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I. THE LOLLARDS.

IN the Middle Ages there were developed two opposite views of the sphere and mission of the church. One was that of Hildebrand and his school, who began with the claim that the church should be independent of the secular power, and ended with the demand that all civil rulers should recognize the successor of St. Peter as their suzerain. The natural outcome of this theory was that the administration of civil governments should be largely in the hands of ecclesiastics, that the hierarchy should be enriched at the expense of the state, and that the whole body of the clergy should be practically divorced from their spiritual functions.

The other view found advocates in William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua, who held that the sphere of the church was purely spiritual. Not only was the state independent of the church, but the pope, with all ecclesiastics, was of right, in all secular concerns, subject to the civil ruler.

Of this latter view John Wyclif became the champion in England. It was as a member of the Parliament of 1366, which repudiated the papal claim for tribute that King John had engaged to pay, that we first hear of Wyclif's opposition to the pretensions of Rome. From that time forth he was busy refuting her claims, and, by the use of all the means in his power, helping on the efforts, then making under the lead of John of Gaunt, to exclude the dignitaries of the church from secular offices and confine them to their legitimate work.

VII. NOTES.

CHRISTIAN GIVING, OR ECCLESIASTICAL MERCHANTISING?

One of the first acts of our Lord's public ministry was his purification of the temple. He found there "those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Again, near the close of his ministry he repeated those vigorous measures for the purification of his Father's holy sanctuary; and he said unto the money changers, etc., "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

What was the nature of those abuses which our Saviour thus summarily rebuked and sought to abolish? At the passover multitudes of pious Jews flocked to Jerusalem, to join in the feast and to make their yearly offerings. The animals necessary for their sacrifices they bought in the city, and the Jewish shekels for the temple offerings they obtained in exchange for their foreign coin. Cattle dealers, money changers, etc., had, for the sake of driving bargains with these visitors, set up their stands in the very court of the temple itself. These men probably defended their traffic by alleging (what was perfectly true) that it was an honest business when not abused by being carried to extortion, and that being for the accommodation of God's worshippers, it was for the promotion of spiritual ends. What was there, then, in that traffic, apart from the extortion practiced, that excited our Saviour's indignant remonstrance? It was simply this: The desecration of God's sacred temple by using it as a house of merchandise, the devoting to carnal uses of that which was intended for spiritual purposes solely. Our Lord here enounced the general principle that the church is a spiritual institution, designed for spiritual ends, to be conducted on spiritual principles, and to be surrounded by spiritual associations. Even her houses of worship should be kept free from all secular transactions.

Have we to-day no lesson to learn from these words and actions of our Master? Do we conduct all our church enterprises strictly on the principles laid down in God's Word? Are our church buildings devoted to no uses but those connected immediately with God's worship? As to the latter question: What of all those concerts, sociables, Christmas trees, etc., which are so often held in the very house of God "where prayer is wont to be made"? Even material objects can exert a great deal of moral influence over us from their associations. To the wanderer returning home after years of absence, every object that meets his gaze, every chair and table and picture and book, speaks to him of by-gone days, and recalls vividly "the old familiar faces." So those walls that have been wont to echo no sounds but those of Christ and his salvation will ever seem to re-echo in our ears the sweet old refrain; while the house in which solemn religious services are interspersed with gay concerts and festivals will ever produce in our minds a sad confusion of things spiritual and things carnal.

And now as to the first question asked: Do we conduct all our ecclesiastical business on strictly spiritual principles? What about our methods of raising money for the Lord's service—our church fairs, concerts, suppers, dine parties, etc.? From a secular standpoint they are perfectly legitimate business transactions; and so was that temple traffic. They are for the express purpose of promoting spiritual ends; and so was that other business that provoked our Lord to wrath. But are they the spiritual methods which God has appointed in his Word for the financial maintenance of his church? Where has he ever directed the church to turn merchant and carry on a business of buying and selling for her own support? The only method of church support enjoined in the Bible and practiced in all dispensations is by the free-will offerings of God's people. The church has always been kept in a state of absolute dependence upon the good will of her members. Nowhere in the Bible is she represented as receiving a certain stock of goods from her friends, and then starting out in business for herself, setting up her tables and advertising her trade. The nearest approach to this ecclesiastical trading practice we can find in Scripture illustrates well the difference between the divinely approved method and our nineteenth century plan: "As many as were possessors of houses or lands sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet." Now that is just what all properly-conducted ladies' sewing societies do. They make their articles out of their own materials, sell them privately in their own names, and then turn over to the church the proceeds, which belong to no one but

themselves—quite a different thing from our ecclesiastical suppers and concerts. I know that some of the advocates of such things claim that it is not the church that conducts these enterprises, but private members, who thus by their honest labor make their own money and turn it over to the church as a free-will offering. But why then do we call them *church* concerts and sociables; why publish them as such in the papers; why carry on the whole affair under the auspices of the church; why make this an inducement to our patrons to trade with us, and why call upon all good church members as in duty bound to join in these *church* enterprises? It is sometimes, if not generally, the case that ministers even announce these things from the pulpit among their regular church notices. Think of it! Interrupting God's service to talk about concerts and suppers and Christmas trees and pic-nics! Their own money, indeed! Free-will offering to the church! Where is the person who is not a rogue that would dare keep back one cent of money thus acquired from the church? I think it is sufficiently evident that in such transactions the church is made to play no other part than that of a merchant, transacting worldly business like any other secular corporation. Those who manage the affair are but her agents, and all they make belongs properly to her as a matter not of grace but of debt. For them to retain any of the proceeds for their private use would be just as honest as it is for the clerk to despoil his employer's till.

And what kind of a business is this in which the church is made to engage? It seems strange that those who would think it beneath them to turn peddlers, restaurant-keepers, etc., yet think they are honoring the church in thus degrading her. What a state our poor church must be in when she is forced to take to selling oysters and ice-cream for a living! What minister with an atom of self-respect would tolerate a proposal to raise his salary in such a way? But why not? Are we better than God? If it be no dishonor to him to maintain the general benevolent causes of his church by the proceeds of such transactions, why should we feel ashamed to be supported in the same way?

Having seen that these things violate the general principle of the spirituality of the church, let us now examine some of the principles of christian giving as contained in God's word, and see how these practices accord with them:

1. We are directed to make our gifts as unostentatiously as possible. "Let him that giveth do it with simplicity;" "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest

thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee." That is to say, do not advertise in all the newspapers how hard the good ladies of such and such a church are working to raise money for an organ or carpet; and when the affair is over do not proclaim with a flourish the success that has crowned your indefatigable efforts, and what a splendid sum you have turned over to the church. But go, sell that ye have, the very coat off your back if need be, and then bring your money and modestly drop it into the collection bag.

2. In giving to the church we should be actuated by one motive solely, love to Christ. "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Paul exhorts the Corinthians to liberality "to prove the sincerity of their love." And he further incites them by reminding them of Christ's self-denial on their behalf: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The one feeling, then, that should actuate us in giving to the Lord is gratitude to him for his unspeakable gift to us. Any other motive entering in only vitiates our gift. As soon as we begin to entertain ideas of self-gratification, then our gift ceases to be an expression of love and gratitude to God, and so far from being "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God," it becomes a stench in his nostrils, an abomination in his sight. What a wrong are we committing, then, when we not only commit this fault ourselves, but teach others, whether directly or indirectly, so to do. And it does not help the case at all to allege that the only givers to the church in these entertainments are those who manage them, and that none others are taught to regard themselves as such. For, in the first place, why then do we urge men to patronize us on the plea that they are thus doing the Lord's service? And, in the second place, you cannot get men to make any such fine discrimination. They will, and very naturally, regard themselves as patrons not only of those private agents of the church, but of the church herself. The fact is, it is only by thus representing the matter that these entertainments are so successful. Thus we encourage men to give their money with the two-fold object of gratifying themselves and of serving the Lord, a half-hearted kind of service which God will by no means accept. It is like the motley worship of the old Samaritans, "they feared Jehovah, and served their own gods."

The practical result, moreover, of all this is that we obscure in men's minds the gospel principle of freely giving to God and trusting him for the reward, temporal and spiritual, and teach them to give

only when they may expect a good material equivalent immediately in return.

3. A great object in christian liberality should be the glory of God. "The administration of this service not only supplieth the wants of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God, while by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them." But these church entertainments, so far from glorifying God and being an honor to the church, do but make the latter a laughing-stock before the world, when men see to what shifts she must resort for a living. It is a declaration to the world either that the grace of God is not efficacious enough to persuade his people to support his church by their own free-will offerings, or that he is not able to accomplish his work with those gifts, and therefore we must beg the world to help him out with more.

4. This giving of our substance to the Lord in token of gratitude and love to him, and the self-denial which attends it, is the exercise of a christian grace. Paul speaks of "the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." "Therefore," says he to the Corinthians, "as ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all diligence, see that ye abound in this grace also." Now amid all the bustle and frolicking of a church festival, how much of the devotional spirit can be cultivated? When even the managers of the affair go into it frequently as much as a matter of fun as anything else, how much of that worshipful and self-denying spirit to which Christ attaches all importance do they exercise?

Moreover, the very fundamental idea which underlies this business is a totally false one, namely, that the more money we can rake and scrape together for the Lord the better, irrespective of the way in which it is gotten, so it be an honest one. Why does God intrust the management of his earthly kingdom to the church? Could he not convert every sinner without her aid? Why does he make the spread of the gospel to depend, in a certain sense, upon her gifts? Does he really need her wealth? He calls every beast of the forest his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. "If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." Why, then, does he make use of our agency, but that he would have us exercise the graces of christian working and christian giving? What God really wants is not our money and our labor for their own sake, but the faithful worship and ser-

vice of his people. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." God respects, then, not the absolute amount of our gifts, but the spirit which prompts them. "Jesus beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And a certain poor widow threw in two mites. And he saith unto his disciples, 'This poor widow hath cast more in than all they.'" "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." We may well apply to ourselves the rebuke which God administered to Israel of old for a similar reason: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me."

This illegitimate mode of raising money for the Lord is destroying the grace of christian liberality in the church, and cultivating a selfish spirit in the hearts of God's people. Even those who applaud themselves as being so zealous for the Lord in getting up such enterprises oftentimes do the work, I fear, because it is much easier and pleasanter than denying ourselves of our own possessions. And we are becoming so accustomed to these methods that no sooner is some church improvement, for instance, proposed, than some one, instead of putting his hand into his pocket, as the Lord asks him to do, suggests that the ladies get up a church entertainment. The consequence is that the burden of supporting the church is being more and more imposed upon the women and children, while the men, who have the money and whose business it is to take care of their wives' and children's spiritual as well as temporal interests, look on and do nothing.

5. God promises that if his people give faithfully, according to the measure of their ability, he will prosper them more and more, and so enable them to increase their bounty and thus supply all the needs of the church. He "is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: being enriched in everything to all bountifulness." But we are not always willing to take God at his word; unless we resort to some other plan for supporting the church than the old-fashioned one of simply laying by in store for her as the Lord hath prospered us, we cannot see how we shall build our new church, or repair the old one, or get us a carpet or an organ. Is not a wicked unbelief, then, largely

at the bottom of this whole business, a want of confidence in our heavenly Father?

Thus we have examined various principles of christian giving, and testing these methods of church support by them, have found such methods inconsistent with them all.

And what good is derived from such things, even from a purely financial standpoint? The advocates of these schemes claim that large sums of money are thereby turned into the treasury of the Lord. But what shall we say of the large sums kept out of the Lord's treasury? The more we resort to such practices for making money illegitimately, the less will we be at pains to give to the church in the legitimate way; and thus as this ecclesiastical traffic increases, in about direct ratio will the free-will offerings of God's people decrease. This will inevitably be the case as long as human nature is what it is.

The fact is, if all God's people did their duty in the matter of giving, there would be no necessity for such schemes. This, I think, all must acknowledge. These practices arise from an evil existing in the church, namely, the selfishness of God's people. There are one of two courses open to us, either to indulge this selfish spirit by getting money in other ways than by direct appeal to church members, or to let these members see that the church is suffering through their neglect, and persuade them to cultivate the grace of liberality. Which course shall we adopt? Ask any sensible physician what he does with a patient, one of the organs of whose body is not performing its natural functions. Does he resort to artificial means to get that work done in the physical system, and meanwhile leave the diseased member to die through inactivity, or does he try to stimulate it to healthy exercise, and so enable it to recover its full vigor? It is never judicious to resort to any temporising measures which only aggravate and perpetuate an evil.

These practices are something peculiar, I believe, to this radical, worldly-wise nineteenth century, which is never content to walk in the old paths, where is the good way, but is ever concocting new and so-called practical schemes. This is the age of electricity and railroads. Everything, to please us, must be done in the twinkling of an eye. Physicians are curing all sorts of diseases by electricity; why may we not carry a similar cure into the spiritual world, and by turning upon the poor sinner the galvanic battery of spurious religious excitement, startle him in a moment from his spiritual torpor and shock him into the kingdom of heaven? We carry nearly everything now by steam; why not railroad our church along on the backs of all kinds of financial schemes? The church has to learn again and again the same old les-

son that God's ways are not our ways, and that his ways are the wisest and best. We may depend on it, he is not going to bless these faithless, self-asserting schemes of ours. He can multiply, if he will, a few loaves and fishes to feed a multitude; and again, all our wealth and power will avail naught without his blessing. And so it is with our church just now; with all our dime readings, ice cream festivals, oyster suppers, concerts, etc., etc., every one of the benevolent causes of the church is languishing for the want of a proper support. May God, who "is able to make all grace abound toward us," grant us more fully that old Macedonian grace of christian liberality, and that, "always having all sufficiency in all things, we may abound to every good work."

E. C. MURRAY.

EVANGELISM: ITS PLACE, AND HOW IT SHOULD BE PROMOTED.

It is the claim of Presbyterians, while crediting other denominations with many excellencies, that their church government is in beautiful harmony with the spirit of the nineteenth century and the genius of American institutions. In fact, our national government is largely moulded after the pattern of that of the Presbyterian Church, with its two kinds of officers in representative assemblies, and with a series of appellate courts. Our theological system is not only thought to be in closest accord with the entire Word of God, but also in true harmony with the laws of the most advanced science. Again, we claim large catholicity of spirit, while adhering to the most rigid doctrinal standards ourselves, receiving to church fellowship and to the communion table members coming from any of the evangelical denominations. This much is said not by way of boasting, but to emphasize the following thoughts.

Notwithstanding all this, and our age as a church, we have increased far less rapidly than some other denominations. It is claimed, with justice, perhaps, that the Presbyterian Church is more rigid in the admission of members than some denominations. But there are other denominations who also are careful to receive only such as give evidence of regeneration, and yet they have outgrown us. With doctrinal and ecclesiastical advantages on our side, there must be some fault, and no small one either, somewhere in our system or polity. It behoves us to seek it out. One cause, no doubt, is the paucity of our ministry. But this is not the point at issue just now. It may be claimed