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All communications connected with the Record and the several Schemes of the Church, to be addressed to "Rev. W. Reid, Office of the Missionary and Ecclesiastical Record," Toronto.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications intended for the *Record* should be in the Editor's hands by the 15th of the month.

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The Record.

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SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

We have occasionally in the pages of the *Record* offered a few remarks on Christian liberality in general, and systematic benevolence in particular. This subject deserves and really demands our most serious attention. The duty of giving to the cause of Christ, and for the sake of Christ, is, we fear, but very partially understood. How solemn the thought that many professing Christians spend far more on unnecessary luxuries than on objects connected with the cause of Christ; yea, that some spend more on strong drink or tobacco—things which we hold to be not merely unnecessary, but positively injurious—than they devote to Christ's cause. Such things assuredly ought not to be.

The evil has been, that in giving for the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, no principle has been recognized, and no system followed. Of late, this subject has engaged the attention of various devoted men, and several treatises have been written on the subject, which, we believe, have so far been of use in diffusing correct and scriptural views in regard to the duty of Christian liberality. A volume has lately been published, entitled "Gold and the Gospel; the Ulster Prize Essays on the scriptural duty of giving in proportion to means and income."—Prizes having been offered for the best and second best essays on "Giving in proportion to means and income," fifty-one essays were submitted to the adjudicators, who selected five as "co-equal in merit, but so varied in style and distinct in character as to form an interesting, efficient and complete exposition of the whole subject." Of the five writers, two are Englishmen, two Irishmen, and one a Scotchman; while, as to Churches, the first is an Episcopalian Minister, the second a Presbyterian Minister, the third a Scotch Dissenter, the fourth an English Nonconformist, and the fifth a layman of a different

church from all the four. Some of the Essayists hold the divine institution and authority of tithes; while they all hold up a high standard of Christian liberality,—one of the writers maintaining that "the proportion of the Christian offerings to religion and humanity should as much exceed the ratio of the law of tithe, as his obligations exceed those of a Jew; and that he should proportion his offerings to the measure of his resources, and practice self-denial of the luxuries and elegancies of life, to have what he may in the fullest measure to the Saviour's glory." The fifth essayist dwells on the importance of method, system and regularity in giving, and recommends that we should not only give when solicited, but store up a portion of our substance in readiness, so that the amount shall not be left to chance, or to the impulse of the moment. This volume has had a most extensive circulation in Britain. In England, six gentlemen belonging to as many different denominations, have purchased each 1000 copies for distribution among the ministers of the Gospel. We trust the essays will be extensively read in Canada also. Were the principles set forth in them generally prevalent, how much might be done by our prosperous settlers. We might not only liberally sustain our domestic religious institutions, but send missionaries of our own to India and China to take part with those who are labouring to plant in those lands the standard of the cross. Would we be the poorer for this expenditure? Assuredly not, for God himself hath declared that "them who honour Him, He will honour;" that "the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth others shall be watered himself."

The paragraphs which we subjoin are taken from one of the essays referred to, viz, that by the Rev. Henry Constable, of the Established Church of Ireland:—

In the expenditure of the Christian's offerings, the support of the gospel ministry amongst ourselves occupies the leading place. They who are God's ambassadors to convey his message to man, are his first objects in the distribution of the portion which he claims for himself. It is their right, which cannot be withheld from them without guilt—"They who preach the gospel should live of the gospel"—by the same Divine ordinance that gave to the Jewish priesthood a share of the altar sacrifices. They who have separated themselves from secular business, devoted themselves to the service of the Redeemer, and the salvation of his wandering sheep, should not have their thoughts distracted from their calling by poverty and want at home—"Let it not be thought," says Mr. James, speaking on this subject, "that what is given to a minister is a charitable donation: it is the payment of a just debt. It is what Christ claims for his faithful servants, and which cannot be withheld without robbery. I spurn for myself and my brethren the degrading apprehension that we are supported by charity. We are not clerical pensioners upon mere bounty. Our appeal is to justice; and if our claims are denied upon this ground, we refuse to plead before any other tribunal, and refer the matter to the great assize." We know of no money so well spent as this, in whatever view regarded. It is the most direct homage to God, being given to his servants. It maintains the preaching of those grand truths, which are for the salvation of immortal souls. Even on the grounds of worldly expediency, it is

more for the temporal interests of nations than any other expenditure. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Christ to his apostles; and well and truly has Hooker called every ambassador of his "a pillar of that commonwealth wherein he faithfully serveth God." Take away from nations its gospel ministrations; silence the message of peace, and the word of exhortation, rebuke and warning, and you will quickly reduce it to that degeneracy of mind and morals, which is the certain precursor of decay and ruin.

It is righteousness which is the great exalter of one nation above another; and true religion more, far more than any other thing, produces those principles of morality, of activity, of prudence and industry, of temperance and endurance, which make a people great at home, and respected and powerful abroad. What has preserved wealthy England from falling into that effeminacy of manners, that luxury and vicious indulgence, which extinguished the spirit of Greece and Rome, and paved the way for their downfall? Without hesitation we say it is her possession—too partial, alas!—of true religion. What the Latin poet said of imperial Rome may, with much greater truth, be said of Britain—"Thou bearest rule, because thou submittest thy will to heaven." To the possession of the truth and to its influence we refer, under God, the greatness of our country; and while she retains them we will not fear her overthrow.

OUR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS CITIZENS.

There are some who entertain the idea that Christians should leave secular matters to worldly men, without troubling themselves with their management. Now while we hold that Christians should guard against the influence of secular things, and live as it becometh those whose home, and portion, and affections are in heaven, still we cannot admit that they are at liberty to lay aside all regard to secular and public matters, far less that it is sinful for them to be engaged in any degree about such things. The Christian, it is true, is not to be sunk in the more citizen. Neither is the citizen to be sunk in the Christian. The duties of the Christian and of the citizen are not to be regarded as inconsistent with each other. The truth is Christianity is not a thing by itself. It is not something superadded to the character of the man. It is something that must pervade and influence his whole character, and affect all his conduct and demeanour;—a leaven which, hidden in the heart, must diffuse its influence through the whole individual. The true Christian will not merely be a Christian on the Lord's day, he will show his Christianity by his week-day conduct also. He will not be a Christian merely in the house of God, or at the religious meeting, but in the bosom of his family, in his intercourse with his fellow men, in the shop, in the Senate, on the Bench, or in whatever place he occupies in society. We do not mean to say that the Christian is, in the performance of ordinary duties, to affect a marked difference from his fellow creatures. But still wherever he is, and in whatever duty he may be engaged, he will still be the Christian, remembering that he is under law to Christ, having a single eye to the glory of God and manifesting such conduct and such a spirit as may lead those who see him to take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.