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Contributors and Correspondents

ROBERT MURRAY McOHEYNE.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, TORONTO.

The noble characters of the Old Testament Scripture may each be regarded as an exemplification of some particular divine grace, as Abraham of faith; Moses of meekness; Solomon of wisdom; Joshua of obedience. These graces do not alone obtain them, they are supported by other fruits of the free living Spirit of God, but these predominate, so that they form their characteristic grace. Christ Jesus is the central sun of the moral world, in whom all graces are in infinite perfection. His light fell upon them, and they according to the receptive qualities of their faith, and the divinely given tendencies of their nature, glowed with their various virtues. But not only did the light of Christ penetrate the past, and fill believing and therefore receptive hearts with light so that they shine to the eyes of men to-day like stars, it also flooded the future so that we have all down these eighteen centuries men and women "appareled in celestial light." John, the Apostle of love; Peter, the Apostle of hope; Paul, the Apostle of faith, and James, the Apostle of good works in the Christian life, lead off the line of embodied and embattled virtue, which has glorified and gladdened the ages since the resurrection of our Lord. They are but the leaders of a sacramental host which greates by the grace of God every day, and which makes the world beautiful and blessed by its presence.

Among modern instances we may mention Robert Murray McOheyne, who shall ever live in our thoughts as one of the finest examples of entire consecration to God. Look at his life how we will, this impression is made upon us. It falls upon us as the sun-light. It is this fact that has made his memory so blessed to thousands and thousands of hearts in all parts of the world. He denied himself that Christ might be all, and in all. From the time of his conversion until his death he gloried only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world was crucified unto Him and He unto the world. His heart so affectionate and so tender, his will so strong and so resolute, his mind so capacious and so clear, and his imagination so lively and so chaste—his entire being was yielded to God. Like Paul, he judged that he should not henceforth live unto himself, but unto Him which died for him and rose again, William Guthrie, in his exposition of the "New Creature," says, "This new creature is called 'the New Man,' which holds out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or new hand, but a new man. There is a principle of new life and motion put into the man, which is the new heart; which new principle of life sends forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of Him who created it, so that the party is renewed in some measure every day."

McOheyne was a new man, and he lived a new life. Being risen with Christ in Spirit, he lived a truly resurrection life. In his diary this interesting entry is found, giving us intimation of a pleasing fact, and revealing to us his gracious spirit: "March 11, 1864.—Read in the *Sum of Saving Knowledge* the work which I think first of all wrought a saving change in me. How gladly would I renew the reading of it, if that change might be carried on to perfection." The question might be asked, "What influences conspired to impart to him the spirit of entire consecration that rested upon him all his life?" We have no hesitation in answering, his intense study of and love to the Scriptures. This was his prime influence. Both the Old and New Testaments were the objects of his prayerful and persistent research. His correspondence and his sermons show this. "When you write," said he to a friend, "tell me the meaning of Scriptures." To another, in expressing his value for the Word, he said, "One gem from that ocean is worth all the pebbles of earthly streams." Writing to William C. Burns he says, "If you lead sinners to yourself, and not to Christ, Immanuel will cast the star out of his right hand into utter darkness. Remember what I said of preaching out of the Scriptures; honor the Word both in the matter and manner." He lived and laboured in the pure light and quickening energy of the Word of God. How grandly do these remarks prove this? "I am on his breast-plate. If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yes; the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me." "If I would be filled with the Spirit, I feel I must read the Bible more, pray more, and watch more." "Every sin is something away from my greatest enjoyment." "Eternity sometimes seems very near." To William C. Burns, "Now, remember Moses was not that the skin of his face shone. Looking at our own shining face is the bane of the spiritual life and of the ministry. O for closest communion with God, till soul, and body, head, face, heart, shine with divine brilliancy! But, O for a holy ignorance of our own shining! Pray for this, for you need it as well as I."

But while the Word was the chief spiritual power upon his heart, there were others that served to strengthen and deepen it. He was a great lover of Rutherford's letters; we find him frequently quoting them. No doubt he remembered those dying words of his to his brother ministers: "Dear brethren, do all for Him; pray for Christ; preach for Christ; feed the flock committed to your charge for Christ; do all for Christ; beware of man-pleasing, there is too much of it among us." He loved to read the lives of eminent Christian workers, for his own improvement. Hence the following entries in his diary: "Nov. 12.—Reading H. Martyn's memoirs. Would

I could imitate him, giving up father, mother, country house, health, life, all for Christ. And yet what hinders. Lord purify me, and give me strength to dedicate myself, my all to Thee!" "This day I have attained my twenty-first year. O how long and how worthlessly I have lived, Thou only knowest! *Neff* died in his thirty-first year; when shall I?" In that precious hymn, *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, written before his ordination, we hear the high and holy note of his devoted life.

"*Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.*
Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast,
Jehovah Tsidkenu! my lord and my host;
In thee shall I conquer by flood and by field,
My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield."

Thus accounting for the spirit of devotion to God that possessed him. Let us see how it unfolded his life, enshrined in I, *In Work*.—The first sermon he preached was from Isa. lxi. 1-5, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," etc., of which he writes, "May it be prophetic of the object of my coming here." And it was, for his ministry all along was fruitful of conversion to Christ, and confirmation in the faith of the gospel. He lived for the salvation of men.

He was accustomed to visit among his people all day, and at night to preach in one of their houses where they were all gathered together. This work fitted him largely for the services of the Sabbath. He would know his people intimately, that he might feed them with the bread of life. It mattered not if strangers were in the house with the family, he accepted them as sent of God to hear the Word with the rest. On the leaf of one of his note books this memorandum is made, "*Rules worth remembering*: When visiting in a family or otherwise, speak particularly to the strangers about eternal things. Perhaps God has brought you together just to save that soul." What an instructive entry is this, "To-day missed some fine opportunities of speaking a word for Christ. The Lord saw I would have spoken as much for my own honor as His, and therefore shut my mouth. I see a man cannot be a faithful minister until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake—until he gives up striving to attack people to himself, and seeks only to attach them to Christ. Lord give me this!"

II. *In Weariness*.—"Coming home on a Sabbath evening from Torwood Sabbath School, a person met him who suggested an opportunity of usefulness. There were two families of gypsies encamped at Torwood within his reach. He was weary with a long day's labour, but instantly, as was his custom on such a call, he set off to find them. By the side of their wood fire he opened out the parable of the lost sheep, and pressed it into their souls in simple terms. He then knelt down in prayer for them, and left them somewhat impressed and very grateful."

III. *In Travelling*.—"Every Christian knows how strong are the temptations to relaxation in travel from the calls of duty, both personal and public. Dr. A. Bonar, his 'travelling companion in Palestine, says of him, 'I was often reproved by his unabated attention to personal holiness; for this care was never absent from his mind, whether he was at home in his quiet chamber, or on the sea, or in the desert. Holiness in him was manifested, not by efforts to perform duty, but in a way so natural that you recognized the least outflowing of the indwelling spirit. Prayer and meditation of the Word were never forgotten.'"

IV. *In Sickness*.—"I feel distinctly that the whole of my labour during this season of sickness and pain, should be in the way of prayer and intercession." He must hold the place of power even on a sick bed, that others may be blessed by Him! Just consider this beautiful fact.

V. *In Correspondence*.—His letters are fragrant with myrrh and cassia. They all seek the honor of Jesus. "You know not when your last Sabbath with your people may come. Speak for eternity." "Do not forget to carry on the work in hearts brought to a Saviour." "Don't be cast down, except for sin. Lie low in self, and set both feet on the Rock of Ages. Remember the well of Sychar." "O for fullness out of Him! Why do we not take all out of Jesus?"

VI. *In Death*.—"In the delirium that preceded his decease he was ever uttering words of wisdom, such as had fallen from his lips all through his life. 'I tell you what I like, faithfulness to God, and a holy walk.' 'You must be awakened in time or you will be awakened in everlasting torment, to your eternal confusion.' In prayer he cried, 'This parish, Lord, this people, this whole place!' Again, 'Do it Thyself, Lord, for Thy weak servant.' And at the last, he lifted up his hands as if to pronounce the benediction, and then sank down, and his soul was at rest."

The zeal of Christ's Church had eaten him up. He was all and only for Christ. His life, his whole life, without any reserve, was spent for the glory of God and the salvation of men. O, to have to-day ten thousand such examples of entire consecration to God!

A late writer, describing Bismark says: "I shall never forget the frantic look of surprise and rage, which took possession of the group of clericals seated right in front of him as he revived the old incident of Henry IV. standing in his shirt at Canossa until it was the Pope's pleasure to receive him. 'We desire,' said he, without changing a muscle of his face, or raising his voice in the least, 'we desire to live in peace with the Roman Church; with Bishops and with Pope, but still—' pausing and stammering, 'we are not going to Canossa!' The effect was indescribable, and from that day to this, Germany has repeated Bismark's 'We are not going to Canossa.'"

[For the Presbyterian.]

EVANGELISTIC WORK.—I.

ITS NEED.

The article upon the above subject in the last number of the "PRESBYTERIAN" is timely, and to the point. The paper is to be congratulated upon having come out so decidedly in favor of more aggressive methods of work in our churches. Surely no one, with any heart, if their eyes are open to the signs of the times, can fail to see that it is high time that the press as well as the pulpit should raise its voice to arouse the church to something like the vigor which the exigencies of the times demand. A few years ago we used to read of the awful crimes of vice and violence which prevailed in the Western States, and self complacently thank God we were not like our neighbors. Now, who that loves his country and jealously looks for pure manhood in this formative period of its youth, can read our papers without blushing with shame and tingling with horror at the fiendish outrages constantly committed, not only in our great cities, which, apologists tell us, receive the scum of the "other side," but in what are called our "quiet country districts." The depth of iniquity they reveal is truly appalling. The article just referred to dealt mainly with the needs of the city, but those of the country are hardly less. There is there a large element just as godless, as lawless, and as depraved, as any which comes under the notice of city editors. A merchant in one of our western towns said to the writer not long ago, "I like to see a mechanic coming into my store, for then I know I have a gentleman to deal with, but these young fellows from the country are an unprincipled set of ruffianly blackguards." Of course such a statement is not meant to be without exception, but there is enough of truth in it to fill us with anxiety about the growing youth of both country and town.

Under these circumstances it cannot be out of place to echo the inquiry, "Is there not something to be done now, and with earnest purpose, for the bringing in of the ungodly and the wicked to the Christian folds?" Would it be strange to find Christian men in Kirk sessions, and out of them, meeting in prayerful conference to consider, "are we doing all we might do?" "are our methods of work so jolly up to the requirements of the times that there is no room for improvement?" Is there not room for suspicion that there are grave defects somewhere? Is not the deliberate neglect of such inquiry sinful and criminal with part of those who are watchmen upon the walls of Zion? Probably a frank consideration of the matter would lead to the conclusion that what is known as "evangelistic work" would strike more closely and effectively at the root of the evil than any other form of effort. Of course its details and concomitants may be modified to suit local circumstances, but in its essential features of *continuous services* presenting the gospel from night to night, in pointed addresses, and impressive hymns, and *after meetings* for inquiring and personal dealing, it offers superior advantages for bringing home to the minds and hearts of men, that truth which alone can set them free from the power of sin and Satan.

That such work is needed in addition to our ordinary services may be conclusively shown, if farther proof be required, by the discovery of such men as Dr. Urs, of Goderich, of an amount of persistent error and ignorance of the simple gospel under their own ministry, which is amazing and almost incredible in congregations so old and highly favored as to "stated ordinances," would that all who are sceptical about the matter, could have heard the frank statements of this honored brother, and others like Dr. Murray (Eastern Provinces), of what they had recently learned by actual observation, of the crying need and effective working of judiciously managed evangelistic operations, at the conferences upon the state of Religion held in the Bay street church during the late meeting of Assembly. The most prejudiced could hardly fail to have been convinced. As time advances and the work of years in this department is subjected to its searching test, valuable testimony as to its efficacy is on the increase—more of this I hope yet to lay before the readers of this paper.

Ashburn.

W. M. R.

COMMUNITY OF PROPERTY.—II.

Since the publication of my first subject in your PRESBYTERIAN, I have learnt that in our own circles it is either taken for granted, by some, that in the first Christian community of Jerusalem there was a regular community of property. I therefore add here a few thoughts in confirmation of my view in that article. There it was clearly proved that it was impossible to adduce facts in favor of the view that there was among the early Christians a community of property, simply because there are no such facts on record. All that the advocates of that opinion can claim in confirmation of their view is mere inference; and I shall here try to examine whether such an inference is justifiable. Dr. Hodge

(Syst. Theol. Vol. III. p. 429), says that "The wonders of redemption may well have produced in those to whom it was new (the early Christians at Jerusalem) an ecstatic bewilderment which led their judgment astray" to form a community of property. These harsh words the truly pious doctor will have to take back: First, he may not forget that an ecstatic bewilderment can only be momentary, while, if we should concede (which we do not) that there was a community of property at Jerusalem, we would be obliged, from the whole narrative, to say that it lasted at least for several weeks, which length of time would be too long for an ecstatic bewilderment. Secondly, to say of a community in which the Holy Ghost was indwelling that they were suffered to fall into an ecstatic bewilderment which led their judgment astray; to say that the apostles had permitted this bewilderment to continue, though for a few days only, is dangerous. If the doctor is correct, what should we think of the apostolic church—that church which was, as we believe, to be the pattern for all future churches? But the doctor has still another explanation, why community of property prevailed among the early Christians, namely, that "with them the perception that all believers are one body in Christ Jesus was clearer than with us, and that all are united in Him, and that all are equally partakers of his righteousness." Therefore the early Christians at Jerusalem had also a united pure, (community of property)! But just this inference, made by numerous divines, sufficiently proves that they either failed to understand the spirit prevailing at the first community of Jerusalem, or they mistakenly conceived the possibility of an unselfish community of property (which were a contradiction to the very nature and name of community of property) which might be put on a par with Christian charity. The truth, however, is that the very nature of community of property even in its best form, is national selfishness and not self denial. For, its principle is equality. It says, "thou art no better than I, and I am not better than thou; we must either both be accommodated, or neither." As soon as the respective parties overstep this boundary of equality and mutuality, and say, "Thou art better than I; I will deny and deprive myself of my comforts for Christ's and thy sake," then they stepped out from their own sphere of national selfishness into another, into a sphere which we call "Christian Charity," because it is Christ-like, who denied himself for the sake of others—the world. The latter is the language of love and of the heart, while the former is the language of the brain and of reason. Reason says, "Give in order that thou mayest receive it back; help in order that thou mayest be helped," so that the last end in view is always the I (ego), while Christian charity says, "help in order that others may be helped," so that the last end in view is compassion on our fellow man and obedience to Christ. On this definition we all agree, I suppose. We also all agree that the contributions made by the Christians at Jerusalem were in consequence of their having been converted to the teachings of Christ and his example. We, perhaps, also agree, that no other community at that time or since, was more guided by the direct influence of the Holy Ghost and of the apostles than the early Christians at Jerusalem. Now, if we agree on these proportions we are compelled to consider the contributions in question as Christian charity, that is, that they were given for the sake of Christ and for that of brotherly love, and with no view of receiving anything in return from those to whom, or for whose benefit they were given, and therefore under no system similar to that of a community of property; because in such a case it would not have been in the spirit of Christ. Christ said, "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same" (Luke vi. 33). Any community of property, however, in the best sense conceivable, would expressly be against this command of Christ. I shall now try to remove an objection made to my view from a linguistic stand-point, that is, to explain the word "common" (*roina*) in the respective passages. I concede that in the classical Greek, the term "*common*" (*roina*) has—either political, corporate, or social—the meaning of a certain equal right or claim which each of the respective members of a body or community has, based on either a law or a special agreement. But the advocates of the contrary opinion should not forget that in our case the term "*common*" (*roina*) was applied to a new idea, a new notion (to Christian charity), a notion quite new, at least in intensiveness; and because the idea was quite new, because it was a divine notion, there could be found no term in the hitherto heathenish Greek which would be fully capable of expressing it. The New Testament writers, could therefore only use the best, "*best*" is only *relative*, and does not imply that it is *absolutely* "good" term they had (*roina*), though the said term was never before meant to imply the ideas of Christian charity (as pertaining to selfishness and spontaneity) in its germ and substance. I therefore claim, even from a linguistic stand-point, a meaning for the term "*common*" (*roina*) in the respective passages of the New Testament, which would be in accordance with the sentiment and spirit of the early Christians at Jerusalem, which was a spirit of charity, of love, and selfless.

To prove that the above stated is linguistically quite natural, I need only appeal to the fact that of the thousands of Greek words which have been taken over into the English, many were intended to imply and express additional shades of meanings (usually known as "derivatives") which they never had in the original, especially

such terms as were intended for the use of chemistry and machinery, where the idea is quite modern. It is the universal law of language that—in course of time if the conception of its speakers increases, branches off, or gains in intensiveness—the same words hitherto used to express a principal idea, obtain gradually a variety of meanings in addition; so that the context alone can decide what the word or term means to convey in a given passage, whether the principal meaning, or a derivative one. Such examples are found in the English of preceding centuries if compared with the English of to-day, even in England. Geographical and ethnographical changes—where ideas are likely to develop with more rapidity—will influence any language still more in reference to the point in question (compare the English in Ireland, Scotland, America, etc.); the same agencies changed the Greek into the so-called Hellenistic, of which the Greek of the New Testament is a branch. I shall now briefly state how the theory and practice of community of property is against the spirit of scripture generally: In Deut. xv. ii, we read, "The poor shall never cease out of the land;" and the Jewish tradition adds, "In order that the wealthy ones should have an opportunity to practice charity." We should not err if we say that in allusion to this very passage of the Old Testament, and in the same sense, Christ said, "For ye have the poor always with you (Matt. xxvi. 11)." How stupefied would men become if they should, by means of community of property, be deprived of this discipline of heart to practice charity, which, in fact, is benefiting the giver more than the recipient. Did not the great apostle exhort the elders of Ephesus, "To remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts ix. 35).' If I have proved in the preceding article that there were no data on record which would justify the expression, 'community of property,' or, 'of goods,' I have proved in this article that any inference in favor of a community of property in reference to the early Christians at Jerusalem would be against the spirit, which we must suppose to have prevailed among them.

Ottawa.

R. WAHL.

Home Mission Debt.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR.—In your issue of the 6th ult., I noticed a communication subscribed "X," in which the writer seems to be giving advice to "a collector" concerning the mode of raising money for the Mission Debt. "X" recommends a sermon to be preached, while both are equally indignant against a tax, because this method of raising money is strictly illegal in the O. P. Church. Granted that it is so. But, why was the debt incurred? Was the organization of the mission not legal? If, then, the O. P. Church employed a certain number of labourers to work in the mission field, and did not furnish the hire at the time appointed, what was the treasurer to do?—for these labourers are like all others in the requirement of their wages. Has it not been made known to the utmost bounds of the Church, that the money was lacking? Does "X" mean to say that Canada Presbyterians require to be told by their ministers that they ought to pay their debts? But "X" makes a sermon. Here then are two. First: A mission debt in the Canada Presbyterian Church, requires to be paid off by a tax. Second: A mission debt of some thousands of dollars against the Canada Presbyterian Church, can be paid off if the members will pay only *fifteen cents each*. But if, in place of questioning the legality of the taxation, each member would shell out, not only fifteen, but thirty or forty five cents, would it not be the quickest method of referring to a hard cash basis, and the legitimization of the debt?

A PRESBYTERIAN SCION.

Copy of Minute adopted 4th October, 1876, by the Presbytery of Montreal, respecting the death of Dr. William Taylor.

The Reverend William Taylor, D.D., having been removed by death on the fourth day of September last, the Presbytery hereby expresses its regret, and takes the earliest opportunity to record its very high estimate of the worth of the deceased as a Christian gentleman, a faithful, earnest, accomplished and successful minister of the Church for many years in Montreal, and one eminently characterized by his Catholicity of spirit and readiness to promote every good work. The Presbytery thanks God for the grace by which the late Dr. Taylor was so richly endowed, and so long preserved to do such excellent service in the Church on earth, and rejoices in the assurance that he has at last entered upon his reward; at the same time reminding itself of the shortness of the time allotted to survivors in this world, and praying that all the members of the Court may be enabled to serve the Lord with increasing devotion, so as to be prepared for the last summons whenever and wherever it may come.—J. W.

HEAVEN is a place of complete victory and glorious triumph. This is the battle-field; there is the triumphal procession. This is the land of the sword and the spear; that is the land of the wreath and the crown. This is the land of the garment rolled in blood, and of the dust of the fight; that is the land of the trumpet's joyous sound; that is the place of the white robe and the shout of conquest.—Spurgeon.