

ness, and Extent. The Christian's Sacrifice and Service of Praise, or the Two Great Commandments. Reason and Revelation. The Relative Duties of Home Life. Bethany; or Comfort in Sorrow and Hope in Death. The Prayer of a Broken Heart.

## GIVING TO THE LORD.

BY REV. M. G. HENRY.

In an article in the October number, I advised managers and others directly interested in the management of the financial affairs of congregations, to inaugurate the system of weekly offerings by previously getting each contributor to pledge himself to a certain amount as the least he would endeavour to give per week. The experience of those congregations which have depended upon weekly collections for the support of ordinances has shown that this is a wise precaution.

I think nearly all who have given the subject anything like due consideration are ready to acknowledge that the system of weekly storing and offering commends itself to reason, and is recommended by the Word of God; and, what may be still more forcible to some intensely practical minds, it has proved most delightful and efficient wherever faithfully and conscientiously carried out.

But there is a difficulty in the minds of many, which prevents them from daring to carry it into effect. It is this: Many without any outside influence, such as public opinion and example, will not put into the collection as much as they now give by subscription. I acknowledge the force of this objection, and confess that I believe there are some who are so little actuated by a sense of obligation to God as to meanly shirk their duty when they can escape the goad of public opinion. But then, on the other hand, it may just as truly and forcibly be affirmed that the majority will give a great deal more liberally than under the old system of quarterly payments by subscription, which will as a rule more than counterbalance the loss sustained by the withholding of those who are men-pleasers and not the servants of God—those who

give merely from such low motives as human approval. So that notwithstanding certain supposed drawbacks, the adoption of the weekly offering would as a general rule prove a success.

But even if congregations are afraid to trust to collections in which each is left to put in secretly what he pleases without any human inspection, yet the plan of weekly offering need not and should not be rejected. Adopt it in the form of the *Envelope system*, which may be briefly described as follows: At the beginning of the year each contributor receives fifty-two envelopes upon the back of which may be marked his number, a line for his name, one for the amount enclosed, and one for the date—these three to be filled up by himself. Every Sabbath he brings an envelope—having previously scaled up his offering in it—to the Church, and puts it into the collection box. The treasurer takes charge of it and makes an entry of it in his book, and thus each one's contribution for every week in the year is recorded. The above plan may be variously modified.

It may be asked:—What if there is not public worship every Sabbath in every section of the congregation? That does not alter the matter in the least. The weekly contribution can be put in the envelope at home just as if there were public worship, and taken to Church when the regular turn comes again. The same applies to cases in which persons are prevented from going to Church on account of sickness, violent storms or other causes.

Now I am in favor of this envelope system above all other above all others. I think it will suit the majority of congregations better than collection without any thing to indicate the amount given by each or to distinguish those who give from those who do not. I think that upon the whole and as a general rule it is better that contributions for the support of public ordinances should be *known*. Publicity in contributing for social religious purposes ought not—perhaps cannot be entirely dispensed with—not yet at any rate. There may be communities or congregations here and there which may succeed very well without