

THE WESLEYAN.
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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GIVING.

Intimately associated with the temple at Jerusalem, were Solomon's wealth and the widow's two mites. One stands at the outset of its history, and the other at its close; while both are an expression of the liberal sentiment in that religion of which the temple itself was the symbol. The temple owed its birth to a grateful large-heartedness—to a lavish liberality, which regards nothing too good or costly to be consecrated to the service of God; and it fades away from sacred history with the glory that is thrown about it by a poor widow's unostentatious charity.

It would seem to be significant, too, that one of our Lord's latest acts, in the exercise of his public ministry, was to pronounce a eulogium upon the liberal spirit. He is about to leave the temple for the last time; the cross is looming up before his mind; the dark shadows are gathering thick about him; and yet he calmly seats himself over against the treasury, where he can leisurely watch the trailing multitudes, rich and poor alike, coming up and casting in their gifts. Some cast in much, but "there came up a certain poor widow and she threw in two mites which make a farthing." It is enough. He cannot hope to witness a more pleasing spectacle; and, determined that the last memory associated with the temple and with his public life, shall be one worthy of remembrance, he retires from the scene with a blessing on his lips, and goes down to Bethany to gather strength for the coming crisis.

We do well to note, moreover, what they are that are most particularly singled out for special mention by Him, who, judging not according to the outward appearance, looks at the heart. Now, it is a cup of cold water given to a disciple; at another time it is a widow's two mites, the drainings of penury; and yet again, it is a box of ointment, the spontaneous pouring forth of a loving heart. In every instance the gift owes its worth and greatness and immortality to the affection from which it springs. This quality has ever been regarded as the measure of any deed or gift of benevolence. Wetstein, in his comment on Mark 12, 43, quotes a Jewish legend to the effect that a high priest, on one occasion, had despised a handful of corn which a poor woman had brought as an offering, when he received a revelation, directing him not to despise the small gift, because the giver had at the same time, offered her whole soul. Secular history supplies examples of the same kind. Seneca tells us of a poor man named Eschines, and of a rich man named Alcibiades, both of whom were disciples of Socrates, but while the latter bestowed abundant offerings upon his master, the former devoted himself with an abandon of soul, and so was more beloved by the great philosopher. It is when a gift is instinct with life, when it is warm with the blood of a living, loving heart, that it is most acceptable.

So that the essence of a gift is to be found, not in its magnitude, so much as in the source from which it springs. It is said, "God loveth a cheerful giver." And again: "The liberal soul shall be made fat." And the true Scripture limit of Christian charity is the simple rule: "As God hath prospered him."

It will be seen how important this matter becomes, when we remember that the largeness of the liberal spirit is the condition and the measure of God's gifts to us. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and *proves me now herewith*, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." And again: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Now, this is what the Bible says about giving. And it is very gratifying to observe how the Christian Church is coming up to this high level of large-hearted liberality. Never was there an age when wealth was more lavishly consecrated to holy and benevolent purposes. Nor is the Methodist Church behind any other in the liberal spirit. Look, for example, at English Methodism, maintaining its own ministry, and contributing nearly three quarters of a million dollars towards the support of its foreign missions. And now a gigantic scheme is being set on foot for the raising of a million dollars as a Thanksgiving Fund, to be devoted towards liquidating all its debts, and extending the advantages of its Theological Institution. It would appear, therefore, that Methodism is out-growing the reproach of poverty which was originally cast upon it. Our own Methodist Church of Canada is following in the wake of the parent body, and, notwithstanding the financial embarrassment under which some of our funds are labouring, partly on account of the general commercial depression, and partly on account of the growing demands of our work, we are quite sure that the liberal sentiment of our people, when sufficiently enlightened and kindly provoked, will be equal to the requirements of the case.

Our Missionary Anniversary, which, at this season of the year, is usually observed all over our vast territory, is an occasion—a suitable outlet for the pent up liberal spirit, and no doubt our people will regard it a privilege to make this missionary campaign a grand success.

NOTABLE RESIGNATION AND ITS RESULTS.

Rev. R. R. Meredith, two years pastor of the first Methodist Church, Boston, has recently connected himself with the Congregationalist body, accepting a call to the leading church in the same city. Mr. Meredith has won a well-deserved reputation as a preacher, but especially as a teacher of Bible-classes. It tells much for the respect paid to him by the church which he has just left, that it urgently requested him to continue the Bible lessons with them. To this he has consented, conducting at the same time two other classes, aggregating an attendance of nearly two thousand.

To supply the vacant pulpit, Rev. J. A. Chapman, D.D., who had preached three years to the same congregation before Mr. Meredith became their pastor, was at once sent back from New York by the Bishop of that diocese. This was a fine stroke of ecclesiastical policy. Mr. Meredith's resignation might have caused an unsettled condition of the relations in the First Church, though he certainly did not desire any such result; but Dr. Chapman's coming harmonized everything. The congregations on Sunday are said to be larger than ever.

This certainly is an argument in favor of Bishops. In our economy the best that could have been done would be to furnish a chairman's supply, and wait till Conference. But in the M. E. Church contingencies are more quickly met. It is probable, however, that our side could offset this advantage by others which the M. E.'s have not. A one man power is always an awful responsibility—too weighty, quite, for most human beings to use at once firmly and tenderly.

CHURCH WORK—SUGGESTIVE.

FORCE USED AND NEGLECTED.
If any order of business were conducted on the same principle as that by which our churches are usually worked, its managers would be the subject of no little remark. Imagine a merchant having fifty thousand dollars invested in his store, yet keeping thirty thousand dollars worth idle on his shelves. Or suppose an engineer, with a pressure of sixty pounds of steam in the boiler, content to use only one-half that power, while his locomotive or craft lagged correspondingly behind. These would be such serious defects in commerce or engineering that men would be turned off immediately for neglect of duty. In Nature all forces are at work to their full extent: ten thousand pumps forcing vital sap into trees and verdure; ten thousand energies drawing water from the sea, changing its chemical parts and scat-

tering them in rain and dew upon the earth. Every force engaged—not one force idle.

Now look in upon the churches. What proportion of our Christian strength is really at work, in our prayer-meetings, in our benevolent methods of reaching the fallen, the homeless and the sick? Are these only Christians who are obeying their Lord's commands, "in season and out of season?" What name, therefore, shall be given to those who profess Christ, feed upon Christ—and do nothing?

O that Christians everywhere would fall into line, take up their neglected duties, find their tongues, and begin to "redeem the time." What life should we then have in our prayer and class-meetings; what joy in the prisons and hospitals; what new hope of the millennium!

It is appalling to think of the amount of dead capital in the church. If all its members would pray, and work, and give, as they ought, its power and influence would be quadrupled. We should astonish ourselves and the world with the grand result.

THE BEST PROOF.—Are you combating scepticism? What method of conflict have you adopted? What are your weapons? It would be amusing to hear the elaborate arguments brought forth, in the pulpits of our time, in defence of the Christian religion, if it were not so very serious a subject.

In the first place, the disbelief of Christianity in our social circles is a thing so very rare that time spent in fighting in this way, is time almost wasted. Deep down in the hearts of the multitude are profoundest reverence and fear of God and goodness. The cold-blooded infidelity of the United States—limited even there to very narrow limits—has scarcely reached us. We have *natural* atheism, who has not? But our people respect religion.

Next, if conviction of the truth is what we aim at, what better proof can we adduce than the *results* of religion? A good revival is worth a score of sermons on "evidences." Bring the "Epistles known and read of all men," and who can withstand your arguments.

It is becoming fashionable to build churches by a method which leaves enough debt to keep the minister's salary down to a figure which will tax his financial skill and his godly prudence. "If the debt were reduced, and if the interest were stopped, we could afford to pay a salary of \$1,000, instead of \$700." By and bye the debt is extinguished. Up goes the salary to a reasonable figure.

Now, we ask, what, in plain English, does this mean? Is it this:—That the minister in charge of the church with a debt of \$4,000 is paying the interest on that amount as it comes due? We fear that is the fact. Hence we say, let any minister, before he sanctions the building of a church, which is to involve a heavy debt, become personally responsible for the interest!

THE INFLUENCE OF AN EXPECTED PRESENCE.

Halifax, for a week past, has been quivering through every fibre of its being. Ordinarily quiet enough for a metropolitan and commercial centre, sedate and conservative by habit, it yielded this time fairly to the excitement of the time. After the vice-regal visitors came, enthusiasm was natural enough; any thing else would not have been pardonable. But what astonished us most was the current of agitation which moved through the streets for several days in advance of the great arrival, and which seemed to increase in volume and rapidity as the auspicious occasion drew nearer. As if the multitude had revealed to them the grand hull of the "Sarmatian," coming over her ocean voyage with her illustrious passengers; as if they looked into her log-book day by day, and hour by hour, measuring the leagues as they lessened, our citizens quickened their steps and shortened their conversations. This was the condition of things among all classes. There were great expectations in every mind. Little children caught the enthusiasm and carried it to their schools and their homes, to talk excitedly by day and dream of wonders by night. Parsons abandoned their books and students their classes. Business was anything but steady. Clerks measured dry goods and talked Marquis. Painters mixed glowing imaginations in with their colours. The very hospitals, we are told, were seized with the new, healthful affection. Hope seemed to bear up everything on its wings into an exhilarating atmosphere.

Yet this was but for a Scottish nobleman and a British Princess, the prospective rulers of our youthful Dominion. True,

there were bright associations connected with their coming. Victoria was present in the pageant, in a two-fold sense. The dead Albert—Victoria's lost Consort, whose memory she is pardoned for cherishing by those who have read of his rare gifts and rarer equanimity of soul—he, too, was there. These contributions of the Royal Family to the government of distant, related countries, are the fruits in part of that wise instruction by which the Queen and Prince communicated to their children qualifications for exalted place and usefulness of life. Nor should it be forgotten that the outburst of feeling during this week was in itself a result of our own British character and the training which has followed us to our new-world existence. Dear though it may be, taking it altogether, we have come intelligently to regard royalty as being, *for us*, the cheapest form of government in the end. Still, there is a sense in which these vice-regal personages hold a subordinate position.

It is not unreasonable to assert that the world is feeling some quickening of its pulsations in the prospect of the coming of the Prince of Life and Peace. There has been a very remarkable assembly at New York, to which, however, we do not attach any very great importance, any further than as regards its evangelical character. Many ministers, of different churches, and from various countries, read essays upon the Second Advent. It was intended to link the assembly in profession with the Millenarian party, so far as to announce its confidence in the coming of Christ by a given period. This was ruled out; though a conviction was recorded that the Lord might be expected any time. In the estimation of many, holding quite as hopefully to the doctrine of Christ's second coming as any who were present, there is much still to be done before the world becomes fully ripe for the reception of its Lord. Yet, may we not look upon the gathering of divines to speak, and multitudes to listen, as regards this great topic, with much such reflections as crowded upon the mind in looking down the streets of Halifax last week? A Royal Personage is approaching; the fact is whispered in the air; the world feels the influence of a large expectation.

Busy brains were sketching plans; busy hands were working last week to welcome the Governor-General. What are you doing, reader, in expectation of Christ? Poor was the house which was not decorated or illuminated for the Marquis of Lorne. Are you "setting your house in order?" Tens of thousands hailed the vice-regal pair as friends and rightful rulers. How shall we meet Christ "at his coming?" "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye know not the Son of Man cometh."

THE RECEPTION.

Halifax certainly did itself immense credit on Monday and Tuesday last. The Marquis and Princess, after an exceedingly rough passage, arrived, and quietly anchored, at 9 o'clock on Saturday night. It was a tribute to the Protestant religion that the Sabbath was allowed to pass without a single interruption of its regular services, or the sweet calm of its sacred hours. The churches were crowded, many strangers occupying places in those most central. On Monday morning every one was early astir. The city quickly threw out its flags and otherwise assumed its most comely aspect. At 10.30 o'clock the *Sarmatian* steamed up very slowly, amid the firing of guns from forts and six ships of war. This was a magnificent sight. At 1.30 the party landed in barges, carrying standards according to their rank. The scene brought forcibly to mind the description of those occasions on the Thames, when royal spouses came from foreign countries, and were greeted by shouting crowds and loud-mouthed cannon. It would be difficult to describe the procession of boats—the principal one propelled by twenty-four gay, active oarsmen, each proud to act his part—speeding to a decorated landing, lined with soldiers, and densely covered with military, political, and civic dignitaries. Then came the procession of the vice-regal pair, through streets in every window of which were smiling faces peering out among flags and festoons of evergreen. Arches at intervals, and clusters of flags and emblems gave variety and beauty to the occasion.

Through all this exciting day no solitary accident occurred, so far as we have learned. Providence blessed the people's generosity.

It was remarked by those who obtained a near view of the Princess that

her recognition of the honours were always with an expression of great sweetness, inclining almost to sadness at times. Refinement and gentleness were very perceptible in her every change of countenance. The Marquis, now His Excellency—seemed eager to mark his appreciation of the universal sympathy with himself and his royal wife. The slightest act or symbol caught his attention and was responded to. It is evident that we have a pleasant, honest, intellectual pair in these representatives of royalty.

On Tuesday night a splendid illumination of ships in the harbor and dwellings ashore crowned the effort of welcome. Fireworks streamed in every direction, in all colours, and of all fantastic shapes. At times the city and town of Dartmouth seemed one blaze of illumination. Too much cannot be said of the Firemen's procession. It was unique—a thing to be remembered for a life-time.

We question whether Halifax ever saw such a complete ovation in all its history, nor would it be unreasonable to hazard the prophecy that it never will again. It would require a union of all hands, hearts, parties, creeds, and professions to bring about anything similar; and in this country of divisive inclinations, there is little probability of securing in a century, a common object sufficiently important to reproduce that great spectacle. Unless the Queen herself should cross the ocean—and Princess Louise's voyage is not likely to encourage that—we have seen the most illustrious event in the history of "Old Chebucto."

BISHOP HAVEN has received an unexpected reinforcement and from no less a personage than Canon Rawlinson, whose standing as a scholar in ethnology is second to no one living. The Canon proposes to settle our great national question by the wiles of intermarrying with the blacks, absorbing the latter in a century or more. And the Canon's paper, "Duties of Higher Toward Lower Races," is published in the *Princeton Review*.—*Central Advocate*.

All this ethnological wisdom comes ungracefully from men who have themselves married white women. If there be a man of "standing as a scholar in ethnology" who is in a position, and possessed of sufficient courage to espouse one of the race for whose elevation his philosophy provides let him stand forth as the first real apostle of miscegenation, and doubtless the "national question" will have a prospect of settlement.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

By a note from Dr. Douglas, President of General Conference, we learn that the 4th of December has been appointed by the Dominion Government, as a day of Thanksgiving. No arrangement has been made so far as we are aware, in the Maritime Provinces which would interfere with this day as a general observance, save in the case of New Brunswick; and there the day of Thanksgiving announced some time ago was not generally adopted as such. It will therefore be understood that the 4th of December will be regarded by the Methodist Church as a day of Thanksgiving, where no day had previously been set apart for that object.

BETWEEN TWO FILES.—This week there are two remonstrances against the remonstrances of the previous week, as regards Mr. Currie's letters. We are threatened with loss of subscribers if we do continue, and with severe displeasure if we don't. We imagine this reflects outside opinion pretty well; and it illustrates the supreme joys of an editor's position. It will be understood, of course, that the objection of those alluded to last week are not against Baptism *per se*; but against magnifying an ordinance which they regard as of minor importance, comparatively. On the other hand there are many of our readers who are helped in their doubts, and others in their conflicts, by the discussion; so that we would counsel forbearance till the subject has been completed. Our remarks were written, both last week and this, under the consciousness that the WESLEYAN belongs to *Methodism*, and not to the individual controlling, for the time, its pages.

Several letters addressed to us—some with, others without, money—have recently been lost in the mails. We have refrained from mentioning this fact till now through the difficulty has been perplexing us for several weeks. We must now state the circumstance for two reasons:—to shield ourselves from possible blame in instances of other losses which may not have come to our notice; and to show that registration of letters always affords some security, while it is at a cost but of only two cents per letter. The letters lost were Post Office system in our day need allow itself to be filed after this fashion for any great length of time.

SCIENCE is surely at its best. Here is a declaration of war on the part of England on the 31st of November, against a ruler in the remote districts of India. The dec-