

## Our Contributors.

### CONCERNING THE INEQUALITIES OF GIVING.

BY KNOXIAN.

AT the foot of page 18 of the report for 1894 of the Committee on Statistics the following sentence may be found: "For ALL purposes the average contribution per family was \$22.71, being twenty-seven cents of an increase; and per communicant \$11.84, an increase of nine cents." The report was drawn by that natural born statistician, Dr. Torrance, who year after year gives the church a view of herself that her members and office-bearers would do well to study. It is quite needless to say that the averages are correct to a mill. By that we mean that they are correctly made from the figures supplied to Dr. Torrance from Presbyteries and congregations.

Now for the averages. All things considered is the sum of \$22.71 a fair average contribution for a Presbyterian family to give for all church purposes. It is very difficult to answer that question in a satisfactory manner. For some families it would be an immense sum, for others it would be fair to middling, for wealthy folk it would be nothing compared with what they spend on themselves. Some would feel the giving of \$22.71 acutely; some would feel it a little, and many would never know they had given it at all.

It should be remembered that the giving of \$22.71 is spread out over a whole year. Now a year is a good long time. It would seem long if you had the toothache all the time. Twenty-two dollars and seventy-one cents a year means just a fraction over six cents per day. Now six cents a day would be a considerable sum for a family that has an income of a dollar a day. It would be a very large sum for a family that had to live on fifty cents a day and an impossible sum for a family that had to live on less than fifty cents. But candidly now does six cents a day seem a liberal sum for a large majority of the families of our Church.

As a simple matter of fact, however, Presbyterian families don't pay any such sum as six cents per day for church purposes. There are hundreds of people not in families who pay as liberally as the heads of families, and if the amount they pay could be deducted from the sum total the average per family would go away down nobody knows how far. Every pastor who labours in a city or town knows that a very considerable part of the giving is done by young men and young women in stores, offices, and other places of business and not a little by domestic servants. Not long ago we heard a Toronto pastor say that he had in his congregation domestic servants who gave much more liberally to the church than their fathers out in the country and to his certain knowledge their fathers were fairly well to do property holders. As a matter of fact many families give with praise worthy regularity and liberality, but too many give very little and some nothing at all and thus the average is kept down a painfully long way below what it would be if all did a fair share.

The average per communicant is \$11.84 per annum or a fraction over three cents per day. Is the sum of three cents per day a fair contribution for an average Presbyterian? Of course a man can't give three cents per day if he has not the money. He should not give even three cents per day if he needs the cents to buy bread for his children. But looking over the church as we see it, does the sum of three cents per day seem a liberal contribution for the people called Presbyterians.

Here again the average would be brought down if we could find out the amount given by people who are not communicants. Some of these are among the most liberal givers and every dollar they contribute lessens the average per communicant. The actual average per communicant would we fear be rather low. And why low? Simply because too many do not give at all, and their not giving brings down the average of those who do give handsomely.

Some people object to this per day method of ascertaining the liberality of the church. Well, is there any day in the year on which the members of the church do not enjoy God's mercies? Is there any day on which a redeemed man does not receive some of the benefits which accompany or flow from redemption? Is there any day on which a Believer is not protected by the providence of God, restrained by the grace of God, and fed by the bounty of God. If there is any such day in the year then perhaps on that day a Presbyterian may be justified in withholding his average contribution.

We should like very much to see a comparison made between the average giving of our church and the average of other members of the Presbyterian family. To make such a comparison one would need to have the blue books of the other churches and these are not within the reach of a "mere pastor." Years ago we made a comparison between our church and the American Presbyterian (North) but never published it for the simple reason that the publication would have been of no use. Their average was then a good deal higher than ours but was kept high mainly as we thought by the princely giving of millionaires in New York, Philadelphia and other wealthy cities. We have no people of that kind outside of Montreal and not many of them there. We cannot compete with churches that number their millionaires by the score, but there is one thing our church might do—it might make an honest effort to find out why some Presbyteries pay four or five times as much as others apparently quite as able to pay. Just run your eye up and down the last two columns, page 18, of Dr. Torrance's

report and note the inequalities. One Presbytery pays \$9.74 per member, another on one side \$13.21 and a third on another side \$9.68. One pays \$6.66 and another \$33.77!

Does some self-righteous man with a close pocket and a streak of Plymouthism in him say—why say so much about money, why not discuss spiritual topics? Dr. Bayne once replied to a man who made that objection by saying: "If there were fewer men in the church like you, sir, we wouldn't need to say so much about money."

### THE SABBATH A SIGN BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

BY REV. JAMES MIDDLEMISS, D.D.

IF there is any name in English Christian literature, to which one would be disposed to award the palm for sound common sense, it is that of Archdeacon Paley. For what is commonly known as *genius*, we would not say he was greatly distinguished. But for sound and sinewy common sense, his equal, I venture to say, is hardly to be found in the whole compass of English authorship. And yet, perhaps, it would not be easy to find in any writer of name—in any writer, especially, who can claim rank with Paley—a piece of more inconsequent reasoning, than that in which he undertakes to show that the weekly Sabbath is an institution whose observance was designed to be peculiar to Israel and distinctive of that people.

In Book V. of his work on "Moral and Political Philosophy," the book which treats of "Duties Towards God," the seventh chapter is devoted to the "Scripture Account of Sabbatical Institutions." Paley there expresses his opinion that the weekly Sabbath was first instituted on the occasion of the giving of the miraculous supply of manna, in the wilderness. While his whole argument is open to adverse criticism, especially on the ground of unwarrantable deduction from Scripture, I would ask your attention to only one point. I refer to his argument from the fact that "the Sabbath is described as a sign between God and the people of Israel"; because I believe the fact that it is so described, is sufficient of itself, if we rightly apprehend what it implies, to prove the universal obligation of the weekly Sabbath. In Exodus xxxi. 13, 16, 17, we read: "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations: that ye may know that I am the Lord God that sanctify you. The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever." And in Ezekiel xx. 12-20: "I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." "And hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."

Referring to these passages, which he quotes more or less fully, Paley says: "It does not seem easy to understand how the Sabbath could be a sign between God and the people of Israel, unless the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and designed to be so." I believe you will all agree with me when I say that there is here a specimen of a well known fallacy in reasoning. It shows the oversight of the fact that, while the Sabbath was beyond question peculiar to the people of Israel, it was peculiar to them as the people of God, or as a people distinguished from the heathen. To infer from this that the Sabbath was designed to be peculiar to the Israelites as distinguished from Christians, is not only gratuitous, but in opposition to the only correct inference. That the Sabbath was peculiar to the Israelites as God's people, implies that it is common to them with Christians, who, if they are not "Israel after the flesh," are the true Israel, "the children of Abraham the father of the faithful, but by the 'circumcision not made with hands.'" It is common to Christians and to the Israelites as being both the people of God. And it is peculiar to Christians now, as it was peculiar to Israel under the dispensation preceding the present. Let us illustrate this briefly.

It is not an uncommon thing for men to be carried away by the mere sound of a word, instead of first inquiring into the sense and meaning of it. In the present case, our first question should be: What is implied in its being said that the Sabbath was a sign between God and the children of Israel, that they might know that He was the Lord their God? Without going into any verbal criticism, what can it mean but just this: That the Sabbath is an institution so peculiar and distinguishing in the matter of men's relation to God, that its observance is very specially, if not above all else, discriminative of those who serve and honor God from those who do not serve and honor Him, but love this present evil world and serve its god. The observance of the Sabbath accordingly constituted the most potent and prominent distinction between Israel and the heathen nations around them. As a simple matter of fact, such is the place of the Sabbath in relation to the service of God—the only living and true God—that its observance, both in itself and in its influence on the life in all respects, is so discriminative of the people of God from those who are not His people, that when Israel, God's ancient people, "polluted the Sabbath," or ceased to hallow it, the evidence that Jehovah was their God was very soon entirely lost. As a matter of fact, not merely is the honour of God greatly concerned in the due observance of the Sabbath, but it is so much concerned in it and bound up with it, that where and by whom the Sabbath is duly kept, God is honored, and where and by whom it is disregarded, He is dishonored. Not only is a due observance of the Sabbath an important part of the tribute of honor that is due to God, but it is nothing less than essential in the securing of His revenue of

honor in every department of it. And, in like manner, not only is a disregard of the Sabbath in itself a withholding of an important and chief part of God's revenue of honor, but its deteriorating power is such, that wherever it prevails, men become utterly godless—God is dishonored in everything and in every way—no portion whatever of His revenue of honor is rendered to Him. So that, as I have said, when the Israelites, instead of hallowing the Sabbath, polluted it, or made it a common day, all distinction between them and the heathen disappeared, and it could not be known from the way in which they lived, that Jehovah was their God, any more than He was the God of the heathen round about them. And it is so still, and will always be. The Sabbath is still and will always be a sign between God and His people that He is the Lord their God. The Sabbath is still, and will always be, a sign between God and the men and nations that serve and honor Him. Those who duly observe the Sabbath are the men and the nations that serve Him and honor Him, by having "respect to all His commandments"; and those who disregard the Sabbath are the men and the nations who have respect to none of His commandments, who render to Him no part of the honor that is due to Him, but dishonor Him in everything. Not only is the hallowing of the Sabbath a conspicuous and important part of God's revenue of honor, that those who hallow it, in their very doing so, greatly honour Him, and those who disregard it, are, in that very disregard, guilty of withholding from God a main part of the honour due to Him; but such is the essential connection between the hallowing of the Sabbath and our regard for God and our obedience to Him in all other respects, that those who hallow the Sabbath are, invariably and without exception, those who honor and obey God in every thing, and those who disregard the Sabbath are, as invariably and without exception, those who are utterly godless and honour and obey God in nothing. So that whenever and wherever, be it under the Jewish economy or under the Christian dispensation, the Sabbath ceases to be hallowed, then and there, all distinction between God's professing people and those who know Him not disappears.

In short, then, we are so much at issue with Paley, in his inference from the Scripture "description" or designation of the Sabbath as a sign between God and His ancient people, that we regard it not only as warranting the precisely opposite conclusion, but as being sufficient of itself to bear the whole weight of it—the conclusion, namely, that the Sabbath is of universal obligation, always and everywhere, as a "sign" between God, i.e., Jehovah, and His people. In a word, therefore, in as much as "there is one God, and there is none other but He" (Mark xii. 32), that the Sabbath is a sign means, No Sabbath, no God.

### WHOM SHALL THE CHURCH SEND TO THE FOREIGN MISSION FIELD?

BY REV. J. M'P. SCOTT, B.A.

MORE fully stated the question to be considered in this paper is: Should we send to the field all approved persons who offer for Foreign Mission service, trusting to the Church for their support?

No more important question could possibly be asked, for on the right answer to it most momentous consequences depend. The course we have been following in the past has been to await the contributions of the Church and to regard these as indicating the extent to which we are for the present to obey the command of Christ. That very indifferent success has resulted from this method all must admit, for whilst in the aggregate much has been done, for which we must look up with gratitude to God, many comparisons can be instituted which may well cause the Christian Church to hang her head in shame, holding, as she does, a lamp in her hand but refusing to carry it to the countless, benighted millions.

Shall we, then, continue to follow this method, secure the money and then advance, money in hand, or shall we go forward trusting that the money will follow and be on hand when needed? That the former will be deemed the more cautious cannot be denied; but that the latter is characterized by faith is equally unquestionable. Not a single word would we speak in disparagement of caution, but there are virtues which may be carried to such an extent that they assume a very different complexion. Many an opportunity has been suffered to go by unimproved through over-caution. On the other hand faith never can become excessive provided it rests on a sure foundation.

To prevent all possible misunderstanding, and to present the subject in a more pointed manner we shall take the liberty of altering the wording so as to read "trusting to the Lord, through His Church, to support them." To this question we give an affirmative answer, and shall endeavor to justify it by reasons.

1st. The great need of the heathen and their accessibility. Although almost nineteen hundred years have elapsed since the great commission to evangelize the world was given to the Christian Church, very little, comparatively speaking has been accomplished. Three-fourths of the population of the globe have never heard the message of salvation. True they have the consciousness of a Supreme being, and some kind of religion of their own, which is calculated to debase rather than to elevate. But there is only one true religion, that which rests on the sacrifice of Calvary, and whatever there may be of good in the other so called religions, apart from Christ, there is no salvation. We are thus forced to face the appalling facts that the stream of time is carrying down to the ocean of eternity millions of unsaved souls. We may wait for the contributions of the