

owe to God? Under the old dispensation God required the tenth of the increase, and He certainly requires as much as this under the new. A less proportion was never heard of in any age of the Church. Even many of the heathen gave a tenth of their possessions for the promotion of their idolatrous worship. The offerings of the Church, including the personal tithe, supported all the poor up to the time of the Reformation. It was Queen Elizabeth who was obliged to make the first poor-rate—the result of the dissolution of the monasteries. And what a tale is told of the princely offerings of the Middle Ages by their splendid architectural remains! Does not the testimony of that age form a noble contrast to the grudging spirit of our times, when men will give only when they have their feelings wrought upon; when the amount obtained, we will say, for example, for missions, depends very materially upon the ability of the sermon, or the eloquence of the speech at the annual missionary meeting! Compare our religious societies advertising, agitating, begging, almost cringing, for the sake of an income—compare them with the Macedonians pressing round the Apostle St. Paul, and begging him with much entreaty, to accept the gift; and say whether the statement that “covetousness is the besetting sin of the modern Christian Church” is not a true charge.

The immediate welfare of Christ's kingdom, the Church, is a sacred trust solemnly committed to each individual member thereof. It does not rest entirely upon the vestry, or upon a few prominent members, but it rests upon all alike who have been signed with the sign of the cross. Not a single person can shirk the responsibility without being guilty of sin. Religion, while it is free, was never intended to be cheap. We must remember that there are some offerings that God spurns and despises. He will not accept the sacrifice which is cheap, which costs us nothing; for it is no sacrifice at all. God requires us to give so liberally that we must feel that we have made a sacrifice. What an awful charge God makes against those who withhold their tithes from Him; “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me.”

Might not God use the same language to many in the Church to-day and justly charge them with robbery—people who do not pay God what they owe Him, who keep back all that they can and pay only that which, for decency's sake, they are obliged to pay? They play the role of the delinquent debtor in the Church of God, and they will be visited with a curse, as surely as the business man who fails to pay all his obligations will, in due time go to the wall. The curse, very often, is in the man's own heart. His life must be as barren of good as the broad field which receives the rain and the sunshine, but gives back no verdure or fertility. Barrenness is a curse in itself. It requires not the judgment of God. With the means of making himself and others happy, such a man lives only to be despised and miserable. The poor never bless him. The widow and the fatherless never mention him as their friend or benefactor; and as for his church dues, he begins to practice economy on them first of all: and when he pays, long after it has become due, even his pew rent for which he has bargained, he flatters himself that he is performing a beautiful act of charity.

God demands the tenth. That is the minimum, and that man only who gives more than the tenth can lay a just claim to being generous. If God demands the tenth, your available income is diminished by a tenth and you must live accordingly. You must not practice economy upon God. You must not plead that you have a certain position to keep up. If your position is more expensive than you can afford, you must descend from your position and take

up a lower one, and live within your income. You must dress less expensively; you must live more moderately. You must not reduce your payments to God to indulge your tastes and extravagancies. You cannot plead with God that you have a certain position to keep up. You cannot plead a human and conventional arrangement as a set-off to a divine decree. The conscience that will do that must be seared with a hot iron. The judgment of our lives is being made up here and now. And it is being made up very accurately. Figures cannot lie. What we give to God, and how we give it, tells how much we love God. Remember that what you give is not given to the minister, or to the congregation, or to the Episcopal Church, but it is given to God and rightfully belongs to Him as a debt from you to Him.

No man was ever the poorer for what he gave from a pure motive for the glory of God and the good of His Church. And it is only when we give so as to feel it, so as to make self-denial necessary, that we know the full luxury of giving, the value of property as a means whereby may be ministered to us the most exalted happiness. In religion, as in other things, God has wisely ordered it, that if we will not work, neither shall we eat; if we will not do our duty we shall not be blessed. The Christian who never loses sight of self, whose sole anxiety is about his own hope and welfare, who puts forth no earnest efforts for the Church or for others, will find his religion very barren of comfort. The more we do to bless others the more we ourselves are blessed. While watering others, our own souls are refreshed. The less selfish, the more Christ-like is our character, the more will our graces flourish. The active, working, painstaking, self-denying, liberal Christian is always blessed; his hope is always bright, his faith strong, and his soul joyful in God; while the indolent, ease taking, selfish, penurious professor is always complaining.

NEWS FROM THE HOME FIELD.

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

AMHERST.—The long silence on the part of your correspondent from this parish has certainly not been caused by any lethargy in the work of the Church, for that goes on as methodically as usual. On Ash Wednesday services were held morning and evening. The first Sunday in Lent there was an early celebration at 8 o'clock, matins at 11 o'clock, and sermon by Rev. H. A. Harley, Rector of St. James Church, Picton, which was full of chaste and beautiful language, delivered with all the grace of a true orator, and listened to with rapt attention. At Evensong Rev. D. Bliss was the preacher. Through the indefatigable energy of Rev. V. E. Harris, Vicar, a mission was opened some time ago at Fort Lawrence, about two miles from this parish, which has been successfully carried on, and on the First Sunday in Lent we saw a tangible proof of his work in the opening of the pretty little chapel of “St. Alban's the Martyr.” At 11 o'clock there were special prayers, matins, sermon, and a celebration of the Holy Communion, the Vicar officiating. At three o'clock, the Litany and short addresses by Revs. C. F. Wiggins, H. A. Harley and H. Howe. Evensong at 7, and sermon by Rev. H. A. Harley. Offertories throughout the day for the building fund. Special services were also held on the four following days, viz: Monday, at 7, Rev. J. R. S. Parkinson; Tuesday at 7, Rev. Chas. Wilson; Wednesday, at 7, Rev. H. H. Pitman; Thursday, at 7, Rev. S. Gibbons. The interior of this neat little chapel is finished in birch, juniper, ash, spruce and pine. The cornice, crestings and belts are imitation cherry and walnut. The wood work was done by Higgs Bro's., of River Philip, and reflected credit on the firm. The staining and varnishing by Mitchell and Stuart. The seats are free.

The Vicar and laity are to be congratulated upon the result of their self-denying labours.

DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON.

St. JOHN.—Rev. Mr. Lloyd, of Toronto, the new rector of the Rotheray church, has arrived, and will enter on his duties immediately. His wife and two children came with him. He was chaplain of the Queen's Own Regiment, and very popular.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—SIR—Will you be good enough to allow me to publicly thank Mrs. Medley, of Fredericton, for a gift of linen for the Holy Table in St. Luke's, Baie Verte, and also to thank the committee of the S. P. C. K., in the Diocese of Fredericton (Rev. J. O. Crisp, secretary), for their grant of ten dollars worth of books towards a Sunday school library for Baie Verte. Those who are interested in the work we have taken in hand to do will be glad to learn that we have very good congregations at Baie Verte, at Port Elgin and at Tidnish, the last place being in the Diocese of Nova Scotia. Yours very truly,

C. A. FARRER.

DIOCESE OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL.—St. Martin's—The Rector of this Parish, the Rev. G. O. Troop, as well in his Lenten pastoral as in his sermon on the Sunday preceding Lent, referred to the question of free seats and expressed his conviction that all the sittings in God's House should be free from any rental, saying that his honest conviction was ‘it is morally wrong to rent sittings in God's House. The sense of this wrong has troubled me ever since I entered upon the ministry of this parish, and my conscience refuses to allow me to endure the reproach any longer. I cannot continue to minister among you unless all payments towards the support of the Church are left to the voluntary offerings of the people.’ He suggested in place of the pew renting system, the following plan:

1. That all members of the congregation should continue to occupy by common consent their accustomed sittings.
2. That strangers should as usual be shown to seats by the sidemen.
3. That no member of the congregation should have the right to object should he find his own usual seat occupied by a stranger.
4. That Mutual Christian Courtesy should take the place of legal right in the occupancy of the sittings.
5. That the ‘Envelope system,’ (so called) should be adopted to meet the financial loss of the pew rents; that is to say:—
6. That each member of the congregation be asked of his own free will to contribute a definite sum, varying in amount according to ability, towards the necessary expenses of the Church.
7. That as far as possible this sum should be presented in weekly instalments through the offertory as given to God.
8. That each contributor should be provided with a numbered envelope in which to enclose his weekly offering.
9. That a systematic account of the issue and return of these envelopes should be kept either by the Financial Warden or an officer appointed for the purpose.

A special Vestry meeting was called for the evening of the 24th, to consider the Rector's suggestion, and at that meeting the proposal was unanimously agreed to, and St. Martin's will hereafter be ranked amongst the number of free seat churches.

Great satisfaction has been expressed at this result, and some seem to regard it as phenomenal, and forget that the Church of St. John the Evangelist, of which the Rev. E. Wood, M. A., is Rector, has been from its very commencement