

Correspondence.

A LAY SERMON.

[The following article concludes the address of an Elder, of which a part appeared in the last number of the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, under the caption, "Working for Christ." A quaint writer has declared his entire disbelief in any conversion which does not go far enough to reach the pocket; and such seems to be the Elder's opinion also, although he does not express it so emphatically. There is, of course, a vast amount of Christian benevolence in our communion, which flows through other channels than the Committees of our General Assembly; but, nevertheless, it is also true, that, with rare exceptions, those who give most liberally to the causes recommended by the Church, are the same persons who contribute most liberally to all other worthy objects. All true Presbyterians should endeavor to do their full share towards sustaining the organizations which our Church has created and commended to our fostering care; and we therefore beg all the readers of this paper to peruse carefully, and to ponder prayerfully, the somewhat startling statistics which are here submitted for their consideration.] J. G. B.

No. 2.—GIVING FOR CHRIST.

The reports made to the last General Assembly, which met in Rochester, N. Y., May, 1867, show that there are in our communion 1,560 churches, containing 161,539 communicants. These, together with the members of the congregations who are not communicants, contributed in the preceding year to the six great objects specially recommended by the General Assembly to our benevolence, as the most efficient means of doing our work for the evangelization of the world, as follows, viz:

Table with 2 columns: Object and Amount. Includes Home Missions (\$117,798 or 73 cts. for each), Foreign Missions (110,725 or 68 cts.), Education (20,770 or 13 cts.), Church Erection (19,335 or 12 cts.), Ministerial Relief (9,482 or 6 cts.), and Publication (8,128 or 5 cts.). Total: \$286,238 or \$1.77.

The whole amount given by the entire Church to these six objects in the year, was equal to one dollar and seventy-seven cents for each church member; which is less than one day's wages of an ordinary laborer in our cities, and less than half a cent a day for each communicant. Comment is useless, for these figures speak louder than words. Well might a clergyman say, "It would be hardly worth while for the left hand to know what the right hand doeth, in the case of a great many of our people. If the injunction were removed, the right hand would have nothing to reveal." It must always be remembered, when we talk of averages, that there are some members in every congregation who do their full duty, and many others who approximate to it. But inasmuch as a part give five, ten, twenty or fifty times the church average, it necessarily follows that a large number give little or nothing.

The last command of the Lord to his disciples before his Ascension, was, "Disciple all nations," "Preach the gospel to every creature." Elsewhere he has said, "Give and it shall be given unto you," and again, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In view of the above statistics, would it not seem as if a great many in our communion repudiate the commandment, and disbelieve the promises?

If all of us, rich and poor, would follow Paul's injunction: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him," or if at the beginning of each month, or quarter, or year, we should do the same; thereby recognizing the right of the Lord to a portion of what he has given us, would not many be ashamed of the insignificant amounts which they now contribute? Can it be possible, that because our Lord praised the poor widow who cast two mites, her little all, into the Treasury, some people believe that there is a special blessing upon very small contributions? It would seem so, from the number of pennies and half dimes in the boxes, and from the fact already stated, that the contributions from our whole communion to these six great objects of Church benevolence, only average the beggarly pittance of less than half a cent per day for each member.

There are probably not many members of our communion so poor, as not to be able to give ten cents a week to these objects without inconvenience; and yet this is two and seven-tenths times as much as last year's average for the whole Church. If the poor should give thus of their poverty, and all others proportionally as God has prospered them, the aggregate, including the sums received from non-communicants, would fill the church treasury; and if accompanied by the faithful prayers of the givers, would enable the organizations appointed by our Assembly to aid in the evangelization of the world, to move forward to triumph like an army with banners.

Some years ago, a congregation in the State of New Jersey, determined to pay off a debt which was burdensome to the church. The wealthier members were called upon first, and others afterwards, until every one had been visited who was supposed to be able to give even so much as five dollars, and yet only one half the required sum had been thus obtained. The poorer classes were then invited to join in the effort, by subscribing weekly for a year, as much as they thought they could spare for this object; and the result was that the poor had the honor and privilege of paying as much as the rich, and the debt was cancelled. Many who did not feel able to give five dollars at once, knew that they could give ten cents a week, which at the year's end is more than the other. Let none despise the day of small things.

There are only two Churches in America, the Roman Catholics and the Methodists, who understand fully the power of "littles," and these have a larger proportion of the laboring classes than any others. By the systematic arrangements of the first, through priests and confessionals, and of the second, through class-leaders, large sums are

collected from the comparatively poor. There are many fine houses in our cities, where the Irish Catholic servant girls give more towards the extension of what they suppose to be the gospel, than is given by their wealthy nominal Protestant employers for the advancement of a purer faith. It behooves us to remember that strange and terrible denunciation, uttered of old by Deborah and Barak: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Paying our pew rents; is not in any sense a matter of Christian benevolence. Our pews are contrivances for our personal comfort, and our pastors are selected for our special edification. If we must have beautiful architecture, luxurious cushions, frescoed walls, costly organs and scientific musicians, we must pay for them as for other luxuries; and we should try to do it ungrudgingly, and yet at the same time without supposing that a high pew rent is a "dead end," which may be subtracted from our allowance for charities.

My own opinion is, that every church should be free from debt, and should own a comfortable and convenient parsonage. If, in addition to this, each church were endowed with a sum sufficient to pay the salaries of pastor and sexton, and to cover the cost of Sunday-schools, music, gas, fuel, dilapidations, and that unpleasant item, "Sundries," we should get comfortably rid of pew rents, weekly collections, and special calls for painting, repairing, and beautifying our place of worship. The congregation would be able then to devote all their means and energies to the assistance of less favored churches, and to aiding more effectually the great work of evangelization, in connection with which so many blessings are promised. But we must take things as we find them. Ordinarily a church has no fixed income, except the pew rents, and unfortunately there is too often a mortgage upon the building, the interest of which must be punctually paid. The expenses I have spoken of are our own private expenses; as much as stopping leaks in our roofs at home, repairing our own broken windows, or paying our own house-rent. I cannot point you to any blessings specifically promised for doing these particular things. In the days of Peter and Paul, church mortgages, as well as gas, organs and Sunday-school libraries were unknown, and anthracite furnaces were not required in Palestine; but nevertheless I am sure, from general gospel principles, that blessings always follow duties performed, and I can easily find a denunciation, if we neglect them. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I take it to be strictly true, that paying our due share of the necessary expenses of our place of worship, is a most important way of providing for our own, and for those of our own house.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you, that the same gospel which enjoins Christian liberality, also glories in the fact, that to the poor the gospel is preached. My remarks on these, and all kindred subjects, refer to those who have, not to those who have not. Those who are not able to pay full church rates, or any rates, are as welcome here as the richest of the land, and need fear no discrimination in their reception. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised them that love Him?"

And now, speaking as the world speaks, what do we get for this annual investment? Instruction from our chosen teachers, for ourselves and our families, on matters which are as much more important than all earthly culture, as the soul is more important than the body; as eternity is more important than time. Those of us who have children at boarding schools or colleges, do not hesitate to pay for the secular education of each one of them, four times as much as we are charged for the pew, which represents the cost of public religious instruction for ourself and family at home; and yet this last is the only kind of knowledge, that we cannot afford to dispense with, upon any consideration.

I have dwelt upon these two points—Christian benevolence, and the support of our own place of worship, because they involved duties too often overlooked, notwithstanding their importance. And yet they can be measured by any one for himself, if he understands the rudiments of arithmetic. I once asked a scoffing University Professor, who was sneering at Christianity, if he believed anything? He replied "yes, I believe the multiplication table." Some Christian professors have not yet reached even his standard of faith. They are sticking fast in subtraction and reduction, to say nothing of vulgar—very vulgar fractions.

Suppose we turn over a new leaf, and follow the advice given in these matters by God himself: "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house; that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it." There is God's pledge, made to the Israelites, that applicable to the church in every age. Can we demand a better security for our investments, than the solemn promise of the Lord of Hosts?

AN OLD TRADITION.

After the Israelites had borrowed sundry jewels of the Egyptians, and had been led out of the house of bondage, with a high hand and an outstretched arm, the successor of Pharaoh sent a demand to Moses for pay, or for the return of the borrowed jewelry. Tradition relates that Moses as a rejoinder made out an account against the Egyptians for the services exacted of the Israelites for the period of 430 years, and deducting the claim of Pharaoh, demanded the balance.

Upon the same principle, how stupendous the claim the freedmen of the United States, can honestly make out against their task-masters and oppressors!

We usually refer the poor to God's Providence, and it is just this Providence that refers them to us. Some hope to be saved by a faith which does less to them than the faith of devils. Ja. ii. 19.

FROM OUR TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT.

CHICAGO, Dec. 1867.

DEAR EDITOR:—It was in the gray of the early dawn that we bade farewell to beautiful St. Paul and its hospitable people, and set out on the return. When we passed Mendota we had left the true Minnesota itself, and were again running over the bare prairies. A strong wind was blowing, and as often as the course of the train turned the window we sat at, away from the sun, it was instantly covered with frost. The ride was utterly dreary, broken only by the new and ugly towns that have sprung up in a night, like Jonah's castor-bean ("gourd" in our version.) In six of these towns there is no religious organization of any sect whatever, in others no regular services, in others still no resident minister.

It was night when we reached the Mississippi at North Maogregor, and now came the tug of war to get from the Iowa to the Wisconsin side. We had come up by boat, but during our stay in Minnesota the river had frozen. The accommodations, furnished by the Railroad were, scandalously imperfect. We first had to scramble—ladies and all—some twenty feet down a steep bank covered with ice and snow, and when at last we reached the edge of the ice, we had to wait some fifteen minutes because they dare not trust too many on the ice at once. We had just come out of cars heated up to the highest endurable point, and there we stood in the teeth of a prairie wind that went through one like a knife. When at last we were permitted to start for the ice-boat, the only pathway was a single plank, some five inches wide, and when, at the end of twenty yards of that, we found that we had as much farther to go over the slippery black ice. Just here, as if to soothe the nerves of the ladies in our party, one venturesome stranger "cut a spread-eagle" in beautiful style. At last, by holding on to each others arms, more by sliding than walking, we reached the ice-boat, which consisted of flat-boats extemporized into sleighs. The supply of horses had run out, and the mule assigned to us had a second boat attached to him, "to pull the first one" we were told. We scrambled into our seats, plain rough planks nailed across the boat, which was utterly devoid of anything to protect from the cold, and started, slowly and carefully. We wound round and round among the unsafe places in the ice, which went crack! crack! crack! at every step, until we reached the eastern side of the river where the ice was stronger, and then proceeded on our ride of an hour up stream to Prairie du Chien, in the teeth of a wind that would fly a wolf. Such cold! I hope never to endure again. The only redeeming trait was that the chilling was not local: we were chilled from heart to finger-tips in the most impartial way. But most things have an end; and at last the lights on the bluffs showed that we were at our destination. We climbed up fight after fight of stairs and in a few minutes found ourselves in one of the best R. R. hotels in the whole country. If any reader should wish or be compelled to go to Minnesota, "pray that your flight be not in the winter." And yet this I am assured is only a taste of what the prairie winds are and can do. Dr. Patterson, (O. S.) of Chicago, told me that some years ago he and a ministerial brother had to ride quite a distance across the prairies to tend an ordination at Mt. Vernon, Iowa. A good while before they reached their destination, they were unconscious of the possession of either hands or feet. Before they came to the farm-house where they were to put up, they had to cross a creek, but in the drifted snow could not see the bridge. The elder who was driving got out and felt for it, and finding it called out to Dr. P. to drive on. He found however that he could not lift the whip, but managed to make some sound that started the horse in the direction of his master. When they reached the farm-house the two ministers had to be lifted out of the sleigh and carried into the house. They were as livid as corpses and had to be kept a good while in a cold room, before being brought near the fire. One of these, the late Rev. J. W. Morrison, of Bloom, Ills., never got over the effects of that ride.

Another night's ride brought us to Milwaukee, and then we came to Chicago by the morning train, seeing something of the country between the two cities. As the road runs near, though not in sight of Lake Michigan, we could hardly judge of the character of this part of the State from what we saw. The country was rolling and well-wooded and the towns seemed thriving and pushing ahead. Milwaukee itself seemed to be a very beautiful city, and has the reputation of being one of the most beautiful in the North-west. Chicagoans are very jealous of it, as indeed of every place on earth except New York. They tell a story to the effect that a Chicagoan being in Milwaukee, and observing that the draw-bridge was closed, remarked to one of the citizens: "Why you don't seem to be doing much business up here." "I tell you" was the answer "we are doing just as much as you are in Chicago. Why that bridge was open only the day before yesterday."

Chicago looks more home-like to us now after being away from it, and we feel some compunctions for possibly not having done justice to it before. The people are having no place in the West for kindness and hospitality. We shall always have very pleasant memories connected with our stay, but it would take a very strong sense of duty to make us live here. We cannot agree with those who predict an indefinite continuation of its marvellous growth. Its position as the connecting point between the East and what was once the West, but is now "the Interior," accounts for its past, but as the Interior itself develops in resources and becomes no longer under the necessity of turning corn into pork for the Eastern market, the importance of Chicago must diminish. Its R. R. monopolies are also on the decline, and the Mississippi Valley R. R., which is far more needed than the Union Pacific, will, when completed, give the finishing stroke. The St. Paul and Lake Superior Road will turn the grain trade into other channels, and as St. Louis recovers from the effects of the war, much of the business that had come here will return to it.

The opening up of new and promising outlets for scoundrelism, such as Julesburg and Cheyenne, has improved the moral character of the

city, but there is still room for improvement. There is one place where liquor is sold for every sixty of the inhabitants, but one of the local papers notes it as an omen for good, that the marriages already equal the divorces in number. This of course is exaggeration, but as the latter number over 300 for the current year, it may be inferred that there is a screw loose in social morals here. ON THE WING.

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGES AND REUNION.

LETTER FROM REV. DR. TUSTIN.

Washington City, D. C., February, 1868.

EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, Rev. and Dear Brothers:—The arrival of the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, always a welcome visitor, has reminded me of an obligation which your kindness has imposed upon the friends of an Institution with which I am connected. As the oldest member, if I mistake not, of the Board of Trustees of Lafayette College, and feeling a lively interest in its prosperity, I was much gratified, as I have no doubt all the friends of the Institution were, at the editorial notice which appeared in your columns a few weeks since, in relation to its present condition and future prospects. Having occupied the position of President of the Board, in the darkest period of the Institution, when even the "last star of Hope" was fading from the vision of Faith, I can testify how nearly it approached the point of transfer to some other denomination, or the less welcome destiny of entire abandonment. By a train of providences which it would be criminal to disregard, it has not only been delivered from the fate which seemed inevitable; but through the princely liberality of several citizens of Pennsylvania, accompanied by the blessing of God upon the untiring and successful labors of its noble President, it has been placed upon a footing which makes it a formidable rival of the best Institutions of the land. With a Board of Trustees actively alive to the interests of the Institution, and Faculty abundantly qualified to meet all the requirements of their high and responsible positions, Lafayette bids fair to fulfill the expectations of its most ardent and enthusiastic friends.

When the several branches of our "Sacramental host," shall become united as they soon will be, unless some Demon of Discord shall cast its flaming torch into our gradually approximating ranks, and the Presbyterian element shall be concentrated upon Lafayette in the Eastern section of Pennsylvania, and Jefferson in the Western, the heavy battalions of ignorance and infidelity will "have to be up and a doing" to maintain their entrenchments, much more to attempt any further aggressive demonstration upon, even the outskirts of the Redeemer's kingdom. And why should not this be the case? Why should the friends of truth and morality weaken their forces by contention and division? Why should this Holy Alliance be deferred, and thus furnish the enemy with time and opportunity to strengthen their position in the good old Commonwealth of Pennsylvania?

If ever there was a time when Christians of all denominations were called upon to lose sight of their minor and unessential differences, the present is the hour in which such sacrifices are loudly called for. The enemies of Christianity are availing themselves of every facility to disseminate their hurtful and ruinous sentiments.

In this view of the subject, I regard the results of the grand Union Convention in Philadelphia, as possessing an interest and importance of which the church has no adequate conception. And I would almost as soon think of speaking against the scenes and results of the "Day of Pentecost," as to be found uttering expressions of ridicule or hostility against the developments of that Convention. The conversions in the one case were certainly almost as remarkable as those in the other. Very truly yours, SEPTIMUS TUSTIN.

FROM AN OCCASIONAL WESTERN CORRESPONDENT.

STREIBENVILLE, OHIO, Feb. 21, '68.

I notice many tokens of life and improvement here. The construction of the magnificent bridge over the Ohio at this point for the "Pan Handle" R. R. is destined to exert an important influence here. It is said to have cost over a million and a half of dollars.

In different parts of the city many new buildings have gone up within a year or so. To my mind, however, the most interesting is the new brick block on Market street, consecrated as it is by containing the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association. I have not seen any rooms for such a purpose anywhere that have struck me more favorably. Overlooking as they do, some of the most beautiful views in the city, they are fitted up with great neatness and taste. There is nothing gloomy or repulsive about them, but much to make them light, airy and attractive. Several large cases of valuable minerals, shells, and objects of interest in natural history occupy a part of the room. Two respectable libraries—one belonging to the city as such, the other to the public schools—find an appropriate home here. A number of large oil paintings and beautiful engravings, handsomely framed, adorn the walls, presented by prominent citizens. Newspapers and periodicals of different kinds in profusion, are found on the tables, by no means exclusively religious. The ministers of all denominations seem to be thoroughly enlisted in the enterprise, and have a room partitioned off for their ministerial association meetings. What surprised me, not a little, was the announcement that Ralph Waldo Emerson was to lecture under the auspices of the Association, not of course with any disposition to endorse him, but indicating, as I regard it, a wise liberality calculated to secure the sympathy and co-operation of all classes of the community. But the best point I saw was that ladies were admitted to the privileges of the rooms. It was early in the evening when I called, and but few persons had come in; but among them I noticed the mother-in-law and wife of a prominent clergyman of the place deep-

ly interested in reading. In another place a young man was showing a young lady, perhaps his sister, more likely his sweetheart, some of the attractions of the place. Ah, said I, here is the way to make Young Men's Christian Association rooms attractive. Why should it not be so in other places? Possibly it may be, but to me the idea was novel. Are we not too fastidious about such matters? The community trust young people together at balls, at parties, at concerts, at the theatre—why not at such places as these rooms are—may be, and ought to be? Verily the children of this world are wiser than the children of light.

FEMALE SEMINARY.

But I must hasten to say that Prof. Wyckoff of the Female Seminary who seemed to be a prominent man at the rooms, was kind enough to show me over the Seminary, and especially over his own department, that of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry. I was charmed with the simplicity and excellence of some of his apparatus, much of it constructed by himself—appropriate—suitable; and all the better for its cheapness, as showing his classes how in their schools, as teachers, or in their country or even city homes, they could themselves construct apparatus, thoroughly illustrating the subjects they were studying; the very perfection of teaching, as it seems to me. For variety and adaptation I have rarely seen any thing of the sort which pleased me more. It is just such suggestive instruction that not only our girls, need but our boys and young men as well. I was delighted to find this Seminary—perhaps the oldest under the original founders in the whole land, maintaining in full vigor the character it has had through all parts of the West as a first class institution, for a third of a century. Dr. and Mrs. Beatty still give their loving oversight and care: they may be spared to see this child of their faith, intelligence, energy and far-sightedness flourish.

Mr. and Mrs. Reid, the present principals, themselves accomplished teachers, take the deepest interest in the institution, and have introduced many new features; as a large gymnasium and other matters tending to the health and comfort of the pupils. The view of the Ohio from their portico, is one of the finest on the river, and well repays a call to the Seminary.

Such institutions are the glory of the land. Very many of our female missionaries to foreign lands, and the wives of ministers of the gospel in almost every State of the Union, have here obtained their education, and a few of them have here found the Saviour. Thorough education, at the lowest possible price; and especially for ministers' daughters, and to raise up pious teachers, seems to have been a prominent object from the beginning of the school. Very few seminaries in the land have done more to realize these objects than this one. But my letter is too long now, and I close by saying that at this time there is a very interesting work of grace going on. This however is by no means uncommon, as few seminaries in the land have been more blessed in this respect. VIATOR.

Congregationalist:—Revivals are reported at E. Weymouth, Mass., with between 80 and 90 conversions; at N. Hartford, and S. Hartford; at Bradford, with 80 conversions, many of them heads of families and men of influence; at M. E. church participating; and in the Vermont Reform School at Atterbury, where nearly thirty boys are awakened. The Appleton St. church, Lowell, has voted for one service and Sabbath School in place of the second service. Three-fifths of the Congregational churches in Maine, are more or less dependent on charitable aid.—Mr. Joseph Lannan, of the last class at Andover, has received a call to the Presbyterian church in Windham, N. H.—A series of daily religious meetings is now in progress in the President's lecture room at Yale College, held from 6 to 7 o'clock in the evening. On Tuesday evening, the respective classes have their own meetings.—Rev. J. L. Dudley, of Middletown, is invited to the pastorate of the Plymouth church in Milwaukee. Salary \$4000.—The Protestant Methodist church in Georgetown, Fairfield County, has voted to become Congregational.—Rev. H. A. McFarland and thirty-three members have withdrawn from the Fifth Avenue church, in Brooklyn, and formed a new organization, acting on advice of a recent council.—The Puritan church in that city is experiencing a revival, and many have been converted.—A church of eight members (freedmen), with an A. M. A. teacher as pastor, was organized at Davis Lake, Arkansas, Dec 16th; the first in the State.—A church of twenty-two freedmen was recognized at Memphis, Feb. 2, the result of the labors of an A. M. A. missionary.—E. and N. E. of Chattanooga, within a circle of 50 miles in diameter, are seven or eight Congregational churches, with an aggregate membership of some seven hundred, the result of the labors of a Congregationalist pastor, travelling for his health. They are loyal, anti-slavery, and supplied with pastors, and form an Association.

Baptist.—Rev. J. A. Spurgeon has resigned his ministry at Cornwall road Chapel, Notting Hill, England, to become co-pastor with his brother at the Tabernacle.—Rev. A. J. Sage has commenced his work as pastor of the Fourth church, late Dr. Jeffrey's, Philadelphia.—The first annual report of the Commission of the Baptist Church Extension in Philadelphia, says:—"With our appointment we received subscriptions for the proposed object amounting to \$14,225. Our first work was to enlarge up the year's work as follows: The Commission sum lot free from debt, on the main street of the city, the organization of a new church of 240 members, and the commencement of a good church. Much more remains to be done. It is estimated that during the last six years, over two hundred thousand people have been added to the population of Philadelphia—which addition is nearly equal to the whole present population of Boston, with its one hundred churches. This vast population have not brought with them here a single meeting-house, and all the additional provision we, as a denomination, have made for them, is two new churches."

Presbyterianism in India.—A Calcutta correspondent of the Weekly Review writing Dec. 23rd ult. says:—"The Free Church congregation have unanimously fixed on the Rev. Mr. Don as successor to the late Mr. Powrie. This will leave the mission staff somewhat weak. Dr. Robson, the medical missionary, has resigned, and accepted the appointment of Professor of Literature in the Presidency College—a position which his talents and attainments eminently qualify him for. The Rev. Lal Behari Das, the minister of the native church here, the only self-supporting native convert church, has also resigned and accepted the head mastership of a large institution at Benharapore. It is painful to lose men like these, but the fault is not theirs: they have simply done an act of duty; they owed to themselves and it certainly ought to stir up the Church at home to make a more adequate provision for the maintenance of those who send here to contend, amidst numberless causes of discouragement, against a people deeply rooted in heathenism."