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*Christian Giving:  
Its Character  
and Objects*

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### **EDITORIAL NOTE:**

Anything in braces { } has been editorially added for this printing.



## *Stewardship*

### *"Will a Man Rob God?"*

The subject of stewardship has been much neglected because it rebukes our selfishness.

What is a steward? A steward is one entrusted with "*That which is another's*" (Luke 16:12). We are so apt to regard our possessions as the world does and forget that even "Ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19) but "His own" (John 13:1). Then as to everything we possess we should make good use of it as being "all Thine own" (1 Chron. 29:14, 16).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). Be faithful to the True owner as He said "Trade while I am coming" (Luke 19:13, JND trans). Instead of making good use of the Lord's goods some lay "up in a napkin" (Luke 19:20), or hide it "in the earth" (Matt. 25:25).

Our blessed Lord who has so abounded in His grace to us, now entrusts us to use all we possess for His glory and for blessing to others. "Distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim. 6:18; Heb. 13:16). "Liberal distribution" (2 Cor. 9:13). "Not grudgingly . . . for God loves a cheerful giver" (v. 7). "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth . . . the liberal soul shall be made fat . . . he that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse" (Prov. 11:24-26). "Working with his hands . . . that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). "So labouring ye ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). We will be richly blessed if our object is to give and not to get. A fishtrap gets; a fish-hatchery distributes. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8).

"Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother . . . Beware that . . . thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought . . . Thou shalt surely (lit. bountifully) give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him" (Deut. 15:7, 9, 10). How well the Lord knows the heart of His fallen creatures.

It is in connection with stewardship in Luke 16 that the Lord speaks to the covetous and selfish rich that are indifferent to the poor at their door. Oh the opportunities at our doors that we ignore! We close our eyes to them and then pray for those to whom we contribute nothing! What inconsistency! In Luke 12:15 the Lord says "Beware of covetousness." "Covetousness, which is

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idolatry” (Col. 3:5 and Eph. 5:5). “The love of money is a root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10 JND trans). “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare” (v. 9). “The deceitfulness of riches” (Mark 4:19). “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth” (Matt. 6:19). “Men of the world have their portion in this life, and . . . leave the rest of their substance to their children” (Psa. 17:14). In that way the world lays up for their children, but the apostle Paul left a more enduring heritage for his children (2 Cor. 12:14; Prov. 13:22; 1 Tim. 6:19).

Matthew Henry well said:

There is a burden of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given concerning them.

Earthly possessions are not our own nor intended to be piled up. “Woe unto them that join house to house” (Isa. 5:8); “build greater barns” (Luke 12:18); “heaped up treasures in the last days” (James 5:3).

Wealth is surplus, generally increasing, robbing God, oblivious of the needy, and the Lord’s work of evangelizing, printing, distributing etc.

According to Webster a miser is “one who lives miserably to increase his hoard.” To be niggardly is one “who gives the smallest possible.” To be stingy is to be tight and lacking in large hearted liberality. See 2 Cor. 8:2, JND trans.

J. G. Bellett’s daughter writes of him:

I think he had a dread of wealth. To hear of anyone dying “worth so much” (as the expression is), especially if he were known as one who made a profession of religion, pained him very much. But the luxury of giving away largely, he fully understood.

Very soon we shall have to leave behind all that is of earth and all that we have failed to use for our blessed Lord.

A. C. Brown

## *Christian Giving*

by A. H. Rule

My dear Brother: Since you ask how the subject of *Christian giving* is presented in Scripture, I will try to give something of how the matter has been brought before my own mind in reading the Scriptures. The subject, I believe, is one, the importance of which, very many of the people of God but little appreciate, though it holds a large place in the Word of God, both in Old Testament and New.

While very many seem to have little or no exercise about giving, it is a comfort to know that there are not a few faithful, self-denying givers, who are blessed of God in their own souls, and who are a blessing to others. These in their measure are imitators of God, the great Giver, who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, and who can be counted on, with Him also freely to give us all things (Rom. 8:32). It is well known by those who have observed these things, that these liberal givers, as a rule, are enriched in their own souls, proving the truth of Prov. 11:25,

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

And it is just as noteworthy, that a Christian who gives not is dried up in his spiritual affections, and although he may have abundance of earthly treasure, suffers from what Scripture calls "leanness of soul."

Christ, though He was rich, became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9). How many of us, for His sake, and the sake of those He loves, have become poor? Heb. 10:34 shows that the Hebrew saints took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance. They became poor for Christ's sake. The Apostle Paul also suffered the loss of all things, counting them but dung that he might win Christ. The history of God's people furnishes a multitude of cases, where everything has been given up for Christ, or devoted to Him. Not a few in our own day could be mentioned who have devoted their all to Christ, and used all in serving Him and His. Have such been the losers? Surely not, but much the gainers. Has not a loving Father's care been over them? Most certainly.

Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you (Luke 12:30, 31).

The following Old Testament scriptures, as well as many others, might be weighed with much profit in connection with this subject: Gen. 28:22; Lev. 27:30, 32; Num. 18:20-32; Deut. 12:19, 14:27-29, 15:1-15, 18:1-8.

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It will be seen from these scriptures that the Levites, the widows, the fatherless and the poor, all came in for consideration in connection with the liberality of God's people. The Levites are largely noticed. They had no inheritance with their brethren in Israel. The Lord was their portion, and for them He exacted from the other tribes a tenth of all their increase. This tithe was devoted to the Lord.

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 concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.

These tithes were first devoted to the Lord, and then given to the Levites.

And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

We find also that the Levites were to offer to the Lord a tithe of what they received.

Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.

All this is instructive. The Levite was to be cared for, and not forgotten. Stress is laid upon this again and again.

Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

The people were the Lord's people, and the objects of His love and care; and they enjoyed the service of the Levites, and were not to forsake them. The Lord gave the increase of the land, and of the flocks and herds, and He exacted a tenth, which was to be devoted to Him as holy. This tenth was to be given to the Levite as his inheritance; and he also was to have the privilege of presenting an offering to the Lord -- a tenth of the tenth which he received.

The application of this principle is simple. Those called of the Lord to devote themselves to His service in spiritual things are not to be forgotten.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? (1 Cor. 9:11).

In Nehemiah's day, after the captives returned from Babylon, self-interest took the place of what was due to the Lord, and the Levites were neglected.

And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field (Neh. 13:10).



A little later still, in Malachi's day, one of the grievous charges the Lord brought against them was in regard to these tithes.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.

Solemn charge. Yet even then, cursed as they were through their self-seeking and forgetfulness of God, He stood ready to bless them, if only they would bring in the tithes.

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 (Mal. 3:8-10).

In considering what is said in the New Testament, it is well to note the difference in the order of blessing known to Israel, and that known to Christianity. Christianity connects itself with the rejection, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven of the Messiah. While our faithful God and Father supplies His people now with creature mercies, it is in a scene out of which His Son has been cast, and where He does not allow us to settle down with the thought of finding our blessing where His Son found only a cross and a grave. Our blessings now are in Christ, and where He is. They are spiritual and heavenly. In keeping with this, and having in view His own rejection in Israel and in the world, the Lord said to His disciples,

Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:33, 34).

How blessedly this was carried out in the beginning of Acts when all hearts were still fresh in the love of Christ!

All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for 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: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:34, 35).

There was no bondage in this. It was not a legal exaction. It was the free-will offering of hearts touched by the love of Christ, and energized by the power of the Holy Ghost. With Ananias it was not this, but the ambition, perhaps, not to be behind the others; and it is in connection with his case we are distinctly told there was no bondage.

While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? (Acts 5:4 . . .).

No doubt there was a special call at that time on account of the many thousands detained at Jerusalem by the wonderful work of God. But why should we not hold all our possessions as subject to the Lord's disposal, and to be used for Him, as He may guide? We ourselves are the Lord's, bought with a price, and all we have is His, held by us as stewards, to be used for Him and His glory . . .

1 Cor. 9:14 tells us the Lord has

ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

This is the same principle as the tithes given to the Levites. Indeed the context refers to this. The Apostle did not use this right for himself, though he did receive from assemblies; but he gives it as that which the Lord ordained as a general rule. And, of course, this lays upon the saints at large the responsibility to care for those devoted to the gospel. There is no question of salary or hire; but there is the question of caring for such. The servant who devotes himself to gospel service, or service in spiritual things, leaves himself in the Lord's hands for his support, waits upon Him, counts upon Him. But the Lord has laid upon the saints the responsibility to think of these, and to minister to them of their substance, as the Lord enables and leads.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things (Gal. 6:6).

But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:16).

As to the general responsibility of Christian giving, its importance may be seen from the fact that two entire chapters in 2 Corinthians are devoted to it -- chapters 8 and 9 to say nothing of many other passages bearing on the subject. The occasion of the lengthy discussion in these two chapters, was the raising of a collection among the Gentile assemblies for the saints in Judea, in a time of general dearth (Acts 11:28-30).

When we examine these New Testament scriptures, although we see the same general responsibility to give, we see also a marked difference from many of those in the Old Testament. There it was law -- legal exaction -- all bound to giving according to a fixed rule. Here it is *grace*:

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.

And so in writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle says,

Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this *grace* also.

He calls it "grace" because it is the fruit of grace in the heart. And being

grace, it connects itself with “a *willing* mind.”

If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not {2 Cor. 8:12}.

It is not here a legal ten percent, as under the law, that he *must* pay, but according to his willingness and ability. There is a deliberate weighing of the matter. What can I devote to the Lord? How much am I able to spare? How much ought I to give to this purpose, or that?

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver {2 Cor. 9:7}.

Under the law the tithes were exacted whether a man was willing or unwilling, gave cheerfully or grudgingly.

But here God counts on the hearts He has touched with His grace, and expects them to give willingly and cheerfully, leaving it to the love He has put into these hearts to say how much shall be given. Nothing else suits Him now. He loves a cheerful giver, and unless we give thus, He does not want our giving.

But let us here take heed, for the deceitfulness of our wretched flesh is ever ready to take advantage of His grace. If we would enjoy abundant blessing in our giving, we must sow plenty of seed for it is written,

He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully {2 Cor. 9:6}.

How many are dried up in their souls, because they sow “sparingly”! God Himself supplies the seed, and He delights to have us sow bountifully, and He is able also to “minister bread for your food,” and to “multiply your seed sown,” and to “increase the fruits of your righteousness.” Why then, should we give grudgingly? Why not give cheerfully and bountifully, counting on all grace from Him?

Another point of great importance comes out in 1 Cor. 16:2. It is connected with the same special occasion, but it gives us a general principle on which to act in view of giving.

Upon the first day of the week *let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.*

Here it is providing a store, out of which can be given as the occasions arise. It is like the tithes *first devoted to the Lord*, but in view of being given to the Levites. Our devoted money is thus laid aside in store, and from this we can draw to give to the poor, or for the spread of the truth in books and tracts, or to give to a servant of the Lord to help on the work.

If the saints generally acted on this principle in faithfulness to God, I am sure the matter of giving would be greatly simplified, and there would be

abundance in the treasuries for the various needs. A dear brother (now with the Lord) once told me he had a bag which he called “the Lord’s bag,” in which he placed what he habitually laid aside, and he said it was never empty. There was always something in it from which to draw in time of need.

. . . If the saints would faithfully lay aside on the first day of the week, as the Lord prospers them, how many precious stores of money there would be to meet the many calls to give! How many poor and needy and tried ones would be made to rejoice through the bounties of God’s people! How many servants of the Lord, ready to faint under pressure, would take fresh courage, and go on with thankful hearts! And would not the Lord be honored? Would not fresh blessing be the result -- the windows of heaven be opened? Who can doubt it?

It is to be feared that very many feel but little or no responsibility in this matter. Why should this be so? Mark the word is,

Let *every one* of you lay by.

It is not *law* but it is *responsibility* under grace. It is the privilege also of those who receive -- even the poor -- to lay by of what is ministered to them, just as in the case of the Levites. With one it may be little, with another more, according to the ability; but are any altogether exempted? If I am poor, and devote a little to the Lord out of my “deep poverty” (2 Cor. 8:2), shall I be the poorer for it? Will He allow me to suffer want because of my devotedness and faithfulness to Him? Such is not His way. He loves the cheerful giver, and honors those who honor Him. The wise man has also said,

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (Prov. 3:9, 10).

Does the assembly give as such? I believe so, and believe it to be a happy thing to do so, when it is done in the unity of the Spirit. It seems clear that the writing of the epistle to the Philippians was on the occasion of their having sent an offering to the Apostle Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus. They had also sent once and again unto his necessity (Phil. 2:25; 4:10-18).

The Apostle would not receive from the assembly at Corinth, but it does not follow that he might not have received from individuals there. But while he would not receive from that assembly, he did from others.

I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service (2 Cor. 11:8).

“The box”? Well, it seems to me, it is only a convenience for receiving the offerings of the saints when they are assembled together.

What part has it at the Lord’s table? I do not see that it has any special connection with the table at all, except this: it is at the table we gather for worship; there we have the tokens of Jesus’ dying love; there we remember

Him, and think of His love; there we offer worship; and there at the same table it is fitting that we present as an offering to Him what we put in the box. Heb. 13:16, shows that our communicating is a part of the worship,

for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.<sup>1</sup>

The placing of the box *on* the table, or *otherwise*, is, in my judgment, a matter of little importance. It is well to be as simple as possible about such things. If we get occupied with these little side questions, we are in danger of losing sight of the *great* question; namely, *the duty and privilege of giving*. Let it be in assembly, or {and} let it be individually; let the box be on the table or otherwise, the great thing is to attend to the giving -- to DO it, and not *forget*, nor *neglect*, to do it.

Let every one have a box, or bag, at home, and habitually lay by a portion out of all that comes in, and do it cheerfully, and with a liberal heart, as unto the Lord, assured that it is well pleasing to the Lord, and remembering how He has said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Let us not suppose, either, that because a tenth is not exacted, it does not matter whether we give that much or not. A tenth was Jacob's measure, and a tenth was the portion for the Levites, but an Israelite under the law had to give much more than that to meet its requirements. And why should not a Christian give as liberally? Grace does not exact it, but if the heart is living in the sunshine of Christ's love, will it not yield up its stores more bountifully than under law? Where the Israelite was faithful in giving, the Lord blessed him in his basket and in his store. And while the Christian's blessing is of another order, the Lord will honor such as are faithful in this responsibility.

May the Lord stir us all up to give, according to the grace we have received, our hearts aglow with the love of Him who loved us, and *gave Himself* for us, and in whose presence and glory we shall soon have our part, leaving behind us all that is of earth and all that we have failed to devote to

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1. {Lest it escape the reader's notice, observe that the fruit of our lips (worship and praise) is coupled with communicating of our substance -- in the word *sacrifices*. Individuals worship and communicate of their substance as individuals. But there is also assembly worship and assembly communication of substance. It is true, and to be observed, that there is an order to the two things. The fruit of our lips is first, and primary, and then the communication of our substance. Worship is to form what is generally called service; worship is to give character to it. The Levite serves the Priest, to speak of it in connection with the types. Thus, worship goes up to the great Giver for what He is in Himself, and in what He has done. Would that not have a due effect upon our giving, our communicating of our substance? And this has also to do with the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-3), the day having the chief feature of being the Lord's day, the day upon which the Lord's supper is eaten. And connected with that having before us Him Who gave all, there is also the communicating of our substance, though that does not have the chief place.}

Him, and finding, as treasure above, all that has been given as unto Him.

Yours affectionately in Him,

*Selected Ministry of A. H. Rule*, Oak Park: Bible Truth Publishers, pp. 246-254,  
n.d.

## *Giving*

by *A. P. Cecil* <sup>2</sup>

The great characteristic of the present dispensation is that God is revealed as a Giver. In its season during the legal dispensation, that is from Moses to Christ, He made certain requirements on man ; for man had been created a responsible being, put into relation with His Creator as a creature, and under obligation to Him. The law was the perfect measure of those obligations due from the creature to His Creator. But addressed as it was to man already fallen under the power of sin, it could only bring out his infinite distance from God. And just as every standard puts to the test all things that are put under it, so the true use of the law was a test to bring to man's conscience his guilt, and to give him the knowledge of his sinful state by nature.

In this way it was a most useful schoolmaster to the Jew who would learn its lessons. Shutting him up to death under its demands and putting him under the curse, it would show him that the only way of deliverance and pardon was through the promised Messiah.

In due time the Messiah came, and the change in God's dealings with man was most sweetly brought out in the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus the Jew in John 3:16, and with the Samaritan woman in John 4:10. These were the words,

God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life,

and again,

if thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.

God was now revealed as a Giver, giving His Son; the blessed and only way by which poor guilty man, born in sin and lost, could have his sins met and answered for; the only way by which he could be delivered from his state of sin, and set in a place where he could really please and glorify God. And since the Gentile born in sin (yet having the light of creation and conscience as his rule), and the Jew (having the law as his perfect standard), have both been proved on that ground utterly lost, and shut up to death, so now Christ having been revealed to the whole world as the gift of God, both Gentiles and Jews are shut up to Him as the only way of salvation.

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2. {Boldfacing has been added.}

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In scripture, we have in various places, God figured in relation to His creature as a creditor, and the sinner His debtor. (See Luke 7:41; Matt. 18:23, 24.) In Luke 16 we have man in relation to God, set before us as an unjust steward, who has wasted his Master's goods, who has already had to give an account of his stewardship, and received the sentence that he can be no longer steward.

Everything was committed to him, intrusted to his charge in the garden of Eden. Adam had dominion over the earth, and all its treasures, but alas! the one thing that God kept to Himself, as it were in His secret treasure box, man broke open and stole, and he has forfeited in consequence his own life, and all the treasures of the earth. His history since has been the misappropriation of his Lord's goods to his own use. Now, all this brings out that man is in debt to God, and not only that; he is a thief and unfaithful steward that has misappropriated his master's goods.

But behold the giving God as displayed in the gospel! He has given His Son; His Son has paid the debts of every repentant sinner in His blood; not only that, He has repurchased the earth and its treasures, and though rejected now, will finally return again to take it in power, reigning over it in partnership with His fellow-heirs, to whom in the meanwhile He has given as their own superior portion the glory of heaven. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

And now my reader, before I go on, one word to you. Have you taken the place of the happy receiver? Have you, like the poor woman in Luke 7, owing your Lord the five hundred pence, taken your place at His feet, saying, Nothing to pay, yet owning your debt and your guilt? If so, behold His wounded hands and side pierced on the cross for you; there He bore your sins, there He paid the debt, and the consequence is, that on the righteous basis of His blood having been presented to God, free forgiveness comes to you from your creditor. He frankly forgives or remits your debt.

Christ was the grand exhibition of the giving God. He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich (2 Cor. 8). He emptied all His heavenly riches into our penniless stores, to pay our debts, yet of such worth was He, that all who believe in Him are lifted out of their abject poverty, and put into connection with Himself in His present rich place in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

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3. We never read of the blessed Lord asking for money, or for anything but a glass of water from a poor sinner. He trusted His Father's love and care too well for that; and as if to teach His dear dependent ones a useful lesson in this way, when at the very beginning of His life of service He was tested by Satan, He refused to turn stones into bread, saying, "Man shall not live by bread



May the Lord open my readers' eyes to understand about God in His wondrous grace. Surely to do this is the foundation and source of all giving. I shall never understand the principle of giving till I understand the grace of God in His ways of giving salvation to me. Then having received all from His hands, having had all my sins answered for and blotted out, and having been put into connection with the infinite worth of His blessed Son's person who is in the glory, my state as a child of Adam is ended at the cross. I have eternal life now in the Son, and am able to go forth like the giving God to give to others; I see Him as my pattern and example, as shown in Christ, both as a giver and dependent one; and I am privileged to go forth and empty into the penniless stores of others what God has given me, either as Creator or Redeemer.

**Giving to the world.** -- Now giving has as its object two classes of people: namely, the world and the church. To the former, the dealing of God is that of pure grace, asking nothing, requiring nothing. To the latter, being under His government, there are more or less conditions attached. We shall see this brought out as we look at the various scriptures that bear on the subject.

In Matt. 5 the Lord says, that whereas it was said in old time, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; I say unto thee, that ye resist not evil. Give to him that asketh of thee, and to him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. I am not to ask questions if the recipient is worthy, neither surely am I to give the amount that he asks, but to give, for God gives. The people brought their sick to the Lord: the Lord having power and grace healed them, requiring nothing, asking nothing. Many were utterly unworthy objects; yet He was the exhibition of the giving God, and He gave freely.

So again the Lord says, that whereas it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be (in character) the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. He makes no difference in these respects in His favors. The evil despise His benefits, the unjust give Him no thanks, but His sun rises, His rain descends upon the most unworthy. So are we called to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, we are told, but the righteous showeth mercy and giveth, (Psa. 37:21), beautifully harmonizing with the God who is rich in mercy, who has shown us that mercy in quickening us who were dead in our sins (Eph. 2. See also Luke 6:30-36.). Again, he that hath

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3. (...continued)

alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4).

pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again (Prov. 19:17).

**Giving to the saints.** -- But there is something even more precious than giving to the poor of this world, in the eyes of the Lord, and that is expressed in the words, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me (Matt. 25:40). And again, The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always (John 12:8). This latter passage no doubt refers to the Lord Himself, but when linked on with other passages which show that His people are seen as Himself, it becomes a principle of much value to us as to giving. In giving to the least of the saints, I am giving to Christ Himself, and He was the real poor man, still poor as exhibited in His saints.

A principle of great value comes out, in regard to the way of using the means the Lord has given us, in Luke 16. There man, as I have shown before, is looked at as having utterly failed in his stewardship, and as having received the sentence that he should be no longer steward. The unjust steward of the parable then says,

What shall I do, for my lord taketh away my stewardship? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of my stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

And so what does he do? Between the time of the sentence and the execution of it, in making up his lord's accounts, he makes friends with the lord's debtors; he so uses his lord's money that, when he is put out of his lord's house, these friendly debtors may receive him into their houses. And so man has been found unfaithful in his stewardship; he has lost his place on the earth (Israel had that place specially in the land of Canaan). Now the question is how to make the best use of the unrighteous mammon, so as to be received into heavenly habitations. Now I believe the debtors signify the Lord's people, all of whom are more or less in debt to Him: how many actually in their money affairs! The wise way of using my money, the unrighteous mammon, is so to make friends with it, that they might be my welcomers into the everlasting habitations in the glory. (See Luke 16:1-12.) But I think in reference to helping the Lord's saints, that there is a difference between them and the world. For instance, the Lord in paying down His life's blood on the cross for our sins, only paid the debts of those who in due time repent of their sins, and believe on Him for salvation.

So in helping God's saints who have got into actual debt through their folly, I believe the way is not to help them without sincere repentance on their part, and a resolve to walk in the ways of the Word in regard to those things, which says, Owe no man anything, but to love one another (Rom. 13:8). If I help a saint, for instance, encouraging him thereby to set up in business without capital to carry it out; I am only encouraging him in a path of dishonor to the Lord, in

which the Lord can by no means go with me. Under the government of God I believe the principle is true as set forth in Psa. 37:25:

I have been young and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging their bread.

God has promised food and raiment to His children (Matt. 6:24-34), with the caution, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. The words,

Are ye not much better than the fowls? How much more shall he not clothe you, oh ye of little faith?

come in with unmistakable truth to faith wherever it is. Again, Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. See also Luke 12:22-31. Again,

Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we can boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me (Heb. 13:5-6).

All these sure promises ought to give confidence to the saints in the care of the Father, and prevent them from ever getting into debt, like other men. And indeed how can I give to others if I am in debt myself? I am then giving what is not my own, a terribly solemn thing when it is professedly done in the name of the Lord: I am taking what ought to be in another man's pocket, and giving it to the Lord. Is not this hypocrisy?

But lastly the question comes in, **How much are we to give to the Lord?** Now, dear reader, this question would never come in, if you understood that you and all yours are entirely bought for the Lord. Israel's men, women, and children, and cattle, were all for Jehovah. All had to come out of Egypt. Moses would not hear of the compromise, that the men were to come out of Egypt, and the wives, children, and cattle to be left behind. Not a jot or tittle was to be left in Egypt or to be lavished on Egyptians. All was for Jehovah, and for the support of their families and other Israelites through the wilderness, but for nothing more. And so in a much higher sense all that the Christian possesses is the Lord's. The Lord says as to the principle of it in Luke 12:33,

Sell that ye have and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

On the day of Pentecost all was given up, and laid down at the apostles' feet, to be distributed equally amongst all. Truly this did not go on in the later times

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of the church. <sup>4</sup> But the principle surely remains, and so in 1 Tim. 6 the rich are exhorted to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life. And such principles as are shown in 2 Cor. 9:8-11, and Eph. 4:28, would surely be a check to saints who seek to get rich, as showing that the only purpose of laboring, and getting the blessings of God on it should be for the purpose of being an increased blessing to others, to abound in every good work, to have to give to him that needeth. As to usury, it was absolutely forbidden between Jewish brethren: to the stranger they might lend on interest, but not to their brethren. <sup>5</sup> If they took a pledge it was to be restored before evening, lest their poor brother should cry to God and He would hear him for He was gracious. Dreadful is it to hear of brethren who boast of their high standing and privileges in a heavenly Christ, yet lowering themselves below the level of the righteous Jew in their walk, leading their poor brethren into sin, in the matter of buying farms or land, which they cannot pay for, and then exacting interest, notes, and all kinds of things afterwards, for the payment of it, thus becoming their oppressors. May the Lord lead His beloved saints to consider His principles in giving, and to abound individually in every good work!

In looking over then what has been said on the matter, we have found that the great source and motive power of giving is in the revelation of God Himself in the gospel. He is the Giver. He has given His Son. His Son has been to the cross, and paid the debt of every repentant and believing sinner; He has gone up to glory, as the accepted man, and by the communication of His own Spirit of life {Rom. 8:2}, believers are now connected with Himself in that place. Christ thus becomes the great pattern and example of giving, and, the believer having been set in connection with Him in glory by the Holy Ghost come down, he is sent forth to exhibit Him in this world, and in principle to give up himself and all he has for the good of others. Then we have seen that giving has a two-fold sphere of action, namely, towards the world, and towards the church. Towards the world, the attitude is to give as the Father gives: He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good; He sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. Towards the saints, we have a special relation in regard to giving, they are members of the household of faith, and are one with Christ by the Holy Ghost. In giving to them, we do it unto Him. But here we are brought into the sphere of the direct government of the Lord; who never even at the beginning, in regard to His own, paid the debts of any but repentant sinners. Consequently,

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4. {If this was meant for all time there would have been no gift of giving (Rom. 12:8).}

5. {If the borrower bears the cost of inflation, that is hardly true interest.}

in giving to the saints, we are to act wisely towards them for their good, so helping the Lord's debtors as that we may be received into everlasting habitations. The Father has conditions Himself of helping His children, and we are to be imitators of Him.

Lastly, I would allude to **the principles of assembly giving**. God, besides having saved believers by His Son's blood, and set them individually in connection with Him, has set up an assembly in this world. It was formed consequent on the rejection of Messiah by Israel at the cross, by His exaltation to heaven, as man, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Saved by the cross, and connected individually with Christ raised from the dead, believers were on that day united to the glorified man by the Holy Ghost come down, baptised into one body, and builded together to be God's habitation by the Spirit.

Believers were thus formed on earth into a distinct assembly, separated from Jew and Gentile. They gave up everything; no one accounted anything that he had as his own. All was laid at the apostles' feet, and served for the common, need of all (Acts 2:44, 45). There was a daily ministration of the proceeds.

In due time murmurings arose amongst the disciples, the Greek proselytes supposing that the Jews were more favoured in the administration. The apostles also found that the temporal care of the saints interfered with their primary work of preaching the gospel. Consequently seven men of honest report were chosen by the multitude, whom the apostles might appoint over this business, whilst they devoted themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. The seven having been chosen, the apostles laid their hands on them, and they were appointed to look after the need of the poor saints (Acts 6:1-7). Afterwards we see the local office reproduced amongst the Gentile churches in the deacons (see 1 Tim. 3), who had to have certain qualifications as to their character, to be set apart for the office. We see then by this that God has appointed a way for looking after His poor in the various local assemblies gathered to Christ's name. The money is put into the hands of these responsible qualified men, and it is their business to care for the need of the poor saints at each assembly.

So far then as to the order of the church set up at first, everything was simple. Each assembly had its local officers chosen by the assembly {concerning temporal matters, not elders}, and appointed by apostles. And thus the poor saints were looked after. Now the assembly is scattered in various sects and denominations,<sup>6</sup> and only a few are gathered back to the name of the Lord Jesus

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6. {W. Kelly correctly pointed out that the word "denominations" has been gotten up to hid the sin and shame of "sect."}

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on the original ground of the church of God. Perhaps in such an assembly there is not a single man with the necessary qualifications in it for such an office. What are the saints to do? Moreover, there are no apostles to lay hands on the men even if they were there.

The **first thing** to do is to confess the ruin of things and wait on the Lord; surely not to set about appointing deacons without qualification as set forth in the word, and without authority to appoint them. This would be to make the confusion worse, and to hide from the gathered saints the existing ruin. The great thing now for the saints to do is to abide strictly by the word, and to mark in their brethren the qualifications necessary for that place, and if there thankfully to own it. For instance, a deacon must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; and such were first to be proved. So their wives must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. The deacons were to be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well. If the gathered brethren discover such qualifications in their brethren, they should cheerfully and thankfully commit the money affairs of the assembly to such; and they would become responsible for the special need of the poor saints in that locality. So far as to God's order and provision for the local poor in each assembly.

**2nd.** There may be a special need at a special time, in any given assembly, such as there was in the apostles' day amongst the poor saints at Jerusalem. We have already glanced at the way by which this need was met at first. After the great conference held at Jerusalem (as to whether the Gentiles were to be put under the law or not {Acts 15}) was finished, the apostle Paul settled to remember the cause of the poor saints there amongst the Gentile churches (Gal. 2:10). In 1 Cor. 16:1-3, we see there was to be a special collection made for the poor saints at Jerusalem. The way it was to be collected was for every saint in each local assembly to lay by him in store as God had prospered him every first day of the week. Then when Paul came there would be no necessity for a special collection. The money would be all ready. In 2 Cor. 8, 9, we find that the Macedonian assemblies had gone ahead of the Corinthians in their collection, so much so that the apostle took occasion to stir the Corinthian assembly up. Three great points were placed before them:

1. Christ as the great motive power and example of giving (2 Cor. 8:9);
2. the gift of the manna and the way it was collected and distributed (2 Cor. 5:14-15);
3. the governmental results in blessing as to giving (2 Cor. 9:6-11).

First then as to the motive. Christ who was rich, for their sakes became poor, that they through His poverty might be made rich. Of course His example is an

illustration of how saints should give their money in the same way as Christ had given Himself up to death to reap for them spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Himself. They had been set in connection with Christ by His grace, bought by His blood. All they were and all they had were His; and now, as made rich, it was their privilege to go forth as givers of Christ's bounty to others, and to supply their bodily need as their Lord had supplied their spiritual need.

Secondly, the principle and way of collecting the money is shown by the manna. God rained down the manna for the daily supply of the whole nation. Some Israelites gathered more and some gathered less, according to their eating (Ex. 16:14-18). It was then apparently all brought together, as the money on the day of Pentecost, and divided with an omer. (Cp. Ex. 16:18 with Acts 2:44, 45; 4:34, 35.) Those that had gathered more thus supplied the need of those that had gathered less. So it was now the privilege of the richer assemblies amongst the Gentiles to supply the need of their poorer brethren at Jerusalem in this way (2 Cor. 8:13-15), on the ground that God's bounty was to all. Titus was sent by the apostle to stir up the Corinthians to this grace; also another brother, whose praise was said to be in the gospel in all the assemblies, and who was also chosen by the assemblies to travel with the apostle in regard to this collection (vv. 16-24.) Another brother was also sent, who had been found diligent in all things. Certain men, approved also by each assembly, seem to have gone with Paul with this bounty to Jerusalem. So careful was the apostle that everything should be done above-board, and for the glory of the Lord. (See 1 Cor. 16:3; Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8.)

The governmental results of giving are shown in 2 Cor. 9. He that sowed sparingly should reap also sparingly, and he that sowed bountifully should reap also bountifully. God was able to make all grace abound towards the saints, so that they, having all sufficiency in all things, might abound in every good work, &c. These blessings were not given with the object of making the saints comfortable in this world, but that they might be enriched in everything unto all bountifulness; that they might have to give to him that needeth. (See vv. 5-11.)

May the Lord greatly stir up His assemblies in this grace, giving them opportunities of showing this grace to their brethren in other assemblies, and in perhaps distant lands!

But there is one point more in regard to assembly giving, which cannot be passed over, and that is the **care of the laborers**. The special gifts that Christ has given to the church to carry out the gospel to the world, and to build up and feed the saints, are the evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11, 12). Such passages as 1 Cor. 9:1-19; Gal. 6:6-10; Phil. 4:10-19, bring before the saints these as special objects of the Lord's care. In Israel's economy the Levite was to be specially cared for by the people giving their tithes to him. In the Christian

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economy there is no stated rule; only special principles are given to be carried out by the motive power of the love of Christ. These servants of Christ were figured as out on a warfare, planting a vineyard, feeding a flock. Did anyone go out on a warfare at his own charges? Did anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Did anyone feed the flock and not drink the milk of it? Besides, as the law said, You must not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. Those who ministered at the altar ate of the things of the altar: so had the Lord ordained that they who preached the gospel should live of the gospel. For though the apostle glorified in preaching the gospel without charge, and that he might give no occasion labored with his own hands, yet he thus puts the need of Christ's servants before the saints as objects for their care.

So in Gal. 6:6: Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. In the Philippian epistle we have a sweet instance of how an assembly cared for the apostle Paul from the very first (Phil. 4:15). He had hardly left before he received at Thessalonica a love-gift to supply his need. And now they had been helping him again when a prisoner at Rome; and he writes to them full of love and thankfulness for their care. Epaphroditus had been their messenger to carry the gift to the apostle, and in doing so he had apparently been sick nigh unto death. (See Phil. 2:29, 30.) Is not this a wonderful picture of reciprocal love between the assemblies in the apostles' days, and the laboring servants of the Lord? This was no cold formal putting so much into the money-box every week for unknown laborers, or giving so much into the ministers' fund; but the assembly had the need of the laborer on their heart, and their own messenger (perhaps going naturally to Paul at the time) conveyed it. Such a thing was an odor of a sweet smell, acceptable, well-pleasing to God. Thus we have three things specially connected with assembly giving:

- 1st. God's provision for the local poor in each place;
- 2nd. the special need of poor saints in an assembly in another place;
- 3rd. the provision for the servants of God.

May the Lord graciously use this little paper to stir up His saints as to the principles of giving, both individually and in the assembly! It is, I believe, greatly needed amongst the saints at the present time. Many of God's servants going about find that what is eating out the very life of many assemblies is covetousness on the one hand; then often, when God does not prosper saints in their ways of making money, and they get into debt, they plan all sorts of schemes of getting out of it, which are not of God. I believe the great corrective to this is to know God's principle, of giving, which, if carried out, would correct this evil tendency; and consequently health and blessing would flow in to the saints. It is remarkable that the very first sin which had to be judged,



after Israel entered the land of Canaan, was the sin of covetousness. Beloved readers, saints of God, have we considered this enough? But surely it is most significant. Covetousness, as defined by the Lord in Luke 12, is it not this? -- man laying up "treasure for himself and is not rich towards God."

*The Bible Treasury* 12:299-304.

## *Comments by W. Kelly*

### *on 1 Cor. 16:1-3*

Another and a very different topic claimed the service of the apostle, because it fell under the Lord's care for the church. It might seem wholly a matter for the saints; but experience itself proves how much they need in it the guidance of the Spirit through the written word. Hence pretension to superior spirituality here, as elsewhere, sinks below the instincts of love, and the dictates of every sound mind. How blessed to have the regulating wisdom of God, who deigns to give us His mind even for the smallest things of this life!

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so do ye also. Every first of a week let each of you put by him, storing up whatever he may be prospered in, that there be no collections when I come. And when I am arrived, whomsoever ye shall approve, them I will send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem; and, if it be suitable that I go, they shall go with me (1 Cor. 16:1-4).

It is untrue that the assemblies were left without apostolic regulation, or that they were regulated differently. The snares and the circumstances of Galatia were as unlike those of Corinth as could be conceived; the directions given by the apostle were the same, and this, not merely on matters of the most momentous significance, as sound doctrine, and holy discipline, and the attesting institutions of Christ, so that the worship and public ways of the saints might present the same testimony everywhere, but here, as we see, even in the exercise of their liberality.

One cannot overlook the frequent remembrance of the poor saints at Jerusalem; and no doubt there were circumstances which gave them a special claim. Probably external distress prevailed, and persecution had left some widows and orphans. Not only were the believers very numerous there, but there only, so far as we read, had they sold their possessions and substance, so as to distribute to all, as any one had need; there only not one said that anything of what he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them, so that none was in want. But there, partly through this surprising testimony of

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unselfish love, poverty prevailed later; and none among the Gentile assemblies was so urgent as our apostle that relief should be sent for the brethren in Judea, not merely during the great famine under Claudius Caesar, but thenceforward, as we may gather from 1 and 2 Corinthians, as well as Romans. (Cf. Gal. 2:10; Acts 24:17.)

Still a general principle and practice we find laid down of the highest value for any time. The collection for the saints was bound up with the solemn and gracious associations of the first, or resurrection, day. It was to proceed regularly, not occasionally; it was to be done with conscience, according as any might be prospered, not under influence, or pressure, or haste, still less with indifference, or on mere human grounds. Thus faith and love would be called out, and healthfully applied, while waiting for the coming of the Lord. It seems that each was to lay aside at home what he judged according to the means given; but the mention of the first of the week, or Lord's day, points to then joining their contribution, when they came together, as every disciple did, to break bread. This is truly to lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupteth, and where thieves do not dig through or steal.

Again, the apostle was careful to leave no room for evil surmise or appearance; and so he here indicates a fresh application of the apostolic wisdom which we see in Acts 6. The multitude chose their own administrators. They contributed the funds, and they, not the apostles, chose men in whom they had confidence to dispense them. (See also 2 Cor. 9.) As the church cannot impart a spiritual power, so the Lord alone gave gifts for the ministry or service of souls (Rom. 10, 12; 1 Cor. 12 ; Eph. 4). The apostles, personally or by delegate (as Titus), chose elders, being the chiefs of that authority of which the presbyters were the ordinary representatives locally (Acts 14; Titus 2). Everything in the church rests on its own proper ground. Here, then, the apostle promises on his arrival to send with letters whomsoever they should approve to bring their bounty unto Jerusalem.

But the letters were to be his, not theirs as the Authorised Version says, following the mistake of the Vulgate, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, and the Text. Rec., which punctuates wrongly in consequence. For what would be the sense of their approving by their letters when the apostle came? The Corinthians really were to select whom they approved, and Paul, on arriving, would send them on, furnished with letters from himself. So too the Greek commentators understood.

W. Kelly, *Notes on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, London: Morrish, pp. 289-290, n.d.

## *Some Answers to Questions*

*by C. H. Mackintosh*

We most assuredly believe that the collection at the Lord's table is an integral and most blessed part of the worship and communion of the assembly. Some, we are sorry to say, look upon it as an interruption: but we cannot so regard it. We believe 1 Cor. 16:2 is the divine authority for the collection on the first day of the week. The inspired apostle had been dwelling upon the most sublime and precious truth at the close of ch. 15, and we may be sure he deemed it no interruption to communion or worship to pen the words, "Now concerning the collection." Why should we deem it an interruption, when the Lord puts, as it were, His box or basket into our hands, and asks us to contribute to His cause? It is the most suited opportunity we have, as an assembly, of so doing. Besides, it is morally comely -- yea, it is simple righteousness -- to contribute. How is the rent to be paid? How are all the expenses to be met? And then the Lord's poor, and the Lord's work at home and abroad. How are these to be met? Is it not a holy privilege for all to have fellowship? And what more suited occasion than when we are seated at the table of our Lord, feasting, in holy communion, upon the rich provision of His love? Some may, perhaps, object that the words, "Let everyone of you lay by him in store," militate against the idea of a public collection. But why say, "on the first day of the week" if it were merely a private matter? We believe that laying by in store sets forth the calm, deliberate, devoted nature of the offering. We should determine, before the Lord in secret, what we are able to give; and then in the public assembly, in full communion, deposit our offering in the Lord's treasury, remembering that His eye is upon us. We greatly fear, dear friend, that some of us are sadly deficient in reference to the collection. We forget the words, "*everyone* of you," and "as God hath prospered him." We come and avail ourselves of the room and its accommodation -- the assembly and its privileges; but we do not consider how all these things are to be provided. And this is simply taking the very lowest possible view of the matter. Were we merely to view it as a question of common righteousness, we are morally bound to contribute, according to our means, to the expenses of the place where we meet, and where we enjoy the very richest and rarest privileges that Christians can taste upon earth. We have no right to suppose that one, or two, or more wealthy members of the assembly will defray all the expenses. To act on such a supposition as this is to deny our individual responsibility, and surrender a most precious privilege. We have long felt that, did we only consider that the box on the Lord's table is His treasury, out of which He pays the rent of the room for His people to meet in, and out of which He would meet the need of His poor, and the demands of His work, we should have more correct ideas "concerning the collection." No doubt, those

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who take it upon them to manage the Lord's money need much grace and wisdom; and they should seek to act in full fellowship with grave and godly brethren in the distribution of the offerings of the assembly. All this is most important; but for any one to assert that the collection at the Lord's table is an interruption to worship and communion, is, in our judgment, a very doubtful evidence of spirituality of mind, or largeness of heart.

*Things New and Old* 19:27, 28.

Scripture is silent as to such details, and hence we cannot lay down any rule; but we may give our judgment, which must go for what it is worth. The money collected at the Lord's table belongs to Him {1 Cor. 16:1-3}; and we believe He expects that those who take charge of it shall be wise, gracious, and faithful in their stewardship. No one individual should take upon himself the exclusive management of such solemn and important business. There should be full loving conference and fellowship on the part of those in whom the assembly can place confidence. Those who have charge of the money should keep an accurate account of the collection and expenditure of each week; and this account should not only be open to the inspection of the brethren, but it should be, from time to time, duly laid before them.

As to the objects to which the Lord's money should be applied, there need be no difficulty. All righteous claims on the assembly should first be met -- for we must be just before we are generous; then the Lord's poor should be attended to; and finally, His work in its various departments, as may be agreed upon in conference.

We cannot but judge, dear friend, that we all need to have our hearts stirred up, our understanding enlightened, and our consciences exercised as to the matter of the collection. We do not give as we might and as we ought. Our hearts are narrow, and our notions crude. We can find means during the week for a good deal of self-indulgence, for the purchase of many things which we could do without, and yet when the Lord puts His box into our hands at His table, our offerings are poor indeed. Then we are troubled with crotchets and questions which ought never to be heard among spiritual or even sensible people. The collection at the Lord's table, on the Lord's day, is a beautiful and an integral part of our worship. It is *the* special occasion in which we can, in holy fellowship, pour our offerings into His treasury. We greatly dislike boxes placed at the door when the public are admitted to hear the word of God. It seems to us very much like setting a man to stand with a box or plate in order to collect money from all who pass in. But this is only our judgment.

*Things New and Old* 19:279, 280.

## *Some Comments*

*by J. N. Darby*

An assembly would be to blame if they knew an evangelist laboring, and did not assist him. They would be losing one of their privileges. The Philippians were very forward to do it, and so it was now with some. Perhaps it might be to help some other gift, and in another place. I think that is a most happy thing to find, and would not only have blessing on the one side, but on the other. Locality makes no difference. An evangelist is a servant of Christ, not of the assembly. In Philippians, “now at the last your care of me” is a beautiful expression of the delicacy of the feeling of the apostle; they had left him a long while, or he says so, and then adds, “but ye lacked opportunity.” If things were right in an assembly, all this would be done happily. In many places there are collections at times for brothers at work at home and abroad, which is all very right too. I did not mean that the assembly should not together assist, but that it should not have a control of the preacher in any way; he is responsible to the Lord, and not the assembly’s servant. On the other hand, if they knew any reason for not sending to him, they would be bound not to help him.

*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 26:235.*

Do you trust the Lord as to your service as to the money? Do not seek to get money to give, but let it flow naturally, and give it under God’s guidance, in seeking His face as a responsible service. To stir up others to give is quite a distinct service. Merely referring to a particular want privately is another thing again. All right that assemblies should send to whomsoever they see in need or interested in the work. If I or any one feel disposed to give my money to you to give away for a good reason before the Lord, I am perfectly free to do it; perfect liberty as to both if done under divine guidance. Individuals are free, and so presented in scripture, and assemblies are free. There may be right motives or wrong ones for entrusting it to another to distribute. Do not seek it, though free of course to mention individual cases of need to any: but let the wisdom of love guide you in what you do receive. I have given all three ways -- directly, through a brother, and as in an assembly, and I have not seen anything to shake me in any of them as yet, having scriptural reasons I think for all.

*Letters of J. N. Darby 2:389.*



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