

Contributors & Correspondents.

DUTY TO BE MEASURED BY ABILITY.

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"She hath done what she could." Such was the eulogy pronounced by Christ on the woman of Bethany, who brake the box of precious ointment and poured it upon his head. Briefly but tersely it sets before us the true measure of Christian obligation.

When the Saviour uttered the words, he had a two-fold object in view. On the one hand he desired to rebuke a parsimonious spirit that had crept in among the disciples, in virtue of which they regarded everything as so much wasted capital that did not directly produce substantial results.

The objections urged against such apparent extravagance seem at first sight well founded. But in another gospel, the secret of the disciples indignation is explained.

In our own day, the claims of the poor are often made an argument for withholding all acts of benevolence from every other object, presented to the sympathies of the Church of Christ.

"A good work. Not simply an act blameless and unimpeachable, but good in itself, because of the motive that prompted it. It had a worthy object. This valuable gift, which seemed in the eyes of Judas and the other disciples sinful extravagance, and might have been so in other circumstances, was the offering of purest gratitude."

acts giving are commendable, but there are occasions every day for such acts of Christian benevolence, but the present is the only opportunity this woman has of testifying what she feels towards her Lord and Master.

"Oh to grace how great a debtor, Daily I'm constrained to be." Let that grace Lord like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to thee!

There is nothing wasted in the whole round of Christian sacrifice or labour. Even when our charity and benevolence have unconsciously been exercised towards unworthy objects, there is more than compensation, in the growth of sympathy and tenderness within the soul.

From this simple narrative we may learn certain truths as to the measure of Christian liberality. How much should I give for charitable objects? for the support of missions? for the advancement of the church or denomination?

Such conduct is unworthy of Christian professors. There are men in every community possessed of thousands upon thousands, from whom we should never ask or expect a charitable contribution, for the simple reason that they make no profession whatever of Christian principle.

dowments and possessions we are at last to be judged, not by the generosity or parsimony of others.

"Our benevolence is not to be measured by the amount of our donations. An example of the truth is to be found recorded in the twelfth chapter of Mark's gospel, where a poor widow cast in two mites into the treasury." It seems to have been a sort of extraordinary voluntary collection, made at the feast of the Passover.

A man may give what seems liberally for the cause of Christ, and yet give far less in proportion than the widow and her mites. A man of large capital subscribes five hundred dollars for church extension or missionary effort.

The conclusion we arrive at is, that the only standard recognised by the Word of God for giving and working in the Church of Christ is ability.

This principle, if rightly understood and practiced, would revolutionise the church and be a means of infinite blessing to the world.

The most cheerful givers in all our churches are our poorer brethren. They give what they can and in the right spirit; those who give least deny themselves the most.

There never was a stable liberty born into this world until after Christ had shown the way. For liberty must be based upon that benevolence which shall expunge selfishness from supreme control.

liberality." Surely, Christians of the present day, enjoying such priceless privileges under the gospel dispensation, are bound to exemplify the spirit of the Apostolic age, and give generously for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

HOW TO FODDER.

A writer in the Christian Era presents truth in the following sensible words:

"Don't put the manger too high. It must be accessible. Some under shepherds walk on stilts and carry the fodder so high above the heads of the fold that only the taller ones can reach it."

"Another thing: Let it be genuine fodder, the real verd s-grass and red-top of God's Word. Not the 'witch grass' of human speculation nor the 'white-weed' of human fancy, much less the 'thistles' of hearsay and false doctrine."

"The great Shepherd never commissioned Peter nor any other under-shepherd to feed his flock with 'mullen stalks.' None but the bright sweet hay, right from God's own meadow, will answer, all fresh, and fragrant with the smell of inspiration."

"Feed my sheep, feed my lambs; you can't do this with rainbows, nor with dissolving views, nor with flowers. Fill and flood a sheep-fold with wreaths and bouquets of rarest beauty, and how soon the fleecy inmates will pine and perish with hunger."

"Still further. The sheep-feeder must deal out his provender diversely. Sheep like and need variety. Not new 'false pabulum, not old made new. Not the same unvaried, but varied. While some should leave the hearers heeseeching for the same things the next Sabbath, we must not give them the same things; not the same, that is, in the species, but in the genus."

"Follow the Bible. Copy Christ. In God's word, as in a forest, we find unity in the genus but a vast diversity in the species. Christ addressed not one part or passion of our nature only. There was no one manner of address."

THE ONE PURPOSE.

The substance precedes the shadow. Every step of life has been trodden before. We may mark these footsteps in the sands of time; some are easily discernible, some are marked with lines we cannot understand, some are blurred with blood and deep with the heavy weight of a cross carried even to Golgotha.

Earning to argue, turning to question, our eyes are dimmed, and when we are satisfied with the object which has for the time attracted, we would return and pursue the right path; we would follow Jesus in the way, but we know not where to go; we have lost our bearings, we have doubled on our own track, and are adrift in the pathless forest.

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Selected Articles.

ELIJAH'S REMONSTRANCE WITH JEZEBEL.

BY PETER BAYNE.

"A nation shall be true unto itself; An alien life means falsity and death. No place, no name, no right to land or life Hath Israel save as chosen by the Lord To testify for him; to set the fact Of his existence, once, foreverlast, Massively visible before the world, To be a hystorotype for mankind. A word, writ large in city, hill and plain; A javelin, hurled by his own hand among The heathen nations, startling, making room, Like lightning-flash amid the oak-leaves boughs, By special means, exceptional and strong, For God's own nation. For us from his voice, His hand, his eye, his personal governance, What are we? ..."

PREPARING A LESSON.

To the question, "How to prepare a Bible lesson?" the following answers were given at a recent Sabbath School Convention. They are brief, but illustrate well the different methods by which a variety of teachers endeavor to achieve the same great result, a wise and forcible presentation of God's word:

- 1. Realize that all true spiritual light comes from God, and pray for the Spirit's help.
2. Read carefully the passage itself without helps, to get out of it what you can. What is thus gotten is your own, awakens you, and will awaken others.
3. Then consult commentaries—a good, brief, suggestive one if possible—and thus get the light of other minds to aid your own.
4. Spend what time is possible in searching for and laying up illustrations and apt anecdotes, to illuminate and fix the truth in the mind.
Study every word slowly and carefully, endeavoring to grasp the idea of the passage. If anything is likely to be beyond the reach of the scholars, consider carefully how to make it clear to them by illustration, etc. Use commentaries if anything seems obscure.
After prayer, read the Scripture, then study it with the help of commentaries; and then talk it over alone in your room, just as though you had your class before you. Drill yourself first.

ENGLISH MOTHERS.

It is a marked feature of social life in England, and certainly one of its especial charms, that mothers and daughters are so uniformly seen together at their own home. Not only is the mother the first lady to whom you are introduced at the house where you visit, but mistress of the ceremonies throughout; not only does she preside at the dinner-table, but in the evening party she sits as queen. Whatever may be your first impressions of such an arrangement, if it happens that your sympathies are with the younger ladies—you will very soon learn to think that the mother's absence would be very sincerely regretted by the daughters. As a picture, it must admit the arrangement to be perfect. The portly form and mawkish dignity of the mother are an exquisite foil to the youthful beauty and maiden coyness of the daughters. And you will find nothing to mar, but everything to enhance the interest of the picture. The mother's presence never seems to operate as an unwelcome restraint. Between her and the daughters you will mark the most joyous, playful, loving freedom, without the sacrifices of a little of parental dignity and authority on the one hand, or of sweet and graceful filial duty on the other. It may be said of English families generally, that these two things are eminently characteristic, to wit, uniform parental authority, and the most charming freedom of intercourse between parents and their children.

If there is any person to whom you feel dislike, that is the person of whom you ought never to think.—Cecil.