

able piece of gold, but it was given so ill-temperedly, that the negro answered again, "No! dat won't do yet! It may be according to de first and second resolutions, but it is not according to de last;" and he was obliged to take up his coin again. Still angry at himself and all the rest, he sat a long time, till nearly all were gone, and then came up to the table, and with a smile on his face, and very willingly, gave a large sum to the treasurer. "Very well," said the negro, "dat will do, dat's according to all de resolutions."

1. All acceptable giving should proceed from a sense of *duty*. This seems but a cold word, yet it implies all that gives moral value to any act. Give because you ought to give. Not for that reason alone, but for that reason as the full and sufficient one. When a sense of obligation is wanting giving will be spasmodic, and out of proportion. The very highest motive should inspire our liberality. A Russian soldier, one very cold night, kept duty between one sentry box and another. A poor working man, moved with pity, took off his coat and lent it to the soldier to keep him warm, adding, that he should soon reach home while the soldier would be exposed out of doors for the night. The cold was so intense that the soldier was found dead in the morning. Some time afterward the poor peasant was laid on his deathbed, and in a dream saw Jesus appear to him. "You have got my coat on," said he to the Saviour. "Yes," was the reply, "it is the coat you lent me that cold night when I was on duty and you passed by. I was naked and you clothed me." The story illustrates this truth that every generous act done for Christ's sake is accepted as done to Him. Where the love of Christ constrains, gifts flow freely.

2. Along with a sense of duty there should be an appreciation of the *privilege* of giving. This aspect of duty is to little regarded. Men give because others do, or because the object appeals at the moment to their sympathies, or from a variety of other motives, some worthy, others the reverse, but they seldom consider that a favor is offered every time they have the opportunity and the means to exercise liberality. They will readily assent to the view that the Sabbath, Divine service, prayer, praise, Christian liberty, &c., are privileges, but they are not accustomed to rank with these "min-

istering to the Lord of our substance." (Luke 8: 3.) Yet the use of our temporal blessings for the relief of the poor and the extension of Christ's kingdom is just as truly a personal service to Christ as that rendered by Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others to Jesus himself. An eloquent preacher has said, "The poor man is, as it were, an altar; if we bring our alms and lay them upon it, with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

"Dost thou not know? hast thou not understood?
The stagnant pool breeds pestilence, disease;
The hurrying stream brings bounty on its tide.
Pass on thy gold, a messenger of good;
Swift let it speed on gracious ministries;
Wing it with love and let its flight be wide."

In no other form of service can we wield a wider influence for good or receive richer blessings in our own souls.

3. Where giving is not a *delight* the full measure of blessing cannot accompany it. Yet the duty is so contrary to the impulses of the natural man that real joy in giving comes only with ripened Christian character and frequent practice. Dr. Parkhurst, says, "Giving cannot be left to impulse any more than spelling can be left to impulse. We have seen what might be called *impulsive spellers*, and they make just the same wretched work with orthography that impulse-giving makes with charity." Learning liberality is like learning a foreign language. One only reads and speaks it with pleasure after much painstaking study and practice. Until that degree of proficiency is reached, only a sense of duty or hope of future benefits will keep one at it. Too many are like *idle and impulsive students*, they will not keep up their practice and rarely experience the happiness which consecrated benevolence brings. A poor blind woman in Paris put twenty-seven francs into the plate at a missionary meeting. "You cannot afford so much," said one. "Yes, sir, I can," she answered. On being pressed to explain, she said: "I am blind, and I said to my fellow straw-workers: 'How much money do you spend in a year for oil in your lamps when it is too dark to work nights?' They replied: 'Twenty-seven francs.' 'So,' said the poor woman, 'I found that I saved so much in the year because I am blind, and do not need a lamp, and I give it to shed light to the dark heathen lands.' Surely her giving