

The Foreign Mission Collection--The Every-Member Canvass

By Rev. J. G. Bishop, D. D., Mission Agent

"Our church adopted an annual budget prepared by the church officials, and then, by an every-member canvass, took subscriptions, so much for the current expenses and so much for benevolences. It is generally understood that the benevolent fund is to be divided between Home Missions and Foreign Missions, Education, The American Christian Convention, and perhaps one or two other objects. Now in addition to this, should the church be expected to take the Foreign Mission Collection called to be taken the second Sunday in March?"

Certainly, most certainly; and not only the one mentioned, but the others named, in their proper order and time. But some one may say, some have had occasion to say, "The idea has been drilled into us that the design of the budget weekly plan is to eliminate all special collections."

That is about the same as if the good housewife, with her husband, prepares a budget covering the necessary table expenses for the year; considering that the times and prices are normal, they can figure pretty closely what the cost will be for the family of a certain number; they set aside or lay their plans to provide that amount for that necessary purpose. So far very well. But they now go further and decide that that fixed amount is all that shall be expended for the table for the year, that any and all extras for any occasion shall be eliminated.

All goes well for a time, when one day, as Will comes in to dinner, his good wife, all flushed with joyful excitement, exclaims, "Will, I have good news to tell! I have a letter from Brother John, of Genoa, Nebraska. He and his wife are coming to make us a visit. You know, we have not seen them since they went West thirty years ago."

They are delighted. . . . At the dinner table Mrs. Blank suggests: "Now, Will, you know this will be an extra occasion, and the few days they are with us will require a few extra dollars, for it will require not only more food, but we must have some things in quality extra from our regular daily fare."

A season of silent thoughtfulness is broken when Will replies, "Yes, it does seem as if we really ought to show our appreciation of their visit in some suitable way, but you know that the amount for our daily table fare was fixed when we adopted our budget and all specials are thereby eliminated. We will therefore have to divide up our regular rations and all of us manage somehow to get along on less."

See! And so for many extra occasions, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc., to eliminate all extra expense even for table fare, would be to eliminate much of the social pleasure and real enjoyment of life. Do you see?

APPLICATION

Yes, the budget and every-member canvass are all right for the every-day work of the church and its enterprises. But these have not met, and will not for many years at least, the ever-increasing need of our foreign mission work; it is that we are speaking of now. If the subject is properly presented and the opportunity given,

many will supplement their weekly offerings with other, and with some even larger offerings.

For many years the second Sunday in March has been designated by The American Christian Convention as the day for taking the foreign mission offering.

It is worth much for all the churches to cooperate with each other, and in harmony with denominationally-authorized plans. There is a stimulus in the knowledge and realization that so many churches are doing the same thing at the same time for the same cause.

This occasion furnishes a grand opportunity for the pastor and his teacher helpers for bringing the subject of missions, in a definite way, and especially our own missions in a fresh and inspiring way, before the whole congregation. From a mind full of the facts and heart all aglow with interest

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THE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

George Washington the Father of Our Country

A Tribute to His Memory

By C. T. Wettstein, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

INTRODUCTION

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing—leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.
—Longfellow.

PREFACE

Only a few days have come and gone that our country, with great enthusiasm, celebrated the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, our third martyrd President, on February 12. I was honored with a ticket to a Lincoln memorial meeting, where I was pleased, after a good lunch, to listen to the eloquent speeches of our best orators, with our amiable Governor Phillip, as the first speaker, loved and honored by everybody.

But when Lincoln's birthday was celebrated all over our country, we must not forget to celebrate the birthday of "THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY," GEORGE WASHINGTON, on February 22. And here I would like to request the school authorities of our country to make February 22, if not already made, a yearly holiday for the children. The teachers, or other able speakers should speak to the children about Washington's life and character.

And here I have a few quotations from Washington's spoken words, from which the reader can see that George Washington was not only a good statesman, but also a true Christian.

A year ago the following article was published in a Milwaukee paper:

THE RELIGION OF WASHINGTON

To the Editor:

Recently much was reported in the public press about the claim that Washington was not a communicant of the Church, that he was not a Christian believer, but a deist. We have answered this assertion once before, but since then we have seen an article in *The New York Sun* in which Rev. R. H.

McKim, of Washington, D. C., recapitulates briefly the evidence upon this subject. Space does not permit publication of the whole article, but a few extracts will be of interest to many readers. Rev. McKim says:

"The Century dictionary defines a deist thus: 'One who holds that there is a God, but no Divine Providence governing the affairs of men; one who holds that God is not only distinct from the world, but also separated from it.'

"Now, the doctrine of Divine Providence was almost a passion with Washington. He ascribes his escape from the perils of battle to Divine Providence. He describes all his military successes to Divine Providence. He ascribes the success of the revolutionary cause to Divine Providence.

"Truly, Washington, if a deist, was of a unique type, all alone in his class. Was it the habit of deists at that period to fast all day strictly, as Washington's diary shows that he did on more than one occasion, when a public feast was proclaimed? Or to attend regularly upon the services of the Christian Church, and to insist upon his officers and men in the army doing the same? Or to practice the habit of secret prayer? as there is overwhelming testimony that he did; for example, that of his aides, Col. Temple, Gen. Porterfield, and his private secretary, Robert Lewis?

"That he daily and diligently read the Bible is attested by his wife, by Mrs. Curtis, and others. In the absence of a chaplain, he himself conducted prayers in camp. In a private letter to Gen. Nelson he said: 'The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations.'

"That Washington was a regular attendant to the Christian communion whenever there was a chance, we have shown in a previous article. In one of his state papers he speaks of the 'Divine Author of our blessed religion.'

"Lassing, the historian, says: 'He was a member in full communion of the Pr. Church.' Washington Irving says: 'Washington and his wife were both communicants.' Gen. Porterfield writes: 'I saw him myself on his knees receive the Lord's

Supper at Philadelphia.' Mayor Popham says the same of the church in New York: 'I had the privilege of kneeling with him.'

What more does the skeptic want?
April 13, 1916.

THE BOOK

BY T. DARLEY ALLEN

The British and Foreign Bible Society has been publishing, for thirty years, a penny edition of the New Testament in English. During the past two years, because of the increased price of paper, printing, and binding, this Testament costs the publisher six cents a copy, but the price is still a penny to the buyer.

No wonder infidels do not meet with success in their efforts to destroy the influence of the Word of God, considering that Christian people are so zealous in the work of circulating Bibles that they publish them by carloads, at a loss, and, indeed, give large quantities away, their great desire being to make men and women everywhere readers of the Book.

Infidels should be thankful that the facts are as they are. The more widely the Bible circulates, the better for the world, and infidels reap the benefit with the rest of us. So, if they are wise, they will be thankful that they do not succeed in destroying the influence of this civilizing Book. For success, in such a work, would be disastrous to all that is best in our civilization.

In an article on "The Preservation of the Bible," Alfred Nevin well shows how the old Book has withstood all the efforts that have been made to destroy it. "About one hundred and seventy years before Christ," says this writer, "Antiochus caused all the copies of the Jewish Scriptures to be burnt. Three hundred and three years after, Dio-

cretian, by the edict, ordered all the Scriptures to be committed to the flames; and Eusebius, the historian, tells us he saw large heaps of them burning in the marketplace. Nor has this spirit ever failed to show itself. The Bible has, all along its course, had to struggle against opposition, visible and latent, artful and violent. It has had to contend with the prevalence of error, the tyranny of passion, and the cruelty of persecution. Numerous foes have risen up against it—pagans, who have aimed to destroy it, and Papists, who have striven to monopolize it, and ungodly men, who have hated it for its purity and penalties. But from all these assaults it has been preserved. It has survived the shocks of all its enemies, and withstood the ravages of time. . . No weapon that has ever been formed against the Bible has prospered. It has survived the power of secret treachery and open violence. The time has been when to read it was death. Infidelity has fought against it with relentless malignity, but it has successfully resisted all its potency. The identical press, indeed, which was employed by Voltaire and the French Institute to disseminate their attacks upon the Bible, has since been used to print the very volume they so vainly sought to destroy. Thus has the Word of the Lord lived and triumphed. Portions of it were written thousands of years ago. Whole libraries of works have perished, of much more modern date. Never was book more bitterly hated. Most malevolent efforts have been put forth for its annihilation. Kings, and emperors, and generals, philosophers, statesmen, and legislators, have all aimed at its extirpation. Yet has it flourished, while its adversaries have been blasted one after another, and never did it bid so fair as at present to be the Book of the whole family of mankind."

Nineteen-Sixteen Gains in the Churches

By Rev. H. K. Carroll, D. D., Washington, D. C.

The churches of the United States have not suffered financially from the European war and the increased cost of living, nor has their ordinary rate of growth been reduced the past year. They have given freely toward the millions of money sent to the war-afflicted populations of Europe and Asia, and yet maintained their own regular work, evangelistic, missionary, benevolent, and educational, with undiminished force. The Year Book of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America for 1917, edited by Dr. H. K. Carroll, gives full statistics, showing that the religious bodies, Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox, had in 1916 an aggregate of over 40,000,000 communicants or members, crossing the forty-million mark by about 17,000. The net increase of the year was 747,000, or 204,000 more than the increase for 1915. In 1890 the total religious strength was 20,618,000, so that in twenty-six years following the net increase has been 19,399,000 or 94 per cent., while the gain in the population of the country for the same period has been about 39,000,000, or 61 per cent.

The churches therefore gained faster than the population.

Of the gains in 1916, about 216,000 were of the Roman Catholic and some 500,000 of the Protestant bodies. Among the latter, 136,000 are credited to the Methodist, 132,000 to the Baptist, and upward of 79,000 to the Presbyterian and Reformed group. The Episcopal Church had a gain of 27,000, and the Lutheran bodies of 20,000.

The thirty constituent bodies of the Federal Council report a total of 17,966,000 communicants, a gain in 1916 of about 254,000. Except for an extraordinary revision of the returns of the Disciples of Christ, causing an apparent loss of about 185,000, the gains of the Churches comprising the Federal Council would have been much larger.

The gain in 1916 in number of churches was small, only 117. In the previous year, however, there was a net loss. The smallness of the increase this year is due to decreases reported by several denominations and denominational groups. The Disciples of Christ sustain an apparent loss of

769, caused by faulty method of counting in previous years; the Methodist Episcopal Church loses 68, the Northern Baptists 33, the Northern Presbyterians, 97, the Episcopalians 7. These and other losses reduce the considerable gains of the Roman Catholics, 199, the United Brethren, 70, the Lutheran Synodical Conference, 105, etc. It is quite probable that churches, particularly in the rural regions, are being closed or merged for the sake of economy and efficiency.

The gain in ministers is 2,643, which is nearly double that of 1915. The largest gain, 478, is reported by the Roman Catholic Church; the Baptists added 365, the Lutherans 159, and other bodies smaller numbers.

Dr. Carroll presents a new chapter, indicating the distribution of communicants and population of the chief world communions of Protestantism. The Anglican communion has an estimated population of 26,758,000 in the world, the Baptist of 21,000,000, the Congregationalist of 4,355,000, the Lutheran of 70,500,000, the Methodist of 32,418,000, and the Presbyterian and Reformed of 30,800,000. It is shown that the prevailing estimates of the strength of Protestantism are far too low, and that nearly, if not quite, 200,000,000 are Protestant members and adherents.

Returns for Sunday-schools in the United States for 1916 show a much larger aggregate of Sunday-school scholars than any previous report has given, and that the net increase in the last ten years is more than 6,300,000, with a gain of between 15,000 and 16,000 schools.

CHARLES STELZLE, Secretary.

CONSTITUENT BODIES OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL, JANUARY, 1917

DENOMINATIONS	Min.	Chs.	Com.
Baptist Churches, North...	8,572	9,542	1,289,909
Free Baptist	805	*1,110	*65,440
Natl. Baptist Convention†..	13,806	16,842	2,133,635
Seventh-Day Baptist	98	82	8,255
Christian Church	1,066	1,360	106,159
Congregational	5,974	6,106	790,488
Disciples of Christ	6,324	8,533	1,117,792
Evangelical Association	1,056	1,625	120,387
United Evangelical	516	948	89,530
Friends	1,287	748	97,514
German Evangelical Synod..	1,089	1,389	274,787
Lutheran, General Synod....	1,425	1,847	360,749
Menonite General Conf....	180	116	15,451
Methodist Episcopal	18,763	28,360	3,743,031
Methodist Episcopal South..	7,320	16,993	2,123,785
African Methodist Episcopal	5,000	6,000	620,000
African M. E. Zion	3,552	3,180	568,608
Colored Methodist Episcopal	3,072	3,196	240,798
Methodist Protestant	1,410	2,400	201,110
Moravian	144	126	20,859
Presbyterian in U. S. A....	9,585	9,784	1,543,027
Presbyterian in U. S. (S.)	1,261	3,437	348,223
United Presbyterian	973	992	156,954
Welsh Presbyterian	91	142	14,668
Reformed Presbyterian (General Synod)	16	17	3,300
Protestant Episcopal, Com- missions on Christian Unity and Social Service.	5,598	8,054	1,066,970
Reformed Church in America	775	724	131,724
Reformed Church in U. S....	1,245	1,778	326,112
Reformed Episcopal	82	80	11,465
United Brethren	1,937	3,577	345,705
Totals for 1916	103,622	139,085	17,966,485
Totals for 1915	103,113	139,091	17,742,509

* Largely merged with Baptist Churches, North.
† Statistics include both Conventions, the incorporated and the unincorporated.

NOTE.—The difference between the totals for 1916 and 1915 do not represent the actual increase of 1916, for the reason that there has been one extraordinary change. The figures for membership of the Disciples of Christ have been reduced by the denominational statisticians by about 185,000, and those for membership of the National Baptist Convention have been increased by adjustment by about 115,000.

—EDITOR.

We want something more than thrills in our patriotism; we want thought, we want intelligence.—Charles E. Hughes.