

MERCHANDISE IN GOD'S HOUSE.

Have church fairs and the like seen their day? If straws tell which way the wind blows they have. The trustees of a Baptist church in Williamsport, Pa., have adopted the following heroic resolution: "We hereby prohibit the holding of fairs, festivals and suppers for the purpose of raising money for the support of the church, believing that moneys raised in this way are a hindrance to the spirituality of the church and also a violation of the scriptural way of giving to God's cause, and that the selling of tickets for such purposes has become a nuisance." And here is another straw from a Lutheran source. A conference belonging to the General Synod, when assembled at Easton, Pa., adopted a resolution, "That it is the sense of the meeting that church fairs and church suppers have no beneficial effect on the development of Christian life." Amen! Amen! (The Lutheran).

It is a lamentable fact that so many congregations of Christians have resorted to questionable methods for supporting the church. It is to be regretted that the Church of the Reformation, which stands so firmly on the Word of God, would ever so far depart from scriptural teaching as to entangle itself in these unchurchly and ungodly ways. No great amount of logic is required to show that suppers and fairs and festivals in the church are unchurchly. What would we think of St. Paul or one of the other apostles of Christ writing to the different churches advising them to give a lawn party or hot supper, or some kind of theatrical performance for the benefit of the church? There is an idea in many minds that it makes no difference if there is cheating and unfair dealing so long as it is being done for the church. Is it right to encourage those very things which we so earnestly wish to abolish? Surely the church of Christ should not have less common honesty than is found in worldly business affairs.

We need some of the spirit that was in the Jews when they went back from captivity to build again the walls of the temple. They were too zealous for their God to accept offers of aid from their heathen neighbors (Ezra, 4:13). On another occasion they all willingly tore off their ornaments of gold and silver and gave them for

God's service. They did this without compulsion. If Christians would show the love which they profess by sacrificing a part even of their finery there would be no demand for a traffic in the house of God.

The cause of Christ may be suffering for lack of support, but not near so much as the individuals who through their neglect are responsible for its condition. The necessity is great, but the opportunity is still greater. The necessity may continue, but your opportunity for growth in spirit, and the expansion of your power for enjoying the world to come, will soon pass away.

We come to this conclusion: It is not a matter of necessity on God's part, but on ours. He can do without our gifts, but we cannot afford to do without His. St. John said to some such who had the opposite view, who came to him in the wilderness, "God is able, of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

If we are giving for our own benefit, primarily, rather than God's, and from a motive of love rather than one arising from necessity, the question then is should we give in a way so that we do not know we have given, or give directly to the church. "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." This is the apostolic rule and until we can find a better let us hold fast to it. If a man does not purpose in his heart to give any thing, and has to be enticed into it by a show or some other similar something, then let him keep his gains and enjoy them until God calls him hence. All we have is the Lord's. Not how little but how much can I give. God says to his people who bring their offerings, "Prove me, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Let us hold fast to the "formal principle of the Reformation," God's word our rule for faith and practice.

W. B. A.

Truth and nature are in their very nature mighty and intolerant, and must fight with and conquer falsehood and sin in any region of this many regioned universe where they may meet.—Phillips Brooks.

LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

Crime brings its own punishment and obedience its own reward. Yet man is slow to see and loth to accept this law of cause and result. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is none the less true today than it was nineteen hundred years ago. It is true that men often suffer because of others' sins, yet the chief cause of our happiness or misery must be sought, not without, but within. Enemies and false friends may cheat and malign, but there is something within beyond their reach—conscience. This they cannot touch. While conscience approves, we are happy, though forsaken and alone. When shorn of earthly wealth and honors, we instinctively look up up. The wounded soldier lying on his back upon the battlefield can look neither to the right nor to the left, but he can look up into the face of Deity. The criminal whose conscience no longer approves, but condemns, when adversity comes, is bereft of all. Sinful pleasure, money or honor is his god, and when his god no longer serves him or is separated from him, then comes bitter despair. Little wonder that many such seek to put an end to their troubles by suicide. Even if there were no life beyond, if we would get the most out of this, we must live virtuously and uprightly. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

Some weeks ago an otherwise good man, who had followed the drink habit for a long time, said to his friend: "The world seems so much brighter to me now since I have reformed and quit drinking. Life is again worth living." O, my friend, whatever sin or bad habit you may have fallen into, reform and stop it. Even this world will put on new life and interest for you. You will see sunshine through the cloud, you will hear music in the breeze; you will find a friend even in a supposed enemy. And what more? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the things that are in store for you in the beyond.

J. P. Miller.

To be lost is to live in an unregenerate condition, loveless and unloved, and to be saved is to love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth already in God. For God is love.—Drummond.

THE CHILDREN AT CHURCH.

The Bible is the book for children in the Sunday-school; is it any less so when it is explained, expounded and enforced in the pulpit? Our children eat the same food with their parents at the table; why cannot they be fed with the same spiritual food if the minister has the good sense and the grace to prepare it? All mere sensational devices fail as completely with the young as with the old; they degrade God's house and Gospel in the estimation of sensible people. "Presching up to this age" is a will-o'-the-wisp; the human heart is just what it always was, and God's heavenly message must come down to it, in all simplicity, burning earnestness and winsome love.

Pastors and parents, the children must be reached, must be brought to church, and must be saved! The future of both church and country requires this. The vital importance of this is not realized as it ought to be, and the purpose of this plain article will be reached if it sets both pastors and parents to thinking about it. Cold, dry and formal services will kill any church. Warm, earnest, practical services—in sermon, song and prayer—will bring old and young to church and bring down the blessings of the Holy Spirit.—Canada Presbyterian.

Lutheran Leipsic—The World's Publishing Metropolis.

This old university town has a population of 400,000—not great as compared with London, Greater New York, Paris or Berlin. For many decades, however, it has stood at the head of the list as a book-publishing and a book-selling center, both as to the number and the value of the works it prints and sells. It has 400 publishers and booksellers, and 5,000 firms in different parts of the world are represented there by agents or commissioners. From 2,500 to 3,000 new books are brought out each year. The booksellers have their own exchange and several hundred members are seen there at least once in the year to settle accounts.

Humility is the characteristic of great minds. Christ is the essence of humility which prevails largely in his followers.