

would be an immenso increase to all her funds. It would prove to be the solution of many of her financial difficulties.

We should also give *constantly* and *frequently* as the rule and habit of our lives; *prayerfully* like Cornelius (Acts x. 1-4, 31); *believingly, humbly*, "offering God the duty, but casting away the merit as a filthy rag;" *carefully* and *intelligently*, as the Lord's stewards, more careful how we lay out His money than if it was our own. "Every one who tries to do good bought to take the further pains of seeing that he is doing good."

III. How much we should Give.—There is no absolute or universal rule in the New Testament as to the amount we should give. "New Testament institutions appeal to a willing heart, more than to a legal mind." For our guidance, however, we know that, under a dispensation of inferior privilege, God claimed as His portion one-tenth at least of every man's means, besides accepting what he might choose to give as voluntary offerings. God would have us to give *proportionally* to our means;—as He has prospered us (1 Cor. xvi. 2; Matt. x. 8). We must do this *honestly*, remembering that it is with God, the Giver of all things, and the Searcher of hearts, that we have to do. "The tenth in straitened circumstances may be much to give, while the tenth in prosperity may be *very little*" (Luke xii. 48). Over and above our regular givings we should give thank-offerings for special mercies. There are some noble souls who are resolved "never to be rich while the cause of Christ is poor." Would that we all gave as those who realized that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us!

IV. The spirit in which we should give.—This is of far greater importance than either the method or the amount of our giving. We cannot please God, or bring a blessing to ourselves, by our giving, unless we give in a spirit of *willingness, cheerfulness, gratitude, and love* (1 Cor. xiii.). "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. vii. and viii.). The *quality* of our giving is the first thing, then the *quantity*. There should be no sense of bondage in connection with our giving, and no desire for mere imitation or competition. It is not our money itself God wants, but the money from *us*. He desires fruit that may abound to our account. "God yearns after men's hearts, not their money; He needs more of their grace than their giving." The first step in Christian giving is to give our own selves unto the Lord (2 Cor. viii. 5). "Whenever a man gives *himself* to any-

thing, it can command his *purse*." We dare not give in order to be saved, but we cannot give enough when we are saved, out of gratitude to Him who though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. It were an unworthy motive from which to give, but it should not be lost sight of, that those that do give are not losers thereby. It is a great mistake to assume that giving, if done in a right spirit, entails poverty. On the contrary, giving is a channel of blessing. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." There is a great reward to the Christian giver, both here and hereafter. Many texts of Scripture might be referred to to prove this (see Deut. viii. 10-18; Ps. xli. 1; Is. lviii. 6-11; Prov. iii. 9, 10, xi. 24, 25, xiii. 7, xiv. 21, xix. 17, xxii. 9, xxviii. 27; Mark x. 21; Luke vi. 38, xii. 33, 34; 2 Cor. ix. 6). Withholders are the losers; apart from withholding being an index of spiritual poverty, it is dangerous. It is well to "think as much about giving as about getting," for money may be kept to the owner's hurt. God provides outlets for it, in case it should drown us in perdition. Riches are dangerous, but giving takes the sting out of them (see Hag. i. 5-11; Prov. xxi. 13; Eccles. v. 13; Mark x. 23).

V. We should all Give.—Some seem to have an idea that it is only the rich who should give; but that is a great mistake. God would have us all to give. Every true source of happiness, every sanctifying influence, is open alike to rich and poor, to young and old. "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," says Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 2). The poor man is as responsible to God for the use of his one talent as the rich man is of his ten talents; and "the pence of the poor are as precious in God's sight as the pounds of the rich" (2 Cor. viii. 12). If the poor are not faithful in that which is little, God will not intrust him with more. The poor may be "in a proportionate sense, the most liberal," for their giving entails self-denial; and even if actually too poor to give any money, they may yet be rich in good works (Mark xii. 41-44). There are those who call themselves *poor*, when asked to give who spend much on personal or domestic comforts, and even luxuries, who deny themselves little or nothing; and yet who plead inability to give to God's cause. It were well if such would remember that in this matter they have to do with Him before whose eyes all things are naked and open. If we all realised our steward-