

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CHARITY.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." (Ecc. 11:1).

The writer of Ecclesiastes is speaking of the damper which often rains upon our deeds of charity. We say familiarly of many acts of benevolence: "It is just throwing money into the sea." In the days of this writer that saying must have been almost proverbial, for he describes charity by an equivalent expression. "Cast thy bread upon the waters." He admits that benevolence is a throwing of money into the sea—the casting of it out into a sphere of uncertainty. Yet, in spite of that, he bids us throw, he does so on the ground that, though the sea is a sphere of uncertainty, it is not a sphere of hopelessness; many things which are laid on its bosom come back to us again. He tells us that we shall find our bread of charity "after many days." I understand him to mean, "after many castings." I do not think the idea is so much that of time as of repeated effort. What I take him to say is this: "You are committing your charities to a very uncertain medium, and the large majority of them will probably bear no fruit. But out of a thousand scattered seeds some few will fructify. Out of the many to whom your charity may be in vain, there will be at least two or three to whom it will bring blessing, and perhaps these two or three may be more powerful than would have been all the rest put together. Cast the many seeds for the sake of the two or three." I agree with the writer of Ecclesiastes. I hold that charity is always an act of faith—that it must be bestowed in the absence of certainty. I hold that it must be tested by its power to endure many clouds, by its ability to withstand ninety-nine failures for the sake of the hundredth case which is to prove a success. I know a man, intimately who has been periodically solicited for loans of money during a long term of years and who has generally acceded to the request. Of these loans he can only recall one instance of repayment; but the instance is that of a boy whom he relieved in an emergency, and who has lived to be a comfort to his family. The one success has compensated for many failures. The bread which has been cast upon the waters has come back only in fragments; but the fragments have been so precious that they have justified the cost.

My soul, let thy charity be the child of thy faith and hope! Never desist from love through despair of life! Do not imagine that the value of a spiritual harvest depends on the amount of the bread! There were many babes in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the king, and doubtless much bread was cast upon the waters for their sustenance. Yet I am told that only one of these reached manhood; the rest were the victims of Herod. What then? Was the faith of the Israelites in vain? No. Who was that one babe of Bethlehem that reached maturity? It was a life whose single force was to turn the current of history, whose single energy was to make all things new. Say not that thy work is wasted though thy charity has rescued but one. Hast thou measured the strength that may lie in one! There was only one struck by the light at Damascus; but that one was Paul. There was only one gained by the mission of Philip; but that one stood close to royalty. Often in Samaria thou standest by the well alone, and there seems no response to the thirst of the solitary heart. Do not go away! I see one coming. It is only one; there is no multitude with her. Yet she may be

more influential than all that have passed by on the other side. Wait for her, O my soul! Though she is but one, wait for her! Though thou art weary, wait for her! Though the well is deep and the gain seems small, wait for her! Though she comes only by accident and knows not of thy presence, wait for her! Her coming may be the return of the prayers thou hast cast upon the waters.—George Matheson.

PRAYER.

O Lord, have mercy upon us! Multiply thy loving kindness towards us and comfort us with new supplies. Where there is special sorrow let there be special gladness also; where the grave has been dug under the hearthstone, let there be a great filling up of vacant spaces by a renewed and enlarged vision of Thyself. Then shall men not seek the living among the dead, but say over their very graves—Our loved ones are not here: they are risen. We bless thee for bright example, for words remembered with sweet thankfulness, for patience in trial, for heroism in difficulty, and for the gentle charity that added new beauty to life. The Lord remember the bereaved and the sorrow-stricken and the sad, and give them brightness in the night-time—yea, a great multitude of stars, and one brightened than the rest promising early day. Amen.

Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go,
Anywhere he leads me in this world below.
Anywhere without him, dearest joys would fade.

Anywhere with Jesus I am not alone,
Other friends may fall me, he is still my own.
Though his hands may lead me over drearest ways,
Anywhere with Jesus is a house of praise.

HE COULDN'T SING.

We all believe that followers of Jesus Christ should show the joy in their hearts by happiness on their faces. But a strange thing happened lately in Japan. A young man came from a distant village to Nagoya, and asked to see the missionary.

"I want to look into your Christian teaching, and see whether I can believe or not."

He bought a New Testament and some booklets.

"There is one hindrance in the way which even reading won't remove," said he.

"And what is that?"

"Well, I can't sing. I am told that all Christians must sing hymns. Now I've done my best to learning singing, but can not manage even one tune. Will that prevent me from becoming a Christian?"

Rev. H. L. Hamilton replied:

"If you become a true follower of Jesus Christ, you'll want to sing and praise his name, and you'll do it whether you can follow a tune or not."

DAILY READINGS

M., Nov. 12.—Drunkenness punished. Deut. 21:18-21.
T., Nov. 13.—"Biteth like a serpent." Prov. 23:20-35.
W., Nov. 14.—Woe to the drunkard. Isa. 28:1-4.
T., Nov. 15.—Drink and ruin. Jer. 1:1-7.
F., Nov. 16.—Drink and bad servants. Matt. 24:48-51.
S., Nov. 17.—"Of the day, sober." 1 Thess. 5:1-8.
S., Nov. 18.—Topics—How the Bible condemns intemperance: a review of all intemperance passages. Hab. 2 6-15.

INTEMPERANCE CONDEMNED.

Temperance in the Bible.

Whatever is of God, satisfies; strong drink, and all else of the devil, is only an ever-growing, ever-mocking desire (Hab. 2:5).

Strunk drink "spoils many nations", all nations; it strengthens not one of them (Hab. 2:8).

The source of the drink evil is covetousness, because covetousness is the motive of the saloon (Hab. 2:9).

Even if the saloon license fees exceeded the cost of the sin of intemperance, it would be blood money, and would bring no prosperity to a city. (Hab. 2:12).

If the drunkard is the devil's fool, the saloon-keeper is the Tempter himself (Hab. 2:15).

Salome's indecent dance before the drunken court (Mark 6:21, 22) is an indication of how lust and strong drink have always gone hand in hand.

Of Christ's turning water into wine (John 2:1-11) it would be well said that if men confined themselves to the wine made by Christ, no harm would be done. It is inconceivable that Christ would not condemn drunkenness.

As to Paul's prescription of wine to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:22), we may well wait to drink wine till we have a Paul to prescribe it, and are sure that we are Timothys.

In that same epistle (3:3,8), Paul condemned wine drinking plainly, when used as a beverage.

The story of Noah, the drunkard, in the first book of the Bible (Gen. 9: 20, 23), is an indication of the age-long impetus that this curse has gained.

Drunksards forego heaven (1 Cor. 6: 10) for the sake of a hell on earth.

A sufficient condemnation of drinking is the concealment which it instinctively seeks (1 Thes. 5: 7, 8).

Who would wish to die with a brain clouded by alcohol? But death may come at any time (Luke 2:34).

The devil is the father of lies, and the constant misrepresentation made by saloon advocates shows the origin of the institution they are defending (Prov. 20: 1).

To boast of one's ability to drink "without showing it" is like entering a contest to see who could walk the farthest after stabbing himself (Isa. 5:22).

Though the feet may not stumble, the mind will, for alcohol ruins the brain even sooner than the body (Isa. 28:7).

Let us not forget that, though we may not touch strong drink, we may still be intemperate (1 Cor. 9:25).

Keep in Touch.

An isolated Christian Endeavor society cannot be a training school for the church, or for anything else. It is merely a practice school in stagnation.

You want to know what your denomination wants of its young folks and what is it ready to do for them. Keep in touch with the denominational boards.

You want to help your pastor and be helped by him. Keep in touch with your pastor.

You want to help the Sunday School, and you want the Sunday school to help the society. Keep in touch with the school, the teachers and the officers.

You want to work into the older church. Keep in touch with the older church-members.

You want to be a true Christian citizen. Keep in touch with national affairs and all civic and reform interests.

You want to live nobly on earth and be prepared for heaven. Keep in touch with Christ.