

"I love the Bible—it shines with the truth of God; it has made plain to me my duty and my destiny; it has taught me the power of prayer, the secret of faith, the beauty of holiness; it has taught me how to order my living, and how to leave my dying to the care of Him who lives forevermore; it has taught me my place in society, in the universe—how that I am free in dependence, and dependent in freedom. But the truth the Bible teaches is greater than the Bible, and I care for *that* most. I cannot learn it without the Bible? then I must have my Bible, and my right to interpret it. No priest, no Church, and no organization must take it from me. The style of printing or of binding I care little about; but the Bible I must have. I love the altar—it is the place of my sacrifice, of my prayer; it is the symbol to me of God's patience and mercy; it is the point of contact between earth and heaven; I must have freedom of access to that, and no man, no church, and no organization must bar my way to it.

"Working young men, and all others here!—Shall I tell you how you can best promote the principles of the Bible, and how you can best defend the altar? Let your *lives* be in accordance with both. Take the idea of God you find in the Bible—that He is the All-wise and the All-good, ever loving and blessing you; take the Christ of the Bible, going about doing good—not pleasing Himself, but speaking, living, dying to save sinners; take the brotherhood of the Bible with its teachings of honesty and truth and love; take the freedom the Bible enjoins—individual liberty, manhood's assured rights and privileges. But read and mark at the same time the grand servitude of the Gospel—see how it teaches you to put yourselves under restraint, and the law of self-denial for the sake of others. You cannot be the freemen of truth and Christ if you are under bondage to an organization, to a custom—if you are to be moved and commanded by other men. Would you protect the altar?—then live out the idea, the idea of mercy and sacrifice. You will vindicate our Protestantism best by being tolerant of everything but intolerance. It is better—as you and I firmly believe it to be—if it is better than other forms of faith, show it and commend it by your own industry, your own honesty, your own benevolence to friends and foes, your own charity, your willingness to forego a right to secure general peace. That is the best Church which makes the best manhood and womanhood.

"My brothers, seek after that *manhood*—put it before all custom, all tradition, all creeds, all organizations. Christian manhood is before and bigger than all of them. Whatever would restrict the growth of that; whatever would hinder its free development, put away; whatever will help you to be true and good, be it in creed, or Church, or organization—or outside of them all—take it; for your first concern is the salvation of your own soul."

### JESUS LIFTED UP.

Looking in another direction, we find the Church confronted by critical skepticism and scientific doubt, which aim to break down the bulwarks of her faith, and raze her walls of salvation to the ground. But while we survey this frowning evil, let us not be unduly alarmed, or make too hasty concessions but be vigilant and wise in meeting it on broad and sound grounds. Holding to the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice, we must maintain the supremacy of the Bible by placing it in its right position; and that is, that it is a perfectly completed book. The Bible of to-day is the Bible of all the centuries of the Christian era, and will be of all the centuries to come. As it came from Him, it can neither be added to nor taken from without incurring the anathema of its Author. But the science which opposes this Bible is but the science of to-day. It was not the science of the last century; it will not be of the century to come. These sciences, of whatever name, are variable and uncertain. Not one is on a fixed and immovable basis. Not one that may not be altered, or set aside by some new discovery, or by some new generalization. It will be time enough to say whether these sciences

and the Bible do agree when the perfected circle of science shall be placed on the perfected circle of the Holy Scriptures. Then only can we rightly measure each, and when that time comes it will be found that the circumference of science and the circumference of revelation have one and the same periphery, because they have one and the same divine centre, the same one living and true God.

In the apostles' day there were "oppositions of science, falsely so-called." In every age since then the same assaults have been renewed, but the Bible has calmly held on its way. It waits patiently for confirmation as the ages roll on, and each advance of true science does bring it more into accord with revelation. What the clergy have to do is not to attempt to put on Saul's armour and go forth to fight what they would call a Philistine science with something that they have not proved and cannot wield, but to take the smooth stones out of Scripture, and in the name of the uplifted One so hurl them that even giant defiers of the Israel of God shall fall before the simple truth, slung by the humblest shepherd of the flock. This preaching is now, as in Paul's day, to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness, but it is still what it was then, and what it will ever be—Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. When the apostles preached this uplifted Christ, they did it not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, lest the Cross of Christ should be of none effect, but with that plainness of men fully imbued with the truth which they heralded, and telling it out in the fulness and directness which all will feel who realize that they are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the uplifted Jesus.

### CHRISTIAN GIVING.

It is of the nature of, and forms a part of worship. Worship may be defined as including, reverence for God, trust in Him, love toward Him, and consecration of ourselves and all that we have to Him. This worship may either be private and informal between the individual and God alone, or it may be public and formal before the world, and in this aspect, in all ages of the Church's history it ever included the act of giving, it was so under the old dispensation from its first institution. For over and above all the gifts and offerings that were prescribed and fixed by the letter of the Levitical law. It was commanded that, "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty." "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee," Deut. xvi. 16, 17. Thus the giving was essential to right and acceptable worship. Its withholding vitiated and destroyed the whole act, while its faithful discharge was intimately connected with flourishing piety in the individual soul, and the constant and general keeping of the commandment was ever accompanied with the Divine blessing, and was a sure guarantee of national prosperity. As it was instituted, so it existed and continued to be recognized and practised during the chequered history of the Hebrew monarchy. It survived the captivity, and in the days of our Saviour, the casting into the treasury formed part of the temple worship. The dissolution of the old dispensation and the introduction and establishment of the new did not alter the nature and spirit of true worship in the least. Under the old, the tithes and offerings were distinctly prescribed and enumerated, while the free-will offerings were at the option of the individual as his love or gratitude might prompt him. Under the new, there is no bond but that of love or gratitude laid on any one. It is only "give as the Lord hath prospered you," and lay by you on the first day of the week; and, on that day "forget not the assembling of yourselves together." Hence we see that all true worship is inseparably connected with giving; and conversely, that all right giving is of the nature and essence of true worship.

It should be systematic; not fitful and uncertain

Just as in everything else, if we wish to go on smoothly and prosperously, we must go according to some settled and definite plan. It ought to be looked upon as a part of our life work, and as such be constantly before our minds. We should settle with our own consciences as in the sight of God both the schemes to which we give and the amount of our giving, and then adhere to it as in any other matter of business, and if we set about it in this conscientious and business-like manner, there will be no fear of our withholding altogether, because we have so little to give. For in so giving God will not only bless the gift but bless us in the giving and make it to us a blessed thing to give.

This methodical arrangement of the duty will help to make us cheerful in our giving—and God loves a cheerful giver. If we have no well defined plan of giving, we will seldom find ourselves prepared to give, when we are asked, and when asked in these circumstances the conflict between the sense of duty and inability rightly to discharge it, makes the calls of the collector sources of irritation and dislike to us, so that the spirit in which we give if we give at all, is such as to rob us of all the pleasure connected with our giving, deprives us of all the good that accrues to us from right giving, and leaves us no right to expect God's blessing.

Again, we should be *discriminating* in our giving, and to this end it will have to be *intelligent*. All objects are not alike deserving, and there may be honest differences of opinion as to which is the most needful or the most deserving scheme; but in order to a decision or a judgment there must be information on many points, acquaintance with the condition of the world at large, with the state of our own land and the schemes of our own Church in particular. This can only be acquired by reading and reflection, and having thus informed ourselves and decided as to which of the many we are to give our most earnest support, while at the same time we ought not to withhold entirely from any, we will give with *discrimination*, and thus be enabled to give *prayerfully*, fulfilling the Scripture, "In all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God," *praying* that God would bless you in your giving, and more and more enlarge your heart and open your hand, *praying* that His blessing may rest on what you give, *praying* that He would bless the particular object for which you give, and if we thus prayed in our giving, "*Alexander the coppermilk*" would be entirely cast out of all our special givings.

Let us next enquire what would be the results of such giving as we have indicated; these would be twofold, direct and reflex.

It would do away at once with all that vast complicated and cumbrous machinery which has been called into existence for the purpose of raising the funds necessary for carrying on the work of the Church. Let it once be recognized and acted on, that giving is essential to and forms a part of acceptable worship, and there would be a return at once to the scriptural method of laying by in store as the Lord has prospered us, and on the first day of the week we would bear our own offerings and cast them into the treasury of the Lord. Our worship would then be complete, and not shorn of its essence in being divorced from our giving.

Another direct result would be a large increase in the aggregate of our contributions from the very fact that our giving would be systematic and constant and not desultory and fitful, and as a necessary consequence of this increase there would be a rapid extension of the Church itself, not only in building up the waste places in our own land, but by sending the messengers of the cross into the dark places of the earth, and sustaining them while there by our substance and our prayers.

There would be a large increase of large-heartedness on the part of those giving. It would widen the range of our sympathies, strengthen the bonds of fellow-feeling between ourselves and the world at large. It would deepen our convictions of the brotherhood of the whole human race, and thoroughly arouse us to the fact that as sinners, we all stand in the sight of