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REV. F. L. REID, Editor.

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For the ADVOCATE.

Our Missionary Collections.

Mr. Editor: I send you the following written at my request by the Rev. J. R. Brooks, D. D., the Presiding Elder of Shelby District:

J. D. ARNOLD.

(Concluded from last week.)

I once served a church, the average contribution of whose members was \$28. They paid an average of \$14 for support of the ministry, besides what they gave for missions, schools, etc. Nor was it a rich church. I do not think that more than two of its members were worth \$100,000. I know a man on this district, who last year commenced giving one-tenth of his income. He now pays some five or six times as much as he did before, with about the same income. And he says he moves cheerfully and joyfully than he gets on. And he feels that he "gets on" better and is more prosperous than he formerly was. Last year the old part of this district paid 10 per cent. more for the support of the ministry, and nearly 20 per cent. more for the six collections—missions, etc.—than it did the year before. And I am sure that it has the "ability" to more than double the amount paid.

But, do you ask how we are to get our people up to this standard of giving? It will certainly take time, patience and much faithful work. And after all we can do, we may not hope at any early day to get all of them up to it. But I believe we may do much at it by using perseveringly the following plans:

1. Preach faithfully, fearlessly, and frequently on the duty of liberality and proportionate giving. Men will object, but their objection only indicates the necessity of much preaching. It is a remarkable fact that one may, without giving offence, preach on almost any other subject. He may, with impunity, denounce lying, drunkenness, and fraud, and commend faith, and honesty, and if he warn against covetousness and insist on liberality—"preach about money." He may expect complaint, especially from those who pay but little or nothing. The philosophy of it seems to be the fact that human depravity—human selfishness—concentrates and fortifies itself about the pocket, and does not like to be disturbed. But we must boldly and vigorously "shell" it until it is dislodged or destroyed. Luther said that a man had to be converted three times; first his head, then his heart, and then his pocket-book. As he has said of others, many of our people need this third conversion, and not a few of them would be much improved by a little more of the other two. The pocket is usually the last part to be reached. But it is to be reached through the head and the heart by preaching.

2. We must break down this prejudice which prevails about money. We must let our people know that while religion is love, love is a principle that expresses itself in sacrifice and service. We must remind them that the Bible says as much about tithes, liberality, etc., as it does about singing, praying, and fasting. We must give them to understand that God furnishes the subject-matter of our sermons—that we are to "preach the Word"—and that we are to take all the word of God from His mouth and give it unto them—that we dare not "shun" to declare unto them any of "the counsel of God," however unpalatable it may be to their stingy souls. We must teach them that the worship of God consists as really in giving "alms" as it does in saying prayers—in paying as in praying. We must show them that "pure religion and undefiled before God" is as much "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"—to help the needy and dependent classes—as it is "to keep himself unspotted from the world"—pure in heart and life. The Pharisees church member "smacks his lips" with a relish when we speak against worldliness—dancing, etc.—but he frowns and writhes when we touch on money. We must urge him to contribute something to missions. We may preach the Gospel as much as we please, but we do not refer to China. We grow eloquent in speaking of the love of our "neighbor" as a feeling of the heart, but we must be good Samaritans, feels in the heart to help a stranger of a hated heathen nation. Poor pious people, they are greatly concerned that the church be kept pure, and that we let them practice the "Charitable begins at home," but which gets far enough from them to get one to Heaven! God save the nation from such friends! We must have grace to disregard their criticisms! The pocket-book of the Pharisee will never be converted so long as they control the pulpit. We must have no one ride a hobby, but I am not sure but something may be said on this general line, and on proportionate giving, every one take a special collection. We prescribe often for the patient who has inherited and made inveter-

ate the fearful disease of covetousness.

2. Distribute literature on liberality, missions, etc., and talk the matter privately to our people in their homes and at their places of business. More can be done with some people in this way than by public preaching. In this connection I most heartily recommend a tract of 19 pages, published in Chicago, under the title of "Christian Giving, or Paying What we Owe." It is the best thing of its kind and size that I ever read. The author and publisher has for years been sending it "in any quantity, gratis, postage paid, to all who desired it for distribution among parties who would read it." He will gladly send pastors one for each family in their congregations. He will also send them to laymen for their reading and distribution. I beg that every pastor reading this will send for some of them. And will not our laymen do so? All it will cost them is a postal card. Address "Layman, 310 Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill." Of course our pastors will scatter broad cast the missionary tracts and leaflets which Dr. I. G. John, Nashville, proposes to furnish them free. Let us "sow down" our congregations with this literature.

3. I would humbly suggest to my brethren of the ministry that we set our people an example of liberality. I believe we may do great good in this way by complying with the requirements of the tithelaw. Ought we not to let them see that we practice what we preach in this, as in all other matters? Ought we not to lead them in this work of giving? If they see that we do not contribute to the support of the ministry at home, ought they not to know that we contribute liberally for missions? I regard this as very important.

4. I would emphasize the fact that every one, no matter how poor, should be urged to do something. And I believe that any one who can pay at all can pay one-tenth. "Under the Jewish system no worship was complete without a gift, and the art of giving was itself an art of worship." Why should any one, even the weakest and poorest, neglect this part of worship or be deprived of this means of grace? Do they not need it as really as the strong and rich? We must let those who are "objects of charity" realize the greater blessedness that comes to them from giving.

Besides, as one has suggested, the failure of most methods for raising money is due to the fact that they fail to reach the masses. One secret of Rome's great financial strength consists in the fact that rich and poor are alike expected to contribute to their means. And one has said that "next to spirituality, the rapid growth and spread of Methodism is due to the skill manifested by John Wesley in marshaling every man, woman and child for individual work and personal endeavor." He adds that the watchword of the early Methodists was, "justification, sanctification, and a penny a week." That of modern English Methodists is, "A penny a week and a shilling a quarter," which is about \$2.00 of American money a year. An intelligent Englishman, who was for years a member of the Wesleyan Church, tells me that he never knew one of the youngest or poorest of their members to pay less than that amount regularly for the support of the pastor alone. He says that apprentices do it. No wonder, then, that they average \$1.00 apiece for foreign missions—more than five times as much as North Carolina Methodists average. Of course the wealthier people give much more than \$2.00 a year. Oh for the genius, skill and methods of Wesley and his English followers for American Methodism! Who will revive the class-meeting or give us a substitute for it as a means of developing the liberality, as well as the spirituality of our people?

5. Get every one to see that he is not only able to give at least one-tenth, but that it is greatly to his interest to do so—that he can't afford not to do it. Many will be slow to see and believe this. They forget the lesson of the widow's barrel of meal and crust of oil, and our Savior's miracle of the loaves and fishes. They overlook the reason Moses gives for paying tithes: "That the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." Help them to see that this is the way in which to have their "barns filled with plenty," and to have the "devourer" and all other enemies of their crops and temporal prosperity "rebuked" by the Almighty. Teach them the divine philosophy that giving is a condition of getting. "Ring the changes" on the Savior's words: "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom." Let them see that men, as God's agents, shall bring them enlarged temporal prosperity as the reward of their liberality. And let us not forget that the most effective way of teaching this is from our own experience. If we could get the American Church up to this standard of liberality we would have an "Anti-poverty Society" far better than any that is proposed by Henry George or Dr. McGlynn. We would

have one the effect of whose working would be to present or relieve poverty of every kind—temporal, spiritual and eternal—at home and abroad—in time and eternity.

6. Let the rich see that one-tenth or even one-half of their large income is not more than is needed. Point them to the sublime and pathetic spectacle presented by Young J. Allen. After leaving, home friends and native land, and giving his young and maturer manhood to missions, he sees a new and brighter day dawning upon China and Japan. He hurries back to his loved country and pleads with his brethren to send more laborers into this wide field, so "white unto the harvest." He backed his appeal with a contribution of \$500 to pay those laborers. What has been the financial response to this affecting appeal? Ninety thousand Methodists add not quite \$2,000 to their former contribution to missions—not four times what the noble Allen alone gives after giving his life to the work.

Tell them of the 2,000 students in American schools who are preparing for foreign mission work, and who beg us to give the money necessary to enable them to go. In this way, and through the rich,

"Say to the gold, 'The Lord hath need, Till hoarded treasurers yield.'"

Emphasize the fact that every one must go or send or die!

Fraternally yours,
Jno. R. Brooks,
Shelby, N. C., 27th Mar., '89.

P. S. By all means get the tract from Chicago recommended above. Address "Layman, No. 310 Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill."

For the ADVOCATE.

Our Virginia Correspondence.

BY REV. JOHN E. EDWARDS, D. D.

THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE SPRING TIME.

Time flies! Yes: what of that? This, at least, time to us is the measure of our period of probation for eternity. It is precious. In the little parenthesis between the cradle and the grave, we make up our account for the everlasting ages lying beyond the boundary line of time. How brief the fleeting space! At its longest term human life is short. What are three score years and ten! In the forecast of hopeful youth the period appears to be long. But the seasons come and go with noiseless tread. Youth, like the spring-time, glides into the summer of early manhood; and then, as the summer fades into the sober autumn, manhood's prime falls into "the sere and yellow leaf." Then follows the winter of age, as the close of the year follows the seasons that have come and gone in their turn. "The days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." There is no way of evading the inevitable law. "There is nothing new," says the reader, "in these trite remarks." Admitted; and yet they may be accepted as prefatory to something that is to follow. By some freak of fancy I was carried back, this April morning, by the fragrance of the Spring blossoms, over the lapse of a little more than half a century, to a point in my life that formed a sort of transition period from the buoyancy of comparative boyhood, to the graver responsibilities of early manhood. In the years of 1837 and 1838, I was the preacher in charge of the Raleigh circuit, in the North Carolina Conference, then but recently set off from the Virginia Conference. It was a three week's circuit, with twelve appointments. Round and round I went, with only two or three rest days in the week, and in one or two instances, I had to ride the distance of twelve or fifteen miles—even more than that, as I now remember, from one appointment to another, as for example, from Strickland's to Oak Grove, and from Oak Grove to Liberty. But, all this by the way. There are but few readers of the Advocate who know anything about Strickland's, Oak Grove, or Liberty. Well; what now? It was the breath of Spring, that came through the open casement, this vernal morning, laden with the odor of bursting buds and blossoms, that, strange enough, carried me back to Raleigh and the Raleigh circuit fifty-one years ago. Just then I was making my arrangements to leave the circuit for the space of three weeks to go, first to Greensboro—a distance of nearly one hundred miles, thence to Prince Edward county, Va., a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, where I was to be married on the 1st day of May, 1838; and then, to return to my circuit, a distance, but little short of one hundred and fifty miles, and all this travel to be performed by private conveyance, with the interesting event of my marriage to intervene, in the space of less than three weeks. Nor, was even this length of time taken without the wholesome fear of my Presiding Elder before my eyes. Returning to my circuit there was no parsonage for my reception, and no boarding house to which to carry my bride, and having been sent to the circuit as a single man, the stewards made

no additional "allowance" for me as a married man. These were gay old times. It was well that the spring-time of my life had not passed away; for it is scarcely to be supposed that, with a little more experience, I would have adventured on a married life, with so slender a prospect of providing for the comfort of my young wife, who had abandoned a home of ease to share my fortunes as a homeless itinerant. I have sometimes thought that, but for the hopefulness of the gentler sex, in the bud and blossom of the springtime of their lives, very many of the preachers of the olden time would have lived and died in desiccated old bachelorhood. Many did so die, as it was; but the hopefulness and courage of some of the fair maidens of the land led them heroically to share the hardships and privations incident to the itinerant life in the first half of the present century, and thus to save some of our preachers from lives of lonely celibacy. It is well that human life has its spring-time that blossoms with hope. The reader will see that I am trying to stick to my text; but, like many sermons I have heard, there seems to be but little connection between the text and the sermon. In vindication of the preacher it may be said that he sees, or thinks he sees a connection that is not patent to the hearer. To be candid with my friendly reader, I have to say that I, myself, do not always see the pertinence of the line of remark to the subject in hand. To return after this digression, to the Spring-time, it is admissible to say that it is the seed-time, or the time of planting. Youth, in this respect, answers to the Spring. It is the time to deposit good seed in the mind. The seed sown by the farmer, may for a while disappear, but under the influence of moisture, warmth, and electricity it will quicken into life; strike down its roots, and in due time the plant will lift itself into the sunlight; and in its season, bring forth its fruit. Let us learn to toil on—"labor and wait"—remembering "that in due time we shall reap if we faint not."

The leading lesson of this random discourse is to teach us the value of the spring-time of life, and that with the recurrence of the season, year after year, it may serve a purpose to recur to the hopes, plans, aspirations and budding expectations of our earlier years, revealing to us how far we have fallen short of the realization of our anticipations on the one hand, and on the other hand, leading us to gather up the practical lessons taught—by the disparity between our anticipations and our realizations. Life, in very many of its aspects, has turned out to be something very dissimilar to that which my youthful fancy pictured on the glowing canvas at a time when the rose-tinted colors predominated on the palette. With me, personally, the spring-time, for the most part, has lasted all the year, and indeed, through all the years of a long life. I have always spontaneously kept in sympathy with the young. It has been my good fortune to take a cheerful view of what are called adverse fortunes. I never thought it a sin to laugh. When I was a mere boy in the ministry I was thrown a good deal with a class of preachers that thought it sinful to laugh beyond an audible smile. That good man, the Rev. John Wesley Childs, was a terror to me. He did not even smile audibly; and he would reprove any one for indulging in a good, hearty, midriff-shaking laugh. I respected him so highly that I tried to graduate my risibility by his conscience, when in his presence; but I always claimed reprisals when out of ear-shot of that good and holy man. Mr. Wesley's oft-quoted aphorism; "cleanliness is next to godliness," cheerfulness is next to godliness. Cheerfulness indeed is an element of godliness. Well, it is spring-time. The birds are singing; the vernal air is redolent with the perfume of bursting flowers; the streams, unlocked from the ice of winter, are making merry music in the valleys; the mountains are lifting their heads in the sunshine; the wind-harps of the forest are breathing dulcet notes on the ear of solitude as she sits in sylvan dells, or wanders in the perfumed air of the wild woodlands. * * * My peroration fails to redeem my poor sermon. No new thing under the sun. We have all seen this before. Let us turn to something else.

LOCAL NOTES.

Rev. Joseph Lear, an old and honored member of the Va. Conference, died in Petersburg, April 9th, in the 80th year of his age. He rendered fifty one years of effective service in the pastorate. Since the Conference of 1834 he has been on our superannuated list. He was a man of learning; a most excellent preacher, an able writer, and withal an eminent Christian. No man ever sustained a more irreproachable Christian character in our Conference than he. Brother Lear joined the Conference Feb., 1834. There are but six preachers, now living, who joined the old Va. Conference before he was admitted. Two are still in the Va. Conference; namely: James McAdin who joined in 1814—95 years of age, and Rev. James A. Riddick, who joined in 1833. There

are four in the N. C. Conference who joined before Bro. Lear; namely, Miles Foy, Daniel Culbreth, W. W. Albee, and Rev. R. O. Burton, D. D.

Revivals are still progressing in some of the Methodist Churches in Richmond and Manchester. Large accessions have been made to the membership of the Methodist Church. An interesting fact, in some of its aspects, is worthy of record. Of the four hundred members received into the Methodist Church, not more than five, or six, at most, made a profession of religion outside of the meetings held in our own churches. Many hundreds professed conversion, in the "religion-made-easy-way," in others, but only five or six offered for membership in our churches of the city. Some of the modern "evangelists" are now getting the people "converted by the card." Something after this style: A printed card, having a few questions on it, is circulated among those that "stand up for prayer." They are requested to answer the questions, sign the name, and return the card to the pastor, or evangelist. If an affirmative answer is given to the questions, the person subscribing his name is counted as a convert. This is the latest improvement on the short-cut-process. It is to be hoped that the Methodists never will adopt any of these modern inventions. Something akin to the above is the custom that has prevailed in the west of receiving members on the mere profession of "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." The result is that our church, in some places, is chock full of unconverted members. But the other day I saw published in one of our Advocates an account of a great revival in one of our great city churches, where a large number of conversions was reported, with the statement by the pastor that a very large proportion of the converts were church members who had never been converted before that meeting! No member should be received into the church without "satisfactory assurance" being given "of the genuineness of the faith" of the candidate. In other words, without the profession of "saving faith." We must guard the door of admittance to membership. Profession by the card, and the "stand up," "shake hands" conversion will not meet the demands of the hour.

Lynchburg, Va., April 20th, '89.

For the ADVOCATE.

Letters From a Village Parson.

IV.

The reason why our people do not give a dollar a head to missions is not because the men spend \$600,000 a year for tobacco, and the women wear out \$20,000,000 worth of kid gloves.

It is not stinginess, nor malice, nor the devil.

It is pure ignorance. Ignorance in town and in country among rich and poor, business men and farmers, enlightened and unenlightened. "My people doth not know. Israel doth not consider;" and no united, systematic effort is being made to get them to consider.

What we need here in North Carolina, and in every large Conference, is an intelligent, permanent method of educating our people on the subject of, and securing their offerings for missions. Two hundred preachers with two hundred methods let loose upon two hundred charges will continue to bring a considerable part of the collections up to Conference, but the dollar will continue to go for mince-meats, not for missions, and our people will continue to lie in heathenish darkness respecting the heathen and to hold the most paganish notions of duty toward the pagans. The good old time notion that a Methodist preacher should be a myriad-handed man equally qualified to sell grindstones or honor a bishopric is steadily fading away before the long and fruitless search for just such a man. The wisdom of the itinerant plan lies in the very fact that it accepts the one-sidedness of men and changes the preacher often in order that each church may enjoy the benefit of many sides. Not one preacher in twenty is fitted by nature or by grace or by education to take a collection. Not one preacher in ten is fitted to properly train and enthrone a people for a collection. We don't know how to enthrone or we can't manage after we have enthroned or we know better than we do. We need to be trained ourselves. We need a born agitator and a born collector to instruct us and oversee us. Left to ourselves most of us enter upon the work with the depressing consciousness that we are about to undertake something we are not equal to, and if we succeed in raising the assessment we are haunted for days afterwards by the uncomfortable feeling that we did not act wisely, and that the church has been injured rather than benefited by what we have accomplished.

Let us have an intelligent method. Do not leave us preachers to ourselves to manage an elephant we have never been trained to manage. Our time and brains are frittered away by the multiplicity of duties

ever multiplying. We were left to ourselves to manage the book business and we failed ingloriously. An intelligent method and a qualified head have made of it a glorious success. Would not a like wonderful stimulus attend a like application of business methods to the cause of missions? What we want is an agent of missions, who, under the direction of the missionary board shall organize and keep in good running order an intelligent system for educating our people on the subject of missions and for raising the missionary collections. There need be no trouble about the salary. The right man—and we have three or four born for the place—would add fifty per cent. to the collections the first year, and we could well afford to pay him out of the increase. Put a fire brand in the field—a Ben. Hall, a Stamey, a Tuttle—a man who knows how (as Mr. Kingsbury has suggested about the Trinity endowment) to get hold of the dimes as well as the dollars, a man who can plan for grand, inspiring occasions and come up to them. Let him take the Missionary Conference and work it for all it is worth. He will find it worth enough to employ his whole time. Let him appoint fifty Missionary Conferences for the first year in accordance with Article XIII. § 165 of the Discipline. The next year let the Conference be held at fifty other places and the next and the next, carrying the fire to every part of our territory in four years. Four years of agitation on such a scale would put us where we would not be ashamed to stand. The programme of the Bethel Missionary Conference furnishes an idea of what is proposed. Let the pastor at whose church a Conference is to be held co-operate with the agent. Let him secure the aid of the parsons from the adjoining charges. Prepare an attractive programme and advertise it extensively. Give the children a part. Stir the choir. Spend the whole of Saturday in discussing every phase of the subject of missions. Sunday draw every ray of light to a focus and set the country on fire. At all of the meetings distribute missionary literature and tracts on giving. Dr. John will send you all you want of the former for the asking. Thos. Kane of Chicago will send you the latter on the same terms.

Matters of Opinion.

Good Company:

"That men should make so much of qualifications and experience in choosing a book-keeper or a coachman or a music-teacher, and make so little of it in choosing a legislator, would astonish us beyond measure if we had not got so used to it."

Independent:

It is better to have good intentions for one hour than not to have them at all. There is no man who is not the better for pure, unselfish resolves, however brief they may be.

The Watchman:

"Those who imagine that the pulpit loses importance from the superior effectiveness of the press, might with profit inquire why it is that the stump speaker is still considered so indispensable in politics."

The Congregationalist:

"Infidelity and reckless wickedness get no little proportion of their fascinating influence over the crowd of common-place sinners, from a mistaken homage sometimes paid, even by Christians, to the boldness presumably involved in them."

United Presbyterian:

"Men are habitually striving after place and power, as if there was happiness in being great and distinguished. If we read history or scrutinize the lives we see in our own day, we will conclude that the chief misery of the world is lodged in those who have reached public elevation."

London Primitive Methodist:

"Learn of me"—what to do? To make the world, to raise the dead, rebuke the winds and waves? No, to be "meek and lowly;" to wash one another's feet; not to build churches or erect hospitals; not to fast forty days and forty nights; not to go barefoot on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; not to wallow naked in snow as St. Francis—no, to be "meek and lowly."

Dr. Guthrie:

"Never go where you can not ask God to go with you; never be found where you would not like death to find you; never indulge in any pleasure which will not bear the morning's reflection. Keep yourself unspotted from the world? not from its spots only, but even from its suspicions."

Leigh Hunt:

"God made both tears and laughter, and both for kind purposes; for as laughter enables mirth and surprise to breathe freely, so tears enable sorrow to vent itself peacefully. Tears hinder sorrow from becoming despair and madness, and laughter is one of the privileges of reason, being confined to the human species."