith in our fellow men richly rewarded. The most successful persons of our acquaintance have been men who were free from suspiciousness,—large-minded men, "open of eye and speech, open of heart and hand," who would have scorned to act upon the detestable maxim we have just quoted. Some years ago, in Paris, M. Lafitte rose from the condition of a penniless clerk to be the great leading banker in his time, and one of the most eminent public men in France, although it was notorious that the generosity and trustfulness of his nature made him dupe of every man that sought to impose upon him. His case reminds one of the saying of the knavish Jenkinson in "The Vicar of Wakefield," about his simple, kind-hearted neighbor, Flamborough, whom he had contrived to cheat in one way or another once every year; "and yet," he said, "Flamborough has been regularly growing in riches, while I have come to poverty and a jail."

Considering how many enemies they conjure up in their careers, the successes of the mean, suspicious, distrustful men are far more surprising than those of the generous and confiding. Where, with competent prudence and skill, there is a genuine, instinctive suavity and faith in other men and practical liberality proportional to one's means, all works well, and ultimate triumph is sure; but the prosperity of the scrub, who suspects every man of being a rogue till he proves himself honest can never be other than a miracle when it occurs, and, far more likely, it is strained after in vain.

I Have Promised

It is said of Blucher, that when he was marching to help Wellington at Waterloo, his troops faltered. "It can't be done," said they. "It must be done," was his answer. "I have promised to be there,—promised, do you hear? You would not have me break my word." He was at Waterloo to good purpose; he would not be hindered, for his promise was given.

We praise such faithfulness; we should think little of one who did not exhibit it. Shall the Lord God Almighty fail in his promise? No, he will move heaven and earth, and shake the universe, rather than be behindhand with his word. He seems to say: "It must be done. I have promised,—promised, do you hear?" Sooner than his promise should fail, he spared not his own Son.

Looking Over Trouble.

It is said that John Wesley was once walking with a brother, who related to him his troubles, saying he did not know what he should do. They were at that moment passing a stone fence to a meadow, over which a cow was looking. "Do you know," asked Wesley, "why that cow looks over the wall?" "No," replied the one in trouble. "I will tell you," said Wesley; "because she cannot look through it, and that is what you must do with your troubles—look over and above them."

If you meet a man who tells you he lives without sin, keep your hand on your pocket book.