

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Topic for the Week Beginning Jan. 1. Comment by Rev. S. H. Doyle. Topic.—Willing offerings to God. Ez. i, 4, 6; II Cor. viii, 5, 12. The effect of an offering depends entirely upon the spirit of the offering. If a gift is forced upon us, given begrudgingly, or even out of sense of duty, the highest effect is not obtained. But if given willingly, because of love and gratitude, even though it be of little value in itself, it is joyfully received. As with man, so with God. Hence willing offerings may very profitably occupy our thoughts this first week of the new year.

1. Willing offerings exemplified (Ez. i, 4, 6). The Israelites are captives in Babylon under the rule of Cyrus. God instructs Cyrus to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem. Cyrus gives the people freedom to return and helps them financially. He issues a decree that if any are unable to go because of want of means the people of his kingdom are to help them, and besides to make a free will offering to the house of God at Jerusalem, and the people willingly and gladly obeyed his decree because of personal love to the people of God and because they knew it would please their king. This is a noble example of willing giving. Cyrus willingly gave freedom to a people, means to return home and gifts to rebuild their city and temple when they did return home. It is an example worthy of our imitation. The people gave willingly because it pleased their king. So we should give, for it will please our heavenly king. The example of Cyrus strikingly calls to mind God's free and willing gift of his Son to mankind, and with him a home prepared for all who would accept him and it. Let us imitate such noble examples.

2. Willing offerings should first of all include the offering of ourselves (II Cor. viii, 5). In urging the Corinthians to give liberally, Paul cites them the example of the churches of Macedonia, the people of which "first gave their own selves unto the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." This is another example worthy of our imitation. First of all, this year we should give ourselves to the Lord. In so doing we will only be giving to him what he has bought with a great price. In so doing we will prepare the way for making other offerings.

3. Willing offerings are acceptable to God. II Cor. viii, 12, "If there first be a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not." "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." He also accepts his gift. Acceptance depends not so much upon the amount given as upon the spirit in which it is given. Give willingly according to your means, and the Lord will bless the giver, the gift and the person or cause to which given.

Bible References—Ez. xxv, 2; xxxv, 21, 29; Lev. xxii, 19; Num. xxix, 39; Deut. xii, 6; xvi, 10; Ez. vii, 16; Pa. liv, 6; cx, 5; cxix, 108; Mark xii, 43, 44; Luke xxi, 3.

The Value of Work. I do not know that the prodigal in Scripture would ever have been reclaimed had he not given up his idle habits and gone to feeding swine for a living. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest." The devil does not go often attack the man who is busy with the pen, and the book, and the trowel, and the saw, and the hammer. He is afraid of those weapons. But woe to the man whom this roaring lion meets with his hands in his pockets.

Do not demand that your toil always be elegant and cleanly and refined. There is a certain amount of drudgery through which we must all pass, whatever be our occupation. You know how men are sentenced a certain number of years to prison, and after they have suffered and worked out the time, then they are allowed to go free. And so it is with all of us. God passed on us the sentence, "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." We must endure our time of drudgery, and then after a while we will be allowed to go into comparative liberty.—Dr. Talmage.

A Lover Who Broods No Rivals. Have you found Jesus? Then bear in mind that what is found may be lost! You may drive him from you. If you sink into sloth he may turn from you with the sad reproach, "Could ye not walk with me one hour?" You may be driven away by admitting selfish lusts into your heart, for he is a lover who will not share. He is a lover whom my soul loveth; I would not let him go.

Hold him fast, brother, and he will bring thee safe through and land thee in glory. Here, as in one matchless bouquet, are these six fragrant flowers—Jesus our sinbearer, Jesus our peace-giver, Jesus our unfailing omnipotent friend, Jesus our comforter Jesus the savior of our souls, Jesus our all and in all forevermore. These flowers will keep sweet until heaven dawns. If you have these, then yours is the beauty of holiness.—New York Independent.

The Sweetest Day. Sweet Sabbath day, by thy soft wind The heads of lofty trees inclined Their humble tribute pay. The bird choir sings from chancel green The songs of peace and joy serene; They chant their sweetest hymns, I ween, On Sabbath day. Beneath thy shade my spirit lies; My soul looks upward to the skies Whence come my help alway. There is a rest from every care, There is an all pervading prayer— The good in life is everywhere On Sabbath day. The feelings parched with grief and pain, The Sabbath comes like gentle rain To cool the heated way. The weary mortal and oppressed, The poor, the sick, are doubly blest By thy return, O day of rest, Sweet Sabbath day! —Interior.

THE POWER OF DRINK.

No Man Is Strong Enough to Safely Temper with It—Henry Wilson's Test.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.—Luke i, 15.

The might of strong drink is a subject which it is perilous to discuss. It defies law, it tramples upon the rights of humanity, it breaks every law of the decalogue, or leads to their being broken, and yet it intrenches itself in politics so that a minister touches it at his peril. Vast sums are invested in the business by professed Christian people. The profits are said to be fabulous in amount. It buys out the law and right. The range of subjects open to an honest and fearless minister is becoming exceedingly small. The enormous evils of drink are so apparent and so utterly at variance with man's interests we would suppose that all Christian people would unite in slaying its march; but, alas, such is not the case.

"Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when thou goest into the tabernacle of the congregation lest ye die" (Leviticus x, 9). A clouded brain, a thick tongue would not then be tolerated in the service of the Lord. It ought not to be now, either in the pulpit or in congress. God bless the man who says that. A Nazarene was separated from strong drink. Strength was the result as in the case of Samson no more than of Daniel Webster, who gave to his youthful training and temperance the credit for his wonderful strength of brain, which in later years he lost through strong drink.

"And thou shalt have joy and gladness, for he shall neither drink wine nor strong drink." Drink would have ruined all this. The blue ribbon movement saved not only Spurgeon's boys, but saved the great preacher to the cause of temperance. We need to work this temperance business among the youth. They can be taught to sing it and pray it and love it. Nothing can be more helpful than the turning of the attention of the youth in the public schools.

John had more than abstinence from wine and strong drink. He was given to Christ from his youth. Let us bring our children to Christ. Surrender them to the Holy Spirit's guidance. Nothing can match it. A child well born and raised is half converted.

When I went to Boston Mr. Uniack was under the power of strong drink. He went to the war and drank fearfully. In the convalescent camp he was a wreck—head tied up and eyes black. He came to hear Gough, stopped drink and became the finest temperance orator in the world. One morning, weakened in body, he took some quinine bitters in which was alcohol. It rekindled the fire which consumed his every hope and landed him on the lee shore of perdition. Henry Wilson on the other hand shows how safe a man is that refuses to touch it. His father and family were drunkards. God opened his eyes. He changed his name. He refused to taste it with John Quincy Adams when asked to drink. "That," said he, "was my crucial moment. I told him to excuse me, that my parents were drunkards and if I tasted it I would be gone." John Quincy Adams sent it from the table and praised him for abstaining. It saved him and he climbed to the position of power and influence.

There is something exhilarating in the launching of a great steamer that is

fitted to brave the dangers of the deep. See her as she moves out loaded to the gunwales. Contrast it with a wreck on the shore. There is this difference between a child reared to be temperate and one given up to strong drink.—Sermon by Rev. J. D. Fulton, D. D.

Wouldn't Lead Drunken Soldiers. Colonel Manuel Garcia, of the Brazilian regulars, declined to lead an expedition against the revolted province of Matto Grosso unless the commissary department agreed to leave the supply of intoxicating liquors behind. "The government," he says, "has been careful to suppress the distribution of insurgent pamphlets, but I would sooner undertake to maintain discipline among a brigade carrying a hundred wagon loads of rebel literature than among a regiment carrying a carload of alcoholic liquors." More than one campaign has indeed miscarried in consequence of such commissary supplies. The battle of Zorndorf, fought in the crisis of the Seven Years' war, was lost to the Russians chiefly because their soldiers had got access to the brandy barrels in the camp and befuddled themselves on the eve of the decisive engagement.

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