

they all;”—not a larger sum absolutely, but a larger sum in *proportion to her means*. “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not, that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an *equality*, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want; that there may be equality; as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack” (2 Cor. viii. 12-15).—This equality is secured, by maintaining a fair and just proportion between our *givings to God, and our receivings from God*. By acting on this principle, “the rich and poor meet together” on a footing of perfect equality; and if this principle were generally and uniformly carried out by the members of the Church, there is no doubt that, without burdening any one, far more than we have yet attempted might easily be done for the cause of God, and the extension of his blessed kingdom.

3. *The MOTIVE for giving.*

The motive presented in this narrative is, that *Christ is our witness*. He still, as in the ancient temple, “sits over against the treasury, and beholds how the people cast money into the treasury” (Mark xii 41). He observes, not only the amount of our contributions, but also the *spirit* in which they are given.—We may escape the notice of our fellow-men, and they have no right to judge of our circumstances, or to question our generosity—but we cannot elude the glance of that All-seeing eye, which observes, not only the outward action, but also the secret motive that prompts it. If we could all realize this solemn truth,—the presence and inspection of a heart-searching Witness,—would it not increase our liberality? and would it not also render us more careful to give from a right motive, in simplicity and godly sincerity, with a single eye to his glory, and a sincere regard to the welfare of precious souls? When we cast our offerings into the Lord’s treasury, his piercing eye is upon us; and he knows whether or not we are giving in proportion to our means,—whether we are giving grudgingly or cheerfully,—whether for the sake of appearance or from a sense of duty to him. Does he behold any poor widow shewing practically, from week to week, or from month to month, that she is resolved rather to deny herself, than that the Lord’s treasury should be empty?

If so, then, whatever worldly men may think or say, the Son of God looks upon her with high satisfaction and approval, and says, “*She hath done what she could*”—“Of a truth I say unto you, she hath cast in more than they all.” Or, does he behold another, in better circumstances, who, though once slightly impressed with a sense of his duty in this matter, now feels it weighing upon his conscience, with all the force of an imperative obligation, and who is resolved henceforth to give more liberally to God, out of that which God has given to him:—then to such the Lord says, “If ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*.” Consider your obligations to redeeming love and mercy.—“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.” Therefore imitate his example.—“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;” and remember, that the least act of kindness to a brother, even the cup of cold water given from love to Christ, shall in no wise lose its reward. And though the true reward is not of debt but of grace, yet that reward shall be proportioned to our services here. “This I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. ix. 6).

We conclude by putting the following case:—Suppose that a wealthy and generous monarch were to distribute a great part of his royal treasures among a thousand of his subjects;—giving to one man £10 a year, to another £20, to another £50, to another £100, and to another £1000—“to each man according to his several ability.” Surely it might be expected that the recipients of his bounty would feel gratitude for the boon, and would strive, by every means in their power, to give practical evidence of their love and loyalty. Suppose, farther, that this generous monarch is threatened with a foreign invasion, which renders it necessary for him to increase his army, and send forth ambassadors of peace; then to whom might he be expected to apply for the requisite aid in such an emergency? Surely his first application would be made to those whom he had supported and enriched; and it might reasonably be expected that they would be the very first to come to their soc-