

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

REMARKS ON THE 18TH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

The earnest, intelligent reader often pauses to say to himself, "Here is a chapter that every one would do well to commit to memory." This may be truly said of the 18th of Matthew. In it the subjects treated and instructions given are so plain and so needful for us we cannot afford to forget them.

The disciples longed for a temporal kingdom, and often disputed about which of them would hold the highest office in it. For a time they kept these disputes from the Master, as if ashamed for Him to know the meanness of their ambition. But their eagerness for place and power would be no longer restrained, and they asked himself, "Who is the greatest in

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?"

In the midst of little children Jesus seemed most at home, and He called one of them to Him to show the disciples who is the greatest in the kingdom—the one most like that little child. What did that child care for the greatness which agitated their anxious hearts? he loved those whose goodness he best understood, he believed all they said and willingly obeyed them. It was now and would ever be his highest ambition to be near Jesus and to enjoy His approval. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children ye shall not even enter into the kingdom. His

TEST OF GREATNESS

is entirely different from theirs. He who has most servants and most attention shown him here is the greatest with them; but he who humbles himself most to serve others is the greatest with Jesus.

Their erroneous views leads them to mind high things and high persons, and despise men of low estate, and to hold the former as dear as a right hand or a right eye, although they cause them to stumble, and Jesus commands them to cast them from them, because it is better to enter into life without them than to be cast into hell with them. At the same time He warns them not to despise the little ones who believe in Him. Though they seem of so little importance to them, being more a burden than a benefit to the church, yet they are so precious to His Father that He sends the angels who behold His face in heaven to minister to them. "My ways are not your ways, saith the Lord." He who stands in solitary glory far above principalities and powers, and every name that can be named, once descended from the form of God to the form of a servant, and finished that service by the death of the cross. The Son of Man came to minister and to give His life a ransom for many—and by these instructions He is moulding His disciples into His own likeness and leading them into His own ways. The justice and goodness of these ways He illustrates by the anxiety and toil of the good shepherd for the lost sheep and His joy over its recovery. In the same line he shows how to treat

AN OFFENDING BROTHER:

"Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," etc., etc. We will briefly consider some of the known objections to this order of the Master and also how they may be answered. A thus objects, "I have given this brother no offence, he is the offender and ought to come to me if he wants reconciliation." B answers, "I admit he is wrong and likely not seeking to be reconciled." Is it right for your brother and you to be alienated?

A. No, but he being the offender ought to move first and bear the expense of the reconciliation. If he came to me I am willing to forgive him and to be reconciled. Every law on earth requires the person who has given the trouble to bear the expense of its removal.

B. But there is a law higher and better than the laws of earth. Though no law of earth may demand the offender to bear the expense of a reconciliation, no tribunal can condemn him for choosing to do so, especially when the offender is unable or unwilling to do so. Jesus gave this law, and to prove its practicability and righteousness He has Himself set the example. When we were enemies by wicked works, He moved in the matter and bore the expense so that we were reconciled to God by the blood of His cross.

Two points are to be gained by this command of Jesus—your reconciliation and your brother's salvation. Your brother is on the crumbling precipice of destruction, another step may prove his final ruin. Is it not worth your while to save him? A. But he will not hear me if I do go. I have reasons for so saying.

B. Then if he does not hear you, take others with you. If he still refuse, tell it to the church. And if he will not hear the church he proves himself unfit for its communion, and he takes his stand where he ought to be outside, and the church, by these kind and wise steps, is relieved from the reproach and trouble it bore on his account.

How many are ready to condemn an offending brother! How few to go and labor for his restoration! Nor is it by any means the purest in heart that casts the first stone. If we bruise a finger he would be deemed a horrible specimen of humanity who would look on and urge its amputation. In such a case we use the kindest and quickest means in our power to heal it, and so the Great Physician prescribes for the members of the church, which is His body.

But Jesus gives

CHEERING HOPES OF SUCCESS

to the disciple whom He sends to the offending brother. "If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Not gained riches nor worldly honor, nor a kingdom, nor a crown. Thy hast gained thy brother. "Thou hast saved a soul from death and hidden a multitude of sins." (Jas. v. 20). And that soul is thy brother's. Christian reader, cease to tell others of your brother's trespass, but go and take the name of Jesus with you and gain your brother. Angels will rejoice over it, it will cement your heart to the faithful brethren on earth, and it will be such work as Jesus will ratify and seal in heaven.

It is by obedience to the commands of Jesus that men are

UNITED IN HIS NAME,

and He proceeds to describe the high privileges of such a union. If two of them agree and meet to ask a certain thing of God, God will do it for them, because the Mediator is in that little meeting. A merciful Father will not deny the united petition of His children and His own dear Son.

After Jesus had said so much about an offending brother, Peter asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus did not say until seven times, but until seventy times seven, or as often as his brother might sin against him; or as often as we ask God's forgiveness. The elders taught the Jews to forgive three times, but not four, perhaps gathering it from these words: "For three transgressions and for four I will not turn away my wrath." (Amos i. 3) Peter might think that adding the three and four together might free him from his obligation to forgive his brother.

Jesus put this matter in a strong light by telling of the king who found one of his servants that

owed him ten thousand talents (about ten million dollars). He had likely held a high office and was an unscrupulous spendthrift. But he had nothing to pay this enormous debt and his lord, according to eastern custom, commanded him, his wife and family to be sold, and all he had to be confiscated to pay the debt. He fell at his feet and pled, "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." His lord graciously forgave him the debt. But the man found another who owed him one hundred pence (fifteen dollars), and would show him no mercy, though he pled in the same words he had used himself. He thrust him into prison till he should pay the debt. This grieved others, who told the king of it. Behold his rebuke and awful doom! The man seemed to act worse than he did before the king forgave him the great debt he could never pay. He would not wait for his debtor to pay the small debt which he could pay. It is better for men not to have known the right way, than after they have known to depart from it. Such have no excuse and will find no mercy. When a sinner is awakened to see his ruin he first thinks he can pay the debt by prayer, or weeping, or other meritorious acts. God knows He can't, and through Christ offers freely to forgive all. How happy he is when he accepts it, lives in it, and freely forgives others who offend him.

I was glad to see in the last CHRISTIAN the portrait and short history of Mary M. Rich, our young missionary to Japan. I have no doubt but it is the love of Jesus and her anxiety to lead the lost to Him that induced her to leave all the endearments of relatives and home to go among strangers, spend years in learning their language, and then be exposed to all the hardships of a climate dangerous to the health of strangers.

This sister is Canada's missionary to Japan, and Canadians are and will be happy in sympathizing with and supporting her in her work. Is it not a privilege to be permitted to dozy ourselves that we may support the cause of Him who gave up everything and then gave Himself for us? We would have never known anything of this had not His friends carried the gospel to us, and now we may assist in carrying it to others who need it as much as we do.

Some kind friends have sent me money this year for foreign missions, and I take this opportunity of thanking them sincerely. I would also say to others who might wish to send, that as we have at present no societies on this Island known to me to take charge of it, I will be glad to receive any money sent to my address for that purpose and to forward it.

D. CRAWFORD.

New Glasgow, P. E. I.

Original Contributions.

IS IT A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE?

One of our St. John weekly papers contained, not long ago, an editorial, entitled, "A Matter of Conscience," about which I would like to say a few words. The subject discussed was whether or not a person is justified in attending and taking part in dances, balls, etc. I do not wish to take up the dancing phase of the article here, but wish merely to reply to the arguments put forward by the writer in favor of making the conscience a tribunal of right and wrong. "The Christian test," says the writer, "of the right or wrong of any act is whether he can ask God's blessing on it. If his conscience tells him he cannot do so, he should refrain, but if he can honestly ask that blessing, he is justified in proceeding." I must say I cannot see any logic in such a statement as that. Merely asking God's blessing on an act cannot make that act right, if it is in itself wrong. It would be just as reasonable for us to say that whatever a child thinks is right