

paration for a higher and a better, a nobler and a more enduring one. This, our short span of existence, is but the term of our minority; and every event of our being here, whether apparently prosperous or adverse, shall send onward its permanent impress, when it shall come to pass that we are called upon to scale the awful barricade that separates the things of time and sense from the invisible realities of eternity. As Bishop Butler remarks, "Upon the whole, such a character and such qualifications are necessary for a mature state of life in the present world, as nature alone does in nowise bestow; but has put it upon us in great part to acquire in our progress from one stage of life to another, from childhood to mature age; put it upon us to acquire them, by giving us capacities of doing it, and by placing us in the beginning of life, in a condition fit for it. And this is a general analogy to our condition in the present world, as in a state of moral discipline for another. It is in vain then to object against the credibility of the present life's being intended for this purpose, that all the trouble and the danger, unavoidably accompanying such discipline, might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures, and the characters, which we were to be. For we experience that what we were to be was to be the effect of what we would do, and that the general conduct of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so." And, therefore, every event in the present life is to be regarded not as possessing any final consequence or importance; but as helping to give a character to the future life yet to be revealed—a life of which no information but the most scanty had been given, until the Great Teacher, the extraordinary Visitor from Heaven, lighted on these realms where death had reigned so long in all the triumphs of extended empire. He came to destroy death, to depose nature from its conceived immutability; and to point us and to fit us for a world whither He himself went on before to prepare the glory. St. Paul speaks of in the Epistle, and at length to reveal it in His faithful people.

With prospects and duties, and with qualifications to be secured such as these, we have enlarged motives to the practice of that heavenborn virtue which "droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, upon the place beneath," and which "is an attribute to God Himself," an attribute wonderfully exhibited in the Incarnation and Death of Christ. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Here a fact is stated; and those who are not moved by it to adopt the course of life it naturally and properly suggests, no conception of thought, no eloquence of words, nothing that can be added, can possibly reach the heart. Such a gift of God, such a condescension of Christ—such love, such benevolence, such mercy—must speak for itself or none can speak for it. Such an exhibition, St. Paul might well say, "constrains us," bears us along with it, impels us towards the same objects, identifies

us with the love of Christ to men, and the glory of God in their salvation. Such an example of compassionate benevolence, of enlargement of heart—once perceived and felt, absorbs the whole soul. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" in all His gifts, but more especially in the gift of His Son. In the sublime *mystery*, (for we must most strenuously contend for abundant mysteries, still existing in the Christian religion, notwithstanding the vain babbling of foolish men); in the sublime mystery of godliness, God "manifest in the flesh," the greatest extremes and contrarieties are exhibited; the loftiest grandeur and the lowliest humiliation; majesty and meanness the most opposite to each other; the highest and most glorious excellence and the lowest degradation. And the proper effect of such a manifestation is an assimilation of our hearts as closely as possible to this Divine standard, and then the teaching of the Gospel for the communion office for this day will be abundantly exemplified.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS INSTEAD OF PEW RENTS.

IT must be claimed for the system of weekly offerings that at least they are scriptural; and to those who claim that the Bible is the only authority they recognize, and who even profess to worship the Bible, that ought to be sufficient. All Christians, however, while they may not go so far as that, agree in regarding the Bible as containing their rule of faith and practice. The principle we allude to is contained in such passages as, "Freely ye have received, freely give." "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not;" "Every one according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." There is, however, one passage in which not only the principle is stated, but the mode also: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him." The idea in the Apostle's mind was that those to whom he wrote ought weekly to set apart a certain portion of their income for the support of Christ's cause. It was only by an accident, arising out of the Apostle's absence, that they were enabled to pay the money away every week. In the present day, as Christian people come every first day of the week to God's house, there is no reason why, instead of "laying by in store" their weekly contribution, they should not leave it every Sunday at the church.

The system for which we contend makes giving an act of worship. It is an offering made to Almighty God; it is presented on His altar, as it is intended to promote His cause and to aid in the maintenance of His service.

It redounds to the spiritual benefit of the giver. He feels the truth of the Lord's declaration: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." When we give to God we, so to speak, invest for ourselves; and the returns which God makes to us are sometimes of a

temporal nature, while He always gives a spiritual blessing. The man who gives cheerfully and liberally, and from a right motive, to the cause of Christ thereby insures himself so far against that direst of all misfortunes, the bankruptcy of the soul.

It follows from this that the man is wisest who gives frequently. A man might as well offer a very long prayer once a quarter, and refrain from supplicating God's mercy on all other occasions, as perform this other act of worship, which consists in giving to God, only once a quarter. If it is well to pray often and regularly, it must also be well to give often and regularly; and he who does both cannot fail of receiving the richest blessings from the hand of God.

Now, if giving is spiritually beneficial, it follows that it should be *individually* practised. Religion is an individual matter. Each individual must believe for himself, each must pray for himself, and each must give for himself. Then, too, individual giving is enjoined upon us: "Let every one of you lay by him in store;" not fathers of families alone, but each and every member of the family. And, moreover, to teach children to give from their earliest days secures an interest in the house of God, and cultivates in them a habit of generosity and a renunciation of the purely selfish principle.

Where properly carried out, the system is sure to succeed. It has been tried in the poorest churches, and always with the best results. The best solution of all the problems of Church finance is this: "Let every one give regularly and frequently, and as God has prospered him."

THE DUTY OF MUTUAL TOLERATION BY PARTIES WITHIN THE CHURCH.

THE late Dr. Hook, Dean of Chichester, better known probably by the vast work of Church extension which he achieved, in earlier days, as Vicar of Leeds, has left behind him many very valuable discourses, some of which have been collected and edited, in two volumes, by the Rev. Walter Hook, Rector of Porlock. The earliest of the series dates back so far as the year 1822, and to the principles therein advocated the author steadfastly adhered, through the perplexing times which followed, before his labours came to an end. Dr. Hook was an independent thinker—a brave and honest man; he combined what are called High Church views with Liberal views in politics; a combination which may fairly be regarded as tending to a happy equipoise between opposing errors; on the one hand, guarding the defender of the Established Church against Erastian tendencies, and, on the other, tempering the impetuosity of the democratic spirit by a reverent acknowledgement of the duty of obedience to the prescriptions and authorities of the Kingdom of Christ. The collected discourses bear the title of "The Church and its Ordinances," and although many long neglected points of doctrine or duty, of which the writer treats, are now happily familiar to the minds of all intelli-