

The Presbyterian Review.

Issued EVERY THURSDAY, from the office of the Publishers, Rooms No. 20, 21
23, 25 Aberdeen Block, South-East corner Adelaide and Victoria Streets.

TERMS, \$1.50 per annum.

All communications for either Business or Editorial Departments should be
addressed PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, Drawer 2404, Toronto, Ont.

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Toronto, December 21, 1893.

A Merry Christmas.

BEFORE next issue our readers will have observed, in their various ways, what may be termed the Christian holiday of the year. To one and all we extend the good old salutation, "A Merry Christmas." The season is naturally one of gladness. It is well that a certain time of the year should be given over to relaxation and joy, and by common consent Christmas has been seized upon as the right time. For the moment care and sorrow are cast aside, for his must be an unhappy lot indeed who is not drawn to the brighter side of life by the chimes of the Christmas bells. This is the great season for gifts. Hearts are opened and so are hands; the divine feeling of sympathy is kindled, where, for probably a year, the well-springs have been dried up. How much better the world is for this seasoning virtue? The hand that gives is the hand that receives in double portion; the heart that feels for others is the heart that draws love in return. And there is no happier, nor more gladsome, nor better manner in which Christmas can be celebrated than by scattering seeds of kindness in the needy homes.

To those who profess the Christian faith, this season has a deeper meaning. It is not a question of dates or of chronological tables, but of thanksgiving for the great gift of God to man. The recipients of the priceless mercy will remember anew their obligations, and the joy of Christmas will be to them a holy joy. May it be so with our readers. To bring this gift to the knowledge of our fellows, what a Christmas present that would be! To consecrate our energies anew for God's work, to reach after better things, to live the life of Christ who proclaimed on earth peace and good-will to all men, that would be a fitting mode of thanksgiving. Christmas has many kindred lessons. They can be easily learned, and if we be willing the spirit is able to render their practice easy. Let not this season pass without placing a mark for eternity on our life record.

WITH this number of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW is printed a fine plate containing the pictures of the Moderators since the union of 1875 to the present day. The arrangement with the lithographers was to produce as good a picture as could be taken from the photographs procured, the question of cost, while of course a factor, not being allowed to stand in the way of excellent work. The picture has been pronounced as very satisfactory and we

offer it as a Christmas gift to our readers for 1894. The paper on which the picture is impressed being of heavy, fine toned quality, the post office authorities have permitted of arrangements by which the picture will be distributed in strong paste-board wrappers, instead of folded up inside the REVIEW, thus providing for the safety of the souvenir which will be placed in the hands of our subscribers in good condition. The work speaks for itself and need not be commented on in our own columns. We draw attention to the short sketches of the Moderators on our pages. They are not what the subjects would have received had the intention been to do justice to them in the way of life sketches. The extent to which our crowded space allows does not go beyond a few jottings of the pivotal dates and events in careers, all highly interesting and which would furnish material for many long articles. Still the few facts presented will serve a useful purpose. It may be right to repeat what has appeared in a recent issue, that the plate will be sent free to all subscribers for 1894 whose orders reach us from now until the end of January.

The Grace of Giving.

UNDER this heading an esteemed contemporary publishes an article which is so much in line with our appeal of last week that it is here in part reproduced. The Mid-Continent says:—"Religious benevolence, giving of our means for pious purposes, is one of the features of a Christian life. Shall we not say it is one of the tests of consecration? The apostle calls it a grace. The Form of Government of our church classes it among the ordinances of worship. The word of God calls us to it as truly as it calls us to prayer. This sense of duty has a rightful place in every Christian's conscience. We are to recognize that He whose is the silver and the gold is the rightful proprietor of that which we call our own. The third servant in the parable, slothful and unprofitable though he was, yet acknowledged this truth when he said, as he gave up his one talent to his Lord, 'There thou hast that is thine.' If the Christian in his personality is not his own, but in his body and spirit is to glorify God, surely he cannot set up a claim of exemption for that extraneous substance which God has temporarily lodged in his hands.

Different phases of consecration have had their special emphasis of illustration at different times. Now, martyrdoms for the truth. Again, ascetic renunciation of the world. At another time the ordeal of Reformation throes amid universal error. We are not speaking amiss if we say that for this age the consecration of money is one of the very manifest calls of God upon His people. Formerly the church was more restricted in its mission. The heathen world was closed. Methods of communication and international relations and treaties were not in the providential development we have them to-day. The church was provincial and had only its local wants. And its work not then making large demands, God did not bestow such marked wealth upon His people. But it is otherwise now. To-day two orderings of providence come together. 1. Ability of the church to give. 2. The myriad avenues for the Gospel to enter—the doors of every heathen country open, the amazing development of home countries with means of access to every corner, the facility of contact and communication everywhere, the whole earth as it were having become one neighborhood. Put these two facts together, and what do they mean? The work, and the means wherewith to do it being thus contemporaneous in the providence of God, make plain the duty of the hour."