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Grace and Gold

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Scriptural Giving.

BY

REV. W. J. FOWLER, M. A., B. D.

“The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.”

“To Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.”

“For ye know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“See that ye abound in this grace also.”

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P R E F A C E .

One department of the Life and Work of the Church of God is discussed in the following chapters. The "Church in the Wilderness" under the past dispensation, and the "Church of God" under the present, is one. The Angel of the Covenant, under the former, is the Lord Jesus Christ under the latter dispensation. There is but one High Priest after the order of Melchizedek—even Jesus Christ. The scarlet thread runs through both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures. So, also, does God's plan for the maintenance of His Church, and the extension of His Kingdom. "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." Jesus Christ thus speaks of the permanency of the Law of God, and although we are under grace we do not thereby make void the Divine law. As Paul wrote: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we es-

tablish the law." God, in His Incarnate Son, "condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit." In the Scriptures God reveals His righteous and gracious claims upon His people. His dealings with His people in the past are revealed, that we may understand His dealings with His Church in the present. In emphasizing the Church's needs we may have neglected to make known clearly and fully God's claims upon His people. The needs of the Church, both in men for the ministry and in money to carry on her God-given work are apparent. We know these facts. Why should we not clearly see and obediently follow God's revealed plan for the supply of His Church's needs? When in faith we consecrate our first-born to the Lord, and pray the Lord of the harvest to raise up laborers there will be men. When in like faith we lay by in store as God prospers us, and willingly, lovingly, and obediently give our first-fruits, our tithes, and our offerings unto the Lord there will be money. I am fully persuaded that the Church to-day requires *to see and believe in God's claims upon*

her, and carry out in her life more fully His plan for the supply of her needs.

The *purpose* of this book is to seek to show from the Scriptures something of God's revealed plan for the maintenance of His Church and something of the definiteness of His claims upon our substance to the end that we may recognize His plan and yield a trustful, loving obedience to His claims. Let the Church of God in her leadership and in her membership believe in the righteousness of God's claims upon her substance. Let that belief manifest itself in loving obedience. Where it does so manifest itself in her life and work it will make for righteousness, and for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. As God reveals in the Scriptures His plan of Salvation, so He also reveals His plan for the maintenance of His Church.

The history of the Christian Church on this continent during the last thirty years gives unmistakable evidence that, alas! too often, men's plans have usurped the place of God's plan. The frequent conformity of the Church to the

ways of the world in raising money for her work at home and abroad clearly shows this. The Church professes to believe that "God's ways are higher than man's ways, and God's thoughts than man's thoughts." God has given us a revelation of His thoughts about this matter, and of His way whereby He would have His Church maintained and His Kingdom extended. In this money loving age, when the commercial spirit is so strong in the world, we must face the vital problem. Shall the Church of God follow the thoughts and ways of the world more and more, or shall she repent and return to God and think His thoughts as revealed in the Scriptures, and choose His way as therein made known, and walk in it? The Church cannot follow Christ and the world any more than she can serve both God and mammon. The more closely she does follow Christ, the greater shall be her spiritual life and power, and her separateness from the world. Not only do the Scriptures teach this, but it is illustrated in the past history of the Church. May the Spirit of God give the Church clearer vision of God's plan for her maintenance at home, and extension abroad; clearer vision

of His righteous and gracious claims upon her substance ; and may he persuade and enable her to act in the light of this clearer vision.

W. J. F.

Little River, Musquodoboit, N. S.

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GRACE AND GOLD.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST OFFERINGS.

Genesis 4: 3-5.

GENESIS is the Book of Beginnings. It not only reveals the beginning of Creation, of man, and of sin ; but also of offerings, of sacrifices, and of gifts.

In the first family Cain and Abel are prominent. The book of Genesis reveals to us that man in his primitive state was neither a nomad nor a savage. It teaches that man began with the highest form of rural life—with horticulture. ^a“ And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” After man had sinned he descended to the agricultural and pastoral modes of life. ^bAbel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ^cBy a deeper depth of iniquity man degenerated to the nomadic or wandering mode of life. After the murder of his brother, Cain

^aGen. 2 : 15 ; ^bGen. 4 : 2 ; ^cGen. 4 : 12, 16.

went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, i. e., the land of wandering.

“And in process of time,” or literally, “at the end of the days it came to pass.” When the Lord God drove the man out of Eden, He placed at the east of the garden ^dCherubim. “The Cherubim are the witnesses of God’s presence : where they are, God is.” As the Cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, so likewise the Cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden symbolized the Divine presence. After man’s expulsion from Eden, the place of the Cherubim at the east of the garden was evidently the place of worship. Recognizing a place of worship we associate with it a time for worship. Then, as now, sinful man, wearied in tilling the ground and tending the flock, needed a set time to worship God. This throws light upon the expression, “at the end of the days.” It is revealed to us that ^eGod on the seventh day rested from all His work of Creation, and He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. God’s rest day was at the end of the days of Creation.

^dGen. 3 : 24 ; ^eGen. 2 : 2, 3.

“ At the end of the days ” Cain and Abel came as worshippers bringing their offerings unto the Lord. Thus may it be seen that “ the end of the days ” was the Sabbath. When we recognize a place of worship and a set time for worship we can understand that Cain and Abel would come to this place at the appointed time as worshippers.

Each worshipper brought his offering unto the Lord. In the earliest record of the worship of God on the part of sinful man, ^feach worshipper came with an offering to the place of worship and offered it unto the Lord. In the light of subsequent teaching in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures this is very significant. From the fact that each presents himself before the Lord with his offering is it not probable that these brothers had been taught to worship God by coming into His Presence with an offering? Centuries afterwards, when Israel became a nation, and God gave His people statutes, commandments, and ordinances, it was required that all the males should appear before the Lord at the feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and they were not to appear empty. ^gEvery man who came up to these feasts was re-

^fGen, 4 : 3, 4 ; ^gDeut. 16 : 16.

quired to give as he was able. The fact that Cain and Abel did each bring his offering when he presented himself before the Lord, harmonizes with the law of a later dispensation, which required each male to give unto the Lord according to his ability when he presented himself before the Lord on the occasion of the national feasts.

The Worshippers. On this occasion Cain and Abel were the worshippers. We may regard them as types of the two great classes of worshippers that have been and still continue to be. Abel was a man who exercised faith in God, but Cain was faithless. Some one has aptly said : "Cain was the first rationalist." Abel and Cain present themselves before the Lord, and represent the two great classes of humanity—the believer and the unbeliever. Outwardly there does not appear to be any great difference between the worshippers any more than there is at the present. Each comes to the place of worship, at the set time for worship, and brings his offering unto the Lord. However, the Scriptures reveal to us that in God's sight the worshippers were altogether different. ^hAbel had

^hHeb. 11 : 4.

faith in God. ⁱCain was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. Abel's thought of God, vision of God, and life in the sight of God, were altogether different from Cain's. As the men were altogether different in their heart, mind, and life attitudes towards God, so likewise were they different in their offerings and in their worship.

The Offerings Brought. Cain brought unto the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, but Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. In Hebrews, Abel's offering is spoken of as ^j“sacrifice” and “gifts”. Looking at Abel's offering as a sacrifice it was more excellent than Cain's. What made it more excellent? It was more excellent because of Abel's faith. The simplest idea of faith is taking God at His word, and so, with the fullest confidence in Him, owning His authority and doing His revealed will. Wherein lies the vast difference between faith and unbelief when embodied in action? The man of faith does the revealed will of God, the man of unbelief does his own will. The man of faith seeks to please God in what He does, but the man of unbelief seeks to please himself.

ⁱJohn 3 : 12 ; ^jHeb. 11 : 4.

As a sacrifice Abel's offering was more excellent in itself. Cain's offering was only a sacrifice of acknowledgment offered to the Creator—a thank-offering to the Giver of all temporal good. The meat offerings of the fruit of the ground in the later dispensation were of this nature. Cain's offering, like the Pharisee's prayer, consisted in thanking God that he was not sinful like others.

Abel's offering was a sacrifice of atonement. The blood of the innocent lamb took in some sense the place of the blood of the guilty one who offered the sacrifice. It included the acknowledgment of sin on the part of the offerer, his dread of God's wrath, and his felt need of mercy and pardon from God. Abel's sacrifice was a type of the One great Sacrifice—^kthe Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Like the Publican's prayer, Abel's sacrifice was a confession of sin and a cry to God for mercy.

How did the Lord regard the Worshippers and their Offerings? ^l“And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.” The

^kJohn 1 : 29 ; ^lGen. 4 : 4, 5.

order of acceptance in the Divine economy is first the person and then his offering. This, too, is the order of rejection. God accepts Abel and his offering ; but rejects Cain and his offering. In the earliest account of offerings, the Scriptures associate the offerer with his offering. We should not forget this. It is the man of faith in God who is accepted with his offering. It is the man in unbelief who is rejected with his offering. ^mWithout faith it is impossible to please God. It is the man of faith who offers the more excellent sacrifice. Abel in faith presents himself with his offering unto God ; but Cain coming in his self-righteousness presents his offering. A good tree brings forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree, evil fruit.

No bloody sacrifice is required as an offering at our hands. The one great atoning sacrifice—the Lamb of God—has been offered up. By faith let us receive Him as our personal Saviour. Having received Him in His three-fold office as our Prophet, Priest, and King, let us worship and adore Him. Let us serve Him with the best we have according to His revealed will.

^mHeb. 11 : 6.

CHAPTER II.

TITHING AND THE TITHE COMMAND.

Genesis 14 : 20 ; 28 : 20-22. Leviticus 27 : 30-33.

TITHING was practised in patriarchal times. Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, gave Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, tithes of all. And Melchizedek blessed Abraham. ^aBut without any dispute the less is blessed of the better. It is of great importance to know that Abraham, ^bthe father of the faithful, gave tithes to Melchizedek. ^cJesus Christ is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Since Abraham, the father of the faithful, gave tithes to Melchizedek, the Priest-King, should not Abraham's spiritual children—the faithful in the Church of God—give tithes to Jesus Christ their Priest-King? At Bethel the patriarch Jacob made a solemn vow. In this vow he devoted unto God a tenth of all that He would give him. It is noteworthy that Jacob in giving a tithe of all unto God was greatly prospered.

Men of faith, such as Abraham and Jacob,

^aHeb. 7 : 7 ; ^bRom. 4 : 16 ; ^cHeb. 7 : 17.

gave the tithe to God centuries before God gave His tithe command to Israel from Mount Sinai. The Church of God in the present age should not lose sight of this fact. Since men of faith did the will of God in giving Him a tithe before His will was expressed in a positive command, as it afterwards was from Mount Sinai, now, with our knowledge of God's will, should not all men and women of faith feel the obligation of God's tithe command resting upon them ?

Centuries after the days of Abraham, when the children of Israel became a nation, ^dthe law was given by Moses. God's laws given through Moses to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai are recorded in the Pentateuch. In Nehemiah, the Pentateuch is called ^e"the Book of the Law of Moses," ^f"the Law," ^g"the Book of the Law of Jehovah." In the closing chapter of Leviticus the tithe command is recorded : ^h"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." This tithe command, like the Sab-

^d1 John : 17 ; ^eNeh. 8 : 1 ; ^fNeh. 8 : 2 ; ^gNeh. 9 : 3 ; ^hLev. 27 : 30-32.

bath command, was given by God through Moses unto the children of Israel from Mount Sinai. While all our time is God's gift, yet ⁱHe claims a definite portion of it as holy unto Himself. ^jAll our substance is likewise God's gift; of this, also, He claims a ^kdefinite proportion as holy to Himself. Believing God's word to be true and His commands to be holy, just and good, why should not men and women of faith still obey God's tithe command, as well as His Sabbath command? Recognizing the wisdom, goodness, and love of God in setting apart one day in seven to be an holy Sabbath to Himself, should we not also recognize His wisdom, goodness, and love in claiming a definite portion of our substance even one-tenth as holy to Himself? Mankind is largely possessed by the spirit of selfishness. Obedience to God's Sabbath and tithe commands honors God and dethrones selfishness. If we do not obey God's Sabbath command are we guiltless? Even so, if we do not obey God's tithe command are we guiltless?

God who gives man the earth to inhabit with the sunshine, the shower, the fruits of the earth

ⁱExod. 20 : 28 ; ^jPsa. 24 : 1 ; Ps. 50 : 10-12 ; ^kLevit. 27 : 30-32.

in their season, the power to get wealth, the silver, the gold, the iron, the coal, the precious stones deposited in the earth, with dominion over the lower or animal creation, rightly claims the tenth of man's substance as belonging to Himself, and as holy. "All the tithe . . . is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." Believing this to be a Divine command, let us ever seek to glorify God by loving Him and doing what He commands.

Jehovah's Appropriation of the Tithe. After the children of Israel had sinned grievously in worshipping the golden calf Moses came and stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me". And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto Him. They obeyed the word of Moses and consecrated themselves to the Lord. Afterwards the tribe of Levi was set apart by God to minister unto Him in holy things. When Joshua divided the land of Canaan by lot to the tribes, no portion was assigned to the Levites as an inheritance. ^mThe Lord was their inheritance. To them was entrusted the service of the tabernacle of the children of Israel. ⁿIn return

^lEx. 32 : 26, 28, 29 ; ^mNu. 18 : 20 ; ⁿNu. 18 : 21-32.

for their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, they received the tithe of the children of Israel.

While we read of both tithes and offerings, we should remember that the tithe of the children of Israel which the Lord claimed as His and as holy was to be presented to the Lord as an offering. The tithe comes under the head of heave-offerings. The Lord said unto Aaron, ^o“for the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance.” ^p“And unto the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.” Likewise, when the Levites gave a tithe of their tithe unto the High Priest they were to offer it as an heave-offering unto the Lord. ^q“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, moreover thou shalt speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, when ye take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the Lord, a tithe of the tithe.”

Every kind of offering in the Old Testament Scriptures involved the thought of sacrifice, or man's devotion of himself to God, and included an act of renunciation by which the individual gave up something to God. How clearly the Scriptures teach that the tithe is the Lord's and that it is holy unto Him ; that the children of Israel were to bring their tithe and to offer it as an heave-offering unto the Lord ; that the Levites were to take this tithe of the children of Israel as their God-given inheritance for their service in the tabernacle of the congregation ; that the Levites were to offer the tithe of their tithe as an heave-offering unto the Lord ; and that the High Priest was to take this tithe of the Levites as his God-given inheritance for his service in the priesthood. When God's tithe command is studied in the light of Scripture who can fail to see that it, as well as all other commands of His, is holy, just, and good ! How perfect is the Divine plan for the maintenance of those who served in the tabernacle of the congregation, in the temple service, in the synagogue service ; and in Apostolic days and onward in the service of the Church of God. The

perfection of the Divine plan given by God to the Church in the Wilderness for the maintenance of those who served in holy things, ought to be recognized more fully and lived out more faithfully by the Church of God in the present time. It will be our wisdom so to see God's plan in this as well as in all other things that pertain to His Church as to believe in it with all our heart and embody it in our individual lives. "How much better it is for the Church so to possess the mind of the Lord as to be wholly guided by His Word and Spirit rather than by the opinions and feelings of men !

The Moral Aspect of the Tithe Command.

While the tithe command given by God is holy, just, and good, did the children of Israel always obey it? Alas ! alas ! how often they disobeyed, and suffered because of their disobedience. In observing how God regarded their disobedience we may perceive the moral nature of this command. We need to consider this because of the objection urged against obedience to it under the Christian dispensation : " Is not the tithe command Mosaic or Levitical ? " Might not a like objection be urged against all commands

in the decalogue, seeing that they too were given in the time of Moses from Mount Sinai unto the children of Israel ?

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and repaired the walls of that city, among other abuses he found that both the tithe command and the Sabbath command had been openly transgressed. ⁸Eliashib, the priest, who had the oversight of the chamber of the house of God, where the offerings and tithes were laid for the Levites and priests, had allowed Tobiah to use this chamber for his household stuff. When Nehemiah, on his return to Jerusalem, knew this, he was ^tsorely grieved and cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber, and commanded the chambers to be cleansed, and the vessels of the house of God, and the meat-offering, and the frankincense to be brought in. He saw, moreover, ^uthat the Levites had not received their tithes from the people, and so had fled to their fields. Then he contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" ^vSo he gathered together the Levites and singers and set them in their places. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the corn,

⁸Neh. 13 : 4, 5 ; ^tNeh. 13 : 7-9 ; ^uNeh. 13 : 10, 11 ; ^vNeh. 13 : 11, 12.

wine, and oil into the storehouses. And thus the people were brought back to obey the tithe command. It is noteworthy that when Tobiah succeeded in getting his household stuff into the chamber of the Lord's house, the people neglected to bring their tithes, the Levites fled, and the house of God was forsaken. Tobiah's household stuff must be cast out; the chambers of God's house cleansed; the Levites brought back; and the tithes brought into the Lord's storehouse. In our day the Church of God needs Nehemiahs to cast out the household stuff that has been brought into the house of God. Men ^wfilled with the spirit of Christ are needed to drive out the Church merchandize, and teach the people to cease robbing God; and to bring their tithes and offer them unto the Lord, that He may pour out upon them a blessing.

When the tithes were withheld from God, His house was forsaken, and the Sabbath was desecrated. Nehemiah, having brought back the Levites to engage in the temple service, and all Judah having brought in their tithes in obedience to the Lord, ^xhe next contended with those who desecrated the Sabbath. And ^yhe com-

^wJohn 2 : 14-16 ; ^xNeh. 13 : 17 ; ^yNeh. 13 : 22.

manded the Levites to keep the gates of Jerusalem, and to sanctify the Sabbath day. Observe carefully the demoralizing effect upon Israel when the tithe command was disobeyed and the tithes withheld. The chambers of God's house became polluted with household stuff, the house of God was forsaken, and the Sabbath was desecrated.

In the days of Malachi we may yet further see the moral nature of the tithe command. ^zSorcery, adultery, perjury, oppression, forgetfulness of God, were among the flagrant sins of the time. How had the nation sunk so deeply in sin and iniquity? ^aThe Lord, through His prophet, told the people. They had departed from God's ordinances, and had robbed God in tithes and offerings. The whole nation was cursed with a curse because the people had robbed God. Through His prophet, God charged the nation with the sin—the crime of robbing Him when they neglected or refused to bring the tithes and offerings into His house. Who can have any doubt about the moral nature of the tithe command since God charged those who disobeyed it with the crime of robbing Him?

^zMal. 3 : 5 ; ^aMal. 3 : 7-10.

When man robs his fellow-man, British law recognizes the immoral nature of the act and regards the robber as a criminal. Since British law declares it to be immoral, criminal for man to rob his fellow-man, is it any less immoral and criminal for man to rob God by appropriating to himself, and so withholding from God, what He has revealed belongs to Him and is holy? Since God ^bdeclared the nation of Israel to be cursed with a curse because they robbed Him in tithes and offerings let no one question the moral nature of the tithe command. Remember, too, the condition given by God upon which the curse would be removed; and His blessing bestowed. The nation must make ^cfull restitution for the robbery which they had committed. No man can rob God with impunity. Robbery of God is the worst kind of self-robbery. It impoverishes the individual and the national life, and is destructive to the moral and spiritual life of the Church of God. The individual, Church, or nation must be blind indeed that fails to perceive how much better for man is nine-tenths of his material substance or increase with God's blessing, than ten-tenths of it with God's curse.

^bMal. 3 : 9 ; ^cMal. 3 : 10.

What was Christ's attitude towards God's tithe command? In His Sermon on the Mount Christ reveals his attitude towards the law and the prophets to be ^athat of fulfiller not destroyer. ^eHe warns against the sin of disobedience to even the least of God's commands and of teaching others to disobey; and he exhorts to obedience on the part of both teacher and taught. Even if we should regard the tithe command to be one of the least commandments in the law of God, Christ plainly teaches us how much better it is to obey it and to teach others to obey, than to break it ourselves and teach others to break it. But have we any direct teaching by Christ about the tithe command? Jesus pronounced ^fwoe upon the Scribes and Pharisees, and charged them with hypocrisy, because, while they exacted the tenth of the most trifling products of the earth, such as mint, dill, cummin, rue, and all manner of herbs, they omitted the weightier matters of the law such as judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God. He said to them, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Tithing will not take the place of judgment,

^aMatt. 5 : 17 ; ^eMatt. 5 : 19 ; ^fMatt. 23 : 23 ; Luke 11 : 42.

mercy, faith, and love. It is obedience to these weightier requirements that will fit the individual, Church, and nation for a fuller obedience to the tithe command. All the tithe is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. The Lord declared it to be robbery of Him when the nation withheld tithes and offerings. The people were commanded to bring their tithes to the Lord's house and offer them as heave-offerings unto the Lord. The bringing of the tithe and offering it to the Lord was thus a religious duty—an act of worship. God's appropriation of the tithes was for the support of the Levites and priests who ministered unto Him in holy things. When the people disobeyed the tithe command they not only sinned against God but other sins followed as a consequence, such as: the pollution of God's house, neglect of His worship, and the desecration of the Sabbath. Christ teaches that man ought to give his tithe unto God. He owes this duty to God from whom he receives all temporal good. Men of faith, such as Abraham and Jacob, who lived centuries before the time of Moses and the giving of the law from Mount

Sinai, nevertheless gave tithes ; and shall men of faith under the Gospel dispensation be less faithful in this respect than they were ? From Deuteronomy it would appear that ^aa second tithe of corn, wine, oil, and the firstlings of the herd and flock was to be eaten by the offerer and his household, with the Levites, before the Lord God at the court of the Sanctuary. ^bEvery third year this tithe was to be laid up within the gates of the offerers, and the Levites, strangers, fatherless and widows within their gates were to come, and eat, and be satisfied. By this second tithe, the nation was religiously taught to fear the Lord and to help the poor and needy among them, and the stranger within their gates. By the tithe command, Israel was taught that giving to God for the maintenance of His worship, and for the help of the poor and needy was a religious duty. Obedience secured to them the blessing of Jehovah, but disobedience and neglect incurred His righteous displeasure.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Who opens wide His hand,
And doth the needs of all supply,
In sea, and sky, and land.

^aDeut. 12 : 17, 18 ; Deut. 14 : 23-27 ; ^bDeut. 14 : 28, 29.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Who gives you every good :—
The beasts upon a thousand hills,
And grain, and pulse for food.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Who gives the sun and rain,
The warm south wind, the nightly dew,
The fruit, the ripening grain.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Who gave His Son to save—
The Vanquisher of death and hell,
The Conqueror of the grave.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Who gives His Spirit true,
To quicken, comfort, teach, and guide,
The sinner's heart renew.

Your tithe is holy unto God,
Then give to God His due ;
That He from Heaven may outpour
His blessing upon you.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST-BORN AND FIRST-FRUITS.

Exod. 13 : 1, 2 ; Exod. 23 : 19 ; Num. 18 : 12-15.

ON that eventful night when the children of Israel departed out of the land of Egypt, the first-born among the children of Israel lived, ^abut the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians died. Henceforth the first-born of man and beast among the Israelites was devoted to the Lord. In obedience to the command of God, Moses sanctified the first-born of man and beast unto the Lord.

When the tribe of Levi was set apart to do the service of the Lord in the tabernacle, ^bthe Levites were substituted for the first-born among the children of Israel. The Levites when numbered by Moses ^cfrom a month old and upwards were 22,000. The number of the first-born of the children of Israel ^dfrom a month old and upwards was 22,273.

^eThe Levites and their cattle were exchanged for the first-born of Israel and the firstlings of their cattle. ^fThe number of the first-born of

^aExod. 13 : 15 ; ^bNumb. 3 : 12, 13 ; ^cNumb. 3 : 39 ; ^dNumb. 3 : 43 ;
^eNumb. 3 : 45 ; ^fNumb. 3 : 46, 47.

the children of Israel being 273 more than the number of the Levites, these were redeemed at five shekels apiece. This redemption money of 1365 shekels was given to Aaron and his sons. The firstlings of the clean animals were to be offered in sacrifice, and Aaron and his sons received the wave breast and right shoulder. The firstlings of unclean beasts were to be redeemed. ^gAll the first-born both of man and of beast which was devoted to the Lord was given by Him to the high priest, who had no inheritance in the land.

The First-Fruits. The children of Israel were to bring the first-fruits of the ground unto the house of the Lord ;—^hthe first of their dough or the coarse meal of their threshing-floor ; ⁱthe best of their oil, of their vintage, and of their wheat ; ^jand the first ripe fruits of all that was in the land. All the first-fruits belonged to the Lord, and He gave them unto the high priest.

In the offering of the first-fruits unto the Lord the people acknowledged their dependence upon Him, and declared their gratitude to Him for all His blessings. As the whole nation had been consecrated to God by the devotion of the

^gNumb. 18 : 15 ; ^hNumb. 15 : 20 ; ⁱNumb. 18 : 12 ; ^jNumb. 18 : 13.

first-born to Him, even so the harvest, the vintage, the oil, and all the fruits of the land were consecrated to God by offering unto Him the first-fruits.

The teaching underlying the offering to the Lord of the first-born of men, the firstlings of beasts, and the first-fruits of the ground is very significant. All having been received from God, His ownership of it was acknowledged by Israel when they gave the first, *i. e.*, the best, to Him. ^k“Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.” This is in perfect harmony with the Divine commands given through Moses to Israel in respect of tithes, offerings, gifts, and first-fruits ; and may be regarded as a concise summary of these, and applicable to the Church of God in all succeeding ages. In the light of this summary, the Church of God in this age should acknowledge His ownership of all she possesses, and His claims upon her just as fully as in ^lthe summary of the Moral Law she acknowledges His claim upon her love. In this present time, let Christians individually and unitedly, with deep heart and life searchings, ask this important question :

^k Prov. 3 : 9 ; ^l Deut. 6 : 5 ; Levit. 19 : 18.

Are we offering unto our God the first of our sons, and the first of our substance as an acknowledgment of our complete dependence upon Him for everything, of our gratitude to Him for everything, and of our unreserved consecration to Him and to His service?

In this connection, the offerings of Cain and Abel are suggestive. Abel offered the firstlings and the fat—the first, best, and choicest. Cain offered simply the fruit of the ground,—just what came to his hand, not the first, best and choicest that he had.

Doubtless there are many loyal, true-hearted Christians who are bringing their first and best and offering it to God ; yet I fear there is a vast multitude of professing Christians whose offering to God is more Cain-like than Abel-like : as if anything they could conveniently spare, or had left over after their needs had been supplied was good enough to give to the Lord's cause. Surely there is need of the Christian Church in her vast membership being awaked to a true conception of Christian duty in this respect ; and of learning that God is worthy to receive the first, best and choicest of her offerings and

gifts. He gave Heaven's choicest gift—His only begotten and well-beloved Son—for our salvation. Let us willingly, obediently and lovingly bring unto Him our first, best and choicest gifts.



CHAPTER IV.

OFFERINGS.

I Chron. 16 : 29 ; Psalms 96 : 8.

AS early in the history of the human race as the ^a days of Cain and Abel offerings were brought unto the Lord. After the flood ^b Noah built an altar unto the Lord and offered thereon burnt-offerings of every clean beast and of every clean fowl. When Abraham entered Canaan ^c he came to Sichem and there built an altar unto the Lord. In the trial of Abraham's faith ^d God commanded him to take Isaac and offer him for a burnt-offering. When Abraham, having made the necessary preparation to offer him for a burnt-offering, stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son, the angel of the Lord stayed his hand. And ^e Abraham took the ram caught in a thicket, and offered him for a burnt-offering instead of his son.

The offering of sacrifice as an act of worship, and the willingness to give up what is dearest, to God has thus the Divine sanction. This last incident also served to teach mankind that the

^a Gen. 4 : 3-5 ; ^b Gen. 8 : 20 ; ^c Gen. 12 : 7.

^d Gen. 22 : 2 ; ^e Gen. 22 : 13.

offering of human sacrifice was to have no place in the religious worship of God ; but that clean animals were to be used as substitutes. Bringing offerings to God, laying that which was dearest upon the sacrificial altar in obedience to God, and the offering of clean animals in sacrifice antedate the giving of the law by Moses. After the giving of the law, offerings in connection with sacrifices formed an essential part of religious worship. The offerings were of different kinds.

The Burnt-Offering. This was the offering made by fire to God, of a clean animal. It signified the dedication of the entire life unto God ; and thereby the favor of God was secured, and atonement for sin in general was made.

With it were the meat and the drink offerings. These consisted of flour, oil, wine and salt. The flour symbolized that the support of life, the oil that the fullness of life, and the wine that the vigor of life is of the Lord. The salt symbolized purification, preservation, and endurance. The burnt-offering of a lamb with its meat and drink offerings was made every morning and evening.

for the children of Israel. Then God would meet with them and speak to His servant.

The Sin and Trespass Offerings. These offerings were propitiatory or expiatory. A confession of sin accompanied them. In connection with each there was the consciousness of sin and the felt need of an atonement. With one exception, viz., the extreme poverty of the worshipper, the life of an innocent victim was substituted for the guilty. The sin offering was an atonement for sin in general, not including presumptuous sins, for which the law provided no atonement ; and the trespass-offering was an atonement for particular or specific acts of sin. In the trespass offering, in addition to the ram for the offering, the offender made restitution in full for the wrong he had done and added the fifth part thereto.

The Redemption or Peace-Offerings. These were threefold : for a thanksgiving, for a vow, and for a free-will offering. A sacrificial meal was connected with the peace-offering. These offerings signified communion with God. The peace-offerings included both bloody and bloodless offerings.

The Wave and Heave Offerings. These consisted principally of the first-fruits and the tithes. They also formed an adjunct of the peace-offerings, viz., the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder which the Lord gave to Aaron and his sons.

How numerous were the offerings which the people were required to offer unto the Lord :—burnt, sin, and trespass offerings, with their meat and drink offerings with which there were confession of sin, restitution, and devotion to God ; redemption or peace-offerings with their wave and heave-offerings in which there was communion with God ; and thanksgiving, payment of vows, and freewill-offerings. In addition to all these offerings there were gifts unto the Lord, as in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. In their solemn feasts—the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, the great day of Atonement, the feast of Tabernacles, etc.,—the people were required to offer unto the Lord, ^f besides their vows, freewill-offerings, burnt-offerings, meat and drink-offerings, and peace-offerings.

All their offerings, gifts, and tithes must be offered unto the Lord, and appropriated accord-

^f Numb. 29 : 39.

ing to His revealed will, whether burned in whole or in part upon the altar, or used by the offerer in a solemn feast, or apportioned for the maintenance of the Levites and priests who served in holy things.

We should remember the self-sacrifice that was involved in the giving of tithes, offerings, and gifts under the Mosaic economy; the obedience to God's expressed commands that was required; the knowledge that all tithes, offerings and gifts were offered unto the Lord; the essential elements of religious worship connected with them; and God's promise to meet with Israel at their morning and evening sacrifice, to forgive their sins when they confessed them made atonement and restitution, and to bless them abundantly when they obeyed Him.

Since Jesus Christ has offered up Himself in sacrifice upon the cross and made atonement for sin through His shed blood, all offerings that were expiatory or substitutionary—all sacrifices that were bloody under the Mosaic dispensation—are no longer necessary. Christ has fulfilled the law. ^g He died, the just for the unjust, to redeem us unto God. ^h " He bear our sins in

^g I Peter 3 : 18 ; ^h I Peter 2 : 24.

His own body upon the tree." "Now there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." The sinner is called upon to confess his sins and ⁱreceive that all atoning Sacrifice God hath provided—the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. But since God has given us His unspeakable Gift, Jesus Christ, a Saviour, ^jto save us from our sins, ^kto bring us into peace and fellowship with Himself, ^lto deliver us from this present evil world, and ^mto make us heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, shall not the love of Christ constrain us to live self-sacrificing lives for His sake? In the matter of our giving for the extension of His Kingdom at home and abroad, should we not give Him the tithe of all our increase for the support of those who serve Him in holy things; and should we not also bring to Him our free-will offerings, our thank-offerings and our gifts? Will not this be honoring to our God? Can the Church of God to-day, in the light of all the revelation God has given, do less than this and fulfill the words of wisdom: ⁿ"Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase"? What a priceless heritage the Church of God

ⁱ John 1 : 12 ; ^j Matt. 1 : 21 ; ^k Rom. 5 : 1.

^l Gal. 1 : 4 ; ^m Rom. 8 : 17 ; ⁿ Prov. 3 : 9.

has received from the Church in the Wilderness and in Canaan,—teaching her to give unto the Lord tithes, freewill-offerings, thank-offerings, gifts, and the first and best—if she will but receive it and incorporate it into her life and work !

The pious Jew an off'ring brought
Unto the Temple court ;
And freely offered it to God,
With an obedient heart.

On Sabbaths and on solemn feasts,
His offering he brings
To worship God, the living God,
And psalm of David sings.

Shall Christians in a Christian land,
For whom the Saviour bled,
Withhold their tithes and offerings
From Christ, their living Head !

Millions the Christian nations waste
In strong drink, pride and show ;
Did they but give to God his due
Blessings to them would flow.

Great is the harvest, large the need
In heathen lands, at home ;
The gospel must be preached to all
Wherever man doth roam.

Let Christian nations now arise,
And honor Christ, their King ;
Tithes, thank and freewill offerings,
And gifts unto Him bring.

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATION FOR BUILDING THE TABERNACLE.

Exodus 35 : 4-9; Exodus 36 : 6, 7.

THE building of the tabernacle in the Wilderness was a work for God. Hence we find that God gave definite commands regarding both the preparation for that work and the doing of it. Neither the preparation for nor the building of the tabernacle was left to human wisdom. All was under Divine guidance. All was to be executed according to the Divine commands. The *fact* of building under Divine guidance is beautifully illustrated in connection with the tabernacle. In the account given how often we find it recorded that the work was done, "as the Lord commanded Moses." In "one chapter alone this expression or its equivalent occurs ten times, and the chapter thus ends : "And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it ; as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it : and Moses blessed them."

^a Ex. 39.

Preparation for the work was made under Divine instruction. If we are to build for God, His guidance is just as necessary in the preparative stage as in the actual work of construction. O that the Church of God so believed this as to act upon it! The substitution of worldly wisdom has stripped the Church of much of her spiritual power. ^b Conformity to this world is the Delilah that hath shorn her locks. Regarding the preparative work, Moses said to the children of Israel: ^c this is the thing which the Lord commanded: "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, the Lord's offering, gold, and silver, and brass," etc. Moses showed his faithfulness both to God and to the people in making known to them the Divine command. Let pastors show like faithfulness to-day and there will be less Church debt.

"*Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord.*" They were not to go to the heathen or to those who knew not the Lord to secure means for building the tabernacle. The offering was to come from the Covenant people of God—the congregation of the children of Israel. How

^b Rom. 12 : 2 ; ^c Ex. 35 : 5.

direct and explicit the command: "Take ye from among you an offering." Should not this teach the Church of God in the present where to look for the necessary funds for Church building? Look not to the world or the wordling. Look to the congregation, to the baptized membership of the Church, to those who are the Covenant people of the Lord. The command was from the Lord and the offering was to be made unto Him.

Who were to offer unto the Lord? Whosoever is of a willing heart was commanded to bring an offering. ^a Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. How many, even in the Church, seem to think that under the Mosaic economy all giving was legal or ceremonial. Where under the Christian economy do you find the condition of acceptable giving to God more clearly stated than in this connection? Take the Lord's offering for the tabernacle from every willing-hearted giver. While the offering is to be used in building the tabernacle, it is to be offered unto the Lord. It must be an offering from the heart, yea, from the willing heart. In prepara-

^a 1 Sam. 16 : 7.

tion for Church building, shall not the Church of God in this age profit by the teaching of this Scripture when faithfully declared by pastor to people? Another passage in ^e Exodus shows under what class the willing heart-offering of the people for the building of the tabernacle came. It was an heave-offering unto the Lord. The tithe for the maintenance of the Levites and priests, and the willing heart-offering for the building of the tabernacle were both heave-offerings unto the Lord.

When the Roman Catholic Church has looked upon the tithe as a tax to be levied by the Church upon the people ; and the Protestant Churches have regarded God's tithe command as a legal, ceremonial law that passed away with Mosaism, both have departed from the Scriptural view. The tithe which is the Lord's, and which is holy, is to be offered an heave-offering unto Him ; and the spirit of the heave-offering is herein clearly revealed : ^f " Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My heave-offering." Jesus Christ says of His self-sacrificing act in laying down His life for the sheep : ^g " No man taketh it (My life) from me," etc.

^e Ex. 25 : 2 ; ^f Ex. 25 : 2 ; ^g John 10 : 18.

Christ's willing-hearted giving of His life was in obedience to His Father's command. If the Church would follow Christ her willing-hearted giving must be in obedience to God's command. Here are great practical lessons the Church of God in this age needs to learn from the Church in the Wilderness both in the matter of supporting the gospel ministry and in building Churches for the worship of God. "Let him bring it, the Lord's offering." This offering was to be given with a willing heart unto the Lord. How much the Church of God needs that teaching! The willing-hearted was commanded to bring his gift for the building of the tabernacle unto the Lord. His bringing it to the place where God met with His people was a religious act. His offering it unto the Lord was an act of worship. To bring the gift is a part of the Divine command, as well as to be willing-hearted in giving it. Yea, the bringing of it should be an expression of the willingness of heart that prompts the gift.

How did Israel regard God's command? ^hSo fully did the congregation of the children of Israel obey the command of the Lord given them

^h Ex. 35 : 21-29.

by Moses that they brought more than was sufficient for the work. Moses was under the necessity of restraining their gifts. ⁱ“And they spake unto Moses, saying, the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make.” ^j“So the people were restrained from bringing.” There is much said and written about the liberality of the Church of God in our age; but, methinks, we have not advanced so far in the grace of Christian liberality that leaders in the Church are under any necessity to restrain the people from giving. What a tremendous amount of “constraining the people to give” there is on the part of Christian leaders! Let all Christian leaders and Christian people read and reread Exodus thirty-five and thirty-six. Leaders who contemplate Church-building should study prayerfully these chapters and for the edification of their people faithfully make known the Lord’s command as did Moses.

In making preparation for Church-building, I believe God will honor his own plan as embodied in ^kHis command when that plan is faithfully presented by the leaders of the people,

ⁱ Ex. 36 : 5 ; ^j Ex. 36 : 6 ; ^k Ex. 35 : 5.

and when the people obey the Divine command. At the present time when a congregation requires to build a place for worship who ever hears or reads of one where in the plan of preparation for that work and in the execution of that plan the people bring so much more than is necessary that their liberality must be restrained? Man has sought out many inventions, but has he found anything in the way of preparation for Church-building that can at all be compared to, or equal in results, the command of God as illustrated by the children of Israel in preparation for the building of the tabernacle?

Pure and good is Thy command,
O Lord Most High ;
None is there like unto Thee
In earth and sky.

The Christ, Thy Son, obeyed Thee
Even to death :
Thy holy will still doing
With latest breath.

Moses, unto the people,
The Lord's word spake :
Willingly should they to Him
An off'ring make.

All the willing-hearted came
Bringing their gifts ;
Bezaleel, the tent to build,
His hand uplifts.

Blue, purple, scarlet, linen,
Brass, silver, gold,
With precious stones they offered,
And gifts untold.

Free offerings they daily brought
Until restrained :
What tongue can tell the blessings
Obedience gained ?

O Churches of Christ arise
Obedient too !
That God His richest blessings
May pour on you.

CHAPTER VI.
PREPARATION FOR BUILDING
SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

I Chron. 29.

EXTENSIVE preparation was made by King David towards building an house for the worship of God at Jerusalem. In his day, the Kingdom of Israel possessed much wealth. It was the king's desire to build an house for God's worship that would be honoring to God, and befitting the ability of the nation. ^aSo the king assembled the princes, captains, rulers, officers, and mighty men of the nation. And he said unto them : " Hear me my brethren and my people, as for me it was in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord ; and I had made ready for the building. But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My Name because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood." ^b" And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build My house and My courts." ^c" Then David gave to

^a I Chron. 28 : 1-3 ; ^b I Chron. 28 : 6 ; ^c I Chron. 28 : 11, 12.

Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, . . . and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit." ^d "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

^eAs Moses was Divinely guided in all things pertaining to the tabernacle and its vessels, so David made known to Solomon that he had received Divine guidance in the pattern of all things which he gave him in connection with the temple. It should always be remembered that both David and Moses were guided by God in making preparation for building the temple and the tabernacle. In all work the Church undertakes for God she needs and should seek Divine guidance. The Church of God has not always sought and followed the guidance of God in making preparation for building houses for His worship. The age in which we live affords many painful evidences in which the wisdom of this world has supplanted the wisdom of God—in which worldly methods and expedients have thrust aside and trampled upon the commandments and ordinances of God.

^d1 Chron. ; 28 : 19 ; ^e Ex. 25 : 40.

King David made very great preparation for building the temple. He gathered gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, all manner of precious stones, and marble in great abundance. With a willing, loving heart he gave out of his own treasure ^f three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver. Having placed his own kingly gift upon the altar of consecration to God, to be used in overlaying the house of God, he called upon all ^g the willing-hearted to offer unto the Lord for this work. And the princes, captains, and rulers offered willingly; ^h and they gave for the service of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand drams of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents of iron, and precious stones. ⁱ The people, too, with a perfect heart offered willingly to the Lord and rejoiced, and King David rejoiced with great joy. David, moreover, ^j blessed the Lord before all the congregation. He praised God that he and his people should be able to offer so willingly. He acknowledged that all things came from God, and in offering willingly

^f I Chron. 29 : 4 ; ^g I Chron. 29 : 5 ; ^h I Chron. 29 : 7, 8.

ⁱ I Chron. 29 : 9 ; ^j I Chron. 29 : 10-14.

to God they had but given Him of His own. ^kHe knew that God tried the heart. So he confessed that in the uprightness of his heart he had willingly offered all these things, and had seen with joy the people of God offer willingly unto Him. And King David said to all the congregation, "now bless the Lord your God." And all the congregation blessed the Lord. And on the morrow they offered sacrifices, and burnt-offerings in great abundance unto the Lord.

King David, in giving a solemn charge to Solomon, thus speaks of the preparation he had made for building the house of the Lord : ^l"Now, behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass, and iron without weight : for it is in abundance : timber also and stone have I prepared ; and thou mayest add thereto." ^m"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God ; arise, therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord."

Not only every minister of the gospel, but every professing Christian should be familiar

^kI Chron. 29 : 17 ; ^lI Chron. 22 : 14 ; ^mI Chron. 22 : 19.

with the twenty-ninth chapter of I Chronicles. On one occasion, having read this chapter and spoken to the people on the need of honoring the Lord with our substance in the building of Churches by willingly and lovingly giving to Him, an elder of the congregation remarked, that it was the best sermon he had heard preached in their Church. The unscriptural methods too often resorted to in raising money for Church-building is not a hopeful sign of the times. When the hearts of the people are right with God there should be enough willing-hearted offerings to God for Church-building purposes. Alas! alas! how long shall it be before the body of professing Christians in our Churches shall see and acknowledge that ⁿGod's ways are higher than man's ways even as the heavens are higher than the earth!

King David, with his princes, rulers and people unitedly, with willing hearts, consecrated themselves unto the Lord by their liberal giving to Him for the building of the temple. The Church of God needs more of that kind of consecration to God in her ministry, office-bearers, and people. How the example of King David

ⁿ Isaiah 55 : 9.

and his people puts to shame the Christianity of the twentieth century that resorts to the pic-nic, the basket social, the bean-supper, the bazaar, the fancy sale, the grab-bag, the lottery, the dance and such like man-devised, worldly expedients for the purpose of raising money for Church-building and other kinds of Church work !

King David was Divinely guided in the pattern of the temple, in the preparation he made, and in the choice of Solomon as the one who should build the temple. What minister of the gospel of Christ considers himself Divinely guided in making preparation to build a Church for the worship of God, when he and his people adopt such carnal, worldly expedients as I have referred to in raising money for that purpose? David's affection was set upon the Lord, and he offered royal, kingly gifts of gold and silver. Then his princes, rulers and people following his example offered willingly unto the Lord with a perfect heart. It is the preacher or teacher who has a larger measure of the grace of Christian liberality than any other individual in his congregation or class that will by precept

and example seek to draw out and develop that grace in all others who come under his influence. When Solomon's temple was completed it was the glory of Jerusalem and is said to have been the most magnificent building in the world. Both in connection with the building of the tabernacle and of the temple you never read that *there was even one shekel of debt on either of them at the time of their completion.* What an object lesson for modern Church builders!

The house of the Lord is holy,
There he will meet with the lowly.

*Come into His Presence
With praise and thanksgiving :
All ye willing-hearted
Bring Him an offering.*

Freely the Lord has given you all ;
Humbly before his footstool fall.

Him honor with your choicest store ;
Blessings rich He will give you more.

With willing gifts, an house Him build,
The outflow of an heart infilled.

CHAPTER VII.

GIVING TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE.

II Kings 12 : 4-15 ; II Chron. 24 : 4-14.

JEHORAM, the son of Jehoshaphat, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, King of Israel. Athaliah walked in the ways of her mother, Jezebel. After the death of her son, Ahaziah, she destroyed all the seed royal except Joash. He alone of the late king's sons escaped because Jehosheba, his aunt, stole him from among his brothers and hid him with his nurse. Athaliah then seized the throne and reigned six years. During her reign Baal worship was greatly extended throughout the kingdom of Judah. The sons of Athaliah break up the house of God, and bestowed all the dedicated things upon Baalim. When Joash had reached the age of seven, ^aJehoiada, the priest, gathered together to Jerusalem the rulers and captains and made a covenant with them and took an oath of them and showed them Joash. So the wicked Athaliah was slain, and Joash was proclaimed king.

When, at length, Joash had reached man-

^a II Kings 11 : 4.

hood's estate, he resolved to repair the house of the Lord. ^b The money of the dedicated things brought into the house of the Lord by the people, i. e. the half shekel of the sanctuary which every man who was numbered from twenty years and upward was commanded to bring as an offering unto the Lord, was at the king's command to be used in the work of re-repairing the temple. Also the ^c estimation money of those who had made singular vows, together with all freewill offerings—all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord—was to be used for the work. The money of the dedicated things, and the money of the estimation of vows was holy unto the Lord. This with the freewill or heart offerings of the people was at the king's command, to be used in repairing the Lord's house. We should remember that the different sources whence the money came for the repair of the temple were not man-devised but were all according to the Divine commands. It was the Lord's house, and the money to be used in repairing it was holy unto the Lord. But the twenty-third year of the king's reign came,

^b Exodus 30 : 13 ; ^c Leviticus 27 : 2.

and still the priests had failed to gather the money as they had been instructed and repair the temple. ^d Then the king called Jehoiada, the priest, and the other priests, and said, "why repair ye not the breaches of the house?"

^e At the king's command they made a chest and Jehoiada, the priest, took it and bored a hole in the lid, and ^f set it beside the altar, at the gate of the house of the Lord, and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money brought into the temple. ^g Proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the Wilderness. This half shekel for each one numbered, from twenty years and upward, was called the atonement money, ^h and was appointed under Moses for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. It would appear that in addition to this they brought in freewill offerings, for it is written that, ⁱ "all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end." "And they gathered money in abundance." No meagre, stinted, half-hearted offering was

^d II Kings 12 : 7 ; ^e II Chron. 24 : 8 ; ^f II Kings 12 : 7.

^g II Chron. 24 : 9 ; ^h Exodus 30 : 16 ; ⁱ II Chron. 24 : 10.

brought by the people. The great liberality of the people is to be seen in that they had more than enough to repair the house of the Lord. ^j "And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof they made vessels for the house of the Lord."

Under Jehoiada, the faithful priest, with the help of Joash, the king, God was honored in the repairing of the temple at Jerusalem, and in the re-establishment of the worship of Jehovah in His house. Church repairing is a part of our Christian work as well as Church building. We should seek always to honor God in repairing His house as well as in building an house for His worship.

But if we would honor God we must do His will and not our own; we must follow His counsel and not the ways of the world. The Church of God should remember what the man of God said to Eli; when he had allowed his sons to dishonor God in the service of the tabernacle: ^k "Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour: and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Wicked hands have spoiled the temple,
Breaches in her walls have made ;
Baal worship has been fostered,
God dishonored, disobeyed.

But the wicked are o'erthrown,
And the righteous rule in peace ;
Baal worshippers are scattered,
Those who honor God increased.

Joash minded was the temple
To repair, and worship God ;
To Jehoiada the high priest
Gave the work and numb'ring rod.

Long the temple unrepaired was,
Then the high priest set the chest
By the altar in the priests' court,
And the people gave their best.

Princes brought their willing offerings ;
Men atonement money paid ;
God's own house was set in order,
And the sacred vessels made.

In repairing as in building
Churches for our Saviour-King,

Willing hearts, the Scripture teacheth,
Should their choicest offerings bring.

When we honor God in giving,—
And obedient to His will,
Yield our hearts to His commandments ;
He will bless us, bless us still.



CHAPTER VIII.

GIVING TO BUILD THE SECOND TEMPLE.

Haggai 1 and 2 : 1-9.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE was frequently pillaged by invading kings. When ungodly rulers sat upon the throne of David, the temple was profaned, breaches were made in its walls, idolatry triumphed, and, at times, even its gates were shut. After continuing for nearly four and a quarter centuries, ^a this temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the kingdom of Judah carried into captivity. ^b In the year 536 B. C., King Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to their own land. A remnant of those who had been carried into captivity returned under Zerubbabel as governor, and Joshua, as high priest. Cyrus encouraged them to rebuild their temple. ^c In the second year after their return, they laid the foundation of the Second or Zerubbabel's temple. Then, ^dthrough the opposition of enemies from without and the selfishness, indifference, and lukewarmness of

^a II Chron. 36 : 19, 20 ; ^b Ezra 1 ; ^c Ezra 3 : 8-11 ; ^d Ezra 4 : 1-5.

the people from within, the work was stayed and the temple remained unbuilt.

^e It was not until the second year of Darius Hystaspes (520 B. C.) that the work of rebuilding was resumed. ^f The Second Temple was then completed in about four years (516 B. C.), or about nineteen years after the foundation had been laid. During the years the people did nothing towards rebuilding the temple, they said to themselves: ^g "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." While they allowed the Lord's house to lie waste, ^h they were putting up ceiled houses for themselves. But did they under these conditions, have great prosperity? Certainly not. Neglecting the Lord's house and His worship, and building at the same time fine houses for themselves they could not expect real prosperity. ⁱ They sowed much and brought in little. They earned wages to put it into a bag with holes. ^j The heaven over them was stayed from dew, and the earth from her fruit. Why had increasing poverty come upon the people? They had been living in forgetfulness of God's claims upon them. ^k "There is that withholdeth more

^e Haggai 1 : 1-8 ; ^f Ezra 6 : 15 ; ^g Haggai 1 : 2 ; ^h Haggai 1 : 4.

ⁱ Haggai 1 : 6 ; ^j Haggai 1 : 10 ; ^k Pro. 11 : 24.

than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." So was it in their case. They had allowed God's house to lie waste, while they devoted their thought, time, strength, and substance towards the advancement of their own selfish interests. Nations, churches, and individuals might learn a profitable lesson in this connection from Israel's failure.

"Through Haggai, the prophet, the Lord of hosts said unto the people: ^l "Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified." How did the rulers and people regard God's message sent them through His prophet? ^m "They obeyed the voice of the Lord, and the words of Haggai, the prophet. ⁿ The Lord assured them of His Presence with them, and stirred up the spirit of rulers and people so that they came and did work in the house of the Lord. So the temple was at length completed, and dedicated with great joy.

Though inferior in some respects to Solomon's temple, nevertheless it was about one-third larger in almost every dimension. ^o The

^l Haggai 1 : 7, 8 ; ^m Haggai 1 : 12.

ⁿ Haggai 1 : 13, 14 ; ^o Haggai 2 : 9.

Lord, moreover, through His prophet, assured the people that the glory of this latter house should be greater than the former, and He would give peace thereat.

^p In the days of Solomon, the nation had been wealthy ; but the remnant of the nation that returned from Babylonish captivity was comparatively poor. Yet, even, their poverty did not excuse them in God's sight for their neglect in building Him an house, and worshipping Him. Their very neglect to honor God, build His house, and worship him acceptably but increased their poverty. By bitter experience they learned that robbing God was the worst kind of self-robbery. At length, God through His prophet, awakened them to a consciousness of their neglected duty, and commanded them to build Him an house. Even though too poor to give large gifts of gold and silver, they were not too poor to give the labor of their hands. The ^q Lord asked them to give what He knew they could give—the work of their hands. So they went to the mountain, and brought wood to build the temple. ^r “And they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.”

Thus, the Lord makes it possible for the poorest as well as the richest to give in the building of His house. When the poor with a willing heart give their work it will be as acceptable to Him as when the rich with a willing heart give their wealth. Both rich and poor receive from God and are dependent upon His bounties. Therefore, both should acknowledge their dependence, and their stewardship by giving to God with a willing heart. Solomon's temple was built with willing heart-offerings of wealth. Zerubbabel's temple was built with willing heart-offerings of work. The willing heart-offering, given in obedience to God's command, whether in the form of wealth or of work will be acceptable to Him, and blessed by Him. *We never read of any debt being incurred in building the second temple any more than in building the first.* In the light of Scripture we see that even poverty is no justifiable reason for incurring Church debt. How can a congregation be honoring God by building up Church debt? Is not God's instruction definite enough for His Church, as well as for the individual? ⁸ "Owe no man anything."

⁸ Romans 13 : 8.

Preparation for tabernacle and temple building, and for temple repairing is clearly taught us in the Scriptures that we may know that preparation is necessary also in Church-building. Another very necessary truth taught in the same connection is that building or repairing should be kept within the limits of the preparation made. God does not instruct his people to go into debt in building an house for His worship, or in repairing the house of worship. But He does give definite instruction to His Church and people to teach them to honor Him by willingly giving from the heart of their substance, and of the work of their hands in building Him an house for worship. In this, as well as in all other things that pertain to the service of God, we honor Him by obeying Him. Both in work for God and in the worship of God we must clearly distinguish between the varied and oft conflicting opinions of men, and the revealed will of God. Jesus Christ did His Father's will perfectly in all things even up to the death of the cross. Thereby He abode perfectly in His Father's love. By His perfect example as well as ^t by His word He teaches us to abide in His

^t John 15 : 10.

love by our obedience to Him. We are to glorify God by loving Him and doing what He commands. Knowing His revealed will, let us ever seek to do it with a trustful, loving obedient heart. Then may we claim the promised blessing. "He will withhold no good from those who walk uprightly."

" Psalm 84 : 11.



CHAPTER IX.

THE GIVING THAT HONORS GOD.

Prov. 3 : 9, 10 ; Mal. 3 : 10.

THE giving of the first-born, of the first-fruits, of the tithes, and of the offerings unto God by Israel formed an important part of worship. In the light of the Old Testament Scriptures we have seen that the giving which honors God is of the nature of acceptable worship. That giving, too, must be in harmony with the Divine commands as made known in His Word, and in obedience to His revealed will. In the matter of giving as in the matter of offering sacrifice, God was to be obeyed. ^aYea obedience was better than sacrifice. All disobedience to God is dishonoring to Him, for disobedience is sin. The obedience of faith manifested itself by giving both what God required, and as He required it. Is not that how the obedience of faith should manifest itself in the Church of God in the present, or in any other period of the Christian dispensation? Let the revealed will of God ever take precedence

^a I Sam. 15 : 22.

to the opinions of men. When the first-born and first-fruits were brought and offered to the Lord, He was thereby acknowledged as the Possessor and Giver of all. It is because He has first given to us that it becomes possible for us to give to Him. As W. W. How has so truthfully written :—

“ We give Thee but Thine own
Whate'er the gift may be ;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive,
And gladly, as Thou blessest us
To Thee our first-fruits give.”

When King David and his people had given so largely of their substance for the building of the temple, God was honored and the king acknowledged Him as the Giver of all, ^b saying : “All things come of Thee, and of thine own have we given Thee.”

Thus the gospel of giving unto the Lord is both taught and exemplified in the Old Testament Scriptures. If God were always honored

^b I Chr. 29 : 14.

by pastor and congregation in making preparation to build a Church for His worship, as He was honored by King David and the congregation of the children of Israel in the preparation they made for building the temple, what a blessing it would be to the Church of God, and what a deliverance it would so often be from the commercialism of Church merchandise, and the evil of Church debt !

When the Jew honored God with his substance and first-fruits, with his tithes and offerings he became the recipient of the Divine blessings. He was blessed temporally and spiritually—full barns and wine presses, and fulness of blessing outpoured from above. Let us never forget that both temporal and spiritual blessings come from God. The Church of God may still claim the fulfilment of these ^c Divine promises when she complies with the Divine commands. God waits for His people to prove Him in this matter, and when they do manifest the obedience of faith towards Him they shall certainly find Him true and faithful. The silver, the gold, the cattle upon a thousand hills, the earth which we inhabit all belong to God in our

^c Prov. 3 : 10 ; Mal. 3 : 10.

day, as they did in the days of Israel. Therefore, the Church should recognize that the first-fruits and the tithes are holy to God ; and when she honors Him by giving Him what He claims as holy she will be blessed in her giving.

What made Achan's ^d sin so heinous in the sight of God? The city of Jericho and that which was therein, save Rahab and all that was with her in her house, was devoted to the Lord. ^e "But every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord." The goodly Babylonish mantle, the 200 shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight which Achan appropriated to his own use were among "the things devoted to God," and therefore most holy. He coveted and took what belonged to God. His stealing was stealing not from his fellow-man but from God. When Israel in the days of Malachi withheld the tithes and the offerings they were commanded to bring to the temple and offer to God, why was their sin so grievous as to place the nation under God's curse? The prophet told them. The nation had robbed God in tithes and offerings. The tithes and offerings belonged to God. He claimed them as His. They were to be

^d Joshua 7 : 1 ; ^e Levit. 27 : 28.

offered to Him. They were holy. Hence when the nation appropriated to its own use what belonged to the Lord and was holy unto Him, the curse of God rested upon the people because they robbed God.

Restitution must be made to God if the curse would be removed and His blessing out-poured. *f* "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Is the Church of God keeping back from God part of her substance that belongs to Him and is holy? Then, if she would claim the Divine blessing, let her make restitution. Yea, is the individual keeping back from God the tithe of his increase which belongs to God and is holy, then let him make restitution that he may claim the Divine blessing. When we honor the Lord with our substance and the first-fruits of all our increase, when we bring our tithes and offerings to the house of God and offer them to Him with a willing, cheerful, loving heart, we may claim

f Mal. 3 : 10.

and shall certainly receive the fulfilment of
∅ these Divine promises. Robbing God of what
belongs to Him has opened the door for the
commercial spirit to enter the Church. The
commercial spirit is to be expelled from the
Church by giving God what belongs to Him—
what he claims as holy.

Honor the Lord with thy substance,
He gave it first to thee ;
He claims the first-fruits as holy,
The tithes, too, holy be.

Bring all the tithes to His storehouse,
An offering to Him make ;
A blessing pour out upon you
Will He, for His Name's sake.

∅ Prov. 3 : 10 ; Mal. 3 : 10.

CHAPTER X.

GIVING THAT ENRICHES THE GIVER.

Prov. 11 : 24, 25 ; Psalms 112 : 9.

IN the spring time the farmer may scatter his seed upon the fields, or he may withhold his hand and hoard up his seed in the granary. Either action will produce corresponding results. When he scatters his seed upon the cultivated fields it germinates, grows, and yields a harvest. In the kingdom of nature, the increase of his seed is dependent upon this scattering of the seed in the spring time upon his fields together with God's blessing upon his labors. But let him withhold his hand in the spring time, and leave his seed untouched in the granary, and although God gives the seasonable rains, the nightly dews, the light and heat of the sun, yet the farmer's unsown fields yield no harvest of grain in the autumn, but rather noxious weeds. His seed has not multiplied in the granary, and his land has been impoverished by the crop of weeds. The farmer withheld what he should

have scattered and has thereby been impoverished.

In the kingdom of nature, the farmer believes and understands this principle so fully that he shows his wisdom by acting upon it—scattering his seed in the spring time that he may reap according to his sowing in the autumn. Alas! alas! in the kingdom of grace, how many neither believe in, nor understand this same principle of scattering and increasing, or withholding and impoverishment. After the foundation of the second temple had been laid, the people withheld from God their gifts required for building the temple. But did withholding from God more than was meet make the people prosperous? Assuredly not. They became poorer and poorer. The Lord saw how forgetful of Him and of His house the people were, and how unthankful for past mercies. So ^aHe called for a drought upon the land, etc. They withheld from God more than was meet and were impoverished even in material things as well as in spiritual.

Afterwards when Haggai rebuked leaders and people for their sins and told them what

^a Hag. 1 : 11.

God would have them do, the Lord stirred up the spirit of leaders and people and they built the temple and were greatly ^b blessed and prospered in material things as well as in spiritual. Surely it is both a mark of unbelief in God and of folly to withhold from God the proportion of either our time or our substance which He claims as holy !

Are there not teachers who say, "there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular ;" who try to cover up this erroneous teaching by asserting that everything is equally sacred or secular ; and that man's welfare is to be promoted by secular means? But part of a truth is often far more deceptive than an untruth or a falsehood. Along with the truth that all our time is God-given is to be placed the truth of God's disposal of our time which He has given us ; ^c "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." While all our time is God-given, God's arrangement of it is that one day—the Sabbath—be kept holy, and six days be given to work. Thus God has distinguished between the Sabbath day as an holy day, and the six days for

^b Hag. 2 : 19 ; ^c Exodus 20 : 8, 9.

labor and the doing of all our work. Along with the truth that all man's substance is God-given, for He is the rightful Possessor of all and gives man power to get wealth, is to be placed the truth—^d the tithe is the Lord's—it is holy unto the Lord; ^ethe first-born is the Lord's, sanctify it; ^f the first of the first-fruits thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord. While the Lord is the Possessor of man and beast, the earth, and all the wealth therein and thereupon, He claims the first-born, the first-fruits, and the tithes as holy.

The secularism to which I have referred—so prevalent in this present age, and which too often influences the masses, may be seen in embryo even in Moses' day. Then, too, it manifested itself among those set ^g apart for the service of the tabernacle of the Lord. ^h Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On with two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly,—famous in the congregation—gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron and charged them with taking too much upon them “seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.” And Moses spake unto Korah

^d Lev. 27 : 30 ; ^e Exodus 13 : 1, 2 ; ^f Exodus 23 : 19.

^g Num. 16 : 9 ; ^h Num. 16 : 1-3.

and unto all his company, ⁱ saying, "even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who are holy." The rebellion of Korah and his company was short lived, God signally manifesting His righteous displeasure by their overthrow. After the death of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, ^j when they offered strange fire before the Lord, and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, the Lord reminded Aaron, the high priest, that he must put "a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean." Where God puts a difference is it not great sin and folly on the part of any man to say and to teach others that there is no difference? He that scattereth in giving to the Lord for the extension of His Kingdom, or to the poor for His sake, will increase in the grace of Christian liberality, in self-sacrifice, in love to God and man, in usefulness in Christian service, and in favor with God and man. ^k "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will He pay him again."

As we scatter the good seed upon the ground it grows and with God's blessing yields an

ⁱ Num. 16 : 5 ; ^j Lev. 10 : 1, 2, 10 ; ^k Prov. 19 : 17.

abundant harvest. So, also, as we scatter seeds of truth, of kindness, of love, of hope, of comfort, of encouragement, of sympathy, of obedience, of faith, of helpfulness, of Christian liberality, will they, too, by the grace of God, find lodgment in other hearts and lives and yield an abundant harvest.

Give thou to self and poorer grow,
But give to God and man below ;
Then shall thy gifts be multiplied
Through Christ, who gave His life and died.

Live thou for self and life is lost,
But live for God whate'er the cost ;
And then shall life a sowing be,
For reaping through eternity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WISE MEN OFFER THEIR GIFTS UNTO JESUS.

Matt. 2 : 11.

THE wise men came from the East. Leaving their own country, they journeyed westward on a very important mission. They came seeking the new-born King of the Jews. At length, they reached the Jewish capital, Jerusalem. Did they expect to find this city all aglow with joy and gladness because of the new-born King? Alas! alas! ^a“He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.” ^bLearning where the King of the Jews was to be born, the wise men follow the guidance of the Star and come to Bethlehem. Having arrived there, they entered the house where the young child, Jesus, was with Mary His mother. ^cWhen the wise men saw the child Jesus, they fell down and worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they offered unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In the highest sense of the term,

^aJohn 1 : 11; ^bMicah 5 : 2; ^cMatt. 2 : 11.

these men were wise, as is manifested from their attitude towards Jesus. They sought for Jesus, found Him, saw Him, worshipped Him, opened their treasures and offered Him their best gifts. What higher wisdom can man display, even in this present time, than did those wise men from the East? To seek Jesus and find Him, to see and worship him, to open our treasures and offer Him our best gifts is certainly the true wisdom. Those in the Church of God to-day who are doing these very things are the wise men and women. When the Bridegroom comes shall they not be accounted the wise virgins? But, alas! alas! we fear there are too many surrounded by Christian influence and in the midst of Christian privileges who have not yet seen Jesus although they may even profess to be His followers. Their worship of Him and their gifts to Him differ altogether in spirit from that of the wise men from the East. If their gifts are any criterion of their worship then it is poor indeed. No gold, frankincense, and myrrh are in their gifts. They put a copper coin—the cheapest coin in the realm—on the collection plate. Their silver and their gold

they use upon themselves. They love self more than Christ, or their fellow-man, or the perishing heathen. They have a name to live, but their offerings to Christ for the extension of His Kingdom at home and abroad speak more of spiritual blindness and deadness than of spiritual vision and life.

How many there are also, and these, too, among professing Christians, who come up to the house of the Lord to worship and bring no offering in their hand. That is left at home. The Church collector is expected to go around to their homes every quarter, or, it may be several times in the quarter, until he finds them at home and gets their contribution. Are there not professing Christians in our Churches who might profitably sit at the feet of the wise men from the East and learn these practical lessons? Where Jesus Christ is worshipped, open your treasure and offer Him the best gifts you have—dollars when you have dollars, dimes if you are so poor that you have not dollars, yea even the copper coin if the copper coin is the very best you have and can get. Let your offering be a part of your worship. Let it be the very

best you have and can get. Let it be offered to Jesus Christ freely, cheerfully, lovingly and you will be blessed in your gifts. ^d“ The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”

^dII Cor. 9 : 7.



CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST'S WORDS ON GIVING.

Luke 6 : 38 ; Acts 20 : 35.

JESUS CHRIST revealed His attitude towards the Law and the Prophets, saying, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. . . . Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." Christ did not destroy the law of God. He fulfilled it. His Father's law was His law. His Father's will was His will. His Father's word was His word. The ceremonial law with its types and shadows of good things to come found its fulfilment in Christ, the great Antitype. When Christ had offered up Himself the one great Atoning Sacrifice—the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world—there was no further need that the

^a Matt. 5 : 17, 19.

blood of clean animals should be shed at Jewish altars to make atonement. The moral laws of God were fulfilled by Christ who rendered a perfect obedience to them in all things and wrought out a perfect ^brighteousness as the Spiritual Head of redeemed humanity. ^cChrist condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk after the spirit. God's moral laws are not made void ^dthrough faith in Jesus Christ, as a Saviour, but rather established. The moral laws of God, the Moral Governor of the Universe, are abiding. Hence there was no special need that Christ should simply repeat the moral commands that were already familiar to the minds of the Jews. But He refers to many of them for the purpose of cutting away on the one hand, the *traditions* of Scribe and Pharisee that had gathered around them; and that He might, on the other hand, unfold more fully their deep spiritual meaning. This is well illustrated in His ^e"Sermon on the Mount." While Christ does not reiterate the Sabbath command as found in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, yet he teaches that ^fit is lawful to do

^b Romans 5 : 19 ; ^c Romans 8 : 3, 4 ; ^d Romans 3 : 31.

^e Matt. 5 : 21-48 ; ^f Matt. 12 : 12.

well on the Sabbath day ; ^g that the Sabbath was made for man ; and that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. No more does Christ reiterate the ^htithe command. It was well known to the Jewish people. Yet in His teaching He refers to it as ⁱa duty that ought not to be left undone ; and also as ^ja duty which a man who sought to live up to all the requirements of God's laws was careful to discharge. As the law had already been given, we find as we would expect, that Christ does not simply repeat the law but gives principle, precept, example that mankind may understand the spirit of God's laws, and how the individual ought to embody the law of his God in his daily life. Christ reveals this great principle, that through giving we receive more abundantly. "Give and it shall be given unto you," etc. This is the opposite of the world conception of prosperity. The world says, "If you wish to be more prosperous get all you can, hold it, and add thereto." But Christ teaches us that in His Kingdom giving is a necessary condition of true prosperity. Give much time to prayer, and communion with God, and meditation upon His Word, and you

^g Mark 2 : 27, 28 ; ^h Lev. 27 : 30-33.

ⁱ Matt. 23 : 23 ; Luke 11 : 42 ; ^j Luke 18 : 12.

will grow stronger in the spiritual life. Give more love to God and man and you will become more lovely and loveable. Give more fully your powers of body, mind, will, heart, and conscience to God and His work and you will grow more and more into the stature of a full-grown man in Christ Jesus. Give more largely of your substance for the advancement of the Kingdom of God and you will grow in the grace of Christian liberality. The Sea of Galilee gives out the waters of the Jordan which it has received, and its water abounds in animal life. Vegetation, too, abounds along its shores, and beside the Jordan's downward course. The Dead Sea receives the waters of the Jordan, but has no visible outlet,—does not give out these waters to refresh other regions,—and lo! death reigns in its waters, and barrenness and desolation along its shores. Even so, the man who lives the self-centred life, getting, getting, getting but never giving out to others is dead while he liveth. But the man who is ever giving out his own life to ennoble, enrich, purify, beautify, and spiritually uplift other lives is through his giving receiving the more abundant life.

Another worldly maxim is that "it is better to get than to give." Get all you can. Live to get if you want to be somebody, possess wealth, and make your mark in the world. But the principle Christ lays down for the guidance of His people in the Spiritual Kingdom is the very opposite of this world-maxim. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The world teaches it is better to get than to give. Christ teaches it is more blessed to give than to get. The mother gives her child milk from her own breast for his nourishment. Through the food with which she supplies her child, he lives and grows. But how much more blessed the mother is in giving than even the child is in receiving. In maintaining the life of another her mother love is manifested and developed through self-sacrifice. Even so in a much fuller measure is this principle realized in the kingdom of grace. Give willingly and lovingly of your means for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom and you have the joy of knowing that your gifts are honoring to Christ, and helpful in promoting the highest interests of your fellow-men,

even their salvation. Give yourself with all your powers to the work of extending Christ's Kingdom and you have the joy of knowing that you are a co-worker with God. In giving your substance, your time, your powers of body, of mind, of heart, and of will for the good of others you are not only delivered from selfishness but your own character is ennobled and beautified through self-sacrifice and love to God and to man.

In receiving we become indebted to others, but in giving we become the benefactors of others. We are all God's debtors, and yet, if we freely give unto others as we have freely received from God we become the benefactors of our fellow-men, and grow in favor with God and man. Let us remember that the more blessed life comes through giving. ^k“ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?” The love that is in deed and in truth, manifests itself

* I John 3 : 16, 17.

in self-sacrifice for the good of others. The highest form of self-sacrifice is giving one's self. Jesus Christ gave Himself for our redemption.



CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST'S WORDS TO SIMON.

Luke 7 : 40-47.

SIMON, the Pharisee, had invited Jesus to eat with him. Jesus accepted the invitation, entered Simon's house, and sat down to meat. But Simon neglected to confer upon his guest the common rites of hospitality and respect. He did not give Jesus water to wash His feet. Neither did he salute Him with the kiss of affection, nor anoint His head with oil for His refreshment. But as Jesus sat at meat there came into Simon's house a sinful woman. She stood at the feet of Jesus and wept. She gave her tears to wash His feet, and the hair of her head to wipe them. In again and again kissing His feet, she did Him homage. She, also, gave her alabaster box of ointment to anoint His feet. When Simon saw what was done he soliloquized thus : " This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth

him ; for she is a sinner." By the parable of the two debtors who had nothing to pay their creditors Jesus sets before Simon, the sinful woman and the self-righteous Pharisee, and asks for Simon's judgment in the matter. Simon rightly judged that the one to whom most had been forgiven would love most. Then Christ makes the personal application of the parable to Simon that he might see in the light of his giving how little love he had for Jesus ; but how great was the woman's love as exhibited by her gifts. The woman had been forgiven much, and she loved her Saviour much, and manifested her great love in the gifts she bestowed upon Him. Her tears, kisses, and ointment given to Jesus were the outward expression of her love to Him who had forgiven her many sins. But Simon had shown his want of love, yea of due respect, towards Jesus by neglecting to give Him water to wash His feet, the kiss of respect, and the anointing oil for His refreshment.

The consciousness that our sins have been many and grievous in God's sight, and that they have all been forgiven should constrain us to love the Saviour much who so loved us as to

give His life for our redemption. As we love Christ much we too will give Him much. Our love will manifest itself in self-sacrifice for His sake. It did so in the case of the true disciples of Christ. Paul testified : ^a“ What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,” etc. Peter testified : ^b“ We have left all and have followed Thee.” Jesus assured him that there is no man who has given up all for His sake and the gospel’s but will be a hundred fold the gainer in this life, and the possessor of eternal life in the world to come. And so it is that man can make no better investment of himself and all that he has than by a full and unreserved surrender of himself and all his powers and possessions to Jesus Christ ; and serve Him with his very best. The words of Jesus to Simon reveal the cause of much love to Christ, and much giving because of much love. It is the consciousness of many and grievous sins forgiven through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

^a Phil. 3 : 7-11 ; ^b Mark 10 : 28-30.

Jesus, Thou didst love me much,
When Thou gav'st Thy life for me ;
May my love to Thee be such,
As to give my life to Thee.

Thine is an eternal love,
Touching sinful hearts below :
Reaching down from heaven above :
Making friend who once was foe.

We who by Thy blood redeemed,
And from sin have been set free,—
On whose lives Thy light has beamed,—
Would surrender all to Thee.

Take us Lord, and make us Thine,—
Thine to labor or to wait :
Thine,—Thy light in us to shine,—
Till we reach the pearly gate.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIST'S COMMENDATION OF MARY OF BETHANY.

Matt, 26 : 10-13 Mark 14 : 6-9; John 12 : 7-8.

SIX days before the Passover, Jesus and His disciples came to Bethany. There a supper was prepared for Him in the house of Simon the leper. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are prominent on this occasion. At the supper with Jesus and His disciples was Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. Busy, active Martha served at the supper. But Mary had a higher service to perform for her Lord and Master. She took her alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, and, coming behind the couch upon which Jesus reclined, break the box and poured the precious ointment upon His head ; she also poured the precious ointment on His feet and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Jesus said, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." Mary's deed

^aMark 14 : 8.

of self-sacrificing love could not be hid. ^b“ The house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” This delicious perfume doubtless attracted the attention of the disciples to what Mary had done. ^c Some of the disciples were indignant and spoke of Mary’s gift bestowed upon Jesus as a waste of the ointment. ^d“ They murmured against her.” John, the beloved disciple, tells us who the chief murmurer was. ^e It was Judas Iscariot. He also tells why Judas so murmured against Mary. ^f It was not that he cared for the poor, but because “ he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

Jesus rebuked this murmuring spirit which possessed Judas Iscariot, and which also appears to have affected in some measure other of the disciples. He said, ^g“ Let her alone, why trouble ye her.” What a stern rebuke from the loving Master ! The murmuring spirit is always hateful. It shows distrust in God. It is an evil, sinful spirit. It manifested itself again and again in the Children of Israel during their wilderness journey. Often they murmured against God and His servant, Moses. In his

^b John 12 : 8 ; ^c Matt. 26 : 8 ; **Mark 14 : 4** ; ^d **Mark 14 : 5**.

^e John 12 : 4 ; ^f John 12 : 6 ; ^g **Mark 14 : 6**.

first epistle to the Church of God at Corinth, Paul^h warns the Corinthians against the sin of murmuring and reminds them of the murmuring Israelites who were destroyed of the destroyer. How often this Judas spirit of murmuring manifests itself in the Church of God ! Jesus rebuked it when it appeared among His disciples. In the present, the murmuring spirit needs to be rebuked. It is more dangerous and deadly within the Church than the deadly epidemics are which from time to time sweep over the land. These bring death to the body ; but the sin of murmuring against God and His servants brings death to the soul.

Jesus highly commended Mary. He spoke of what she had done for Him as ⁱa good or beautiful work. Therein she had done what she could, and it would be her memorial throughout the whole world wheresoever this gospel should be preached. Peoples have heard of what Mary did for Jesus who never heard of Queen Victoria. Mary's deed has been and still is known, as world wide as the preaching of this gospel. The poet has truly said :

“ We live in deeds not years.”

^h I Corinth. 10 : 10 ; ⁱ Mark 14 : 6, 8, 9.

In her deed of self-sacrificing love, Mary still lives in the memories of the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. What are all marble, granite, and bronze memorials when compared with Mary's ?

Mary's gift to Jesus was very costly even when looked upon in its commercial value. It was thus Judas Iscariot regarded it. Had it been worth only a penny or two, even Judas might have said nothing about it. But so costly a gift bestowed upon Jesus aroused his indignation.

Jesus beheld it as a gift of love. How much self-sacrifice Mary made to provide so costly a gift ! What heart love it represented to Jesus ! The ointment was so costly that she kept none of it for herself, but gave it all to Jesus. All of it was none too much to express the greatness of the love of her who gave ; and it was far too little to express the dignity and worthiness of Him upon whom it was bestowed. Judas Iscariot, for about one-third of its intrinsic value, betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of His enemies.

What a striking contrast there was between

Mary, the giver, and Judas Iscariot, the grumbler. How different they were in their thoughts, and feelings, and actions towards Jesus! How different they were in spirit! How different in character! Mary, with a heart o'erflowing with love to Jesus, gives him all her precious ointment, and thereby manifests her love. Judas Iscariot, with a heart full of greed, selfishness, and covetousness not only murmurs against Mary's beautiful work for Jesus, but a little later betrays the Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Beware of the Judas spirit. It has doubtless dragged many a victim to perdition since Judas Iscariot, ^j"the son of perdition," ^kbetrayed Jesus, ^lhanged himself, and ^mwent to his own place. How hateful, evil, wicked is the spirit manifested by Judas Iscariot towards Jesus! How lovely, good, and true is the spirit manifested by Mary towards her Lord and Master! Jesus rebuked Judas, the murmurer; and commended Mary for her gift of love.

My reader, what think you of Jesus Christ? What is your heart's attitude toward Him? What spirit do you manifest towards Him and His? What does Jesus think of you? In the

^j John 17 : 12 ; ^k Luke 22 : 48 ; ^l Matt. 27 : 5 ; ^m Acts 1 : 25.

light of what you are saying and doing, do you merit His rebuke, like the murmuring disciple ; or His commendation, like the loving, self-sacrificing Mary of Bethany ?

The love of money ! O what ruin it hath wrought
In man, created in God's image at the first,
But fall'n through disobedience ! O, so fallen !
Yet, in Christ, the second Adam, redeemed,
restored

To life, and light, and peace, and joy, and hope
of heav'n.

Money ! a gift of God, like all material gifts
Good in itself. But let man's heart on it be set,
And then to him a root of evils it becomes—
Greed, avarice, theft, lying, fraud, oppression,
wrong,

Dishonesty, and murder too go in its train—
A num'rous mighty host, to lead mankind astray,
And sink man to perdition : like Iscariot,
Simon's son, who for thirty pieces of silver
Did our most blessed Lord betray to wicked
men,

Who led Him forth to Annas and to Caiaphas,
That, by the Council, He might be condemned
to death.

How diff'rent 'twas with Mary in the use of
means,—
God-given too—which she possessed, and used
aright
In buying spikenard :—ointment precious, cost-
ly too,
Not to be used upon herself, but giv'n to Christ
For His anointing to the burying ; at the feast
In Beth'ny, six days before his crucifixion :
And Jesus her commended highly, when He said,
“ She has done what she could,” “ a good work
on Me wrought
Hath she ” ; My body to the burying thereby
She hath anointed : her memorial shall be
Throughout the world, where'er this gospel
preached is,
This work which she has done in honor of her
Lord.
Most beautiful her work of love ! great her
reward !
Self-sacrificing was her deed, which some did
blame ;
But Jesus judging righteously, approved her act
With commendation high ; and to her mur-
murers

He spake in words of stern rebuke, and silenced
them.

Discern how sinful then the murmuring spirit is
That, at the good work done by others for their
Lord,

Grumbles, and leads astray the weak and waver-
ing.

O man, this evil spirit shun, it leads to death.

Discern how lovely and good the giving spirit

Of Mary is, how like the Spirit of her Lord,—

He gave His life the ransom price on our behalf—

O man, seek this good spirit, yield thyself
thereto,

'Twill lead thee in the blessed life on earth to
heav'n.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST'S APPROVAL OF ZACCHEUS' GIFT.

Luke 19: 8-10.

ON His last journey to Jerusalem, previous to His sufferings and death upon the cross, Jesus passed through Jericho. This city was famous for its palm trees. In the days of Christ's public ministry, many of the priestly order lived in Jericho. Here, too, in this wealthy city were publicans. Zaccheus was a chief publican at Jericho. He was a rich man. Desirous of seeing Jesus as He passed through Jericho, but being little of stature, he ran on before the crowd and climbed up into a sycamore tree. His position gave him a commanding view of the multitude, and of Jesus. But when Jesus came to the place where Zaccheus was, doubtless much to his surprise, looking up He addressed the publican by name, called him to come down, and invited Himself to his house. Zaccheus was delighted at this recognition.

Hastily he came down from the sycamore tree, joyfully received Jesus, and took Him to his house. Among the priests and Levites at Jericho, there were loud murmurings against Jesus, because He had gone to lodge with a publican. But the heart of Zaccheus was touched that day when he saw the Christ. From that time, Zaccheus became a changed man. Through Jesus Christ, the Saviour, salvation had come to him. Zaccheus gave unmistakeable evidence of a change of heart. He not only answered the call of Jesus, and received Him joyfully, but he said, "Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor," etc. In a rich man like Zaccheus, the voluntary gift of half of his goods to the poor, and the vow to make fourfold restitution is noteworthy. He gives five times what the tithe command required: even five tenths. He vows to make four-fold restitution, which ^athe law only required in the case of theft. ^b"This day is salvation come to this house," said Jesus. The readiness of Zaccheus to make four-fold restitution where he had wrongfully exacted anything from any man was certainly the kind of repentance that needed

^a Exodus 22 : 1 ; ^b Luke 19 : 9.

not to be repented of. What a high conception of his duty to God and to his fellow-men must have filled his soul! His recognition of the needs of the poor, and his readiness and willingness to give half of his substance for the supply of his needy brethren showed great liberality. This is all the more apparent because he was a rich man. The half of his riches meant a large gift. It generally appears to be a far greater effort on the part of the rich to give even a tenth of their income to the Lord's work, than it does to those who are only in moderate circumstances. To give yearly hundreds or thousands of dollars to extend Christ's kingdom, and to help the poor and needy, even though they have abundance, is no easy duty for the rich. Does it not require the grace of God in a rich man's heart to enable him to do this? In our day there are millionaires who give their thousands towards public libraries, and institutions of learning, and these are commendable purposes; but have these millionaires yet given the Lord a tithe of their goods or possessions for the extension of His Kingdom, and for the needs of the poor? The millionaire ought to feel the obliga-

tion of giving a tithe of his substance and a seventh of his time to God just as well as the poor man. ^c“God is no respecter of persons,” etc.

^c Acts 10 : 34, 35.



CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST'S ESTIMATE OF THE WIDOW'S GIFT.

Luke 21 : 1-4; Mark 12 : 41-44.

IN the days of Christ's public ministry, the treasury in His Father's house—the temple—was not beneath His notice. ^a“Jesus sat over against the treasury,” etc. To this place the people, coming up to the temple to worship, brought their offerings. *How* the people gave and *what* they gave arrested the attention of Jesus. The people cast in money. Many that were rich cast in much. A certain poor widow cast in two mites, which make a farthing. It would thus appear that all classes were casting their gifts into the treasury—the rich, the poor, and those in moderate circumstances. All classes still should bring their offerings to the house of the Lord, and offer their gifts to Him. The Lord of glory, who in the days of His humiliation overlooked the treasury in His

^a Mark 12 : 41.

Father's house, still sees who are casting their gifts into His treasury.

Jesus saw *how* they gave. He saw both who were giving and how much they were giving. The people cast in money, or a piece of brass money. The many who were rich cast in much out of their abundance. A poor widow cast in two mites or a farthing. Jesus carefully observed how much these different classes of givers were giving. Do we remember that He still observes how much the different givers now bring to his House and offer to Him? He sees whether it is gold or silver, paper or copper. Let each giver remember, *the Lord Jesus sees how much I give Him whatever my circumstances may be.* Jesus discerned who were giving, how much each gave, the spirit in which it was given, and the measure of self-sacrifice involved in the gift. Jesus Christ still discerns these things in us. In the light of what he had discerned, Jesus Christ that day gave the disciples the benefit of His righteous judgment. He told them the poor widow had cast in more than they all; for all these had of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her want

or penury did cast in all the living she had.

They had given *a part* out of their abundance; she had given *all she had*, even all her living. In giving the two mites she gave the ten-tenths or her all. She gave a larger proportion of her substance than they all. She made greater self-sacrifice than they all. They gave of *their abundance*, she gave *all her living*. And taking God's standard—^bthe greater the gift the greater the love—in her heart was greater love to God than in their hearts. Her gift was greater than all the others. She gave the largest proportion of her substance, made the greatest self-sacrifice, and manifested the greatest love toward God.

Perhaps few passages of Scripture have been more frequently misinterpreted in practical Christianity than the poor widow's *two mites*. In the first place the widow did not give her mite, she gave her TWO mites. In giving them she gave out of her poverty, and she gave all she had, even all her living. Those who give of their abundance even when they abound in giving, do not give the widow's mite much less her two mites. It is only those who

^b John 3 : 16.

out of their poverty are giving *some portion of their living* that are at all approaching the widow's mite in the matter of giving to the Lord. Our giving must go beyond our abundance and include the half of our living before we give the widow's mite. Our giving must go beyond the half of our living and include all our living before we give the widow's two mites. How rare are the cases where even the widow's mite is given to the Lord, and how extremely rare the cases where the widow's two mites are given to the Lord. Let no one, referring to this Scripture, say, "I'll give my mite to the Lord's work" who is not prepared to give the half of his living to the Lord. Remember, the poor widow's mite represented one half of her living; and her two mites, all her living. My brother, my sister, place one half of your living upon God's altar in self-sacrificing love before you speak of giving the widow's mite; and when you have put all your living into the Lord's treasury in His house, as did the poor widow, then you will have no desire to tell others what you have done any more than had she.

Jacob's gift of the tenth of his substance to the Lord, Zaccheus' gift of the half of his goods to the poor after all seem very small when compared with the poor widow's gift to the Lord of two mites or ten-tenths, even all her living.

The Master's estimate of gifts is very important. His judgment is righteous. He sees the heart, reads the motive, knows the amount of the gift, and discerns the love and self-sacrifice involved. If we would form a correct judgment of our own giving to Him, then we must not compare our giving with that of our fellow-men, but we should rather inquire how much love to Christ and self-sacrifice for His sake do our gifts represent.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRIST'S COMMAND REGARDING MERCHANDISE IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

John 2 : 16.

ON two occasions—once near the beginning of His public ministry, and again near its close—our Lord and Master cleansed the temple. On the first occasion, He made a scourge of small cords and drove out the sellers with their merchandise and gave the command, ^a“ Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise.” On the second occasion, He ^bcast out both sellers and buyers and charged them with making the house of prayer a den of thieves.

It is worthy of notice that the sheep, oxen, and doves sold in the temple court were clean animals and therefore such as were offered by the Jews in sacrifice at the temple. ^cWhen the nation was numbered, each male who was twenty years of age and upwards was required by Law to pay a half-shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, into the treasury in the temple.

^a John 2 : 16 ; ^b Matt. 21 : 12, 13 ; ^c Exodus 30 : 13-15.

In the days when Christ was upon earth, foreign as well as Hebrew coins were in circulation in Palestine. These foreign coins included Roman and Greek and probably Persian. As this half-shekel must be paid in Hebrew coin, there arose the need of the money-changers at Jerusalem. This merchandise, in the sale of clean animals for sacrifice, and in the changing of money for the temple service, needful as it was at Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish worship, was nevertheless altogether out of place in the temple courts. It looks as if the Jewish authorities at the temple sanctioned what was going on, yea, perhaps, received the profits of the sales. If any kind of merchandise would be allowable by Christ in the temple, it might seem that the kind required for use in temple worship would be least objectionable. But even this was all driven out by the Christ. For that age, and all succeeding ages, He has caused to be recorded His attitude towards merchandise in the place of worship, and given His command, "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Seeing what Christ's attitude was towards merchandise in His Father's house even in those things which

pertained to temple worship, what must His attitude be in the present towards merchandise in the Church in all those things which form no part of Church worship? Think for a moment of all the buying and selling—the merchandise—at Church bazaars, suppers, fancy sales, entertainments, etc., etc., and the robbery of lottery that is carried on in the name of the Church! But ^dChrist is the Head of the Church. Whatever, therefore, is done in the name of the Church is done in the name of Christ, her Head, and should have His approval. How can Church merchandise meet with the approval of Christ when He not only drove out with a scourge the merchandise and those engaged therein from His Father's house but commanded, "make not My Father's house an house of merchandise." Is not disobedience to Christ's command sin? How sinful and abhorrent in His sight must all Church merchandise be! Is it not sad that both Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, in their work, have so grievously trampled under foot Christ's plain command, ^e"make not My Father's house an house of merchandise."

^d Eph. 4 : 15 ; ^e John 2 : 16.

The spiritual life of the Church of God has been seriously affected by this commercial spirit which alas, alas, has been fostered within her by too many of her office-bearers and members. The commercial spirit is of the world, worldly. It is selfish, grasping, and when opposed autocratic and defiant. It is antagonistic to the spirit of Christ. The time is coming, if it has not already come, when the Church must cease to foster this commercial spirit, yea, must drive it out if needs be with the scourge. As long as the Church sows the seed of mammon within herself how can she expect to overcome mammon in the world? As long as the Church, in catering to the commercial spirit, tramples upon Christ's plain command, "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," is it not vain for her to attempt to restrain in the world the very spirit she is fostering within herself? Watchmen upon the walls of Zion, can you not discern the signs of the times? When the "angel of the Churches" arise in the strength of the Lord, and, in obedience to Christ's command and example, drive the Church merchandise out of the Church, and by precept and

example teach the grace of Christian liberality as taught and exemplified in the Scriptures, then I believe the Church will be in a position to grapple successfully with the commercial spirit, and restrain its power in the social, political and national life. Christ's words need to be remembered by His followers, ^f“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Brethren in the gospel ministry, shall we unite in the name of Christ; and, in the spirit of Christ, drive the mammon spirit out of the Church that she may be prepared to receive a Pentecostal blessing? It is not by fostering the spirit of mammon, under the cloak of religion, that the Church shall be able to purify Christendom and evangelize the heathen nations; but she can only hope to accomplish her God-given work through the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit, and by unwavering faith in Christ and implicit obedience to Him.

The pastor sat in his study
And searched his Bible o'er;
He needed a text and sermon,
For he had few in store.

Year by year he had labored on,
Working with hand and brains,
A beautiful Church erected
Had he, but debt remains.

The Ladies' Aid by sales and feasts,
By suppers and bazaars,
By entertainments good and cheap,
Excursions on the cars,

By moonlight sails upon the stream,
By lottery and dance,
By grab-bag, sociable, and farce,
Had helped to build the Manse.

And from Church merchandise, which they
So long had carried through
The Church debt too had half removed,—
And sought devices new.

The Christian men and elders all,
From city and from farm,
Deacons and pastor, small and great
Inquired "what's the harm?"

'Tis for the Church. The cause is good :
Money we need,—must get,
The end will justify the means
In paying off Church debt."

The pastor read in his Bible
How Israel of old,
The tabernacle built for God
With silver, brass, and gold,

And precious stones, and wood, and skins,
Which they an offering brought
With willing hearts unto the Lord,
And did as they were taught.

God gave command : and Moses spake,
God's message he proclaimed ;
The people heard and did God's will,—
They gave until restrained.

The pastor laid down his Bible,
And on his knees he prayed
Till a new light shone within him :—
He saw how he had strayed.

Fine Church he had built, and Manse too,
With all kinds of device,
The people's will he had followed ;
At his door great sin lies.

God had set him there as watchman,
To warn, to guide, to teach ;
But his God he had dishonored,
His Word he had failed to preach.

Again he opened his Bible,
And read how Jesus made
The scourge of small cords, and drove out
The sellers and their trade.

“ Make not My Father's house an house
Of merchandise,” He said,
Thus cleanse the temple did the Christ—
The Church's living Head.

“ What temple cleansing have I done,”
The contrite pastor cries,
“ Who never lifted up my voice
Against Church merchandise ?

Christ I've called Lord, and Master dear,
But His direct command
I've trampled on, nor taught his flock
Satan's power to withstand."

A text was found, a sermon preached
With spirit and with power ;
A wondrous change came o'er his flock,
From that eventful hour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GIVING IN THE EARLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

Acts 4 : 32-37 ; 5 : 1-11.

IN our day when so much is being said and written about "Church Union," it might perhaps be profitable to read the closing verses of the fourth Chapter of the Acts, and perceive some of the great elements of vital unity. The multitude of believers had oneness of heart, oneness of soul, oneness of purse, and great grace was upon them all. The Apostles, moreover, had great power as witness-bearers for Christ. We are also told that there was ^asteadfastness in the Apostles' teaching, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. This steadfastness in the truth, in Christian fellowship, in the observance of the Lord's Supper, and in prayer was conducive to the Christian unity then manifested in the Church, and expressive of the deep spiritual life which filled the Church. United in heart and soul, they

^a Acts 2 : 42.

went forth under the Apostolic leadership as a spirit-filled people. Self was crucified, and Christ was all in all. Like conditions to-day are required for a closer unity among Christian peoples.

^b "Neither said any that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." They not only professed, "We are the Lord's, and all we possess belongs to Him," but they embodied that profession in their daily Christian life. ^c "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet." They surpassed Zaccheus, and emulated the poor widow in their Christian liberality by giving all they possessed to the Lord. Their Christianity had to do with their possessions. They could not be Christ's and serve mammon. If a man's Christianity does not touch his possessions, in this money-loving age, he has good reason to examine its genuineness. If Christianity does not constrain the rich man to open his purse to the Lord, he can reasonably doubt if he knows the power of Christianity in his own life. Apostolic Christianity was both self-crucifying, and self-sacrificing.

^b Acts 4 : 32 ; ^c Acts 4 : 34, 35.

The Apostles had ^dgreat power as witness-bearers for Christ, and ^ethe Lord added to the Church daily such as were being saved. Apostolic power in her preachers and teachers is a great need of the Christian Church. She needs it for the awakening of sinners, for the ingathering of those who are being saved, and for the deepening of spiritual life among believers.

^f*Great grace, too, was upon them all.* How much the Church of God needs grace upon her people! ^g“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men,” etc. How fully that grace was manifested in the Apostolic Church! O for a manifestation in fuller measure of the grace of God that brings salvation in our day! With other Christian graces the grace of Christian liberality abounded in these converts. Their salvation included deliverance from both sin and selfishness. See them as they bring the prices of the things sold, and lay them at the Apostles’ feet. What giving that was! Not merely a tithe which was holy unto the Lord, but ten-tithes,—even all their worldly possessions and goods. Their Christianity found expression in their Christian liberality.

^d Acts 4 : 33 ; ^e Acts 2 : 47 ; ^f Acts 4 : 33 ; ^g Titus 2 : 11-14.

The Apostolic age brings before us great things in the Christian Church:—great power in preachers, great multitudes gathered into the Church, great unity among believers, great steadfastness in the truth, great spread of the gospel, great grace upon believers, great Christian liberality, and great punishment for apostasy.

It is noticeable how quickly apostasy was detected and exposed. The dross must be separated from the gold. Purity, purity, purity in the Church was a necessary condition to spiritual power. Has the Church been losing sight of that? ^h“Ananias and Sapphira his wife sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, . . . and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.” They professed to be doing what Barnabas and many others had done; but their hypocrisy was quickly detected and exposed, and they were signally punished. Hypocrisy and lying in the early Apostolic Church in connection with money! How much have you thought about it? What would Peter, the Apostle, say to those now, who, professing to give their mite to the Lord’s work, give but a pittance of their abund-

^h Acts 5 : 1, 2.

ance and none of their living? Though God in mercy may spare hypocrites and liars to see their sins and repent of their iniquities, He has nevertheless, in the awful doom of Ananias and Sapphira revealed His abhorrence of hypocrisy and lying. Is it not appalling how many the devil lures to hypocrisy and deceit just where Ananias and Sapphira so grievously sinned, through giving a part and professing to have given all! Professing Christians need to be on their guard against these deadly sins of hypocrisy and lying in connection with the Lord's treasury. What a "professing to give to the Lord" there is running through all this Church merchandise referred to in the previous chapter! With what plausible speech those who indulge in the Church bazaar, supper, fancy sale, entertainment, etc., seek to justify their conduct in the eyes of their fellowmen! Do they forget that obedience is better than sacrifice?

The association of great grace and daily additions to the Apostolic Church is, with spiritual power in preaching and teaching about Christ, with steadfastness in the truth, with prayerfulness, and with self-denial in giving to

the Lord. Where these things characterize the life and work of the Church of God still, there will be great grace.



CHAPTER XIX.

INDIVIDUAL, PROPORTIONATE STORING MAKES SYSTEMATIC GIVING POSSIBLE.

I Cor. 16: 2.

VITAL religion concerns the individual and affects the life of the Church. While religion is a personal matter its effects reach far beyond our own personality. Individually we have to do with God and God has to do with us. Our acceptance or rejection of Christ and His gospel is a personal matter. So is our birth, our worship, our life, our death, our accountability to God. We may be lost in the crowd of humanity from the eye of man, but not from the all-seeing eye of God. Paul, in his first epistle to "the Church of God at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by call, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, reminded them and reminds us of "the collection."

^a 1 Cor. 1 : 21.

The previous ^b chapter contains his great argument on the resurrection. Without any apology, for he needed not to make any, this foremost teacher and preacher of the day passed from the sublime doctrine of the resurrection to the practical work of the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Sometimes preachers in the present seem to think they ought to make some apology to the people when they are about to speak on the "collection," or the grace of Christian liberality. Paul would teach us that no apology is really necessary. Christ's ambassador should preach as fearlessly, faithfully, and lovingly on the grace of liberality, as upon any other Christian grace. The word on giving should be preached as faithfully as the word on trusting, repenting, loving, obeying, serving, etc. It is but one gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Well is it for the minister who, looking back on his past ministry, can truthfully say with Paul: "I kept back nothing that was profitable."

Paul does not exempt any in the Church of God from giving. It is just as reasonable as well as Scriptural that none should be exempted

^b 1 Cor. 15 ; ^c Acts 20 : 20.

from giving a definite portion of their substance to the Lord for the advancement of His kingdom, as that none should be exempted from giving a definite portion of time to the Lord, at least one whole day in seven—the Christian Sabbath. ^d“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”; ^e“The tithe is the Lord’s . . . it is holy unto the Lord,” are both Old Testament commands; but being moral, not ceremonial, in their bearing upon mankind they are not confined to the Old but reach out into the New Testament, where the spirituality of both commands is more fully unfolded. This was needful, inasmuch as Christ hath revealed that ^f“God is a Spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” A fuller revelation of the Spirit of God’s moral commands in no wise nullifies His law but makes it all the more luminous and heart searching. Every individual needs time to attend to the highest interests of his moral and spiritual nature, and God has wisely assigned man a special time by his Sabbath command. So, too, every individual needs deliverance from the spirit of selfishness and help in the grace of

^d Ex. 20 : 8 ; ^e Levit. 27 : 30 ; ^f John 4 : 24.

liberality, or self-sacrifice, and God's tithe law faithfully reminds man that a definite portion of his substance is holy unto the Lord. The Sabbath law restrains worldliness ; the tithe law restrains selfishness. Both the Sabbath and the tithe laws teach us holiness unto the Lord. Our time is holy ; our substance is holy. Both teach us that God, who gives us all our time and all our substance, claims a definite portion of each as holy to Himself. Through heart obedience to the Sabbath command God in Christ will deliver us from the spirit of worldliness. Through heart obedience to the tithe command God in Christ will deliver us from the spirit of selfishness. A heart obedience to both these commands will make for truth, righteousness, and holiness not only in our religious, but also in our social, and in our national life. Those who honor God, He will honor. The way to honor God is to trust in Him, love Him, and obey Him. Peter when sent to preach to Cornelius, his family, and friends, perceived that God was no respecter of persons in the matter of their nationality. So we should perceive that God is no respecter of persons in the matter of their

worldly wealth or worldly poverty. Hence the righteousness of God's Sabbath and tithe laws in their bearing upon all ranks and conditions of men. Man's character,—his heart and life attitude towards God and man, is what counts in God's sight. ⁹“Man looketh on the outward appearance, the Lord looketh on the heart.” How clearly Paul shows he had the mind of Christ when writing about the “collection,” he says, “let every one of you,” or “each one of you,” It is an individual, personal matter ; just as the worship of God is an individual, personal matter ; just as Christian life or duty is individual, personal.

What is the duty enjoined upon each one ? “Let each one of you lay by him in store.” The duty enjoined is that of “laying by in store,” or “storing.” In our worldly business we do not need any teaching in the matter of “storing.” We all believe in it enough to do it, some to a greater and some to a lesser degree. The professional man lays by in store, knowledge, books, manifold things which he requires for daily use in his profession. The preacher has his library, texts and sermons ; the doctor his

drugs and surgical instruments ; the lawyer his briefs ; the professor his lectures ; the editor his clippings, paper, ink, type ; the merchant his goods ; the laborer his tools ; the farmer his farming implements, and in autumn his harvest ; the retired gentleman his bank account and stocks ; and so on throughout the range of human worldly activity. From a worldly view point, idle, wasteful, improvident describes the man who lays nothing by in store. The Scriptures speak ^h very plainly about the improvident man. But God must teach us foresight, or the need of being provident, in connection with His work—in extending His Kingdom, in helping the needy. “ Let each one of you lay by him in store.” Make provision for doing the Lord’s work. Since money is a means to be used towards this end, you need to make the necessary provision, to lay by in store. Does some one ask, may we not raise what we can and go in debt for the rest, and pay off the debt by Church bazaars, etc. ?

As far as my knowledge of the Scriptures goes I cannot find that God ever gave any such instruction to His Church either under the for-

^h 1 Tim. 5 : 8.

mer or under the present dispensation. If the Christian Church takes upon herself to do that which Christ, her Head, has given her no authority for doing is that obedience or disobedience to Him? God teaches us in His word, ⁱ“owe no man anything.” Christ said, ^j“make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.” Again it is written, “let every one of you lay by him in store.”

Admitting that it is Scriptural for each one to lay by him in store for the Lord’s work, the next question that naturally arises along this line of Christian duty is “how much”? Ah, “there’s the rub.” How much? How much? Upon this point it were vain to attempt to discuss human opinions. I suppose they are legion. If there is one place above another in the whole range of duty where the individual wants to do his own will, until his eyes are opened to see that God’s will is better than his, is it not here? Not merely the man who makes no profession of religion, but how large a proportion of professing Christians say in act if not in word, “my money is my own; I earned it, and therefore I have a right to do with it as I

ⁱ Rom. 13 : 8 ; ^j John 2 : 16.

please." Worldly wisdom, is it not! There is also a large number of professing Christians who profess, "All I have belongs to the Lord," yet say by their lives, "My money is mine to do with it as I please. Don't I know best how much I can spare for the support of the home Church and for missions?" Worldly wisdom again! "I" is always a very important person when it comes to dollars and cents. God (let it be said reverently) in man's opinion need not be consulted, the wisdom of "I" is amply sufficient for guidance here. But some have been, and more I believe are reverently inquiring what is the mind of God in this matter? What revelation of His will has He given for the guidance of His Church? We have the testimony of the Law and the Prophets, of Christ and His Apostles in other matters, have we not in this? If we have; what is it? The Scriptures give us all needed information. The trouble is the counsel of God has too often been forsaken for the counsel of man. God, in this matter, has too often been dethroned, and man deified by others, or self-deified. Anti-christ has antagonized the work of the Lord. The love of money

has become the root of many evils. The spirit of worldliness has asserted its mighty power. What does God in His Word say about the "How much?" His Law says, ^k"The tithe is the Lord's," etc. ^l"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it, the Lord's offering," etc. ^m"The first of the first-fruits of the ground thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God," etc. From God through wise kings and prophets have come these messages : ⁿ"Honour the Lord with thy substance." ^o"Bring an offering and come into His courts." ^p"Who then offereth willingly to fill his hand this day unto the Lord." ^q"Will a man rob God? . . . Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings . . . Bring ye the whole tithe," etc. Christ plainly teaches ^rthat when receiving and giving are contrasted, giving is the more blessed of the two. ^s"The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Having come to Christ and received His Spirit we should rise above legal requirements as did Zaccheus when he gave half of his

^k Lev. 27 : 30 ; ^l Exod. 35 : 5 ; ^m Exod. 23 : 9 ; ⁿ Pro. 3 : 9, 10.

^o Ps. 96 : 8 ; ^p I Chr. 29 : 5 ; ^q Mal. 3 : 8, 10 ; ^r Acts 20 : 35 ; ^s John 1 : 17.

goods to feed the poor ; as did Mary of Bethany when she gave all of her precious ointment to anoint the body of Jesus ; as did the poor widow when she cast all her living into the Lord's treasury ; as did Barnabas when he sold his possession and laid all the money at the Apostles' feet. The Scriptures answer the question, " How much ? " If a man had a lawful claim upon you for ten dollars and you gave him three dollars telling him that it was all you could spare and therefore all you could give him, what have you done ? Have you not robbed him of seven dollars ? If he took his case into a law-court and received justice, could he not recover the seven dollars ? God says the tithe is His ; it is holy. Suppose your tithe is ten dollars and you give God three dollars, telling Him that it is all you can spare and therefore all you will give Him, what have you done ? Robbed God of seven dollars, have you not ? Will a man rob God ? Rob Him in tithes and offerings. " How much " in the light of God's lawful claim ? If man withholds from God the tithe, what does God account him to be ? When man does rob God by withholding his tithe he is in danger of

also doing what Israel did—robbing God in his offerings. In the past God has been robbed of tithes and offerings. Is it not evident in the light of Scripture that God's lawful claim goes even beyond the tithe and includes the offerings? To withhold a tithe and offerings is robbing God. Is not that the plain teaching of the Scripture? "How much" then includes a tithe and offerings. The obedient Jew gave a tithe and offerings, yea, more, for among other gifts was a second tithe every third year. Shall the obedient Christian give less than the obedient Jew? Should he not give as much?

Let each one of you lay by him in store, but "How much"? "As God has prospered him." Interpreted in the light of the law and the prophets does it not mean at least a tithe and offerings? Interpreted in the fuller light of Christ's teaching and example, and the example of the saints, does it mean less than that, yea, rather does it not mean more? Christ gave Himself—His very life upon the Cross for us. He says, "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The more you give the more you shall be blessed. Mary of Beth-

^t Luke 6 : 38.

any gave all her precious ointment to Jesus, and He said of her, "She hath done what she could"; the poor widow gave all her living, and Jesus said of her, "This poor widow has cast in more than they all, . . . she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she hath." Certainly Christ's judgment in this as well as in all other matters was righteous.

The testimony of God's Word and Spirit does not leave man in ignorance either as to "how much" he ought to give or as to how much it will be best for him to give. We may know both our duty and our privilege, if we are willing to be taught of God. Law, principle and example are given for our guidance and edification.

Under the former dispensation God gave the tithe, which belonged to Him, unto those whom He had set apart to minister in holy things. Under the present dispensation is not the tithe required for those whom God has set apart to minister in holy things? Of course the Church has not been giving it. God has been robbed. But see the result. Think of the spiritual deadness and lukewarmness within the Church!

^u Mark 14 : 8 ; ^v Luke 21 : 3, 4.

Think of the millions upon millions that are without the gospel of Jesus Christ! Souls have been perishing in Christian lands! Heathen nations have been perishing for want of the Bread of Life!

Apart from the ceremonial offerings, there were offerings required to build the tabernacle, to build the temple, to repair the temple, etc. Offerings have been and still are required to build churches for the worship of God, to repair churches, etc. How has the Church been building and repairing places for worship? Giving some offerings for this purpose, but too often not giving enough. How often has the balance required to remove the indebtedness been secured along the line of "Church merchandise" in direct disobedience to ^wChrist's command! God has been robbed in offerings as well as in tithes. Christ has been disobeyed and dishonored. What wonder if the spiritual blessings have been withheld!

Individual, proportionate "storing" for God when done at the right time, makes systematic giving not only possible, but an acceptable worship, an offering well pleasing to God, and a

^w John 2 : 16.

source of abiding joy and blessedness to the giver.

What is the right time? "Upon the first of the week." God, our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer rightly claims the first:—^xour first love; ^ythe first day of the week as an holy Sabbath; ^zthe first-born as holy; ^athe first-fruits as holy. It is in harmony with His general claims upon us that He should ask us to remember His claim upon our substance as first claim also. It is right to lay by in store for our families and ourselves. But we may get right things in wrong order. The Divine order is for man *first* to lay by in store for God. Man is tempted, and too often yields to the temptation, of laying by in store *first* for himself, thus reversing the Divine order, and thereby fostering the spirit of selfishness instead of the spirit of self-sacrifice. Satan is very confident of working successfully man's ruin, as long as he can entice him to put self first and God last in life and duty.

God's plan for the maintenance of His Church upon earth is a great unity running through the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The

^x Matt. 22 : 27 ; ^y Exodus 20 : 7 ; ^z Exodus 13 : 2 ; ^a Exodus 22 ; 29.

trouble too often both with the Jewish and the Christian Church has been a turning aside from the Divine plan through unbelief in God and disobedience to Him. Sometimes, perhaps, the Divine plan in its unity and simplicity has not been recognized, and faithfully presented to the minds and hearts of the people. By faith we understand God's plan, and so by faith we obey God, taking His plan as ours. The obedience of faith is necessary. God's plan is simple ; it is for His own glory, and the highest good of His creatures ; but it involves self-sacrifice. It always means placing God and His revealed will first. Whenever self and the human will are placed first, we may know that we are *off* God's plan and *on* our own. If each one within the pale of the visible Church would lay by in store *first* for the Lord the tithe and offerings as he is prospered how honoring it would be to God ; how ennobling to the individual life, and the life of the Church ; how helpful for the extension of Christ's kingdom throughout the whole earth ; and how exemplary for those whom we seek to win for Christ !

CHAPTER XX.

ABOUND IN THE GRACE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY.

II Cor. 8 : 7.

THE Church of God at Corinth had many gifts and graces. The Corinthian saints ^aabounded in faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence and love to the Apostles. Although possessing more material wealth than the Macedonian Church they were far, far behind them in the grace of Christian liberality. Paul brings the example of the Macedonian Churches before the minds and hearts of the saints at Corinth to stir them up by way of remembrance to greater liberality. He also reminds them of the self-sacrificing spirit of Christ manifested in His estate of humiliation. ^b“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc. Deep poverty yet abundant liberality characterized the Macedonian Churches. Their gift of ministration to the poor saints at Jerusalem was a manifestation of their grace of liberality. How does

^a II Cor. 8 : 7 ; ^b II Cor. 8 : 9.

the Apostle account for so large a measure of this grace in Churches where deep poverty, trial and affliction abounded? Their first gift had not been money to fellow-men, but themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. Self-surrender to Christ is the secret of their abundant liberality towards Christ's needy ones. Self-surrender to Christ is followed by self-sacrifice for Christ's sake. First things first, is so difficult a matter for the mass of professing Christians to embody in their lives. Let Christ have His rightful place and sway in heart, mind, and life, and you have vital Christianity; but let self usurp the place of Christ in heart, mind, and life and you have idolatry with its accompanying evils. O that professing Christians would always give Christ the right of way! When the Macedonian Christians gave themselves to Christ—gave Him first place in mind, will, heart, conscience, life—their duty to the poor saints at Jerusalem who were even poorer than themselves, was clear as the noonday light. They were willing of themselves. They saw what Christ would have them do. With joyful hearts they did it. O it is marvellous how much a willing people can

do for Jesus! No less marvellous is it how little an unwilling people will do for Jesus! The Macedonian saints perceived that the gift of themselves to Jesus Christ included the gift of their substance. The Corinthian Church required to be taught this through precept and example—the example of the poor Macedonian Churches, yea the example of Jesus Christ. He gave himself. He was rich with the glory of the Godhead. He was willing to veil His Divine glory, and so humble Himself as to take upon Him the human nature. In the days of His public ministry, so poor did He become as to be dependent upon others. Women at times ministered unto Him. Out of the common purse carried by Judas Iscariot daily provision for Himself and His Apostles was often supplied. How often they had but little! When the 5,000 were to be fed in a desert place it was ^ea lad who had the five barley loaves and the two small fishes. When the 4,000 were to be fed ^dJesus said to His disciples, How many loaves have ye? And they said seven and a few little fishes. When the ^etribute money was to be paid, Peter, at the command of Christ,

^e John 6 : 9 ; ^d Matt. 15 : 34 ; ^e Matt. 17 : 24-27.

must need go to the sea, cast in a hook and take a piece of money from the first fish he caught for this purpose. To a ^fcertain scribe who expressed his willingness to follow Jesus, the Master said, "Foxes have holes," etc. Even in death ^gthe body of Jesus must be placed in the tomb of another. He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor. How poor He became, yea to what depth of humiliation He descended when He endured the cross with all its shame and woe, dying thereupon that he might deliver us who receive Him as our Saviour, and follow Him as our Lord, from spiritual and eternal death, and bring us into the light and liberty of the children of God. When we recall Christ's self-giving for our sakes, how mean a thing is even our best self-giving: the giving to Him of our time, our substance, our hearts, with all our powers,—yea, our very selves!

"Follow me," said Jesus, Do we remember that following Jesus involves a life of self-sacrifice! ^h"If any man," etc. The fruit of Christian liberality does not grow upon the tree of self-indulgence and selfishness. This fruit of the Spirit grows upon the tree of self-denial and

^f Matt. 8 : 19, 20 ; ^g Matt. 27 : 59, 60 ; ^h Luke 9 : 23.

self-giving for Christ's sake. Absence of the grace of Christian liberality shows absence of the Christ likeness, but abundance of this grace is a true reflection of the Christ likeness. ⁱ"For ye know," etc. What more impressive manifestation of love to Christ, His Church, and people can you give to the world than by abounding in the grace of Christian liberality? It is said of John Wesley that during the first year of his ministry he received \$150, lived on \$140, and gave \$10 to the Lord's work. The next year he received \$300, lived on the same amount as in the previous year, and gave \$160. Throughout his fifty years of service he is said to have contributed on the same generous scale, giving, it is estimated during these years, nearly \$150,000.

It is said of William Carey that when his income was \$500 he lived on half, and gave the other half to carry on the Lord's work; and when as Professor of Languages his salary was \$7,500, he spent no more on himself than before, and gave the remainder.

How needful that the gospel ministry exemplify that Christian grace in fuller measure,

ⁱII Cor. 8 : 9.

and then in demonstration of the Spirit, and in power preach to the people as did Paul through his epistle to the Church at Corinth ; " See that ye abound in this grace also."

All ye who have been saved by grace grow in grace that ye may serve the best of Masters with your very best.

Grace is of God. Saved by it, too,
Are we through faith, our Lord to serve.
Our Master, Jesus Christ the Lord,
Rich with the Godhead, poor became ;
That we through Him from poverty,
To riches in the heavenlies
In Christ, might rise eternally.
Ourselves to Him we first would give ;
Our substance, as a part thereof,
Our time, spent in His service, too,
Our powers, great or small, of heart,
Of mind, of will, of conscience, all
Devoted to Him be, who gave
Himself most willingly for us.
Thus shall we most abound in faith,
In love, in liberality,
In patience, prayer, and hopefulness,
In joy, and gentleness, and peace,
In likeness to our Blessed Lord.

CHAPTER XXI.

GIVING LIKENED TO SOWING.

II Cor. 9 : 6 ; Prov. 11 : 24.

IN the kingdom of nature, the first season of the year—the spring—is the great sowing time. There is a best time to sow. The farmer and the gardener know the need of diligence in the spring if there would be an abundant harvest in the autumn. Childhood and youth is the great sowing time, nevertheless it is not confined to this period of human life. However, as the spring is the best time for sowing in the kingdom of nature, childhood and youth is the best time for sowing in human life. At this period education in giving, both by example and precept, is very necessary. Because of past neglect, the Christian Church is far below the standard to which she ought to have attained in the grace of Christian liberality. It is no easy task in later years to uproot the wrong impressions and baneful influences that have affected childhood and youth. Evil habits formed in early life are not easily rectified in

men and women. How needful, then, that the Scriptures in this as well as in all other matters of faith and duty be diligently taught the young!

The seed needs prepared soil. What agriculturist would in the spring think of casting his seed into unprepared soil? The diligent farmer is careful to break up the fallow land, cultivate and fertilize it, that it may be in a condition to yield the best returns.

Much preparation of mind and heart is necessary before even the mass of professing Christians will at all measure up to the requirements of the teaching of Scripture in the matter of giving. ^aThe heart purpose, the willing mind, the cheerful loving spirit is so requisite and yet so rare. If the way so many professing Christians talk about giving to the Lord's work at home and abroad is the expression of their heart feelings then the Apostle's ^bexhortation to the Church at Corinth is still needful. The "grudging" and the "necessity" have not yet been fully removed from the life and work of the Church. Let a little more be asked for the Lord's work and where is the congregation without its grumblers? Of course, the quality of

^a II Cor. 9 : 7 ; ^b II Cor. 9 : 7.

wheat as a whole is not to be judged by the shrivelled up kernels. There are liberal givers in our congregations ; but I fear that the spirit of hearty, cheerful, loving giving to the Lord's work does not pervade the rank and file of the Christian army as it should. The strong appeals to congregations to meet the needs of the Church's work at home and abroad, the burden of debt, the *raising* of money by unscriptural methods, the slowness to furnish ample means for the possible extension of Mission work, give evidence of this. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," is just as true and applicable to the life now as it was when Christ first uttered it. Here as in all other departments of the life and work of the Church, if we expect to reap the best harvest we must take heed to sow the best seed. Hence we should not forget the principle that seed yields fruit after its own kind. In interpreting the parable of "The Sower," Jesus saith, "The sower soweth the word." The word of God supplies ample truth for instruction unto edification in the grace of liberality as well as in all other graces if those intrusted with the ministration of that word will but sow the good

seed in faith, in love, and in obedience beside all waters. ^d“What is the chaff to the wheat?” saith the Lord. When the wheat is faithfully and abundantly sown there will be no need of the chaff. When the word of God is faithfully made known by lip and life, then the chaff of man-devised methods with all its train of commercialism and merchandise will be quite unnecessary. It is vain to expect the masses to see more clearly than their leaders, or to rise above them. The leaders in the Church must get the right view point, i. e., the Scriptural, and make it real and vital to the people. The Apostolic Church seems to have had very clear discernment about giving. Great grace was upon them all, and this great grace included, as the Scriptures teach us, great Christian liberality. When the Church at Corinth was found lacking in this grace, Paul felt it to be of so great importance that he not only devoted ^etwo chapters out of thirteen in his second epistle to it, but also sent unto that Church three of the brethren : ^f Titus, and “with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout the Churches,” and “with them our brother whom we have often times

^d Jerem. 23 : 28 ; ^e II Cor. chs. 8, 9 ; ^f II Cor. 8 : 16-18, 22.

proved diligent in many things." Two chapters of an epistle, and three messengers of the Churches—men doubtless well fitted for that department of the Church's work entrusted to them—sent to the Church of God at Corinth to stir them up that they too might abound in the grace of Christian liberality! Has the Christian Church taken this department of the Church's work as seriously as Paul did, and put forth like strenuous efforts to stir up those congregations that are lacking in this grace that they too may abound in it?

In the kingdom of nature, the sower expects to reap in the autumn manifold more than he sows in the spring. His reaping is proportionate to his sowing. Sowing sparingly he can only hope to reap sparingly. But if he sows bountifully he may have good hope, that with God's blessing, he shall reap bountifully. Even so if man gives but sparingly of his substance for the work of the Lord what right has he to expect that the harvest will be abundant? If he desire the abundant harvest he must not neglect to do the abundant sowing, even though it involve much self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Great is the

encouragement given us in Scripture to do the abundant sowing. Greater blessings will come to the generous giver. Greater good will come to fellow-men. God will be more abundantly honored; and Christ when He comes to reckon with his servant "will bestow upon him greater honor. Have we been asking, "what shall the harvest be?" Should we not rather ask, "what, by the grace of God, has been the measure of our sowing for God and eternity?" Are we satisfied with sowing sparingly, or do we seek by the enabling grace of God to sow bountifully?

Lord of my life! to Thee I give
 What first Thou gavest me;
 Teach me each day on earth I live,
 To follow only Thee.

Thou cam'st to give Thy people life,—
 Th' abundant life—that they,
 Above the world's self-seeking strife,
 Might serve thee day by day.

Thy life Thou gavest unto death—
 The death on Calvary;
 Help me with life's fast fleeting breath,
 Thy face alone to see:—

And seeing, serve Thee as I ought ;
The best I have and am
Laid at Thy feet, who hast me bought
With Thine own blood, O Lamb !



CHAPTER XXII.

GIVING IN A RIGHT SPIRIT.

II Cor. 8 : 9, 12; 9 : 7.

IF the giver would receive the fullest blessing from God and the highest approbation from Christ he must take heed to his spirit. "The Lord looketh on the heart of man, and therefore a right attitude of heart towards God is necessary. When will the mass of professing Christians put whole heartedness into their giving to the Lord! How many a man looks at it from this view point: "The minister's stipend and other congregational expenses amount to so much; elder so and so gives \$25, deacon so and so gives \$15, my share will be \$9.35." He takes no thought about God or His claim upon his substance. He has no heart purpose to give unto the Lord as He prospers him. He regards it to be necessary to pay the minister and to keep the Church running. If he does not begrudge what he gives, perhaps he consoles himself that he is doing his part or more than his neighbor. I have heard men in comfortable circumstances,

^a I Samuel 16 : 7.

some too who possessed wealth, plead their poverty when asked to give more than they had been giving in the past. Contact with men—some of them influential and leading men in the Church—has left the impression upon my mind that far too much of the giving in support of gospel ordinances at home and abroad has in it the ^b“grudging,” the “necessity” that the Apostle warns us against. How can the heart be right towards God when the giver doles out his pittance feeling that he must do it to retain his respectability in the Church, and help keep the Church open; or if he begrudges what he gives thinking perhaps that he is doing more than his share. How many a man, too, looks at the matter of giving for the congregational work from this view point: “We have a good minister. He preaches well, and works hard in the congregation, therefore we must do the best we can to pay him. If more is needed I’ll give another dollar or two to help out.”

Now, the people are not all to blame, or it may be most to blame for thinking and speaking thus. Has it not been a part of their religious training? Did not their forefathers think and

^b II Cor. 9 : 7.

speak in much the same way? When the minister spoke about the matter from the pulpit did he as God's ambassador present God's claim upon His people? Did he point out the blessedness of abounding in the grace of Christian liberality? Did he show the danger of selfishness, worldliness, and the love of money to the souls of men? Did he teach the need of honoring God, and of giving expression to our faith and love to Him by doing His revealed will as it is recorded in the Scriptures? Has not the pulpit teaching and preaching been altogether too largely from the view point of need? More money is needed to carry on the congregational work and pay expenses. Our Home and Foreign Mission work cost so much last year, we have so many Missionaries at different points in the Home and Foreign Fields. The tide of immigration is rising at home and we need more money to meet the present crisis. Or the Foreign Fields are in many places "white unto the harvest"; we must get more money to extend the work or present opportunities will soon be lost never to return. Information about the work that has been done, and is yet to be done,

—information about the need of men and money to continue and extend the work is certainly needful and should be helpful. But after all should not the pulpit measure up to God's claims upon His people, as ever paramount to the Church's needs, and adequate to meet them?

How often the men of the world have charged the leaders in the work of the Church with "being always begging"! Yea, it has been no uncommon thing in the past to hear some at least of the workers in the Church who have been engaged in collecting for some department of the Church's work to speak of their mission as "begging." The Church is not a "begging" institution. She is not a "commercial" institution. The Scriptures give us an altogether different conception from this of the Church. In no department of the work of the Church should we dishonor God, and give the enemies of the Church occasion to speak slightingly of her work in the world by lowering the Scriptural standards. Through His prophet, Isaiah, the Lord spake to Israel, saying, ^e"Fear not; for I have redeemed thee . . . thou are mine." ^dThe Church's redemption is with the blood of Christ."

^e Is. 43 : 1 ; ^d I Peter 1 : 18, 19.

‘Being bought with a price, she belongs to Him. Christ is the ^fHead of the Church. She is His Body, and His Bride. As the Church, in her membership, sees Christ to be her Prophet, Priest, and King, will she not receive Him as her Redeemer, lovingly sit at His feet and learn of Him, and obediently hearken to His voice and follow His leadership? Who then shall say that she does not need more of the mind and spirit of Christ in giving of her substance to Him, as well in her praying, and in all her worship and work !

How willingly He gave Himself for our redemption,—as He said, ^g“ I lay down my life for the sheep.” With willing hearts let us give not only our substance, and our time, but our entire selves to Him and His service. He ^hbecame poor to enrich us spiritually. Let us cheerfully impoverish ourselves by giving Him our substance for the spiritual enrichment of needy, perishing sinners. O what heart purpose there was in His gift of Himself for our sakes ! Love enabled Him to do what He did, and to endure what He endured. Let there be heart purpose in all our giving to Christ and do-

* I Cor. 6 : 20 ; 7 : 23 ; ^f Eph. 5 : 23-30.

^g John 10 : 15 ; ^h II Cor. 8 : 9.

ing for Him. Let self-sacrificing love for His sake, and the spiritual good of humanity permeate every phase of our Christian activity. O that the Church of God, in her membership, might see Jesus only, in her giving for the furtherance of His work at home and abroad ! O that she might receive more largely of His Spirit to quicken, guide, and constrain her to greater Christian liberality ! O that, in her individual and united membership, she might with willing, cheerful, loving hearts serve Him through her gifts !

Saviour ! Thou gav'st Thy life for me,
Help me give mine to Thee.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WEEKLY OFFERING.

I Cor. 16 : 2; I Chr. 16 : 29.

THE minister of the gospel needs to be possessed of high ideals. The Scriptures give us the highest ideals of life. The wisdom of God is the highest wisdom. ^a“If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God,” etc. In the complexity of human life at the present time it is difficult to get mankind to see and appreciate the beauty, power and effectiveness of simplicity. How often, departing from the simplicity of the Scriptures, even the Church of God in her work takes on much of the complexity of the State. See this illustrated in the matter of giving. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada there are almost as many “Schemes” for Church work as there are months in the year. And the complexity of the system tends to increase as the years roll by. Has it not become a popular

^a Isa. 1 : 5, 6.

saying that, "the minister is always begging for something." He is expected from time to time to bring the work of the Church and her needs before the minds and hearts of his people. The complexity and over organization of Church work in the matter of giving is truly alarming. There is danger of the people of God being drawn away from ^b"the simplicity that is in Christ," and that is in the Scriptures. "Upon the first day of the week," etc. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name: bring an offering and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The weekly offering is something to be laid by in store for the Lord: something to be given to the glory of the Lord: something to be brought when we come before Him to worship in the beauty of holiness. The simplicity of the Scriptures is apparent. Lay by of your substance for the Lord. Give unto the Lord. Bring your gift before the Lord. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Have we not departed from the simplicity of the Scriptures?

Have we made weekly offering to the Lord

^b II Cor. 11: 3.

possible by laying by in store as He prospers us, some definite proportion of our income? Have you? Have I?

Have we given unto the Lord? In this matter of giving, God not man must have the place of honor. "Honour the Lord with thy substance," etc. The people must be taught to look beyond the minister, and the Church with her missionary, educational and benevolent activities, and look up to God. Let us see the Divine order and put first things first. Give unto God as He directs, and then use for God as He commands.

Do we bring our offerings and come before Him? God is still to be first in our thoughts and the affection of our hearts. The children of Israel were commanded to bring their sacrifices, offerings and gifts and offer them to God. Should not the Israel of God still be taught to bring their offerings and gifts and come before Him? Do we worship Him in the beauty of holiness? My offering brought before the Lord in His house and offered to Him is an holy act—an act of worship. It is an offering made unto an Holy God, in a Holy Place, on His

Holy Day. All duplex and multiplex systems of giving, I believe, tend to mar the simplicity of Scriptural giving. How is this, do you ask? They are in danger of causing the mind to dwell too much upon the special objects for which the offerings are to be used to the forgetfulness of the Being to whom the offering is made. They convey to the mind the thought of offerings—an offering for this work, an offering for that work, etc. What saith the Scriptures? ^c Bring *an offering* and come into His courts. ^d Bring *an offering* and come before Him. It is not a multiplicity of offerings God asks, but *an offering*, when we come before Him in His courts. Let the Church of God accept His revealed will, believe it, and live it! O for the *obedience of faith* in the heart and life of the Church of God!

Where the envelope and the contribution card are considered helpful—and they have proved helpful in educating the people to give tangible expression to their weekly offerings unto the Lord—let us so seek to combine simplicity with effectiveness, that we shall be enabled to bring *an offering*, and come before Him and worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

^c Ps 96:8; ^d I Chr, 16:29.

In Apostolic days when possessions were sold and the money brought and laid at the Apostles' feet distribution was made unto every man as he had need. That Scriptural principle of distribution is a safe one for the Church of God even in this present time. The offering brought and offered unto the Lord by His people should be distributed according to the needs of the Church in carrying forward the work of the Lord. To carry forward and extend her work to all parts of the earth wherever man is found, the Church of God requires money. It is her privilege and duty to supply both money and men for the work of the Lord. Her work may be classified under four general heads, viz., Congregational, Missionary, Educational and Benevolent.

Such a system as the following would include the Scriptural principle of "an offering unto the Lord" and tend greatly to simplify the general distribution of the same on the part of the offerer.

**THE SIMPLEX ENVELOPE SYSTEM.
ENVELOPE.**

No.....	Date.....
..... (Congregation)	
..... (Place)	
My Weekly Offering unto the Lord, \$.....	
" Bring an offering and come before Him : worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."	

CONTRIBUTION CARD.

" The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."	
No.....	Date.....
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, I promise to bring unto the Lord, as He prospers me :	
My Weekly Offering of \$.....	
This offering is to be used in the work of the Church, as follows :	
Congregational	\$
Missionary	\$
Educational	\$
Benevolent	\$
Name.....	
Address.....	
Please fill in and return this card promptly along with your first weekly offering.	

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW CAN I FIND WHAT MY TITHE IS ?

THIS may seem to be a simple inquiry. Nevertheless, in the complexity of human occupations it does present difficulties. A few general principles will help to remove many of the difficulties to which this question gives rise.

I must seek to find out what my increase or income is for a definite time. To harmonize with the weekly offering, suppose a week to be the definite time. It is a tithe of the increase or income that is holy unto the Lord. A tithe is the least that should be laid by in store for Him. All my increase or income is to be tithed, not merely a part of it.

Business receipts less business expenses may serve as a general basis for determining income.

Personal and family expenses, as they represent a part of my income, are not to be included as business expenses.

If in the past I have been giving God less than a tithe I should make restitution.

Should I get into debt, I ought still to give my tithe unto the Lord. His claim is first. Being honest with God will help me to be honest with fellow-man.

How can the Wage Earner determine the Amount of his Tithe. The wage earner represents a large class of mankind. His capital consists chiefly of his hand or brain power or of both. He may furnish his own tools for work or they may be furnished by his employer. If he furnishes them himself they will form a part of his capital, and the price of them is to be deducted from his wages. The balance of his wages will be his income. His income is to be tithed. His wages may be paid wholly in money, or partially in money and the balance in board, house-rent and other money equivalents. Where in addition to money he receives his board, or house-rent, or any other equivalent, the money value of these things is to be added to the money he receives that the total money value of his wages may be determined. Thus,

if for his work he received \$7 per week in cash, and his board, worth \$2 per week, and his house rent, worth \$1 per week, his weekly earnings would represent \$10. If the employer found all tools required in the work done by the employee, then the employee's income would be \$10 per week, and his tithe \$1. But if the employee found his own tools and the average weekly value of the wear and tear of his tools together with new tools required from time to time were 50 cents, his income would be \$9.50, and his tithe 95 cents.

How can the Doctor, Lawyer, Banker, or Minister, etc., determine the amount of his tenth? His receipts or salary less his business expenses should represent his income. Business expenses, let me again say, do not include personal or family expenses. All personal and family expenditure forms a part of the income. To illustrate this, let us take the case of a doctor. Let us suppose the doctor receives on an average per week \$45 for his professional services, and his business expense for horse hire and car fare, if he is in town, or for horse keep, etc., if he is

in the country, along with drugs, wear and tear of surgical instruments, etc., to be \$15, his income would be \$30 per week, a tithe of which is \$3. The personal and family expenses of the doctor, including house rent, lighting and heating, food and clothing, education of his children, etc., may take a half or more of his weekly income. We must, in the matter of tithing, carefully distinguish between a man's income and what he may be able to save out of his income after all his bills have been paid. It is not the tithe of his savings but the tithe of his increase or income that is holy unto the Lord.

How can the Merchant determine the amount of his tithe? If a merchant is doing a strictly cash business it will be much easier to determine what his income is than if he be engaged in business that involves the credit system. In a cash business his profits, less his business expenses, should in general represent his income. Of course, business expenses do not include personal and family expenses, or wages for his own time and labor. In a business that involves the credit system, at such times as he balances

his books, the balance in his Profit and Loss Account added to the amount used out of the business to meet his Personal Account should represent his income for that time. But as books are not balanced every week this only gives him a definite knowledge of his income when he does balance them. He may, however, get an approximate knowledge of his weekly income and at such times as he balances his books rectify that approximate knowledge. Let us suppose a merchant's average scale of profits to be 20 per cent. From his cash receipts week by week he should be able to determine his profits, and if he deducts from this his weekly business expenses, which let us suppose to be 5 per cent. of his profits, his approximate weekly income would be 15 per cent., the tithe of which would be $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Reckoning on such a scale of profits and business expenses as I have sought to illustrate, a merchant giving $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of his cash receipts per week would approximate the tithe of his income, which approximation could be rectified whenever he balanced his books.

How shall the Farmer determine his tithe? His receipts from all sales off his farm less his farm expenses plus the value of all that he and his family consume that is produced on the farm (i. e. his personal and family use of farm products) should represent his income or increase, a tithe of which is holy unto the Lord. Suppose the average weekly receipts for all sales off the farm to be \$9, the farm expenses to be \$2, and the value of the weekly living of himself and family taken directly off the farm to be \$3, then his income would be $9 - 2 + 3 = 10$ dollars, a tithe of which is \$1.

How can the Blacksmith, Shoemaker, Carpenter, and varied Tradesmen determine their tithes? The value of their manufactured products less the expense of producing should represent their several incomes. Suppose the value of the blacksmith's product averaged \$16 per week, and the value of iron, steel, and coal used, with other necessary expense to be \$4, then his income would be \$12, and his tithe \$1.20.

How can the Capitalist determine the amount of his tithe? Let us suppose him to be a young

man who inherited from his father \$500,000. That half a million is to this young heir income, and he should first tithe it. When a tithe or \$50,000 has been given to the Lord, let us suppose the young man invests the balance—\$450,000—as follows :

\$50,000 in 6 per cent. debentures ; \$50,000 in 8 per cent. preference stock ; \$150,000 in bank stock paying an annual dividend of 12 per cent. ; \$75,000 in the manufacture of textile goods, as linen or cotton, yielding him an annual dividend of 20 per cent. ; and \$125,000 in the steel and iron industry, yielding an annual dividend of 20 per cent. Then his weekly income would be \$1,250, less the expense of administering his trust funds. If that expense amounted to 20 per cent., his weekly income would be \$1,000, and his tithe \$100.

Thus it may be seen that obedience to God's tithe command would mean greatly increased giving on the part of all classes from the wage earner to the millionaire. When the tithe is recognized as *the least* to be given to God there still remains ample scope for growth in Christian liberality through other free will offerings and gifts.

The *principle* laid down by Dr. K. J. Grant, late missionary in Trinidad, and so successfully worked out by him in his mission field, viz., "Every baptized member of the Church should be a paying member," is one of great educative value, especially among the young and well worthy of general adoption in our Churches. The "*Tenth Legion*" of the Christian Endeavor Society has done a valuable work among the young in leading many to give the tenth of their income unto the Lord. But the time is coming, if it has not already come, when the Church of God in her united membership needs to be awakened from her self-satisfied condition, and aroused to a deep consciousness of the magnitude of God's claims upon her; and lovingly constrained to give more abundantly than she has heretofore done both of her sons, and of her substance, for the maintenance and extension of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The *Laymen's Missionary Movement* is a hopeful sign of the times. But if it would prove itself to be a world-wide conquering movement for Christ and the Church, the laymen must get

near to Jesus Christ, and live in close fellowship with Him. Christ must be everything, and self nothing. Not we are doing this, but Christ is doing this through us by His Holy Spirit, should be their inspiring thought. Therefore we must listen to His Voice, learn of Him, seek to know more fully His Will, and do it. Since the work is for Christ and the Church, the Mind and Spirit of Christ should dominate the work. This is the path to true and abiding success. The glory of man is as the flower of the field, "but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW MAY SYSTEMATIC, PROPORTIONATE GIVING BE INTRODUCED INTO THE CONGREGATION ?

NO method is equally adapted to all congregations. Congregations, like the individuals forming them, have a wonderful complexity. Nevertheless, there is unity in variety. Our physical organisms present a beautiful illustration of this. The human body has many organs, and each organ has its own peculiar function. In a family of a dozen children what a wonderful variety of temperament, disposition, will power, acumen and aim in life may be observed. However, there is the common parentage, and family likeness ; and there should be filial trust, love, and obedience that there may be a united household. With all the diversity that is to be found among the children of God, we expect to find some family likeness. With faith in, love and obedience to one God as

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there will necessarily be a family likeness. As the leaven in the meal works from within outward until the whole lump is leavened, so is it with the Word of God in the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven. There are, therefore, *certain principles* which we need to recognize in a forward movement in any department of the work of the Church.

Is the movement in harmony with the revealed will of God as made known in the Scriptures ?

Are we willing to take God's revealed will, and fully surrender ours to His ?

Are we seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and following His guidance fully ?

While we call Christ Lord and Master are we doing what He says ?

A very important condition for the successful introduction of systematic, proportionate giving into the congregation is that the pastor himself should believe with all his heart in this kind of giving, and exemplify his faith by his works. Only when it has become a living truth

in the pastor's own life will he be able to make it vital in the lives of others. By faith we understand. By faith we walk. Until we have sufficient faith to understand what the will of God is in any department of Christian duty we are not likely to walk therein, or do effective work.

The believing, obedient pastor will discern that in introducing systematic, proportionate giving he must have the Divine co-operation. He, therefore, makes it a matter of prayer. After Jacob had prevailed with the Angel of the Lord he also prevailed with men. The pastor who in prayer prevails with God has learned the secret of prevailing with men.

The pastor should seek the co-operation of his office-bearers in the Church. A faithful presentation of the subject of systematic, proportionate giving from the pulpit will help him to see, at a subsequent meeting of his office-bearers, who are prepared to go forward, who are indifferent, and who are ready to oppose. It will be no uncommon thing for a pastor to meet with these three classes among his office-bearers when he undertakes the work. If, however, he

has two or more men willing to go forward he has ground for hope. Effort should be made to win the indifferent, and to constrain those who may be opposed to allow a fair trial of the system to be made. On one occasion when bringing this subject before the congregation in which I was then laboring, an elder afterwards said to this effect: "Well, if God wants me to give a tenth of my increase, by the help of God I'll do it." From that time forward he did it, and was blessed in his deeds. He was a man in humble circumstances with a large family to support. Men of strong faith are ever ready to go forward at the call of God in the life of self-sacrifice. They listen to hear God's word. By faith they understand it, and hasten to prove its power in their lives. With even a few choice spirits in a congregation it is wonderful what a pastor may with their co-operation succeed in doing.

When the office-bearers have agreed to go forward, even although some of them should be doubtful and fearful, it is generally advisable to call a meeting of the whole congregation and lay the matter before them. After the pastor has briefly and clearly presented to the people

some of the benefits of systematic, proportionate giving to the Lord, and explained how the system may be carried out practically, it would be well to have two or more of the most influential office-bearers who are enthusiastically in favor of the system to speak. When office-bearers, to whom the people have looked for years as leaders among them, advocate the cause it often has a powerful influence over the mass of the people. On one occasion when introducing the weekly offering into a congregation I found two elders who for years had practised weekly giving. After I had spoken they strongly endorsed the system, and spoke of the benefits they had derived from the weekly offering. Afterwards the introduction of the system was comparatively easy, and became a marked success.

When the people are willing to go forward and give the system a fair trial, say for a year, prompt action is very necessary. "Strike the iron while it is hot." A personal canvass of the congregation by the deacons or managers in their respective districts, assisted if necessary by an enthusiastic elder, with cards to secure weekly contributions from the individual members

and, where necessary, explain the system and answer objections that may be raised, will generally be productive of large results. When a new system of Church finance is being introduced into a congregation as a rule many persons require to be dealt with individually, and the best time to deal with the indifferent and wavering is at its inception. The opposers may often profitably be left until the system has vindicated itself. The success of a system is one of the best methods of convincing an opponent.

If only a fair proportion of the congregation can at first be reached the pastor and office-bearers should hopefully go forward. The change of a manager or managers may sometimes be necessary in the furtherance of the work. Much depends upon the faith and faithfulness of the office-bearers. A man who disbelieves in a thing himself is not likely to encourage his fellows to believe in and adopt it. By faith we overcome the world. The first diaconate in Apostolic days consisted of "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." That is the type of men still required in this department of the work of the Church.

Having organized the weekly system of proportionate giving keep pushing it till even the halt, the lame, and the blind are included. Remember that no system however good will run itself. Behind the system there must be men of faith, wisdom, zeal and spiritual power. Endeavor to get every baptized member of the Church to become a contributor for the support of the Church's work. Parents are responsible for the food, clothing, and education of their children. Likewise, they should willingly assume responsibility for their religious education. The time to begin education is in childhood. That, too, is the best time to begin the education of the baptized members of the visible Church, in the grace of Christian liberality. The "great commission" of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, includes not only discipling and baptizing, but also teaching—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. Christ has commanded his disciples to give. "Give and it shall be given you," etc. In this as well as in all other departments of the work of the Church, pastors, office-bearers, and people need to hear and heed Paul's exhort-

ation to the Churches of Galatia: "And let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."



