

the depth of 800 or 1,000 feet, up to which height its markings are clearly visible on the cliffs.

At length they reached the exquisite Hetch-Hetchy Valley, where a beautiful stream flows through rich green meadows enclosed by vertical granite cliffs about 2,000 feet deep. This green oasis is about three miles in length, by half a mile in breadth. It receives the waters of falling streams as beautiful, though not of so vast a height, as Yosemite, to which, after their three weeks' absence, the explorers returned, to console us with the assurance that in all their wanderings they had seen nothing to compare with the loveliness of the green valley where we had made our summer home, among the thickets of fragrant wild azaleas.

C. F. GORDON CUMMING.



ART. III.—THE GRACE OF GIVING.

GIVING TO GOD, ITS TRUE MOTIVE AND MEASURE.

IN one sense it is impossible to give anything to God which is not already His, for He is the possessor as well as the Creator of all; but it is one of the laws of Divine government that He permits His purposes of goodness, mercy, and truth for the human race to be accomplished by the intervention of human means. Of course He can—and sometimes does—dispense with these means, but, as a general rule, He is pleased to use them; and it is here that our power of giving to God comes in. Acting in accordance with this law, it is plain that we can, if we desire to do so, help to enlarge the scope of these means, and in a human sense render them as efficient as possible. This we can do either directly, by engaging in the work ourselves; or indirectly, by gifts of money, time, labour, or influence. But it can scarcely be expected that anyone will, in this sense, give to the furtherance of these purposes of Divine goodness who has not himself in some way felt his indebtedness to God, and experienced, in a measure at least, the constraining power of His love; for it is in this way alone that the responsive feeling within is evoked, and it will be in direct proportion to the strength of this feeling that we shall give and work for His glory. The important question therefore which we have to consider is this, How is it possible to kindle, preserve, and increase the spirit of Divine love in our hearts? And the answer to such a question is surely not far to seek. If it be true that love begets love, then it follows that the realised

exhibition of the unparalleled love of God in Christ must be the great motive-power. Once convince a man of the reality of that redemptive work by which we have been delivered from the vices in which we were once plunged, and reinstated in the Divine favour; once show him that in Christ his sins are blotted out, that mercy has triumphed against judgment, and that he is heir of a glory brighter than the primeval heritage lost in Adam. Let such facts as these by the Spirit's power take possession of his soul, and immediately there will spring up a desire in some way, however inadequately, to express the gratitude he feels for such undeserved mercy; and the deeper the sense of this gratitude the stronger will be the desire to give and work for God. And when in addition the further thought is realized, that in such work he is identifying himself with God, and moving in the path which He has marked out, the dignity and honour thus conferred will be sure to stimulate still further, for to be accounted a 'worker together with God' is certainly no ordinary privilege. In our own country to be connected with the Queen's service is esteemed an honour, but to be engaged in the service of the Ruler of the universe—to be a helper, however humble, in the great scheme of a world's redemption, is dignity indeed! It is to be placed in the ranks with the angel messengers—those blessed ministering spirits, whose all-absorbing desire is to "do His pleasure;" nay, it is more, it is to share the spirit, and to walk in the footsteps of our loving Lord, whose very meat and drink was to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work.

In all our efforts, then, love to God should be the underlying motive, and this will blossom, in due course, in love to our fellow-men; for "he that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also who is begotten of Him." It is true that much of the work done for the benefit of our fellow-creatures is carried out upon lower motives. Civilization has a humanizing tendency: natural benevolence and kindly feeling will of themselves induce men to give and to do much for the good of others, but, as a general rule, it will be found that the objects upon which these efforts are expended are mainly of a social, a material character for the good of the bodies, rather than the souls, of men; and inasmuch as the followers of Christ will not overlook such work, it follows, from the very nature of things, that the circle of givers to these objects will be larger than that which contemplates the higher work of spiritual good. It is important, therefore, that those who are influenced by the nobler motive of love to God should, in their gifts and efforts, continuously lean more towards this latter goal. The contributions to hospitals and asylums will always be more numerous than those given for purely spiritual work, whether that work be at

home or abroad. The main strength, therefore, of the spiritually minded giver should be directed towards these latter objects.

But it is not merely necessary that we should distinguish between objects which are of a material and social, and those of a spiritual character; we should also endeavour to estimate, as far as we are able, the relative importance of the claims of those objects which are alike spiritual. Some of these are necessarily limited and circumscribed in their action, while others—as, for example, the cause of missions to the heathen—are world-wide in their range; the extent, therefore, in each case should be carefully considered, and the amount of our practical sympathy should be proportioned accordingly. But it may be said, Are we not called upon to take special notice of the objects which lie nearest our homes, even though they are limited? Are we not specially responsible to help in such cases? Assuredly; for it should ever be remembered that our personal surroundings are not the product of chance, they are the manifest expression of the ordained will of God; and the very proximity of the need is in itself an appeal which should not be lightly overlooked. But charity, if it begins at home, is not to end there; and it is a curious fact, and one which shows the elasticity of Christian love, that those who do and give most at home almost invariably contrive to do and to give most for God's work in foreign lands. The one does not interfere with the other, but rather seems to help us to discharge our duty in regard to that other with more efficiency. And in respect of missionary work we should ever remember that the lesson which Christ teaches with such special emphasis is this—that “God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the earth,” and that, however far geographically they may be removed from us, we must still consider them brethren, objects of a common Father's love, and, as a consequence, also of our sympathy and care.

We all admit that the spiritual condition of multitudes in our country is sad indeed; but however dark the picture, it certainly does not present all those terrible features of hideous deformity which the state of the heathen so abundantly reveals. Moreover, our home-heathen at their worst are always within the reach of Christian effort, while the others, who are far away, unless we send and support the missionary, must remain for ever unrescued and unsaved. The need also in such a case it is simply impossible to overstate. The piteous cry which comes up from those dark habitations of cruelty when thoroughly realized is simply irresistible! Our gifts, therefore, and efforts should, as a consequence, be proportionally large and strenuous. The argument then, prosecuted thus far, seems to lead to this conclusion—that the true motive of giving

is "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;" and for the maintenance and increase of this love God has provided the double stimulus—(1) From the exhibition of His love in Christ constraining us; and (2) The real need of our fellow-men, understood in its deepest and widest sense.

We now proceed to inquire what should be the measure of our giving. From the earliest times there is evidence to show that the custom of tithes extensively prevailed. Its adoption is not to be confined to Abraham and his posterity, for we have numerous instances of its contemporaneous existence amongst heathen nations. But the important fact to be borne in mind in regard to it is this, that, under the Mosaic economy, the custom was systematized. There appears to have been a double yearly tithe. The first was appropriated to the priests and Levites, and the second to the sacred festivals. On every third year this latter tithe was shared by the Levites and the poor. In addition to this, there was an ample margin for voluntary gifts and offerings. Thus it appears that the Levitic Law prescribed that at least one-fifth of the yearly produce should be given to God; and this definite proportion is in perfect harmony with the elaborate system of precept which characterized that dispensation: but under the Gospel, as we might naturally expect, no exact proportion of the income is specified. The settlement of the question is left to the inner principle of love working upon an enlightened conscience. But since Christianity is an advance upon Judaism, the inference is inevitable, that, under ordinary circumstances, at least a like proportion of our income should be dedicated to God.¹ I am well aware that the complex nature of modern civilization puts upon many an exceptional strain. There are those, too, amongst us, who have calls of a private character which must be responded to. The social position, also, and surroundings of some render it hard for them to forego things which others look upon as unnecessary luxuries; but when we have made every such allowance, we must not forget that the working of the inner principle differs from the external precept in this—that it calls for the exercise of self-denial in our giving to God's work and service. To give out of a superfluous income is a very different thing from giving as the poor widow in the Gospel. We should endeavour to curtail our expenditure, to limit our gratifica-

¹ If at the construction of the Tabernacle the gifts of the people were so large and generous (Ex. xxxv.) that there was "more than enough" for the purpose, and if at the erection of Solomon's Temple a similar spirit of generosity prevailed, surely, under the blessed light and love of the Gospel, the work of hewing out and building up the great spiritual temple of His Church in the world should not be impeded for lack of funds.

tions, in order that we may give. And as the saintly life progresses, there ought to be a growth in those special graces of self-denial, and love; and with this growth there should be a corresponding advance in the matter of giving, which is one of the forms in which these graces express themselves in the world (unless, indeed, there are special reasons to prevent it); and to leave room for the exercise of this growth is, I believe, one of the reasons why no definite proportion is prescribed under the present dispensation. But giving, I fear, in this sense, is confined to the few. Notwithstanding the name which England has secured for generosity, the circle of real loving, self-denying givers is comparatively small. The same names occur over and over again in all our charitable appeals. As a country, we spend about half a million yearly in missionary work; but our drink bill for the same period amounts to upwards of £140,000,000. "The mere taxes on our tobacco are six-times as much, and on our spirits forty-four times as much, as our whole expenditure upon missions."¹ This ought not so to be. If the great harvest of opportunity which is at present before the Church in this country is to be reaped, we must make greater efforts in this matter. Every parish should have its missionary association, and even children should have some knowledge of mission work. It is only in this way that we can educate our people in the all-important matter of Christian giving. We live in an age of luxury, and the typical Englishman, if he is not fond of money, is at least fond of that which money can procure. No thoughtful person can have failed to notice how constantly the grasping spirit of selfishness and greed grows with our years, unless arrested by the grace of God. When we pass the middle period of life, when youthful passions become less strong, the desire for accumulation expands and gradually occupies the vacant space, until, like a giant weed, it absorbs our whole nature.

Before my mind rises the memory of a wealthy merchant in the north. I remember sitting by his bedside and telling him I thought one of his besetting sins was this spirit of greed. He admitted it; he shed tears, and felt a certain amount of agony of soul. But when he had sufficiently recovered to get up, the old passion reasserted itself, and he died as he lived. One of the saddest things in life is to see an aged man, while the world is rapidly slipping from his grasp, endeavouring with his bony fingers, as it were, to clutch the wealth he cannot hold! To subdue the greed of getting we must cultivate the grace of giving, and it will be found, like other graces, to grow

¹ Archbishop of York, "Word, Work, and Will," p. 303.

and develop by practical exercise; and the opposing selfishness, by being accustomed to submit, will become less and less, until at length a noble habit of generous self-sacrifice and devotion is established, and that which at first cost us a struggle becomes the sweetest privilege of our lives.

Our giving should be performed with thought and judgment. There are few things more injurious than the indiscriminate, thoughtless way in which some people bestow their charity. It encourages the pushing and unworthy, while it discourages the modest and deserving; and it is mainly from this cause that many of the most noble, self-denying efforts of Christian love are left to languish, while others which are of a doubtful character are, so far as funds are concerned, in a flourishing condition. Scarcely one of us who must not sometimes plead guilty in this respect. A collector calls; we are busy, and, sooner than be disturbed, we give, not so much for the good of the cause, as to relieve ourselves of the intruder. Now we cannot give to everything; therefore the objects of our choice should be wisely selected. It is well to keep an account of our donations, with the date attached to each, as I have often noticed a curious habit which prevails with some, of remembering the donation of the previous year with such keenness as to bring it within the limits of the existing year!

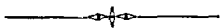
We ought to be systematic in our gifts, but not slavishly so. Room should be always left for exceptional appeals; for it is only thus that the spirit of love, which (while it recognises the value of law and order) is itself free, can be kept fresh and powerful. To give under the power of impulse is bad; but to eliminate all heart and feeling is far worse, for it reduces that which should be a grace of the Spirit to a cold perfunctory discharge of duty, and so the heart gradually becomes shrivelled up and the character hard and forbidding. In a word, the measure of our giving is left purposely undefined, because the power and growth of love upon which it rests is unlimited. Increase the love, and you increase the volume and fragrance of a Heaven-descended charity. Christ loved, and therefore gave; we love, and therefore give.

John Wesley used to say that he "never believed in a man's conversion until his pocket was converted!" If while "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof," not even "a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall lose its reward," then it follows that what we keep we lose, and what we give we have, and that, too, with interest.

Let us, then, stimulated by the love of Christ, use our gifts and opportunities for His glory; let us consecrate our lives, our substance, ourselves, to the Lord, and so endeavour to reflect, with increasing power, the Spirit of Him who "gave

Himself for us," and who, "though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich."

J. EUSTACE BRENNAN.



ART. IV.—PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF AMERICA AND AMERICANS.

FOR the man whose brain is overworked, and whose nervous system is consequently below par, a trip to America will do more in the way of recuperative power than all the drugs in the Pharmacopœia put together. I should advise any man who feels out of harmony with himself, and possibly with the world around him, to pack up his portmanteau—let it be a small one—and secure a "state cabin" on one of the first-class steamers which leave Liverpool two or three times a week for New York. From the moment he arrives at Prince's Dock in Liverpool he will experience a new train of associations. The hum and bustle at the landing-stage, arising from the heterogeneous assemblage of passengers, porters, sailors, servants, mingled with the shrill and discordant note of steam-whistles on every side of him, will at first, perhaps, produce a little bewildering excitement. Piles of "baggage"—Americans never call it luggage—of every conceivable shape, and secured by an endless variety of locks, straps, and cordage, are being skilfully stowed away on the deck of the "tender;" and after a prolonged and final warning, off they go to the big ship lying in the Mersey. The moment you put a foot on the steamer's deck you begin to breathe freely, assuming that you are an over-taxed man, and all your great and little cares and worries insensibly ooze out at your fingers' ends.

For about half an hour there is an indescribable hurryscurry on board. Some are looking for their sleeping apartments, others for their seat at table—a luxury often of very short-lived duration, as they know to their cost whose sailing qualities are not very pronounced—others are taking leave of their friends, while the captain is signing the ship's papers, and is discussing topics connected with the business department of the company with one or two of the directors. We are under weigh before we are aware of it; and the waving of handkerchiefs, the moistened eye and trembling lip, indicate that the returning tender is taking back those who have come to see the last of the friends outward bound. By-and-by a visit of inspection is paid to the state cabin, which for nine or ten days is to be the principal place of rest of the tourist, in