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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

*To the KIRK-SESSIONS and CONGREGATIONS of the Presbyterian
Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland:*

BELOVED BRETHREN,

I have it in charge from the Synod, to offer you a few words of counsel on the Christian duty of adequately providing for the support of Ordinances. It may be inferred from this direction to their Moderator, that, in the judgment of the members of the Synod, there is need throughout the Church for a more intelligent appreciation of this subject than now exists. For some years the opinion has been gaining ground in the Synod, until it has at length grown into conviction, that to whatever causes it may be traced, the Church is not fulfilling her duty in this regard. It is felt that, whether measured by their ability, or compared with other Christians, or tested by the Gospel standard, our people have not reached that degree of liberality which is due to their Christian profession, to their position in the Country, and to the necessities of their Church.

The Moderator shrinks from the task which the Synod has thus imposed. He might find it comparatively easy to explain and enforce the duty in question to his own congregation; but to issue counsels suited to the variety of opinion and practice which prevail in our Congregations generally in respect of supporting Ordinances,—this is a work from which he would gladly be relieved. In attempting it, he unaffectedly casts himself upon the indulgence of those whom, in the discharge of official responsibility, he is called upon to address.

THE duty of consecrating money to religious uses is as clearly enjoined in the New Testament as is that of honesty or truthfulness. Both Jesus and the Apostles enforced it upon their converts by the highest sanctions. Its observance was deemed by them to be of the essence of religion. Under Jewish law the proportion of money to be so set apart was strictly defined. A faithful Jew gave to religious objects, a tenth of all that he possessed. The Gospel exacts no specified proportion. In accord with its free spirit, it leaves it to the Christian's conscience to determine how much of his means he shall surrender to the claims of religion. Let no man think that, by thus leaving it an open question, the New Testament sets up a lower standard of liberality under Christ, than had been observed under Moses. The spirit of the teaching in the Gospels points rather to a more generous outlay; and the instructions of the Apostles leave no doubt that they so understood the tenor of their Master's words.

A considerable portion of the Christian Scriptures is employed in illustrating and enforcing this duty. The Mission and Life of Jesus are at once the embodiment and the illustration of self-denying liberality: "For your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." The lives of the Apostles also, illustrate and confirm it. Both they and He were living examples of all that they spoke and wrote upon the subject. It accords with Christ's being our Pattern in the spirit and practice of unselfishness, that He uttered the command, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." There is no way, indeed, to the rewards of heaven, but by a faithful use of the gifts of earth. Heavenly treasure is assuredly laid up by him who well and generously employs the earthly treasure which Providence bestows. The principles which will determine the retributions

of the rich, will equally govern the retributions of the poor. A man will be reckoned with and accepted in the Last day, according to that he now hath; not according to that he hath not. "A cup of cold water only" will have its reward. Yea, with "the Judge of all," the two mites of the poor widow count for more than thousands of pounds given by the rich man. He casts into the Lord's Treasury of his abundance; she gives up all her living. Not that God thinks lightly of the munificence of the wealthy. When rich men forget not "to do good and to communicate," "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." That Jesus approved the publican's resolve is shown by the benediction which it called forth: "This day is salvation come to this house." Christianity is averse from selfishness in all its forms. Covetousness is represented in the New Testament as shutting men out of heaven, and as involving them in the perdition into which murderers and adulterers sink without remedy. So, a chief aim of the Gospel is man's conversion from that self-regard and self-indulgence which master fallen humanity, to a generous, philanthropic, merciful nature.

The proportion of his earnings or income which a Christian should devote to the advancement in the world of the knowledge of Christ, depends on his ability. From those to whom much is given, much is required. Any man who brings common sense to the interpretation of Scripture must see that a fixed proportion, universally applied, would not reach even the letter of New Testament teaching, much less its spirit. The consecration to religious uses by some men of a fourth of their income, or even of one half, would be a smaller offering and less acceptable to God, than the surrender, in other cases, of a tenth. St. Paul indicates

the just scale of Christian giving in the order which he sent to the Churches of Galatia and Corinth: "Upon the first day of the week let EVERY ONE OF YOU lay by him in store, *as God hath prospered him.*" This is the written rule. It is fulfilled no less by those who, unable to strike a weekly balance, lay by them in store, *year by year*, according to their gains or income. The motive which impels the Christian to generosity—the impulse which constrains him to make sacrifices for mankind—is that which is embodied in the words, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

We exhort you, beloved brethren, to apply these general principles to your own character and practice. We do so the more, because they are the principles by which you will be tested and dealt with, in the Last day. How many of you make a conscience of giving? How many sit down for the purpose of measuring by the gifts which they receive "from above," the extent of their responsibility to lay out money for the poor and for the advancement of religion? Few amongst us strive against their native selfishness. Few set themselves to reach the self-denying standard of Christian piety. May it not, indeed, be feared that some of those who "name the Name of Christ" in the Sacrament of the Supper, are going down to the grave laden with the frightful guilt of "covetousness which is idolatry?" Those who "watch for your souls" feel that at least there are grounds for urging upon you self-examination in regard to this solemn matter. It cannot be safe for any man whom God blesses with competence, much less for him to whom plenty is vouchsafed, to add stock to stock, store to store, farm to farm, and at the same time to grudge to the poor the help which they need; or to refuse to sustain those Christian Ordinances by which his household are blessed; or to withhold the means of sending to neglected ones the Gospel of

Love. We fear for the safety of such a man ; “ How dwelleth the love of God in him ! ”

THE adequate support of Ordinances is that especially which we, at this time, ask you to provide for. God has blessed you, for the most part, with sufficiency. Many of you enjoy abundance. In respect of ability to give, there is no church in Canada beyond you. This you will readily allow. Not less certain is it that there exists amongst the members and adherents of the Church generally, an indisposition to provide suitably for their clergy. Long and costly is the preparation which these men undergo ere they are ordained to the Sacred office. Laborious and self-denying is the work to which they devote themselves. Yet the instances are rare in which they are sufficiently provided for. To our shame, be it said, most of them are expected to be satisfied with the barest maintenance, while very many are even pinched by poverty.

Consider these grave facts in the light of your many blessings. Take a Scriptural view of the responsibility which presses on you as citizens, as parents, as communicants, to foster, in your respective neighbourhoods, the Church and Ordinances of the Redeemer. Remember that “ the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.” The Christian privileges which you have inherited from your fathers, are worthy of being transmitted to your children and, through them, to the generations following. They ought to be dear enough to you to call forth, for their support, a large liberality, and, if need be, even great sacrifices. Consideration for the spiritual interests of yourselves and your households should have weight with you here ; not to speak of the interests of the population at large. We invoke you, withhold not the needed support for maintaining in your several parishes, Gospel Ordi

nances. Do this adequately. Do it even generously. Do it also cheerfully. "He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally." Prove yourselves worthy descendants of those noble sires who, at the cost of not only money, but of their own blood also, laid the foundations of the Reformed Church of Scotland. Emulate the devotion of those loyal, self-denying men who, in later years, sent forth their money, their ministers, and their missionaries, that in this far-off colony, the sons of Scotland might enjoy the ordinances of Christianity in the pure and simple form in which they had been observed in the land of their fathers. For this object the shillings and pence of humble Scotchmen, and, less often, the pounds of the Great, have been contributed these many years. Even still, the Church in Canada is the recipient of Scottish bounty. But they who bestow are, for the most part, less able to give than we who receive. All honour to those in the Old Land who make willing sacrifices that there may be perpetuated in Canada the Faith and Ordinances which are mutually dear to them and us! But let us whose barns are filled with plenty, whose homesteads are surrounded with fertile lands, whose stores of merchandise yield ample incomes, whose manufactures are already a source of enrichment to many, whose ships float on lake and river, and on almost every sea,—let us do our duty, honouring the Lord with our substance and with the first fruits of all our increase. Let us see to it that the Ordinances of the Gospel are liberally sustained in our settled parishes and stations. Let us also look with kindly, loving eye toward those remote portions of the country where the people live in destitution of the means of grace;—where the aged forget the God and Church of their fathers, and the young grow up in ignorance of the Holy Scriptures, and of the way of life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Let our Cities become centres of energetic Missionary movements. Let our whole people wake up to a

sense of the responsibility which rests upon the Church to do for the outlying and other destitute districts of Canada, what the people of Scotland out of their comparative poverty, yea and beyond their power, once did for us.

The progress and present position of the Church of Scotland in this Country are largely due to those ministers who, in the year 1854 surrendered, of their own free-will, a part of their share in the Clergy Reserve Fund for the sake of providing for each of their successors in the ministry a small endowment. The sacrifice which these honoured men thus made, yielded the chief outlay which has been incurred by the Synod, since that time, for Church extension. Ministers were the creators of that Fund by which, with inconsiderable contributions from the laity year by year, the Church has been enabled to advance her position to previously unoccupied posts. The growth of the Church has outstripped the wise and worthy provision which this Fund thus supplied. Some years ago its custodians were obliged, practically, to reduce the annual allowance to each minister from \$200 to \$150. At this time they find themselves constrained to withhold from nearly *forty ministers* the help which their older brethren receive. For this emergency it behoves you to provide; the more, that the larger number of these forty ministers are, of all their brethren, in greatest need of help. It is probable, as has been lately foreshadowed, that permanent relief will be sought to be supplied by the creation of a Home Missionary Fund, separate and distinct from the 'Temporalities' Fund. Whether this change shall be effected, it will be for the Synod of 1870 to determine. This at least is clear, that, in these circumstances, you owe it to the Church and to yourselves, to make provision, first of all, for the pressing wants of your under-paid clergy; secondly, for the extension of Ordinances to those who are destitute. This two-fold obligation we press upon your earnest consideration. We

ask you whether, in view of your early training and present privileges, as well as of the bounties which Providence has bestowed upon you, you are willing to allow the Church which has so long cared for yourselves and your children, to fail in its great mission to this country for lack of that help which it is in your power to afford? We ask you whether, with the means which God places at your disposal, you are content that the Church to which you belong shall remain the lowest of all the Churches around you in the scale of Home Missionary contribution? We ask you further, whether, in view of the extension of Canadian settlements to the territories of the far West, and the certain migration thither of many families and people belonging to the Church of Scotland, you are prepared to let them go there unfollowed, and to live unblessed by the Ministry and Ordinances to which they are loyally attached? Rather, will you not rise to a sense of the opportunity for doing good which God now sets before you?—emulating the zeal and liberality of your Christian neighbours? Is there any reason why other Churches in this country should exceed in ecclesiastical liberality the Church of Scotland? Are the members of other Churches more able to give than you? Are their farms larger than yours, or their crops more abundant? Are their merchants and manufacturers richer, their mechanics more skilled, their laborers more muscular, energetic, thrifty? Or, are they more distinguished by Christian intelligence and education than you?

Shall we then put it down to lack of regard for the Church or of loyalty to her interests, that you fall behind in this work of the Lord? This can scarcely be charged against you. Witness your noble effort to place our University and “School of the Prophets” beyond all danger of decay; yea more, to raise it to a position of capacity and influence worthy of its Ecclesiastical and Scottish connection! The prompt liberality which you have displayed,

and the sacrifices which not a few of you have made on this behalf, in response to the Synod's appeal, encourage us to believe that you will not be found wanting in that which is even more vital to the existence and progress of the Church, the adequate support of Ordinances, and the augmentation of Evangelistic work by active Missionary agency.

That you may apprehend the more readily how great a privilege it is to give of your means for these noble objects, study the Life of Him who left you an example "that ye should follow His steps." Remember that He consented to poverty for your enrichment, underwent suffering in order to your relief from sorrow, endured the death of the cross that you might live the life everlasting. Remember likewise, that His poverty, sufferings, death, are to be not only gloried in as securing on your behalf pardon and peace and heavenly blessedness, but that they are also to be taken by you as the Pattern of your spirit and conduct. You too are called, as was He, to make sacrifices for others,—to deny yourselves and to take up your cross daily, that sinners, through your means, may be brought into peace with God, and into the love and fellowship of His Son. Take up the Gospels and ponder the self-sacrificing examples and teachings which they record. Study the Acts and Letters of the Apostles, and learn from these your duty to the Church, to the Ministry, and to Mankind.

The age demands a pure Gospel. The emissaries of error are earnest in their attempts to subvert the Faith as it is in Jesus. The apostles of superstition and of otherwise corrupt forms of Christianity, are incessant and unscrupulous in their efforts to turn the faithful from the simplicity of the Gospel. Worldliness, setting in upon the domain of the Church with unerring and fatal flow, threatens to overwhelm her choicest spiritual enclosures. Fierce is the onslaught which the enemies of truth and godliness are making upon those who are striving to hold to "the

Faith which was once delivered unto the saints." In this country, no less than in those lands where Christianity and civilization were cradled, error, superstition, wordliness and vice combine their forces against the progress of the pure, living, soul-saving influences of the Gospel of Jesus. Have you, beloved brethren, no responsibility in this regard? That which will most tell against these pernicious and destructive principles is the faithful maintenance of Christian Ordinances and Godly piety,—a simple worship, a plain earnest utterance from the pulpit of the Gospel message to mankind, faithfulness in teaching to the young the Holy Scriptures together with that admirable compend of Christian doctrine the Shorter Catechism, a prayerful reading, in the family and in the closet, of the Book of books, the cultivation of a living holiness through fellowship with Christ, and through works of faith and love. The Sabbath, the Church, the Bible, the family Altar—these are the bulwarks which can alone successfully resist the inroads upon society of infidelity, of superstition, of selfishness, of intemperance, of ungodliness. Much have you in your power. Arise! Meet manfully the enemies of the truth. Hold fast, without wavering, the profession of your Faith. Seek, in earnest prayer, the promised teaching and help of the Holy Ghost. Shut not your eyes against the light, but walk in it. Then shall you know the will of God, and knowing it, shall do it. Your reward is sure. In your own conscience—in the conviction that you are doing your duty—you shall have your reward. In the evidence which the prosperity of the Church shall furnish that you are fulfilling the work and will of your Father in Heaven, you shall have your reward. And when your LORD shall come, and call for an account of your Stewardship, great, unspeakable will be the joy which shall fill your hearts as you hear His approving words, "Well done, good and faithful

servants!" "Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

"Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN."

JOHN JENKINS, D.D.,

Moderator of Synod.

*Given in MONTREAL, and within Saint Paul's Church
there, on this eighth day of December, eighteen
hundred and sixty-nine years.*

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