

tainly surprising. Yet that instance does not prove so much as many think, for the publication of the annual reports of the movement in an *indirect* appeal for aid. So long as the eighth and ninth chapters of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians stand in the Bible, we shall feel that we are on scriptural ground when we set forth the claims of a benevolent object, and use every honest argument to support it, not shrinking to use, if we may, the wisdom of the serpent as well as the harmlessness of the dove. The Apostle, in the passage referred to, appeals to some things in human nature that are not the highest. But the ideal of Christian giving—the point which we should ever be aiming to reach—is where the intelligence and generosity of the giver outrun the appeal, and gifts are “ready beforehand, as a matter of bounty.” It is saddening to think, that unless deputations and collectors go their rounds, a great part of our missionary funds would not be forthcoming; not that gifts are extorted, but that there is a certain indifference about the matter, which will not offer, though it may not refuse. Would not a richer blessing come down on our missions, if the tithes were *brought* into the storehouse?

This is one aspect of the matter; but there is a brighter one. We attach a high value to these annual services, as opportunities for fellowship and means of grace. “Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.’.....And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches.” (Acts xv. 36, 41.) The association on these journeys of isolated pastors, the exchange of domestic hospitalities, the pleasures and the perils of the way, all form a healthy variation from the monotony of daily life. “As iron sharpeneth iron, so the countenance of a man his friend.” Many a knotty question has been solved, many a trouble eased by sympathy, and many an impulse imparted to a right endeavour, as we have travelled together on this good errand. For our own part, we will testify, that we have always come home refreshed in spirit, with a livelier sense of brotherhood, and a deeper conviction of the solid value of the work which our missionaries are doing. No small measure of that more than common degree of brotherly affection which prevails among us, may be traced to these joint services, year by year. But there is room for a much fuller development of the same benefit.

It is matter for congratulation, that the general tone of our missionary meetings is worthy of the cause for which they are held. They are *instructive*, *spiritual* and *grave*. “Jesting and foolish talking are not convenient.” Sometimes they have been occasions on which the deepest spiritual impressions have been produced, and souls converted to God! Should not this be the mark always aimed at—to *revive the living, to quicken the dead*? It is worth some previous thought and pains, to present the cause in a manner