

the Lord will me uptake," words which the great Father has put into His psalter to comfort those who in His providence have been deprived of their natural guardians, or what is worse have guardians that are unnatural, and that is but an instance of a whole class, a class in which reference is made to some form or other of human experience of a painful kind, a class so minutely divided that I believe there is scarcely a phase of human sorrow which has not its own special word of comfort but to which our Hymnal Committee has apparently been quite oblivious. My other reference is to the 94th Psalm with its irrefragable argument, "The Lord did plant the ear of man and hear then shall not he, He only formed the eye and then shall he not clearly see. He that the nations doth correct shall he not chastise you, He knowledge unto man doth teach and shall himself not know," an argument before which, to every sincere mind, all the systems of atheism, pantheism, agnosticism, and scepticism of every kind tumble into ruin like so many structures of cardboard, as they all are, but an argument which the church in the wisdom of our Hymnal Committee is no longer to sing, although it is worthy of her loudest notes of praise.

Closing these general allusions, I would call your attention in conclusion to this, that the committee in its selections seems to have acted on the principle of excluding as much as possible everything of a denunciatory nature. The instances that might be adduced are very many. As to the wisdom of the principle there is very manifest ground for question. It is questionable on the ground that it is a certain sign of church decadence when she says Peace, peace, and that in a high state of spiritual life the church will ever joyfully sound this note of warning. It is objectionable also in the face of the fact already referred to, that the N.T. has put its imprimatur upon the most denunciatory of all the psalms, and its objectionableness will further appear if we take a single instance of it. Let it be the opening line of the 36th Psalm, "The wicked man's transgression." Just see the concentrated wisdom of that collocation of words. See how any transgressor in a congregation singing that psalm is transfixed with the thrust that he is a wicked man. That is a conclusion that many a transgressor, and specially such as are found in congregations, is seeking eagerly to avoid. But here, before he is aware, it is thrust upon him and that by an authority which he dare not dispute and with special emphasis when part of the praise of the whole congregation. And still again is it thrust upon him when in the following verse he finds that the failure to see his transgression as a fruit of wickedness is the sign of a moral blindness which alone makes his self-flattery possible, but which will be completely dissipated by the manifest hatefulness of his sin. What a course of instruction for a man to be put through during the singing of the psalm. But that instruction and a good deal more is, in the wisdom of our Hymnal Committee no longer to be enjoyed, establishing the position that in the selections themselves we have a striking proof of the unbecomingness of the attempt to make selections from the inspired psalter—a proof which will remain in full force whoever may make the selections and however extensive they may be. Hence, on this and the various grounds stated, I ask the Presbytery to express its entire disapproval of any attempt to make selections from the psalter and its conviction that a profound propriety demands the retention of the whole psalter as a medium of the praise of the church.

#### WHERE THE DIFFICULTY LIES.

In a letter in your paper of January 24th, I read this sentence, "Have we" (referring to the members of our own Presbyterian church) "been giving as we have received?" There is but one answer can be given to that question. There may be a few individuals who fulfil their duty along this line, but taking the church as a whole, we certainly are not giving as we receive. If each individual member gave according "as God hath prospered" him, and in proportion to the Bible standard, and did this regularly, systematically and perseveringly, there would be no such deficits as we hear of. Instead of retrenchment we

would be planning new work, entering upon new fields, where as yet the sound of the gospel message has never been heard. The work at home would be prospering, our own hearts would be less burdened, more filled with joy and peace. We might have some such experiences as the people of Israel in David's time, when we are told, "the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord." Or the promise in Malachi iii. 10, might be fulfilled in us. As a church we have never proved that promise. Giving is a Christian grace. In 2nd Corinthians, the 8th chapter, Paul, after expressing commendation of the Macedonian church for their liberality, gives this counsel to the Corinthian church, "therefore as ye abound in everything, in faith, in utterance and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." Paul seems to infer that they need to be specially watchful lest they fail here. He does not want them to be satisfied with small things, but to "abound in this grace," to show their loyal devotion to the cause by generous gifts. This grace of giving is one of the distinguishing traits by which Christians are to show before the world their love for the Master and their belief and assurance that He, and He alone, can raise men from their sinful, fallen condition and save them eternally.

There is no doubt that the lack of this grace in many of the professed followers of Christ causes worldly men to sneer and to express doubts if, after all, Christianity is of such paramount importance as we claim it is. There is no other way of solving the money question and ending the difficulty but by the church waking up to its duty, and each individual doing his or her share. The poor must not depend on the rich. The rich must not shirk the added responsibility which wealth brings. "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He has given thee." There is a story told of Daniel Webster. He was asked what was the most important thought that had ever passed through his mind. His answer was, "my personal responsibility before God." Would it not be well for each one of us to consider well what is our personal responsibility before God in this matter of giving for the honor of His cause and the spread of His name over the whole world.

J. R.

#### TERM ELDERS.

Sir,—The distinction commonly made between ministers and elders is not a proper one. We may as well speak of officers and soldiers. Ministers are themselves elders. They not only "labour in the word and doctrine," but also rule. Those commonly called elders, do only the latter. But, for the sake of convenience, I shall here follow the multitude, and use the word "elders" as meaning those who only rule.

Some advocate the appointment of elders for only a term, which, of course, can be renewed. Now, it is quite true that their appointment for life has difficulties connected with it. But so also has their appointment for only a term, as it appears to me.

Elders appointed for only a term would be in a different position in the church from that in which they now are. We believe that there is scriptural warrant for the office of the elder. We believe that he should be ordained to his office. We do not believe that the elders whom Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain, were only ministers. Nor I do not believe—as many do—that there is some mysterious virtue in ordination. I believe that it is simply a solemn manner of setting one apart to a sacred office. Still, there is something in it. One who has been ordained stands in a different position from that in which he did before. The principle on which is founded the popish maxim, "once a priest, always a priest," is an excellent one, though the papists carry it out too far. It is this—what is given to the Lord cannot be taken from Him. We act on it in our own dealings with our fellow-men. If I make one a present I cannot justly take it from him. It is often said that elders are laymen and therefore they represent the congregation. I deny that they are laymen. They have been ordained. The two parts of

the term "ordained laymen" contradict each other. One may as well speak of a lay minister. Of course, if one is appointed an elder only for a term, when that term expires, unless he is re appointed, he occupies no higher place in the church than he did before, as is the case with the Moderator of any of the three higher courts of our church in like circumstances. Now, would it not be out of place to go through the solemn, though simple ceremony of ordaining one to the eldership for only, say, five years? Well, if elders are not ordained, there will be, of course, only the minister in the session who is ordained. But is it not contrary to our views of scripture that the teaching elder should be ordained, but not the merely ruling one? Again, if there be deacons in a congregation they must be ordained. On that point scripture is perfectly clear. But the ruling elder has a higher place than the deacon in the church. Then, if the lower office bearer must be ordained, so also must the higher. The following is certainly not in harmony with scripture—the teaching and ruling elder ordained; the merely ruling elder unordained; the deacon ordained.

As I have already said there are difficulties connected with a life-service eldership. But it seems to me that there are very serious difficulties connected with a term-service one. These I have endeavored to point out. We must expect to find defects in everything with which man has to do.

I would most respectfully make this suggestion. Let a certain number of the elders in a congregation serve in turn for a certain period. There seems to have been an arrangement like this for the priests under the law. We are told that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was executing the priest's office before God in the order of his course, when Gabriel appeared to him, and that as soon as the days of his ministrations were accomplished he departed to his own house. According to the plan which I have suggested, one "once an elder" would be "always an elder." Therefore, he could with all propriety be ordained. But he would not be always in power. For a time he would be, in effect, the very same as if he were in a new congregation of which he was not an elder. Changes might then be introduced which could not well be introduced if he were in power.

For the sake of those who have not fully considered the matter, I would, in a word or two, show the difference between a term eldership and a term pastorate. An elder is not called to and appointed to labour in a congregation as a minister is. When an elder ceases to be an elder in a congregation, he does not need to leave it. But when a minister ceases to be the pastor of a congregation he, as a rule, has to seek another field of labour, if he has not found one before.

T. FENWICK.

Woodbridge, Ont.

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon publishes in *The Sword and Trowel* for February, an extract of a letter from a missionary in Japan: "You will be glad to know that I have commenced to translate the life of dear Mr. Spurgeon into Japanese. I am also desirous of carrying out my original intention of publishing one of the sermons each week. I think that all our native preachers in this country would be glad to subscribe for them, were they thus made available in their own language."

The new Year-Book (Church of Scotland) shows that there are still about 400 parish ministers (out of a total of some 1,700) who receive less than £200 a year, and that, on the other hand, there are about a dozen who receive from £800 to £1,000. The best paid are Dr. Donald Macleod, of *Good Words*, who receives £1,000; Dr. Macgregor, who receives £950, with a manse; Dr. Macgregor's colleague, Mr. A. W. Williamson, who receives £950; and Rev. J. R. Wilson, of Hawick, who receives £936.

An American contemporary computes that there are about seven hundred women doctors at the present time practising in Russia. Many of these occupy important positions in hospitals and workhouses. The remuneration for those different posts varies from about £200 downwards. So far as private practice is concerned, there is one woman doctor who makes an income of £1,800 per annum—a phenomenally good record. But the average income of the woman medical practitioner in private practice is something under £300 a year.

## Christian Endeavor.

### SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE—WHY, AND HOW MUCH?

REV. H. S. McTAVISH, D.D., ST. GEORGE.

Mat. 11:16. Mal. 3:12 (A missionary topic).

By systematic beneficence, we understand the giving of a stated and regular portion of our means for religious and benevolent purposes. The general idea is that we should give, not on impulse, but according to a well-defined and orderly plan. This is a subject to which the Bible devotes considerable attention, and yet it is one which many people fail to understand, or worse still—do not wish to understand. It is very unfortunate that this should be the case, because if all would give according to the scriptural method, then they themselves would be the better for it; there would be abundant means for carrying on all the work in which the church is engaged, and many collectors would be spared a most difficult and disagreeable task.

The Word of God enjoins men to give cheerfully. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II. Cor. ix. 7). When a cup of cold water is given to a disciple, it should not be allowed to drip from the end of an icicle. The Bible also enjoins men to give regularly. On the first day of the week they should present their offerings (I. Cor. xvi. 2). They should also give with a set purpose. "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give" (II. Cor. ix. 7). It is as much a duty to purpose to give as it is to give what has been purposed. Giving should not be done grudgingly. If a man gives a little, and gives that little grudgingly, he just commits two sins—a sin of omission and a sin of commission. He omits to give as he ought, and he shows his temper as he ought not.

How much should be given? One-tenth. If a man's income is \$200 he should give \$20; if \$400 he should give \$40. Some people propose to give two cents per week to missions. No fault can be found with that proposal, provided the more wealthy give the balance of their due to other religious and benevolent purposes. Even before the law was given, Jacob promised to give one-tenth to God (Gen. xxviii. 22). Up till that period in Jacob's life there was little in his character to commend. He had manifested a greedy, grasping disposition. But if he, with all his meanness, promised to give one-tenth to God, the Christian to-day should surely be willing to give an equal proportion. When the law was given it was definitely stated that God required one-tenth. That rule was never abrogated. In the last message that came to the Jews we find these words, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house."

Some people object to this rule now, because they say we are living, not under the law, but under the Gospel. Is that a reason why less should be given? We are certainly enjoying more light and greater privileges now than the Jew ever enjoyed, and if that argument proves anything, it proves that we should be willing to give not less, but more than was given by the Jews.

One reason why the tithe should be given is that God promised temporal blessings on that condition. "I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and he shall no more destroy the fruit of your ground." One of the best cures for hard times is to honor God by our contributions. Mr. Thomas Kane, of Chicago, tried it and was more than satisfied with the experiment. He urged others to try it; they did so, and were equally well satisfied (Luke vi. 38; Prov. xi. 24).

Another reason why we should give at least a tenth, is that spiritual blessings are promised on that condition (Mal. iii. 10-12). The various Boards of our church are crippled because means are not forthcoming for carrying on the work. It is said that there is likely to be a serious deficit in some departments this year. Such would not be the case if Christians contributed according to the rule laid down. Indeed, then, these boards would be able to meet their present obligation, and even greatly extend their work, and in proportion as the work is extended will the church at home receive a blessing.