

Christian Giving.

ARTICLE NO. XI.

Farmers very frequently excuse themselves for not giving more liberally to the Church schemes on the plea that it is difficult for them to obtain money for marketable produce. Even wealthy farmers are heard sometimes to say: "Oh, I would gladly give something, but really I have not the money; I have sheep and cattle but I cannot sell them to advantage, and consequently I cannot give." This manner of excusing one's self may seem plausible but it is not honest. If a man has not the money, let him go to his flock of sheep and pick out one of the best and sell it at the earliest opportunity and give the proceeds to Christ; let him go to his herd of cattle and make choice of a good animal which he can sell to the best possible advantage and throw the price into the Lord's Treasury. Let him go to his granary and measure out a number of bushels of wheat or oats and consecrate the same to the Lord. Till men honestly endeavor to meet the demands of justice and to comply with the requirements of the Gospel, it is useless for them to talk about the difficulty of obtaining money for religious purposes.

THE PLEA OF POVERTY.

Another plea that is often urged with much effect is that of poverty. "He is so poor he cannot give." If a man's poverty has not come through any fault of his own the plea may doubtless be a good one; but if his poverty is the result of idleness and carelessness, or of extravagance and folly, it will not avail for him to say, I am so poor I cannot give. It is a sin for a person to be poor, if he could have honestly and consistently been rich. A man has no right to misimprove the time and talents and opportunities which God has given to him.

It is most marvellous how men who read the Bible and who profess to be

Christians do excuse themselves for not giving more money for the support of religious ordinances at home, and for missionary operations in heathen lands. Looking at their comfortable houses and large barns, their fine horses and elegant carriages, their extensive farms and prosperous business concerns, and hearing them preaching and praying, talking and singing, and then watching them as they drop a twenty-five or fifty cent piece into the collection for the Home or Foreign Missions, one is forced to the conclusion that there is a strange discrepancy between their profession and practice. The world may well ask whether those Christians are sincere in their professions? Are they honest?

The truth is there is too much

DISHONESTY IN THE CHURCH I

Dishonesty, do you say? Yes, dishonesty. Immediately after the day of Pentecost, when the Christians were "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," how readily did they sell their property and bring the proceeds to the apostles. There was no need of earnest and oft-repeated appeals then to call forth their liberality. There was one man, however, who, while he was anxious to be remembered among the disciples and to hold as high a head as did the others, was so dishonest as to try to deceive and cheat the Lord. The overpowering love of gold prompted to that selfish and dishonorable proceeding which resulted in death. Ananias has his followers still: so has Sapphira. They may be found in every congregation. They solemnly promise and covenant to "give of their substance as God may prosper them for the advancement of His cause," but they do not even try to keep the covenant or to fulfil the promise. Why is it that our Church treasury is empty? Why is it that earnest appeals come from the East and from the West for missionaries to preach the Gospel to the heathen, and our Church authorities have to reply: "We cannot send you missionaries?" New fields are opening up; China, India,