

### The Grace Of Giving.

Right reason, as well as Scripture, teaches us that the spirit and the motive of the giver is more important than the gift, and that the grace of giving must precede the act of giving, to secure divine approval. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." God judges our gifts and all our doings by our motives and purposes. What He chiefly cares for is not the gift, but the "willing mind." He loves the cheerful giver.

In our appeals to others for liberal giving, whether for purposes of private charity or in behalf of the great agencies of the Church, we should have respect, not merely to the amount of the gift, but to the spirit of the giver. He who can induce others to give much for good objects, does well, but he who prompts them to give cheerfully, does better. The blessedness of giving is much more apt to slip through our hands than the material contribution. The gifts are visible; the cheerfulness of the giver's heart is an unseen thing. The fear or favor of man may urge us forward to the liberal act, but the love of Christ can alone win us over to the willing mind.

A revived, enlarged liberality and service such as are now required to put into successful motion the benevolent agencies of the Church, can only be the result of a quickened love and devotion in the hearts of the disciples of Christ. If Christians will open their hearts wide for the entrance and indwelling of the Holy Spirit; if they will so welcome the presence of Christ by faith, as to be filled with all the fulness of God—there must also follow as a necessary result the willing mind for giving and for doing; the cheerful, glad surrender of soul and body to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

### "Give Me thy Heart.."

Every generous act must be as Shakespeare says of "the quality of mercy," "not strained." No deed is admirable which is done by other constraint than the constraint of love. Innumerable songs have been written to bubbling fountains, but it is hard to compose an ode upon the town-pump. A silver cloud floating in the depths of a sapphire sky is a scene that kindles the fancy more than does a cable car dragged along by the clutch of "a grip."

Every really beautiful life is moving freely of its own volition toward some glorious end. No soldier lives in song who fights for a shilling a day instead of for a flag. The Christian life which comes up to the Bible ideal is one that is "given" to God, not one that is bought by promises or forced by fear.

There can be between Christ and the soul no pre-nuptial agreement by which certain reservations are settled and certain rights held back. Jesus Christ does not enter into any bargain which like a modern marriage requires four lawyers to execute the settlements before the vows are spoken. And yet there are people who wish to become Christian "provided" it does not forbid this, or exclude that, or shut out something else; just as the ardent lover is not too ardent nowadays, but reserves his club rights before assuming the responsibilities of a husband. The lover who calculates too exactly the cost of a wedding-ring is not likely to make the best benedict. In all real love there must be a certain abandon and courage else it will be found pinchbeck and not gold.

The Christian life is far from being a joint-stock company with "limited" liabilities as to the stockholders. It must be all or nothing. Christ's soldiers are not militia whose duties are bound by state lines, but regulars whose duty is wherever the flag is. It is this which makes the relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed so sacred. Relationships are tender in proportion to their intimacy. Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn stand leagues apart, robed in snow and jeweled with glaciers; but two hillocks on the prairie are found to run down to the same valley and into each other's embraces, garlanded with anemones in May and wild roses in June and golden-rod in October. The Christian life which consists in paying pew rent and a dollar a year for missions

brings little sweetness with it; but if one would know what that life really means let him give his whole heart to God, and his soul will blossom into song.

### The Evening Service.

Pastors and Sessions in many of our churches are often perplexed as to what shall be done to get the people out to the evening service. There is a sad indifference to the second service, and that it ought to be removed goes without saying. It is not, however, confined to the world's people, but characterizes those who wear the name of Christ. Go into many of our churches on the Sabbath night, and how few, comparatively speaking, of the members of the church are present. Why is it? The people in one community may say that the pastor is responsible, because he fails to make the service attractive, but if this be so, why is it that in scores of other communities the same state of things prevails, where pastors whose pulpit powers cannot be discounted, endeavor to make this service interesting? Pastors may be in some case responsible for lack of popular interest in the Sabbath evening service—they may not exhibit a sufficient degree of interest in it themselves—but we are persuaded that no small measure of responsibility rests with Christian people themselves. A great many of them have in some way come to feel that one service on the Sabbath is sufficient for them. Hence their pews are vacant at the night service, and the result is that the interest in the second service is very seriously diminished upon the part of the public in general.

Can a minister be justly criticised, if, under such circumstances, he begins to exhibit less interest in the evening than in the morning service? He certainly cannot be expected to take a lively interest in "a beggarly account of empty benches." If all the communicant members who can possibly attend should regularly turn out to the evening service, the effect in every direction would be most inspiring and beneficial. They can do it, and they ought to feel that the interests of their church and of the cause of the Master require it at their hands. How this delinquency was cured in a certain church, is tersely exhibited in the following statement, which we commend to the earnest attention of all our readers:

"The evening service on Sunday in a certain congregation was poorly attended. People thought they could not come out twice on a Sunday to church. The officers talked the matter over. Their talk resulted in a pledge to each other that they would never absent themselves willingly from the evening service, and that they would urge every one they saw to plan a second attendance. The parents talked it over. They found that their children were not in the habit of spending the evening religiously or profitably, and they determined to set them an example of an earnest devotion to spiritual concerns. They began going twice a day the Sabbath after. The young men talked it over. They concluded that it was their duty to attend both services, and to bring at least one young man apiece with them. The young ladies talked it over. They thought that if they could go to a concert or party at night, it could not do any harm to be at church after sunset. They decided that they would go regularly, and take each a young woman with them. The minister did not know what to make of it. He began to flatter himself that he was a latent Spurgeon. The attendance was increasing every week. Strangers seeing the direction of the crowd, followed. It became the most popular church in the city."—*Mid-Continent*.

### The Young Man and the Church.

The closeness of the relation of the young man to the Church is measured by the closeness of the relation of the Church to the young man. It is a reciprocal arrangement; in all relations there must be mutuality, and the strength of the tie which binds on one side is determined by the tenacity with which it holds on the other.

Take the condition of the emancipated young man, the man who passes from his home to a strange community and is there confronted with the problem of Church connection. When at home he may have belonged to the Church, constrained thereto at an early age by the presence of parental influence. To him Church attendance had probably become a habit, a perfunctory duty, a necessary sequence to his Sunday breakfast. When, however, on the verge of manhood