

Were this all the loss it would be a small matter, but many go away untouched either in conscience or in purse, some have been pleased or amused, some go away disgusted; while on the other hand this permanent rule of gospel giving has not been driven home to any heart, so that liberality 'as God hath prospered' is next to an impossibility, either in the present, or for the future.

At the present moment the existence of many well known societies depends entirely upon their paid travelling agents; discontinue these, and only a mere fraction would continue to be contributed. But let every Christian have a stated season to lay by in store as God hath prospered; let conscience under the eye of God make this the law of life, and then, "you give to each conscience an agent's commission, a pulpit to occupy, a sermon to preach, and a collection to take up every Sabbath." It is a simple law, any child can understand it; it is an effective law, for each conscience becomes a working agent, each man a conscientious treasurer; and it is a business like law, for every man will willingly and wisely give to each object in proportion to its importance. It is a miserable state of matters in any church when the members thereof never think of giving until they are driven to give some paltry sum by spasmodic lashing from some agent, or the minister; no wonder that to such members the very first symptoms of an appeal is the signal to tighten the purse string. Under the present make-shift practice, everything depends upon how the appeal is made, and the man who makes it; if the man is a popular speaker with full command over the feelings and passions of his audience, if he can tell a well painted tale of want, destitution, and misery, or if he can amuse people by a well told laughable story, then, judged by our common standard, the collection will be good.

So long as people wait to give until they are dunned, so long as people give because other people give, or because they have been amused into giving; so long will their giving be meagre, so long will it be unfelt, yea, so long will it be unblest. But when every man gives at some stated time from principle, and the measure of that God given blessing; when we lay by in store to meet the claims of God and man as a privilege; when we give because not only it is right, but an imperative duty, then, the liberality of the age will be large, felt, and blessed like to those giving and receiving; yea, then it will be worthy of reformed Protestant Christendom.

The Apostle wanted no man to give under the earnest influence of his eloquence; he did not wish any one to give a single cent because he was there; no! but he proclaims the law of God on the one hand, and the wants of his people on the other; and, having done so, he will not sink his ministry into a mere collectorship, but insists, and rightly, that "there be no gathering when I come." It is in such a way as this he would have conscience to scan, and to do its duty.

If men will give nothing until they are asked, this plan will make beggars; but, although in the present state of things many societies find it necessary to their very existence to have paid collecting agents, yet, there are two objections to the system: on the one hand, it is not the scriptural plan, and on the other, it absorbs, very often, a large per centage of the sum collected.