

THE Dominion Presbyterian

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Thursday, December 14th, 1899.

Certain American ministers, who have the good of their congregations at heart, and who retain the respect and esteem of their congregations, have announced that, though it has become necessary for them to resign, because of age, they will not formally present their resignation till a successor has been found. That method is infinitely better than the prevalent method of allowing an eligible pulpit to become an arena of as exciting a contest as it is some lucrative post in the civil service. A good minister, who has, for any reason, is satisfying, decided to resign, can do his congregation an immense service by remaining to give them the benefit of his advice in the selection of a successor. There is a still more excellent way, but this is a long step towards it, and we gladly commend it to the consideration of ministers and people. Of course it presupposes the utmost good feeling between the minister and his people.

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In how many homes, where children are growing up towards youth, are there attempts made to gather the children together for the study of the Bible during the long quiet Sabbath evenings? Some of us remember the Sabbath evenings of days gone by, and we prize them more highly now than we did then. We have learned the strength intertwined in these memories, during the intervening years. More than once we have been held back, as by a restraining hand, when temptation was strong about us, because there came to us the memory of one of those quiet evenings. How much better is the opportunity to-day! There is an abundance of material with which to interest and to instruct the little ones who have a right to look to us for such help. And

the quiet of the Sabbath in the country home is a golden opportunity to speak words that may be unheeded now, but that will return, and for which those who are now heedless children will yet bless you.

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Congregations will soon be considering the division of their mission money for the year. On what basis shall the division be made? In former years an apportionment has been made on the basis of what had been given in former years. It is easy to see that this method may be perpetuating a false and hurtful division. It simply takes into account the sympathy of members of the congregation, but gives no consideration to the real need of the different schemes. It is conceivable that in a certain congregation there are some who are full of zeal for the conversion of the heathen, and whose influence is so great that almost one-half of the entire amount contributed for the schemes of the church may be set aside for Foreign Missions. So of the other schemes. It would be of immense advantage if the agents of the church were to issue each year a proportionate statement, giving the requisite per capita contribution for each scheme. This would be at least a guide through the present wilderness.

A Christmas Greeting.

"Good will among men!" What does the word mean that has come so glibly from our lips of late. Will it change our attitude towards the man who has robbed us of our right by his clever scheming? Will it make any change, even, in the feeling we entertain towards one whom we only suspect of such conduct? Yet the One whose advent was heralded in this song, has said,—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that spitefully use you, and persecute you."

Perhaps you will agree to pray for them, but protest it is asking too much to bid you promise to love them, and to seek that they shall be blessed. Is it possible to pray for the man you do not love? Do not answer this off-hand. Think it out. Why do you pray for any man? What prompts prayer on his behalf? Do you want God to take him in hand? Are you hoping that God will deal with him as he deserves? That is not prayer! That is interfering with matters with which you have no concern. It was to people who talked in this way that our Lord said,—"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."

It will be easy and pleasant to express good wishes and to give our best to our friends next week. But this is to fall below the spirit of the mission of the Christ. He came to His enemies that He

might establish good-will among them. He persisted when their enmity developed into bitter and active hostility. He still persists though they persecuted Him even unto death. And He asks His followers to manifest a like spirit.

Self-Revealed.

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." It is many generations since these wise words were first uttered, but every succeeding generation has proven them true. A man is not always known by the company he keeps. He sometimes finds it prudent to mingle with those with whom he has not a single thought in common. On the other hand, his work sometimes lies among those whose thoughts differ as widely from his own as light differs from the darkness. It was one of the accusations brought against our Lord, that He consorted with publicans and sinners. It has been the joy of His followers, ever since He set them the example, to minister in His name to those whose lives are dark and repulsive.

The heart is concealed from us, and we cannot read the motive from which the action springs. But the thought that is habitually cherished invariably leaves its mark upon the character, and by and by, even the body takes on an impress that betrays the secret thought of good or of evil. It flashes from the eye, it suggests the speech, it is interpreted in the tones of the voice, it gives the expression to the features, it controls the gait, it lines the face, in a score of little things it is making its mark upon the person, and we are able to interpret it for ourselves.

It is as impossible to conceal the effect of an evil thought, persistently cherished, as it is to cover up the ravages of an incurable internal disease. Though the diseased condition itself may not be visible, its effects are plainly seen in impaired vitality, and wasting tissue. So, too, an evil thought saps moral strength, and breaks down moral fibre, till finally the real man stands fully revealed.

It is equally impossible to conceal the beautifying effects of a life of unselfish care for others. The mother, whose life is spent for her children, bears the beautiful lines on her face that have no sharp angles in them. None may know of the deeds of love by which some humble servant of Christ sought to make life a little easier for others, but the effect is evident, as the life grows beautiful under the all-controlling thought.

Shall we make the Christmas season, the season fraught with opportunity for loving thought for others, one that shall add a line of beauty, or shall it leave the trail of selfish desires upon the soul? It may become either. Too often our thought for others is prompted by the deeper thought for self. Is it not possible to eradicate the unworthy and hurtful desire?