

Pastor and People.

HIS CARE.

God holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if He trusted it to me,
I might be sad.

What if to-morrow's cares were here
Without its rest?
I had rather He unlock the day,
And as the hours swing open say,
"My will is best."

The very dimness of my sight
Makes me secure,
For, groping in my misty way,
I feel His hand—I hear Him say,
"My help is sure."

I cannot read His future plan,
But this I know,
I have the smiling of His face,
And all the refuge of His grace,
While here below.

Enough; this covers all my want,
And so I rest;
For what I cannot He can see,
And in His care I sure shall be
Forever blest. —Rev. John Parker.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

LOYALTY TO GOD AND TEMPORAL BLESSING.
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It will not be inappropriate at this season of the year to direct the attention of our people to the very intimate relation that exists between loyalty to God, especially in systematic giving, and temporal blessing. We might cite many passages from Holy Scripture in support of our position. We will content ourselves with a few: Proverbs iii. 9, 10—"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase," etc.; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be [thrown in with the bargain] added unto you"—Matthew vi. 33.

In fact we see this relationship between loyalty to God and abundant temporal blessing running through the whole range of Bible history and biography. We will take one of many cases, that of Abraham, with which we are all familiar. When the Lord called upon him to leave Ur of the Chaldees—to give up home, kindred, and follow whithersoever God would lead him—Abraham at once obeyed the divine mandate. He made haste to follow God's directions, and in implicit, unquestioning faith and prompt obedience we find the secret of his abundant success in life—success in the highest elements, both spiritual and temporal. He received the divine favour which is better than life, and an abundance of earthly goods—in cattle, silver and gold. "And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold"—Gen. xiii. 2. All the way through this remarkable man's career we find one prominent habit of life, especially emphasized in Scripture story, "And there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord"—Gen. xii. 8.

Whenever, during his wanderings under divine direction, Abraham pitched his tent "he built an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord." He acknowledged the Lord as his God before his household, his people and the world at large. Can we for a moment imagine that he, who thus faithfully, regularly and publicly acknowledged God, would be remiss in devoting a portion of his means to the maintenance of true religion? We cannot think so. We have clear evidence that he contributed of his substance to God. He gave tithes to Melchizedek, for we read, "And he gave him tithes of all"—Gen. xiv. 20.

When we study the life of Abraham in view of the contrasted life of Lot its prominent features become much more apparent. How pleasant to contemplate the steady controlling piety of Abraham, after pondering the prevailing worldliness of Lot!

Lot built no altar. There appears no effort on his part to maintain either personal or family religion. The fear of God was in his case held largely in abeyance by an intense and absorbing love of gain, and a constant effort to attain a worldly competence. But we need not dwell on these painful details. Lot was almost lost. His life was well-nigh a failure. Why? He was not hearty in following God, and though he

had a knowledge of the truth he was not fully nor always held by it. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." He did not cultivate daily piety, nor enjoy fellowship with God, and consequently he had not that success in life that God gave to his uncle, Abraham. He had the same opportunities, but did not utilize them. Let us emulate the piety and devotion of Abraham, and we too will find by a similar experience that there is an intimate relation between loyalty to God and temporal blessing—that if we "honour the Lord with our substance," He will deal bountifully with us, according to the Word in Proverbs iii. 10. Let us advance from the individual to the nation.

We see the same principle when we study the history of God's dealings with Israel.

In taking a general survey of the history of the Israelites, we reach this conclusion: When they sought God with a perfect heart they were saved from the yoke of bondage, and received abundant spiritual privileges and temporal blessings. When in prosperity for a longer or shorter period they forgot to honour God—and this was frequently the case—they were subjected to chastisement, both by God and neighbouring nations.

We cannot enter into details here, but the painstaking reader can easily verify our statement by reading the books of Exodus, Joshua and Judges, etc. In a word, the entire history of God's ancient people is made up of a series of sinnings and repentings, chastisements and blessings, all the way through to the advent of Jesus Christ. And since their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, the past nineteen centuries have been an uninterrupted season of chastisement, following the imprecation self-imposed, "His blood be upon us and our children."

We will glance at the period of Israel's history in the time of the prophets Joel and Malachi as a fair sample of the whole. In spite of the repeated warnings, commands and exhortations that had been given to Israel by the preceding prophets, the people had gone back from serving God to gross idolatry. God's house had been neglected, priests and people having ceased to acknowledge God. What was the result of all this?—Widespread sin and immorality, failure of the staple products of the soil, and the whole country was laid waste. See full description in Joel i. Joel by divine authority calls the nation to return to God, confessing and forsaking their sins, to acknowledge God with the assurance of an abundant blessing, spiritual and temporal, in their return to allegiance to the God of Israel. The same principle obtains, and is illustrated in Malachi iii. 8-12.

Israel had again failed in the service of Jehovah; they had become both worldly and idolatrous, and of course the service of the sanctuary had languished. Priests and people had neither time nor inclination to serve God, and the usual result followed, viz., the loss of God's favour and deprivation of temporal good. God, by the prophet Malachi, makes another appeal to them, exhorts them to honour Him by the efficient maintenance of the services of His house, challenging them to prove Him by "bringing in all the tithes to the treasury," and promising to bestow abundant spiritual and temporal blessing—Malachi iii. 8-12. Study it.

"Honour the Lord with thy substance" was a standing law in Israel, and we have seen above that when the people obeyed the divine command they enjoyed the favour of God and abundant overflowing of temporal blessing.

This command is binding upon us. If Israel in the shadows of the Old Testament dispensation received good in the line of God's commands, shall we not in the fuller light of the Gospel dispensation receive more abundant blessing if we are faithful to our position and high privileges? This will without doubt be our experience if we fill in the conditions as laid down in the Word of God. And these conditions are by no means irksome. "Honour the Lord with thy substance," "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Let us not only know but do the truth here indicated by the Holy Spirit. God has heard our prayers and given to our people, as a rule, all over the country, this season bountifully of the good things of life. A harvest, unprecedented in the history of the North-West, has come to reward the assiduous and arduous labours of the farmer, and shall we refuse to give to God of His own?

Let the first fruits be faithfully and promptly devoted to God and His cause—let us hereby and herewith prove the truth of the divine challenge in Mal. iii. 8-12, and we will find our souls abundantly blessed and our country prosperous.

The heathen Hindu farmer can teach us a wholesome lesson just here. When the Hindu harvests his grain and has it threshed, the first thing he does is to take out a portion (not a small portion) for his idol god before he uses any for his family. If a heathen thus promptly and liberally honours his idol god, shall not the believer in the true God set aside at least the tenth as the Lord's portion before considering his own personal and family claims? Let God's claim be honoured first. We cannot afford to ignore God's claim. Just think what a calamity it would be if God were to blow a breath of frost upon the land. What devastation it would produce! God has pledged Himself to rebuke the destroyer for our sakes if we serve Him first—Mal. iii. 8-12.

Oh my friends, we are dealing with our loving heavenly Father. Let us devise liberal things, remembering that Jesus has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and that "God loveth the cheerful giver," "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." "We get rich laying out abundance rather than by laying up abundance."

Again, this principle has also the sanction of our Saviour's life and teaching during His earthly ministry. In His own life work we have a commentary on His own saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This principle underlies that word in Matt. vi. 35, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," etc. Our highest interests are bound up with God's interests, and will be found in the way of God's commands, in the keeping of which there is great reward.

What greater reward can we have than this? "Whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall bring forth favour from the Lord—Prov. viii. 35." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come." Surely this ought to lead us to Him and to faith in His name and daily loving service here and endless service in heaven. "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face."

In conclusion: If you turn to Mark xii. 41, and Matt. vi. 1-4, you will find that we in our worship in the sanctuary are under the eye of Jesus Christ. This is a truth which, while we hold it in theory, is not generally recognized in practical life by God's people as it should be.

That Jesus takes an abiding interest in the service and gifts of His people we find taught in these passages and elsewhere in Scripture. "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury." The interest Jesus then took in the service of God's house He still takes. Would to God we all daily felt this abiding interest of Jesus in how people cast money into the treasury. If we did how many of us would be ashamed of our paltry gifts.

Here in the same pew the master casts in, it may be, a dollar bill, and the servant a quarter, but neither of them sees Jesus looking at them as "He sits over against the treasury." If Jesus were but seen, the master would cast in a five-dollar bill and the servant at least one dollar. For Christ's sake what a revolution would take place in our Church finance did our people see "Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beholding how the people cast money into the treasury"! Oh for the "eye-salve" of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and to clear our vision that we might see Jesus daily, but especially as "He sits over against the treasury."

Oh Lord, help us as minister and people to see Thee and to recognize Thy deep interest in all the affairs and work of Thy Church, and enable us to devote regularly a just proportion of our income to the furtherance of Thy cause for Thy glory, for Christ's sake.

"CHRIST'S time," says Professor Drummond, "was largely taken up in making people happy."

THE examples of maternal influence are countless. Solomon himself records the words of wisdom that fell from his mother's lips, and Timothy was taught the Scriptures from a child by his grandmother and his mother. Parents who thus act and teach and pray may well commit their children to Him "who delighteth in mercy."