

Christianity does not exhaust itself in holy raptures, in ecstatic emotions, in generous feelings, in hallelujahs, in exhortations, or in hymns of praise. So far from being a sentimental affair it is the most practical concern of life. It does not ignore the blessedness of receiving, but it lays emphasis on the superior blessedness of giving. Giving is the only word in the English language that rhymes with living. Giving is a test of living. Pre-eminently so in the Christian life, where the cheerful surrender of whatever is due to us of material goods is an evidence of the supreme surrender of ourselves to Christ. Christianity therefore does not present the giving of money, time, thought, sympathy, as something that will be rewarded by the approbation of God and of men, but as a duty owed to God and to men.

The early church needed liberal contributions from all its members. Christian giving for Christian uses is one of the high privileges of the church in every age. God puts resources into Christian hands that they may be wisely used for the advancement of His kingdom. To hoard them is as great a misunderstanding of the obligations of stewardship as to squander them on self. Without money the larger part of the Lord's work in this world would stop. A consecrated talent for acquiring wealth is as much needed as a consecrated talent for preaching. Each should be regarded as a divine call to service.

The work of stimulating the beneficence of the churches requires men of the highest ability. Paul engaged in it with all the ardor and enthusiasm of his great soul, and joined with himself in this noble work Titus, his ablest fellow-worker, and another unnamed brother so distinguished that his praise was in all the churches. What a pitiable conception of his high ministry that church-collector had who in the writer's hearing once spoke of it as "a dirty work." At the same time how little those who are asked to give appreciate the immense service rendered them by him who appeals for contributions for Christian enterprises. Those who solicit are really helping to complete the work of Christ in those from whom they solicit, that is the effacement of selfishness and the enthronement of love. No ministry deserves to be encouraged with a greater feeling of gratitude.

Paul shows also that in Christian giving the spirit of willingness counts more than the amount actually given. God regards quality more than quantity. Willingness to give a little, out of one's poverty is, like the widow's mite, more prized than ostentatious contributions of large amounts prompted by selfish motives. At the same time intention to give, without performance, counts for as little as apple-blossoms without fruit. Like faith, charity without work is dead.

Christian giving, we are also taught, implies the exercise of wisdom. Not every appeal is deserving. Not every appeal that is deserving can in every instance be granted without jeopardizing other interests still more deserving. No one is required to impoverish himself that another may be made rich. This would simply shift the obligation on the latter in favor of the former, and the result would be social chaos. Christianity seeks rather to equalize burdens, so that one may not be unduly pressed while another abounds in resources that he can hardly begin to use for self alone. "Our luxuries should yield to our neighbor's comforts, and our comforts to his necessities." Finally, he who gives wisely will strive so to give as to stimulate, rather than paralyze, the benevolence of others.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Sabbath Schools Report and Recommendations by Special Committee—Aged and Infirm Minister's Fund Reports—Representation of Ministers to the Assembly.

INNISBRO, June 21st, 1897.

At the time of going to press last week the General Assembly had entered the second week of its session, and had had many of the reports by standing committee before it.

On Monday the sum of \$250 cash was voted to Revs. Dr. Gregg, Dr. Somerville and A. McMillan for special services in connection with the preparation of the new Hymnal.

Rev. Dr. Fotheringham's report on Sabbath Schools was presented, including the recommendations that some one be appointed to take charge of the literature, the removal of the business from St. John to Toronto as a centre, which it was believed would save \$1,000 a year; and that a loan of \$5,500 be furnished at once. Mr. Fotheringham moved that the report and also an overture from the Presbytery of Matland be referred to a committee to be appointed by the Moderator, to consider carefully the financial situation. A number of motions on this report were referred to a special com-

mittee, which at a later stage recommended (1) That the publication of the Sabbath school supplies be continued; (2) that the committee on the Presbyterian Record be requested to undertake the work from January 1st, 1898; (3) that the Sabbath School committee be instructed to take steps toward the removal of the existing deficit, and that all the collections on children's day be devoted to this object, and that the raising of a loan be authorized; (4) that the publication of the Record and the supplies in Toronto be authorized if it can be carried on more advantageously there than in Montreal; (5) that thanks be tendered the committee and especially the convener, and that appreciation of Mr. Fotheringham's valuable services in connection with the publication of Sabbath school supplies take a tangible form.

The report on applications by students was presented by Rev. Dr. Thompson; and greetings from the Council of the Alliance of Reformed churches were read by Rev. Dr. Cochrane, to which a reply was moved by Rev. Dr. Warden. March 31st was fixed upon as the end of the financial year of the Church. The name of Rev. James Murray, Newcastle, N.B., was placed on the roll as a retired minister. Rev. Dr. J. B. Muir's application for retirement was allowed to stand and Rev. Thos. Scouler's name was ordered to be retained on the roll of the Presbytery of Westminster, he having accepted the chaplaincy of the Penitentiary.

The report of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Committee, Eastern Section, already published in the Review, was presented by Rev. Mr. Cumming, Truro; and that of the Western Section by Mr. J. K. Macdonald. The adoption of the latter was moved by Rev. Peter Wright, seconded by Mr. W. Drysdale. The motion included also an expression of cordial thanks to the committee, and especially to the convener and the agent of the fund for their energetic efforts; and of gratitude to God for the good measure of success notwithstanding the commercial depression of the last three years; it further commended the fund to all the people, and requested the ministers to afford every facility to the agents towards securing the endowment fund.

Rev. Dr. D. L. McCrae moved that a small committee be appointed to confer with the committee on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund to look into the whole question of the regulations and administration of the fund, and to consider the alleged grievances in connection therewith, with a view of inducing a greater number of our ministers to connect themselves with it and of drawing out towards it a larger liberality on the part of our congregations, and to report to the next General Assembly; the committee to consist of Dr. Fletcher, convener; Dr. McMillan, Principal Grant, J. K. Macdonald, Rev. D. D. McLeod, of Barrie, the mover; Mr. D. D. Wilson, Col. D. McCrae, of Guelph, elders. This was seconded by Mr. Grahame.

Rev. Dr. Laing objected to the clause re alleged grievances, and it was left out by the mover who also agreed to leave the nomination of the Committee in the hands of the Moderator.

Mr. J. K. Macdonald replied to the amendment, after which the motion adopting the report was carried, and the Moderator nominated the following committee to confer with the standing committee:—Dr. D. L. McCrae, J. A. Turnbull, J. G. Shearer, A. W. Hutt, G. W. Jordan, ministers; George Rutherford, Col. McCrae, J. Armstrong, and J. R. McNeally, elders.

The report on Foreign Missions, an abstract of which has appeared in these columns, was presented by Mr. Hamilton Cassels Q.C. The motion for adoption was made by Dr. Morrison and carried, and several missionaries on furlough made addresses. The Moderator announced a telegram of congratulation from Lady Aberdeen.

On Tuesday the day's work was begun by the passing of loyal and Jubilee addresses. It was agreed to meet next year in Knox Church, Montreal.

Rev. Dr. Warden presented the report of the committee on returns to remits. The remit of the proposal to change the representation to the Assembly from one in four to one in six had been reported on by 40 Presbyteries, of which 31 favored the change and 9 opposed. 33 Presbyteries had reported on the remit as to a permanent place of meeting; 13 were in favor of a stated place, and 20 were in opposition.

The voice of the church as to representation was next discussed by the Assembly.

Rev. Dr. Gregg objected to the change that it would tend towards a system of prelacy, by which the whole business of the church would be managed by about fifty persons.

Mr. Robert Murray, editor of the Halifax Witness, favored the change. He pointed out that there could not be a fair representation from remote Presbyteries under the present arrangement, as the expenses of the commissioners could not be paid as would be the case if the change were made. The Assembly, with a representation of one in four was unwieldy. The change would largely improve the chances of poor men.