

caprice. (c) It should be from habit ; constant and systematic, and not simply occasional. (d) Giving should be the fruit of deliberate choice, not of hasty decision. (e) And, finally, it should be with cheerfulness, and never with reluctance.

In this way our gifts to the Lord will not be dependent for their regularity or sufficiency upon the state of the weather when the collection is taken, or the happy manner in which the cause may be presented, or the feeling which may actuate us at the time, or the amount of money we happen just then to have on hand. Such principles as these would lift our entire system of giving out of the mire of its present wretched inadequacy. Think of the certainty and satisfactoriness of such a system of giving in contrast with the uncertainty and precariousness of any other.

5. The law of quantity. How much shall I give? (2 Cor. ix: 6, 7.)

(a) This will differ with every individual's measure of knowledge, ability and Christian growth. (b) It will be according to how large a harvest he both desires and expects to reap. We cannot but think that this sixth verse has a deeper thought than that which lies on the surface. There is some sowing which we are justified in doing sparingly, while there are other fields so wide and so important that only he will sow with sparing hand who is governed by selfish greed. (c) The amount we give will be apportioned to the extremity and urgency of the need which appeals to us, and it is right that it should.

6. The law of quality. The spirit with which we give is far more important in God's eyes than the amount we bestow. (2 Cor. ix: 7.)

(a) Motive determines the quality of our gifts. The question is not how much have I given? but, How much did I mean to give and wish to give? If I give a five-dollar gold piece, where I intended to give a twenty-five cent silver piece, I get credit with God only for twenty-five cents. If I give under constraint I get credit only for what I would have given with the constraint removed ; hence, (b) My gifts must not be grudgingly bestowed ; (c) Nor of necessity ; that is, under compulsion ; (d) But cheerfully as unto the Lord, as His servant and steward. Thus it will be seen that the inward moral condition determines quality. There must be deliberate preference. Grief at parting with our possessions, constrained giving for the sake of respectability, reputation, social position, or the urgency and importunity of the appeal, vitiates the character of the gift. See Deut. xv: 10. To illustrate: if you give a hundred dollars because your neighbor has given the same, and you are too proud to seem behind him, you have given nothing; you have simply *bought* your own respectability. Again, if you give a hundred dollars to have your name appear in the published list of generous donors, you have given nothing; you have *paid* so much for popular applause. Again, if you give simply to get rid of an in-