

How can we compare such men as even Plato and Socrates with Daniel, Isaiah and Elijah? How can we compare Nebuchadnezzar, the kings of Egypt, Cambysses, the cruel son of Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Pericles and Alcibiades Grecians, the greatest Roman generals, with Moses, Joshua and David? It is true the Hebrews had faults—weaknesses were guilty of crimes at times—but look at the general scope of their conduct, their doctrines and elevated thoughts! Read the glorious song of Moses—the beautiful psalms of David, and the writings of the prophets, especially those of Isaiah and Jeremiah! It is especially interesting to those believing in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments and that they contain the will of a Supreme Being, to see the difference between the two systems that governed mankind before and since the appearance of the Messiah, whose glorious Gospel now dominates the best part of the human race. The heathen gods and goddesses were baser and more corrupt than even the poor human beings who believed in them. Our God—the Almighty Spirit—who is spoken of in the Old Testament, is infinitely superior in purity, benevolence and holiness to the Jewish race, who worshipped Him.

The heathens sacrificed their children, their friends, to their gods and devils in all countries. In some countries they destroyed their children and their parents when old. In many countries they wholly disregarded the marriage laws and generally degraded and enslaved the female race. This is still done among them. All these vices are prevalent still. Even Mahomet with all his boasting "that he is God's prophet alone," by his system degrades woman. The Old Hebrews did not do this, much less does the blessed Gospel of Christ. On the map of the world of old we see Abraham coming out mysteriously from the corruptions and sinfulness of idolatry and believing in and worshipping one God—a Spirit—Almighty—the rewarder of the upright in conduct. This same great Spirit speaks to Moses in the wilderness, and chooses him as a messenger of truth. Around him lay the nations of men bowing to sticks and stones, worshipping devils, steeped in vicious customs and habits, so graphically described by Heroditus in his great work on ancient men.

Josephus, the greatest of historians, living about the time of the Apostle Paul, describes the vices of the Romans and surrounding nations of his day and the ages before him. What but the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit made this difference between Hebrews and heathens and inspired with holy words the prophets? Indeed, who called these men out from their corrupt surroundings to denounce sinful Jews and heathen nations? Was it not God? Yet we see in our day men called learned disregarding such wonderful evidence. God disciplined the Hebrews and punished the heathens. His providences were seen in the rise and fall of empires as it is even now seen since Christ. Why, it may be asked, did He allow this heathen system to exist or the Hebrews to err and to be carried into captivity? We know not, except that men are free agents and can sin or be His worshippers in truth. We know at least that there is a mighty difference in their views between the Old Jewish and heathen systems. It is only to be accounted for on the supposition that there is a God who has revealed Himself and does now—who is the hearer of prayer, the Governor of nations! His will culminated in the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ—that glorious spiritual light upon the earth, who lived, talked, shone in glory, with His beautiful doctrines—was crucified, arose again and is alive forever more! These heathen nations that now exist—so numerous still so debased—are to come under the influence of that beautiful gospel finally, and the world, although not freed from sin and sorrow in the present dispensation, is to be freed from the grossness of idolatry which everywhere pulls into the dirt the human mind.

The efforts, therefore, of missionaries everywhere are praiseworthy. Their acts open the way to truth, elevate women, pull out of deep, vile superstitions the poor human creatures who know not what truth is. Shine on, blessed Gospel. Breathe on, blessed Spirit, and purify the world and let it be known there is a light in our midst from God.

CHARLES DURAND

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SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

The relation which giving to the Lord's cause bears to the progress of that cause indicates the importance to be attached to "giving." "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and if it pleased Him He could dispense with the offerings of His people and yet carry on His work. He has, however, chosen the method of upholding and extending His Church in part by the liberality of His servants. To every true-hearted Christian the plain every-day question is: "How can I best glorify my Lord?" One excellent way is by every day giving to Him that which is due unto Him. This is our duty and our privilege as well.

The first question we raise is: "What is the rule to guide us in the matter of giving?" Some would have us return to the rule given in Old Testament times, but this we regard as wholly incorrect. The New Testament Church is wider and grander by far than the Old, so also the rule for giving. The "tithe" or "tenth" law had its day and served its purpose. The apostle says: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This indicates three particulars: 1. There is to be *preparation* made for making the payment. Is it ungenerous to say

that many who call themselves the Lord's people never exercise any foresight in this matter. 2. There is to be *promptness* in making the payment. Arrears! Yes, we hear about them quite frequently. And 3. There is to be *proportion* in our giving. It is to be "according as God hath prospered him," but it too often turns out according to what his neighbour has subscribed.

Our second question is: "What is the best way to observe this rule?" We think it would be found very helpful to, 1. Let *conscience have a good deal to say in the matter*. Every Christian is bound to act conscientiously. Men do not like to be charged with dishonesty towards their fellows, but there are perhaps many who are upright in their dealing with men who are forgetful of the claims of God upon them as His redeemed ones. 2. *Constancy* should be a steady aim. A living conscience will produce a constant service. Spasmodic giving is a device to maintain one's personal honour in the community and avoid his full obligation to God. 3. *Cheerfulness* tends greatly to the attainment of perfection in giving. "God loveth a cheerful giver." And 4. To sum all up in one word, *be Christlike* in your giving. Give as He gave and gives. What have you you have not received? You are redeemed, but for your redemption Christ gave Himself. "Let the mind which was in Him be also in you." He did not give with a grudge. He kept nothing back. Follow His example.

What is the reward of giving by this rule? It has a reward that is indeed priceless. 1. It brings with it an *approving conscience*. Let the world talk of fun and amusement; there is no pleasure so sweet and true as that which flows from a heart at peace with itself and God. 2. It brings with it *increased power for serving God*. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." When God sees a man faithful with a little, He will give him more. The bankruptcy of many a Christian may find an explanation along this line. And lastly, it brings with it *the approbation of the Master*. What a rich reward is here. No one can tell the joy of him on whose ears fall the words of welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant." The Christian has a large responsibility, but his reward for faithful service is likewise great. May it be the honour and happiness of all here this night to obtain that reward.

FIFTH REPORT OF THE SCHOOL FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

A new interest attaches to this report which has just been issued from the press. It marks a new era, and, in the minds of the friends of the institution, an advanced step.

The school is composed of two distinct and well-defined training schools, each intended for the training of men for special fields of Christian activity. One, the work of the Young Men's Christian Associations, the other, that of a pastor's lay helper, a Sunday school superintendent, or a Sunday school missionary. The two schools have heretofore been under the management of one corporation, though from the very beginning it has been hoped that the association school might be separately incorporated, enabling it thereby to become more closely affiliated with the associations in whose interest it was established, and concentrating upon it their helpful interest. This step was finally taken last June, and hereafter the two schools formerly constituting the "School for Christian Workers" will be separate and distinct in their property and financial interests, though holding the same friendly relations to one another as heretofore, and sharing as before the expenses of such instruction as is given to all their students alike.

The following change, however, is to be noted. The name "School for Christian Workers," which heretofore has applied to the two schools, will hereafter be the name of only one of them, namely, "The Training School for Sunday School Workers and Pastors' Helpers," while the other school has become newly incorporated under the name of "The Young Men's Christian Association Training School."

During the past year sixty-two men have attended the regular school; forty-nine to prepare for the work of the Young Men's Christian Association, and thirteen for that of the Sunday school and as pastors' helpers. This is a somewhat smaller number of students than attended during the previous year, but this temporary shrinkage has been occasioned simply by the higher standard of admission established last fall, and has been more than offset by the marked improvement in the qualifications of the men that have entered, and in the quality of their work during the year.

The summer session of the Physical Department of the Association Training School last year was attended by fifty-seven students.

The demand for the students at the school continues to far out-strip the number which it is able to furnish, the demand being to the supply as three to one. That the school, or that part of it which has been devoted to the interests of the Young Men's Christian Associations, is becoming an increasingly helpful auxiliary to their work is noticeable from the fact that a much larger proportion of those who enter the work after receiving the training of the school or even a very small part of it have proved successful, than of those who enter it without any previous systematic preparation.

While the school has been obliged to close the year with a small deficit, the contributors to its support have been considerably in excess of those of any previous year, indicating the growth of interest in its work on the part of its friends and helpers.

Prominent among the generous friends of the institution, whose death during the past twelve months the school has been called upon to mourn, are mentioned Mr. William Thaw, of Pittsburg, Pa., and Mr. Thomas C. Sloane, of New York.

THE GOSPEL IN ITALY.

The Rev. John R. McDougall, of Florence, addressed the following letter to a friend of his who has kindly forwarded it for publication:—

Having now enjoyed some relaxation, after nine months' strenuous toil in Florence, I am set down to my annual correspondence with all my excellent friends and supporters of Gospel work in Italy. You would get all our news in the April reports, which were very full of matter. Since then, among other things, we have opened a new school in Milan, a new place of worship—our own property—in Pisa and a new mission in Chiavenna.

The public mind in Italy is more and more favourably impressed with our work, and even the Government begins to show us favour, and is about formally to recognize the Evangelical Church of Italy, hitherto called the Free Italian Church. Next April we are to have in Florence the Ninth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, and from the arrangements we are making I trust it will be one of the best meetings of that admirable organization.

You would be glad to notice that a deficit of 1888, which troubled my mind a good deal last year, was cleared off on December 31 last. I am making an experiment in Italy just now, which you will follow with prayerful interest. After twenty years of semi-tutelage, our little native church is learning to manage its own affairs. One of the ablest evangelists, for preaching gift and business faculty, and speaking English, settle in Florence, to carry out an efficient secretaryship, and so relieve me of all the internal concerns beyond advising in committee and answering any letter on a matter of importance.

Then next year an Italian gentleman in business, who is a deacon in my own Florentine church, will make a capital working treasurer, keeping the cash accounts and books of the Evangelization Committee—which again will relieve me of much manual labour, and also of financial responsibility, which the committee will thenceforth bear.

In this way I hope to live longer, and, standing alongside, to guide and counsel the young institute—always continuing to act as honourable treasurer and foreign secretary, and collecting for them among the well-wishers of Italy, at least until such time as God, in His providence, raises me up a successor.

I have a high idea of the sanctified common sense of our Italian Christians, after so many years' experience, and they will be steadied by a greater weight of responsibility and have their self-reliance developed.

If I were a free man—instead of having mind and hands fully occupied in providing for the ordinary mission work and schools—I would make a special effort at this time on behalf of our fund for aged and infirm evangelists, their widows and orphan children.

It is such an honour to a church and to our common Christianity to provide for these helpless ones, that we started that fund fifteen years ago.

Its annual accounts are on page 35 of my large report. All the evangelists pay three per cent. of their salaries to it, and there are at present fortunately only two widows and seven orphans upon the fund.

In the earlier years I used to nurse it, with an occasional special gift from myself or others, but of late I have hardly been able to get support for the expanding work itself, which is my principal business.

Perhaps, as the Lord has laid it on my heart this summer, some generous friends, out of their abundance, may help to give it a good push forward, and so enable it better to meet the claims upon it in the near future.

WOMAN AND HER POWER.

Mr. E. H. Blakeney, of Trinity College, in Cambridge, England, communicated the following to the *Quiver*: Do you know, I think the power of sympathy to be one of a woman's fairest and most goodly endowments. A delicate perception of where pain lies, and a readiness to heal it's smart; a quickness to tell where soul and heart are troubled, and a tender anxiety to minister to their relief; an instant feeling to know where the mind is vaguely distressed and weary, and a sweet desire to refresh and gladden it. Talk of what girls are to do! Ah! did they but know where their truest power was hidden, and the strongest help needed most; were they only more willing to serve the cause of suffering humanity in those lesser and unobtrusive acts of daily charity, binding up the wounds of the sorrowful, and ministering to the needs of the careworn, what might they not yet effect! A woman's compassions! Pause a while, and think of all that is contained in these few words. Do you quite realize what is meant by compassion, or sympathy? They are one and the same word, meaning one and the same thing: "suffering along with;" not the callous or formal expression of regrets, often not felt; but the living, active evidence of the best feelings implanted in our hearts. And then, mark you, it is not only "compassion, but a woman's compassion;" all truth, and purity, and honour, all tender and noble womanliness; all cheerfulness to the doubting and support to the weak ones; thoughts of peaceful homes, and happy, because they are thoughtful, days; this—and this is not all—is bound up together in those simple words "woman's compassion." You are queens and rulers, women of England, in a truer sense than temporal sovereign or earthly potentate; queens, not of armies in the camp, or of councillors in state chamber, but of the affections of all sincere and faithful men; ruling, not with the rod of empire, but with the gentle, yet surely not less mighty, sway of kindness and of love. O you women, you women, when all around you is travelling together in pain and distress and sin until now, and crying aloud, "Come over and help us," will you suffer the very stones by the wayside to lift up their voices in mute appeal, and call unto you in vain? Whether in the crowded streets of your cities, or amid the lowly dwellings of the hillside, there are those who daily mourn unpitied, and go down into the silence of their nameless graves unwept. Will you stop your ears to their voiceless entreaty, and pass by, unheeding, on the other side? Or will you not, with your tears of gentleness and pity, water the ground, and so make glad the solitary place, till the light again shine upon the earth, making the trees and flowers rejoice together on every side, as of old they did in Eden, that paradise of God, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago?

* Synopsis of an address delivered by Rev. A. F. Tully before the Presbytery of Stratford at Millbank.