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EDITORIAL NOTES.

When Jesus talked with the woman by the well of Samaria, He gave intimation of a profound spiritual truth when He made the request of her, "Give Me to drink." In this simple question He unfolds the truth that it is within the power of human beings to refresh the heart of our gracious Lord. He is refreshed as we give Him to drink of the well of our own affections and activities. Have we considered as carefully as we ought the opportunities which God is giving us to refresh the spirit of the Master?

Jesus always appealed to the heroic in men. He recognized that this is the surest way to enlist men in the service of God. Many appeals of men fail at this point. If we would win a cordial and hearty response to some great need in the Kingdom of God, we must challenge men to a choice between self-sacrifice and self-interest. To set forth the attractions, the compensations, the joys of Christian work, will not always awaken a responsive chord in the human heart. Dr. John R. Mott has pointed out that a psychological study of youth would suggest the futility of this basis of appeal, as contrasted with that which addresses itself to the heroic within us; for the call to heroism always meets with a heroic response. "Make the Gospel hard and you make it triumphant."

Rapid progress has been made in the fight against the liquor traffic in the United States during the past few years. The Kenyon-Sheppard Bill, making the District of Columbia "dry," has now become a law. It prohibits the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in the District of Columbia after November 1, 1917. The Anti-Liquor Advertising Law and the "Bone Dry" Bill, incorporated in the Postoffice Appropriations Bill, have been approved by both Houses and have received the President's signature.

Now that the special period of self-denial and prayer for Foreign Missions. (February 1-21), designated by the General Assembly, has come to an end, surely God's people will not permit their prayers for this great work to end, nor their sacrificial living and giving to cease. The great cause of Foreign Missions is very dear to the heart of the Saviour, and we are sure that God's people everywhere will desire to continue to pray and to give, that God's Kingdom may come with power. Much anxiety will be felt by the Executive Committee between now and April 1, when the ecclesiastical year closes, for fear that the contributions of the churches may not be sufficient to close the year without debt. Every church should see to it that some special gift, however large or small, is sent to the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Nashville, Tennessee, before the end of the ecclesiastical year on March 31.

A new standard has been set in the possibility of expenditures and of sacrifice in connection with the great world war which has already cost the nations engaged in it the fabulous sum of almost forty billions of dollars. This is ten times the amount spent in Christian work in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the islands of the sea during the

twenty centuries since Christ came to earth. It has been stated on good authority that the men who have been killed and wounded are many more in number than the total number of Protestant missionaries ever sent into non-Christian lands in the world's history. Never again can it be stated with truth that too great demands are made upon the servants and stewards of God. When pleas are made for funds for mission work, for great sacrifices and great services, no one can urge that they are unreasonable. The sacrifices, the sufferings and the gifts that the nations of the world have readily made for what they consider the demands of a righteous cause should put the people of God to shame when measured against their gifts for extending the Kingdom of God.

No more vital subject confronts the Southern Presbyterian Church than that of evangelism. Large emphasis has been laid upon this fundamental feature of church work during the past few years. A majority of the Presbyteries have held, during the past year, conferences on evangelism. At these conferences plans are outlined for evangelistic work and definite aims are set before representatives of the various churches. Under the leadership of Rev. W. H. Miley, D. D., Superintendent of Evangelism, our Southern Presbyterian Church is taking its rightful place in the vanguard of the Christian forces that are seeking to evangelize our land. There are at our very door about twenty-three millions of people who are not in any Church. While the number of persons added to our Church on profession of faith last year was the largest in its history—21,804—yet it required sixteen church members, on an average, to bring one unsaved person into the Church. One-third of the churches of our Assembly failed to report a single convert. The Church should set before itself as its ideal for the coming year the increasing of evangelistic zeal and enthusiasm.

Rev. Charles Stuart Vedder, D. D., LL.D., died at his home in Charleston, South Carolina, March 1, in the ninety-first year of his age. He was born in Schenectady, New York, and was graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, in 1861. He was ordained in April, 1861, by the Presbytery of Charleston and became pastor of the Presbyterian church at Somerville, South Carolina. In 1866 he became pastor of the French-Huguenot church in Charleston, and served this church for more than half a century. At the time of his death he was pastor emeritus, having retired from the active work two years ago, following loss of eyesight. Dr. Vedder was a man of warm heart, genial disposition and pleasing manners, and was greatly beloved by those who knew him. Because of his public spirit and wide sympathies, which led him to enter largely into the social, civic and religious life of his adopted city, perhaps no citizen of Charleston was more generally esteemed and honored than this gentle, quiet, helpful minister of the Gospel. For many years he was the president of the New England Society and co-operated in its benevolent work. He was from its inception the special patron of the Confederate Home School, and served as a

stated that he could find places for 50 men whose occupations were taken from them and each individual was willing to give his name with a definite promise to meet the emergency.

Did it Hurt the Lumberman's Business?

"Oregon is a new state since January 1, when traffic in liquor was abolished," was the answer that F. S. Cutler, a lumberman of Portland, Oregon, gave in Omaha when questioned about the effects of prohibition in his own state.

"There is absolutely nothing in this argument that prohibition hurts business," said Mr. Cutler. "Business is better, the people of Oregon are more prosperous and the working men of the state making more money than ever before. At Raymond, headquarters for loggers when they came to town after a season in the woods, lumbermen would hand their checks for \$300 to \$800 to a saloon proprietor and they would never see them again. Two weeks and they would be told their money was gone. Now those same men put their money in the bank, send the money to their families, or buy land or clothing or something else that does them some good."

Dallas, Texas.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

BY REV. JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN, D. D.

CHRIST THE SUPREME GIFT.

Topic for Wednesday, March 21, 1917.

Suggested Scripture Reading, John 6:51.

This particular verse, though it presents Christ as giving Himself, does not use the word "Gift of God" in reference to Jesus. But more than once He is called that, too, in the Bible. Once He calls Himself that, John 4:10. And indeed in the very context here He also does, see verse 32. It is a beautiful designation of Him, "the Gift of God."

It suggests comparisons with the other gifts of God. They are very many and very varied. They are both in the realm of nature and in the realm of grace. But He is God's supreme Gift to men; as the apostle puts it (II Cor. 9:15), "God's Un-speakable Gift."

This particular verse asserts three things concerning this Gift: "Its Supernatural Origin," "Its Perpetual Benefits;" "Its Unique Character."

I. Its Supernatural Origin.

The first thing asserted is its supernatural origin. Jesus says: "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven." That is obviously not to be taken as true merely in the sense in which it is true that "every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." For throughout this whole passage Jesus is evidently drawing a contrast between the earthly bread, of which a man shall eat and hunger again and at last die, and this heavenly bread, of which he shall eat and live forever.

That earthly bread, too, comes from God. But it also comes through and from the earth. So it has the mark of all earthly things. It is beautiful but temporal. And, though it is the gift of God it is not spoken of as "the bread which came down from Heaven." It rather came up from the earth.

There is not only a contrast in this whole passage; there is also a comparison. The comparison or likeness is between this living bread and the manna which the Jews ate in the wilderness. The likeness does not consist in the character of both. In that respect the manna was like our common daily bread. Both are temporal. But the likeness is in the supernatural or miraculous nature of their origin. That manna, too, like this living bread which our Saviour here calls Himself, "came down from Heaven."

Whatever men may say of His origin, it is plain that our Saviour Himself regarded His origin as a miraculous one. To try to make out otherwise is to do such spite to the obvious language of the Gospel record that infidelity is abandoning the attempt.

One can not help but wonder at this strange antipathy to the supernatural on the part of some men. It is surely born out of a narrow and amazing idolatry of the natural. It seems consistent with atheism. But why one who believes in a personal God at all should demand that all His gifts to us be mediated through nature's laws, and that He should never come to us more directly, passes impartial comprehension. It would surely leave us and the world by so much the poorer.

Let us be glad for all the gifts of life which come from Him through nature. But let us be glad that when He gave us His supreme gift it came to us "down from Heaven."

II. Its Perpetual Benefit.

The second thing, the perpetual benefit of the gift, is indicated in the further words: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." This is what men have been seeking for, in all generations, the elixir of life that should conquer death and old age and enable them to live forever. Even Huxley, the agnostic, had such a horror of death that he wrote to his friend: "It flashes across my mind at times with all sorts of horror that I shall probably know no more in 1900 (when he would be dead) than I did in 1800 (before he was born). I had

rather be in hell a great deal, provided it were in some of the milder phases of it."

Now Jesus does not say that an acceptance of Him is necessary to give men continued existence hereafter. The Christian Church believes that there will be continued existence hereafter even for those who have not "eaten of this bread." What Jesus promises is eternal "life." Jesus has not only brought immortality to light where that was hidden, but He has made it attractive where it was unattractive and even forbidding before. The Greeks believed in immortality but their conception of it was as a faint replica of the fulness of this life. It was correctly spoken of as a shade. For it was only a shadow of this present life.

But Jesus has rather given the very reverse conception of life hereafter. This earth life is little more than a faint replica of that. "In My Father's House are many mansions." "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

And—this is the important point—of that life He is the condition. We can "exist" hereafter without having accepted Him. But we cannot "live" hereafter without having accepted Him. Why should it not be so? He has been the source and inspiration of all the highest lives here. What distinguishes such a man as Paul from the most of mankind is that he lived more, lived more especially in the higher reaches and possibilities of our being. But Paul's own verdict on that was: "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." We can get our best conception of the fuller life of the better world to come by observing the fuller and higher life of such a man as the apostle here.

For—and this is another important point—that eternal life does not begin for us hereafter. It begins for us here and now, if we have accepted Jesus. That is the implication both of the words of Paul and of those of Jesus. "I am come," said Jesus, "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly," and the first reference is to the present time. In fact unless it begins here we cannot expect it hereafter. And the surest and most natural as well as most logical proof of whether we are going to have eternal life hereafter is whether we have it here. Such a man as Paul was never in doubt as to the life hereafter. He had the evidence of it with him and in him all the time.

III. Its Unique Character.

And finally the unique character of the gift is indicated in the concluding clause of the verse, "And the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

1. Here is first of all and explicitly

The Doctrine of the Atonement.

It was a hard saying to the Jews. And it is still a hard saying to many moderns. But the hardness of it to a man is generally the accompaniment of a lack in him of a consciousness of sin. It is wonderful, when a man has a very deep sense of sin, how little difficulty he has with the deep things of salvation. He may not be able to reason them out any better than before. But he knows they are true because they answer to the consciousness of his need. It was when David knew his sin that he appealed to God to wash him, realizing that he could not wash himself, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." David would have had little difficulty in accepting, in that hour, that what was necessary to wash him clean was something no less than the blood of God Himself.

If, however, a man is looking for helpful analogies to make the atonement a little more familiar to him, he may perhaps find it in the fact that even his natural life has had to be bought at the cost of vicarious human suffering. His life eternal could only be bought from death and sin by the blood of God's Son. Jane Ellice Hopkins has put that in verse:

"I could not at the first be born
But by another's bitter wailing pain;
Another's loss must be my sweetest gain;
And Love, only to win that I might be,
Must wet her couch forlorn
With tears of blood and sweat of agony.

"I fall not on my knees and pray
But God must come from Heaven to fetch that sigh,
And pierced Hands must take it back on high;
And through His broken heart and cloven side
Love makes an open way
For me, who could not live but that He died."

2. But the unique character of the gift is marked not merely by the feature of past atonement but also by that of

Present Communion.

It is so we accept and appropriate the atonement. And if the striking figure under which the Saviour put it, of eating His flesh, was a difficult saying to the Jews that was because, Dr. David Smith tells us, they failed to remember "how their own Rabbis were accustomed to speak of 'eating the Messiah,' meaning thereby receiving Him joyfully and greedily absorbing His grace. They would then have recognized in our Lord's mysti-

cal language an assertion of His Messiahship and a call to welcome Him as the Saviour of Israel and receive the blessing which He brought them. And indeed what else than this is the fundamental signification of the Holy Communion?"

Louisville, Ky.

For the Christian Observer.

A MEDITATION.

BY REV. F. P. RAMSEY, PH.D.

"These things His disciples understood not at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written concerning Him and these things they had done to Him."—John 12:16.

The writer is John, one of the twelve; and the account comes out of his memory of what he himself had witnessed. But this sentence transfers us from the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in which John took part, to his ascension which John witnessed. At that time John and his fellow disciples, as he well recalls, were reminded by the sight of their Lord's reception up into glory of His lowly triumph that day He rode into Jerusalem on an ass.

The sentence is thrown in in the course of the narrative of what took place on that occasion, and is meant as an interpretation of what then took place. The emphasis is on "these things," which is used three times in the sentence, by which he means the facts of the triumphal entry; and the theme of the sentence is the mind of the disciples as to "these things." The negative statement is that they did not understand these things at the first; the positive statement must imply that they did understand these things afterwards. It fixes the time that they came to understand: When Jesus was glorified then they understood. For then they remembered both that these things had been written concerning Jesus in a prediction concerning the Messiah, and that they had done these very things to Him without being aware at the time that they were fulfilling the prediction.

The prediction was that the Messiah would come to His people, not on a war horse, as a victorious warrior, but on a donkey, as a meek and just administrator. For the horse was the animal of war, and the donkey the animal of peace. The bloody warriors rode on prancing horses; the civil judges that made peace among their neighbors by declaring truth and right rode on donkeys. By seizing on this imagery in Zechariah's prediction about the Messiah, and riding into Jerusalem as a triumphant leader but on a donkey, Jesus made clear that His reliance was not on force but on truth, not on war but on declaring the right. He deliberately rejected the use of force and the signs of power, and put His reliance on the meek and peaceful testimony of truth and right. With men He failed. Military power took Him from His seat on the donkey, and nailed Him to the Cross. But with God He succeeded. God took Him from the sepulcher at the foot of that Cross, and enthroned Him at His right hand, thus glorifying Him.

We cannot, from this, conclude that political government ought never to use force, or that it is always wrong to go to war. For the Scriptures appoint the sword in the hand of political authority for the enforcement of justice. It may, therefore, be the duty of a government to make war, if that government is charged with the execution of justice in a given case and cannot otherwise fulfil its obligation. But even so, it must be that governments, even in punishing crime and making necessary war, should be actuated by the spirit of the King of peace. And who can say what God would do with a great nation like our own, if its government and people should deliberately practice meekness and bear injuries and rely on the declaration of truth and right rather than on force? May it not be that in ridiculing President Wilson for writing letters and for patience in watchful waiting some have been ridiculing an effort to bring a touch of Christ-like meekness into international affairs?

Certainly the Church must adopt fully her Lord's program of utterly eschewing the sword and relying wholly on meek and faithful testimony to the truth. The Church of Jesus Christ is an institution of martyrs.

And when I come to apply this teaching to myself, let me be brave in searching my own temper and practice, whether I am a true and full disciple of Him who purposely cut out the use of force and relied for His success on peaceful testimony alone. I cannot reason that thus I shall prevail with men; for even Jesus failed with them. But thus I may count on prevailing with God, and He in His appreciation of such confidence in Him will ultimately give me success, even if beyond the Cross and the grave.

In this faith why should I not be always calm, patient, and even pitiful toward those who may wrong me? In this faith I may be able to endure all the other ills of life and its experiences of injury from men. My ideal hero is not a warrior on a horse, but a Galilean Teacher riding in conscious triumph on a donkey to His death.

Hopkinton, Iowa.