

JASR.—Mr. Edward has returned in safety to the scene of his former usefulness. He speaks with delight of the state of things at Pesih. Our readers cannot have forgotten how much and how long his faith was tried; and they must now rejoice with him on entering, with renewed ardour and restored strength, on the work to which the Lord has called him.

BERLIN.—The cause is prospering at Berlin.—Our missionary, Mr. Schwartz, has encouragement in his work, and is comforted by association with others labouring for the same great end as himself. The attendance of Jews and proselytes on the preaching of Christ is large, and Mr. Schwartz has peculiar encouragement in dealing with the young.

DEPARTURE OF THE REV. DR. CLASON FOR THE CANTON DE VAUD AND MALTA.—On Sabbath afternoon, 11th January, the Rev. Dr. Clason took a temporary farewell of his congregation in Free Buecleuch Church, and in doing so, chose for his text, *Philippians, i 12*—"I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." At the close of this discourse, the reverend Doctor mentioned, that some time since a proposition was made to him by the Colonial Committee to visit Malta, which, after prayerful consideration, he accepted; but from the recent important religious movement in the Canton de Vaud, he had also been deputed by the Presbytery of Eliaurgh to visit Switzerland, and carry out to the suffering pastors and people there the sympathies of the Presbytery in the trying circumstances in which they were placed.

THE DUTY OF SUPPORTING THE GOSPEL.

FROM AN ADDRESS, DELIVERED BY THE REV. JAMES BEGG, OF EDINBURGH, IN THE CORE STREET FREE CHURCH, MONTREAL, 5th March, 1846.

(Reported for the Montreal Witness.)

After disclaiming all idea of interfering with matters in this country, the Rev. Gentleman said. Some think that ministers should occupy themselves wholly with preaching certain doctrines, and not descend to such secular affairs as pecuniary questions, but leave them entirely to the laity. This objection had almost wholly disappeared in Scotland, and it was observable everywhere that it was not made by zealous, liberal-minded Christians, but, generally speaking, by those who were lukewarm and penurious. He remembered an anecdote in point:—Dr. Chalmers, in the warmth of his self-denying zeal, had gone to the island of Arran to preach a discourse, in which he urged the claims of Christ's cause in a pecuniary point of view upon the people; and after service, a wealthy man who never gave anything, shook his head, and said, "The Doctor is a gud man, but unco worldly."

There might be a secular element so connected, by Divine Providence, with a spiritual matter, as to be, humanly speaking, essential to it; such, for instance, was the work of printing Bibles; and as God had not seen fit to employ angels in preaching the gospel, but men, it was evident that the preachers must be supported, and, therefore, the secular element formed a part of the question, whether the gospel was to be preached or not.

The Bible would be found to abound in instruction and exhortation on the subject of giving to the Lord, and he believed it a minister's duty to explain, illustrate, and enforce everything contained within the boards of that book. He referred to the building of the Tabernacle (*Exod. xxv., xxvi.*) when the people were first enjoined to give, and then restrained from bringing, because they gave too much. The Lord could have set up the Tabernacle without human aid, yet he saw fit to command the people to do it. The same plan was adopted with respect to the Temple, (*See 1 Chron. xxix.*) and with the same result. David, though precluded from building the Temple himself, yet considered it his duty to do what lay in his power towards that work. Again, when the people grew cold, Haggai had a special mission to wake them up to the duty of giving. Indeed, temporal prosperity was invariably turned into a

curse unless sanctified by the offering of the first fruits to the Lord. The New Testament taught the same truth. As soon as there were Christians at all, they brought their contributions to the Lord's cause, and laid them at the Apostle's feet; and the Macedonian disciples, after giving themselves to the Lord, contributed of their substance to their power, yea, and beyond their power. The experience in Scotland confirmed that of the early churches. So long as people went to church through habit or fashion merely, their gifts were of the most stunted kind; but when they awoke from lethargy to the power of the gospel, they found that they had both the will and the means to give, and a flood of liberality set in.

The ground of giving is, that Christ is precious—that to hear the gospel preached is an unpeppable blessing to ourselves, and therefore, we should desire that others may enjoy the like blessing. In comparison with the value of the gospel, carnal things look small indeed. The payment of our own church edifice, and our own ministers, are not so much acts of benevolence as duty or debt. The helping of others is more in the light of charity or benevolence, but still a duty. A story is told of a good man, who was reduced from affluence to bankruptcy, and when his creditors met, they all sympathized deeply with his misfortunes, but no one proposed any remedy, until a Quaker, turning to his neighbour, said, "How much dost thou sympathize, friend? I sympathize £50." There are three points to be kept in view—

First.—Every member of a Christian congregation should contribute. If any man profess attachment to a church, and give nothing, his sincerity is to be doubted. However little, let him give something. Nearly all great contributions are raised in small sums. The Wesleyan motto will conquer the world, "All at it, and always at it." Their Missionary Society raises £100,000 a year, upwards of £53,000 of which is in sums under 20s. The god of this world's policy is to keep all his servants busy. They have all something to do, and they are all active doing it. And truly they give largely. Men often make themselves poor for Satan, but how few make themselves poor for Christ?

The mode of collecting pursued in Scotland was this. They had the name of every individual attending a given church enrolled, which was ascertained in allocating the seats, and this list was divided into small districts, each of which was put in charge of a collector, who visited those on his or her list once a month, to give them an opportunity of contributing what they saw fit. It was not, however, sufficient to collect from the heads of families; every member of the family, including servants, and even little children, were encouraged to feel the duty and the privilege of giving.

Secondly.—Every one should give according to his ability. God does not reap where He has not sowed. Where He has given little, He asks little. The principle which Christ inculcated is clearly set forth in the story of the widow's mite. Mr. Wm. Campbell, of Glasgow, who had given, one way and another, to the Free Church, perhaps £20,000, was an example of liberality, and his testimony is, that instead of suffering in consequence, it has pleased God to bless him more abundantly. But the poor make still greater proportionate efforts. In one place, a church was built by them in a single day. In another, three hundred bolls of lime were carried fourteen miles on the backs of Highlanders; and a poor woman had insisted upon giving £12 of her little savings to build his own church; whilst another woman, with a very small income, sends him £20 annually to be devoted to various religious purposes. There were, in fact, people in all their congregations, who had sacrificed even more than ministers.

An anonymous letter from an operative in Manchester, enclosing £20, and stating that he had saved it at the rate of 2s 6d a week, was recently handed in at a Missionary Meeting in Manchester: yet operatives in this country have higher wages than they have in Britain.

Thirdly.—Gifts should be free-will offerings, with nothing like constraint; better not give at all than give grudgingly. In connection with gifts, the Free Church had, generally speaking, resolved to make no exactions for seat rents; every one can have a seat, or as many seats as his family needs, without money and without price. The

principles on which this plan proceeded were, that there should be no trafficking in the church for value received—that the amount given by each individual should be on the responsibility of the giver, and not assessed by church officers. When the office-bearer fixed a seat rent, the hearer paid it and his conscience was satisfied. But what right had the office-bearer thus to step in between the cause of Christ and the contributor? The true plan was to give the gospel freely, and let the hearers give to the cause of Christ freely. Many had doubted this plan, but it was found to work admirably. Take the case of Dr. Candlish's congregation, one of the wealthiest in Scotland; in his old church, St. George's, the fifteen or sixteen hundred sittings had let for fifteen or sixteen hundred pounds; now in a much inferior building with only 1200 sittings, and without seat rents, that congregation raises from £9,000 to £10,000 a year for the cause of Christ. In the old system an ordinary church of a thousand sittings, which he had in his mind, might be expected to yield for seat rents £250, and for all other collections £150, or possibly £250 more, making in all £400 to £500, whereas the same congregation had, without seat rents, subscribed £1400 a year.

Besides these subscriptions, which were chiefly for general funds, (and their general funds had solved many problems, enabling them to build churches and maintain ministers and teachers, where they could not otherwise be maintained,) there were local funds, made up chiefly of collections; and instead of the half-penny a week, which used to be brought to these collections, there were now large sums raised in that way. In Dr. Gordon's congregation, in Edinburgh, for instance, they raised £20 a week, which looks a large sum, but when we reflect that a thousand persons at a sixpence each is £25, it does not appear large at all. The deacons make a calculation of what is wanted and state that it will be made up if so many will give a crown—so many a shilling—so many a sixpence, &c., and their calls are responded to.—In ordinary congregations £4, £8, and £12, are now collected every Sabbath where the collections used to be 9s, 10s, and 2s. *If men would only obey the scripture injunction of bringing and offering with them when they go into the house of God, and there presenting it solemnly in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, there would be no lack.*

When debt exists on a building, the necessary efforts should be made to pay it off, for so long as it remains it will be a kind of bugbear in the way of all other subscriptions. Owe no man anything, is a duty peculiarly resting on congregations. If there be a house in the town that should be free from debt, it is the house of God; debt, it was to be feared, had led to the tax of seat rents, whereas the house of God should be equally open to the poorest as to the richest. While all should be done in order, all should be free. But on the other hand, a habit of giving to the cause of Christ should be cultivated as a duty; the amount which each can, and ought to give, should form a part of the calculation of our annual expenditure, instead of being left to random impulses, whilst calculations are made for all other items. There should, in a word, be a steady fixed principle of giving to Him, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich."

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW'S OPINION OF THE FREE CHURCH.

The following portrait, making due allowance for the Scotch-Episcopal prejudices of the writer, is true in at least the more prominent features:—

"Fourthly, we come to the Free Church; undoubtedly the chief inheritress of the traditions of the early, and especially of the middle; Presbyterianism of Scotland. Here is the hard-favoured, but manifestly legitimate descendant of Knox and Melville, of Cameron and Cargill. The spirit which animated those men, whatever else it might have been, certainly was a notable fact in the history of the world. On the one hand, *dour, dogged and unruly*—having little of the serpent, and nothing whatever of the dove—hedged in between the narrowest defiles of prejudice, and unable, not only to see, but to believe in any world beyond them; on the other hand, bold, resolute, enthusiastic, indefatigable, not less earnest than intemperate,