

THE CENTURY FUND,

AND

THE METHOD OF MOSES. Ex. xxv. 1. 2.

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Our Church has determined to raise a Century Fund of one million dollars. The resolution to do this has not been hastily arrived at. This amount is required for the work which God has given our Church to do. The opening of a new century presents the occasion and the opportunity for raising it. The past years have been laden with blessings for us as a church, and as a people. "God has done great things for us, whereof we are glad," and all that He has done for us is a call to us to do more for Him. We desire to lay this offering upon His altar, as a recognition of His mercy and goodness toward us as a people, and as an act of consecration to the great work which opens before us, as we enter on this new century of promise and of opportunity.

This great effort, under the blessing of God, will lift us out of our devotion to earthly things. It will bind in stronger bonds of union the several portions of our far extending church. It will place all our enterprises and schemes upon a stable financial basis.

It is not a sentimental undertaking, but one to which the voices of Providence are loudly calling us. He who has put it into the heart of the church will enable us to carry it out. We are abundantly able to raise the amount, and in the raising of it we will find fulfilled to us His Word, "Them that honor me I will honor." In the raising of it we will find that the tone and spirit of the whole church will be raised, and all the local calls which are made upon us will be more willingly and liberally met, because of the encouragement and inspiration received from the successful carrying out of this great undertaking.

Not in boastfulness then, not in rivalry, or ambition, but in humble dependence on Divine direction, and in sincere consecration of ourselves to the service of our Divine Master, let us enter upon it, asking God to put us in the mind to do it lovingly and willingly for Him.

I desire in the following paper to point out from the Word of God, the spirit in which this work should be entered upon, and we find an instructive command, with regard to a somewhat similar undertaking, in Exodus xxv. 1. 2: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel; that they take for me an offering; of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take My offering."

It is a great satisfaction to get a plain word of direction from God Himself in any duty. Moses in all his work enjoyed that privilege. It was not easy for him to go astray. He had always the word of direction from God to go by. He was glad to have it. He did not want to take his own way. He was too great and good a man to seek that.

When, therefore, there was any important business to be done, any new undertaking to be entered upon, any difficulty to be overcome, he, in the first place, asked counsel of God. It was after that, he called together his elders and managers, (and he had some splendid men among them) and laid the business before them. And, no doubt, as occasion required, he also admitted to his councils and enlisted in his aid, "the wise hearted women," the "women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom." (Ex. xxxv. 22. 25.) Then with one mind and one heart the Church went forward.

THE COMMAND RECEIVED.

Moses had been on the Mount with God for forty days and forty nights, and of such an interview we expect some great work to issue. During that time God commanded him to "make for Him a sanctuary, that He might dwell among His people." And as we read, we will observe that although the tabernacle itself was to be but a small building, yet the building of it in that beautiful and generous manner in which God likes all work for Him to be done, rendered it a very large undertaking.

Moses, like God's ministers and people now, when brought face to face with some great call of duty, must have wondered where the material was to come from in the wilderness to do this work with; the gold, and the silver, and the precious stones, and the brass, and the fine-twined linen; and where the genius and mechanical skill were to be found to put the gifts of the people to proper use.

God knows the anxieties of His servants on such occasions. Therefore, He told Moses, as He tells us, what we are to do, (ch. xxxv.) Some time after this, when the people were assembled for Divine worship, Moses informed them, of the command which he had received, and made the following intimation: "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord, of every man whose heart maketh him willing, ye shall take my offering. Let him bring it an offering of the Lord, gold and silver and brass," etc.

The announcement went on to give particulars of what was required. It was asked of "every man whose heart made him willing to