

### The Principles of Christian Giving.

Giving, in the broad sense of the term, is, certainly, one of the most important of all religious duties. It squarely antagonizes that native selfishness which is one of the roots of sin. It severely tests the religious man's love of his neighbor, to see whether this can overcome the intense natural love of property. Accordingly, we are not surprised at John the Baptist's answer to the multitudes, when they asked: "What, then, must we do?" His subsequent replies to publicans and soldiers are sharply specific, and help us to understand that the first reply to the multitudes is also intended to be specific. He does not undertake to state all the duties which will give proof of repentance, but to present one that forms a characteristic and discriminating test: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise." (Luke iii.) To give to the needy, even when only a little less needy ourselves, is an elementary duty of piety, and a sharp test of its reality.

The Old Testament, which generally deals in rules, being therein suited to the childhood and youth of humanity, laid down a definite rule for religious giving, namely, the law of the tenth. The New Testament, designed to produce and maintain Christian maturity, does not present any particular rule for giving, but lays down general principles, illustrated by striking examples.

A most instructive example of Christian giving is afforded by the grand contribution which Paul gathered among the Gentile churches for the relief of the Christian poor at Jerusalem, as described in his Epistles to the Corinthians. The Jewish poor in the Holy City often received contributions from their prosperous brethren. Let us select some of the lessons which may be learned from this great collection:

1. It is right to give for the benefit of persons in foreign countries and of alien race. Christianity has so far softened the jealousies of nationality and race, that the duty of disregarding these in Christian giving has fortunately become a commonplace of our teaching, though it still needs to be often and earnestly enforced.

2. It is right for the most zealous preachers of the Gospel to spend much time and labour in organizing and adminis-

tering general religious contributions. They ought to have helpers, as the apostles wished the seven to help them (Acts vi.), and as Paul was aided by Titus, Timothy and others. But Paul did not think it incompatible with his own zeal as a preacher to work personally in gathering such a collection, and to make special instruction and appeal as to giving a part of his inspired epistles.

3. It is right to observe system in religious giving. System is necessary in every other department of life, in business, in the household, in study, in all personal habits; and it certainly ought to be fully employed in a matter so important as giving. Paul designated a system for the churches in Galatia and Achaia in regard to this great collection, which system becomes a valuable example for all times and undertakings. He did not say, as is often imagined, that a collection must be made in the church service on the first day of the week, but (1 Cor. xvi. 2) that "every one must lay by him in store," which evidently means at home; thus each one should gradually gather a private fund from these weekly additions, and would have it ready when the apostle came. To regard this as a law for literal observance among Christians of all ages, would be out of the question; and, as a law, it would not be strictly obeyed by weekly contributions in church; but it is a most suggestive and impressive example of systematic giving on the first day of the week.—*Rev. J. A. Broadus, D. D.*

### Bitter Words.

A single word may disquiet an entire family for a whole day. One surly glance casts a gloom over the household, while a smile, like a gleam of sunshine, may light up the darkest and weariest hour. Like unexpected flowers which spring along our path, full of freshness, fragrance and beauty, so kind words and gentle and sweet dispositions make glad the hardest spot called home. No matter how tumble the abode, if it be sweetened with kindness and smiles, the heart will turn lovingly towards it from all the tumults of the world; and home, if it be ever so homely, will be the dearest spot beneath the circuit of the sun.

Do not wait till you be holy ere you cast your confidence on the Saviour; but cast your confidence on him now, and you shall be made holy.