

sity laid upon us: "Let every one lay by him in store as the Lord has prospered him." Here is seen the danger of covetousness and the duty of giving. The one unfits us for an entrance into the Kingdom of God; the other assures of God's constant blessings. The existence of this sin of covetousness is an insidious evil in our present time. The trend and spirit of the age tend to make that which is material and sensuous permanent, and thus to encourage the growth of a covetous spirit. To get into the current of this worldliness will soon lead us to look upon all the gifts of benevolence, as the poor, deluded, misguided Judas looked upon the ointment that was devoted to his Master as nothing but waste. His covetous nature could not see that there was no waste in the gifts of love. We are glad to know, however, that Judas does not hold all the treasures of the earth, and that his covetous spirit is being relegated to the mediæval ages. The man to-day is a back number who will enquire of love's behest, "Why this waste?"

It is as evident as the shining sun that the cause of God cannot prosper without the gifts of his children, and it is also true that we cannot afford to refuse the giving of our substance without impoverishing ourselves, as well as the cause of Christ. We must not forget that there is a withholding more than is meet that tendeth to poverty. The blessings of God are bountiful. We are under lasting obligations to recognize this fact by bestowing our gifts. We should give because we have received, and bless because we have been blessed, and love because we have been loved. "Freely you have received, freely give." The love of God is seen in the gift of his own Son. "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." The gospel puts this peerless example before us, and surely not to reciprocate such unbounded love by bestowing our gifts would prove us to be out-and-out ingrates.

The poverty and miseries of life can all be traced to the failure in this issue. It is not only needless to be poor, but, as another has said, "a sign of sinfulness." We will find that those who are really deprived of the blessing of life, somewhere, in some way, and at some time, have withheld their hearts and their gifts from God. There may, possibly, be exceptions, but this is true, as a rule. "Give and it shall be given." "He who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully." These and many like promises are sure and cannot fail. Herein we are justified in saying that he who does not appreciate his gifts to God cannot receive gifts from God. The one talent servant proves, beyond a doubt, that not to use our gifts is to lose them. The rich fool found to his sorrow that saving his property was a losing business: It costs nothing to present our gifts compared to what it costs to withhold them. What is the loss of all the riches of a world compared to the loss of a soul? But awfully true it is, that he who saves his life shall lose it."

A gospel that cost nothing is worth nothing. The gospel that we enjoy to-day cost the life of the Son of God, and has cost untold and nameless sacrifices of God's children.

We need to-day to show and to emphasize this true idea of life. Why teachers and preachers do not wake up and declare the whole truth concerning this matter is both surprising and alarming. We never need expect the promised prosperity of the cause until the church is alive to the duty of "Christian giving." It may be, as D. S. Gregory says: "That we ought not to say 'Christian giving,' for the time is fast coming—if indeed it has not already come—when that expression must be abandoned. We cannot give to any one what already belongs to him. The Christian cannot, strictly speaking, give to Christ what is already his own by every possible title. We should speak rather of the Christian's use of wealth as the steward of Christ in the kingdom of God."

What is the scriptural, primitive system of giving, as followed by the Apostolic church? It is not the modern system of begging, where our gifts are drawn from us by the force of some earnest solicitor, nor the "grab-bag" device, nor other pathetic "pie and cake" appeals, but to give as the Lord has prospered us on every first day of the week. (See I Cor. xvi. 2). This Apostolic rule has no particular amount given. But if we take the Apostolic teaching as our rule, why not take their lives as our example? They parted with all they had. They considered what they had was not their own, but belonged to their Master. Their utmost ability was the measure of their giving. The measure of our love for God and his cause will determine the amount we give. If we have no love in our hearts there will be no gifts in the treasury. If we have a ten-cent love, there will be ten cents in the contribution. Our love and devotion to God must be measured by the sacrifice we make for him. If we consider the Apostolic life and teaching a sufficient rule for our age, and we certainly should, then we need a radical reformation in our stewardship, both in the proportion and the system of our giving.

The importance and necessity of consecrating and appropriating our gifts to the Lord should be especially emphasized in our teaching and praying until all are made to see and realize, that to fail in giving as the Lord has prospered us is really repudiating our Master, and breaking our vows and surrendering our hope of salvation.

Providence, history and the Word of God abound with momentous facts, which show that the withholding our gifts is idolatry, and that God despises it in us to-day as much as he did in Ananias and Sapphira.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

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This is getting to be a rather old subject, but it is still a very live one. It is very much, every way, before the minds of men to-day, and claiming and receiving more attention than ever before. There is also a wonderful change in the spirit of its treatment during the last few years. Thought and feeling and sentiment have ripened and matured until little or none of the bitterness of earlier discussions remains.

A few words now, on this subject, need not be new to be profitable in keeping the great interests involved before the minds and

in the hearts of the people. Two questions are pertinent. What is Christian Union? and, How can it be brought about?

The fact that this is a subject of divine consideration, gives it immortality. It was of so much importance that the Holy Son of God makes it the burden of prayer as He saw the cross draw near and looked down the coming ages to see the future of His Church and cause among men in the earth. Prophets and apostles have made it the subject of rapturous song, and faithful warnings and admonitions. The sin and evils of division are clearly pointed out and condemned, and God's will and our duty in this matter are faithfully set forth and enjoined. What an interest, therefore, the subject must have to every lover of God and men, to every disciple of Christ and student of God's Word! What then is Christian Union?

1. First, it must be union. This it is that Christ prayed for. This is what the apostles taught. This is what the church to-day lacks. This is what the world needs. Recognizing some lack in this direction we have tried various experiments, but all have failed. We have tried "alliances" and "associations." We have preached "toleration" and "charity." We have cultivated "inter-denominational fellowship," and have held great "union meetings" and "conventions." These have done some good. They have moved in the right direction, but they have not yet reached the end for which the Master prayed. They are themselves sufficient evidence of the lack they attempt to supply. They fall short of being Christian Union. Nothing is union but union. Union is not federation or alliance of separate bodies. Union is becoming one. This alone is Christian Union.

2. Second, it must be Christian. Christian Union, of course, must be Christian. That means much. It is union in Christ. It means more than alliance of still separate bodies for a common end. It is ceasing to be separate bodies and becoming one in Christ Jesus. It is not a union of sects, but the blotting out of all sectarian lines, and all that goes to make and maintain sects. For what is Christian is not sectarian. No sect can claim any exclusive interests in what is the common inheritance of every true child of God. Whatever is of God is not sectarian. God himself is not a sectarian God. Jesus Christ is not a sectarian Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a sectarian or denominational Spirit. The Holy Bible is not a sectarian Bible. The Church of Christ is not a sectarian Church. If all this be true, then it follows, as the night the day, that whatever is sectarian is not Christian. Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. The words sectarian and Christian are not synonymous. They mutually exclude one another. Christian Union, therefore, is union that is wholly in Christ, and that excludes what ever is not of Christ. In such a union Christ is everything and everything is Christian. All that is of human origin or invention is excluded. Christ is all and in all. Such union is union and it is Christian.