

enter fully into the inner life of the Holy Spirit, that which is the real life of the loyal believer, to whom the sacrificial, redeeming work of Jesus Christ is not a fact of supremest significance.

Nevertheless, conviction of sin may be far from demonstrative in its self-manifestations. It may be genuine when it is that experience of actual agony through which some, especially in times past, used to go. It may be equally sincere and trustworthy when it merely takes the form of a calm admission of sinfulness and a firm, purposeful resolve to live henceforth in Christ and for his sake. By its fruit may each example of it be tested, and no other test avails.

One fact is certain. The prevalent type of piety varies somewhat from generation to generation, and now one feature of Christian experience becomes conspicuous and then some other. But there never was, nor will there ever be, any true conversion to the service of God which wholly lacks the element of conviction of sin.—*Congregationalist*.

#### THE GRACE OF GIVING.

REV. WALTER B. VASSAR, HAMILTON, N.Y.

He who gives grudgingly has not learned the first letter of the alphabet of benevolence. Charity, a virtue of the heart, not of the hands—the most charming of the graces—is likewise the most blessed.

"In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is Charity."

We cannot be said to possess the grace of benevolence until it has become a habit of the life. It is a grace only in a very limited sense, until it is more easy as well as more blessed to give than to receive. And there is no grace in which the church is more deficient. No good cause would go a-begging, no missionary society would need to make its wants known twice, in fact there would never be any strain anywhere, if instead of having to depend on uncertain impulse, we could rely upon a fixed habit of life.

How shall so good a habit be acquired? It goes without saying that first the grace of God must be in the heart, but this grace must needs display itself in the most intelligent way, and intelligence is a matter of growth. For many there will be seen an aptitude here as in all else, but there are those who are not apt to learn; shall they remain in ignorance? Not so in other training, and it is training that tells. In cases of sickness we call now for none but a trained nurse, and they are in great demand. So to be efficiency in benevolent ways as in other affairs of life.

Many a man finds he can now bestow a thousand dollars with more ease than he did the first dime, but the thousand would not be given had not a dime preceded it. We are beginning to acquire the alphabet of the knowledge of benevolence—have learned the letter A—when we make our first gift.

But when the child is making its contribution to the Sabbath school it should be as soon as possible out of its own money, or money it calls it own; not simply to be the agent of the parent. To act as the agent of another can scarcely make for benevolence any more than some one has said, the ground can become fertile by water passing over it in a lead pipe. It is but the semblance of giving when the child receives from the parent the pittance which it passes on to the beggar at the door. Parents deceive themselves in thinking that in some way the child is involved and disciplined in the childish impulse. Wait and see if the child goes to its little bank and removes a cent from its hoard. That will test it.

When God our Father gave us Jesus, He gave us Himself. Herein lies the efficacy of the atonement. When we pass out to a needy cause our precious gift, or our life, then we are growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, who, for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty we might become rich,

"For his bounty  
There was no winter in 't: an autumn 'twas  
That grew the more by reaping His delights  
Were dolphin like."

#### VACANT CHARGES AND THEIR SUPPLY

The Presbytery of Toronto announces a Conference for Tuesday the 22nd inst., with the subject at the head of this article as the topic for discussion. The Committee has chosen a live issue, and the time is ripe for discussion. The supply of vacant charges has degenerated into a scramble for an opportunity to gain a hearing, and the methods used to secure that opportunity are such that a man runs great risk of sacrificing his self-respect to obtain it. There are exceptions, both in the vacant charges and in those seeking supply, but that which should be normal is becoming exceptional.

It is needless to give examples. The consciences of some will call up instances, the experience of others, who have been Moderator of vacant charges, will supply more. In the course of conversation with one of these Moderators, it was stated recently that for one vacant charge under his care there were seventy applicants. The prevalent note in the applications seemed to be "It is one of the best charges in the market." Then followed commendations of the candidate, open or implied, *ad nauseam*. We assume that the candidate for the position, for one can call him nothing more fitting, carries the same spirit into his ministrations when he appears before the people to conduct services upon the Lord's Day. It is not preaching, it is not the declaration of the Evangel, it is an effort to make a favorable impression, and to that end text has been chosen and truth is presented, and public service is conducted. The pulpit may be prostituted to a hustings from which a candidate seeks the suffrages of the congregation!

A train of evils is the unhappy result. If the Moderator of Session be a small man, the temptation to exercise patronage is irresistible. Indeed in the majority of settlements, a little root of bitterness that shews itself at the beginning of the new pastorate is the statement that the minister secured the position because of patronage and favoritism more or less freely exercised. Some congregations expect it, and ask that a certain man shall be appointed Moderator during the vacancy. He has influence and will secure them their man, who may also be the man The Head of the Church has chosen, but at any rate he is the man for them. We heard of one set of commissioners who praised their interim-Moderator effusively on the day they were presenting a call before their Presbytery, because he had so effectively weeded out the list of applicants, and sent them only eligible men, *whom they liked*.

The congregation also suffers. The spirit of the candidate communicates itself to the men and women before him. They wait to be pleased, and if they are not, that decides the question. They profess to believe that the Great Head of the Church has already decided upon the servant whom He shall place over this flock, and that He is looking to them to carry out His choice yet with supreme indifference to the will of the Divine Master, they dismiss thought of a man because he did not please them. The communication of real spiritual truth under these circumstances is all but an impossibility, and there is little wonder that many a newly settled minister faces a great congregation with a spiritual life at its lowest ebb.

The man who candidates suffers most. If he be a man, a Christian man, keenly sensitive to the importance of his Master's business, and eager to carry out his Master's purpose, he will suffer in his race with other men. His modest application will often be set aside, because it has come to be the custom to attend to a candidate's application because of its insistence. This man is not insistent, he cannot yet be clamorous, he will not degrade the sacred calling yet by bringing pressure to bear, or parade his own qualifications. He offers himself, and waits. He usually continues to wait, "till there is an opening," for at rare intervals there is a dearth of candidates. Should he become more bold, necessity being his excuse, it is he knows at the expense of his better nature. He may trample upon it so far as to become a professional candidate, or he may seek employment in some other work. Upon the church rests the blame in that case of driving from his true place one who in Christ has chosen to be His ambassador. Can we not remedy the evil.

We are indebted to the *Presbyterian Messenger* of Pittsburg, Pa., for the very interesting articles "The Ruin of India," by Rev. Dr. Kellogg which appeared in our issues of Jan. 27th, and Feb. 3rd.