

your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." The emphasis is on this grace of giving. It is the highest up, hence the stream must rise higher in the reservoir, in order to supply this grace, than the others he has mentioned; in other words, faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, love, all lie on a lower level than unselfish giving. In a sense, all imparted grace is in order to the imparting.

He who in anything lives to get, defeats God's order. The end of all getting is giving; and God has connected giving with growing.

3. The practical test of the reality and vitality of love. (2 Cor. viii: 8.) The grand question is whether love is a gush of sentiment or a law of life. Dr. Judson said that his hand was shaken nearly off and his hair almost clipped from his head by those who would let missions die for want of aid. A great deal of impression and conviction wastes through sentimentalism. It is vain to sing "Send Thy word and let it fly," unless we give something to make it fly.

(a) Love is practically tested by self-sacrifice. (b) Its sacrifice, however, must be voluntary, not obligatory. Love knows no debt but love, and acts from privilege, not from cold duty.

4. The image of Christliness. (2 Cor. viii: 9.) Here is put before us the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. This motive includes two things:

(a) The law of self-denial. We are to consider what Christ gave up, and what He took, and, taking up our cross, follow Him. He died for all, that we which live should not henceforth live unto ourselves; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

(b) The law of gratitude. Appreciating His self-denial for us, and His identification with the least of His suffering saints, our gratitude for what He has done for us should impel us to similar sacrifice for the sake of other members of His mystical body.

5. The good name of the brotherhood. (See 2 Cor. viii: 21-24.) The churches form one fraternity, bound by living links. Paul had undertaken, in behalf of Corinth, to pledge their aid in this emergency; hence, the good name of the church and of the apostle was involved. It was necessary that they should make a fitting contribution:

(a) To show their fellowship with their brethren. (b) To justify the reasonable hope of the apostle. (c) To fulfill the obligations which he had assumed as their representative.

6. The contagion of a true zeal. (2 Cor. ix: 2.) All good example insensibly influences others. Faith, courage, enthusiasm, generosity, are contagious; so is meanness. Every man is responsible for the evil that hides behind his own unfaithfulness. A whole congregation may wait for one man who refuses to do his duty, or may be inspired and stimulated by one pious, faithful, prayerful example.