

decoration of a church in God's sight is the altar crowded with devout communicants, whose daily life is a living witness of His truth, and the sweetest music the singing of the little ones learning to love His house as their own home."

### "SOME RULES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING."

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(Concluded.)

(1) I will take St. Luke's version of the "Sermon on the Mount," given by the Lord to His disciples at an early stage of His earthly ministry, and covering three chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, v., vi., vii. Look there, and you will see that our blessed Lord has briefly covered many points in this matter of giving in the full utterance of the single text, "Give, and it shall be given unto you"; "good measure," as in the measure of the fabric in length; "pressed down," as in things that you can pack into a basket; "shaken together," as in a bushel of wheat, corn, or other grain; "running over," as in a fluid measure (St. Luke vi. 38).

(2) Next we have the words of the blessed apostle, St. Paul, who had before him the earlier Gospel writings, and who modestly affirms, when speaking apart from the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "I think I have the Spirit of Christ," to which we heartily respond, "O great apostle, saint, and martyr, thou hadst indeed." From these words we may pick out (of course, not out of any one particular passage, but from the general writings of this great apostle) some general rules somewhat after this sort:

I. Generally, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "This I say, he which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." So much for the general question of giving.

II. Then he comes to systematic and proportionate giving, and says, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (I. Cor. xvi. 2).

III. Then he comes to particularly defined objects for which Christian gifts are to be offered, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things (Gal. vi. 6). Offerings for support of the ministry," "As, therefore, we have opportunity let us do good unto all men, and especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. vi. 10). For this is a fact, whether men like it or whether they do not; whether they know it or whether they do not; whether they hold it from their inner sense or whether they do not, that God has made them

stewards of the things which they possess, be they large or be they small, and we are charged to ask of them to give offerings of these things for His holy Church, for the enterprises which that Church is obliged to undertake in His name, parochial, diocesan, foreign. Now let us analyze these, and get down into the practical working of these points.

(1) I would say in the first place that Christian giving should be liberal, if a liberal reward is to be looked for here and hereafter, and, if you say that is a very inferior motive, I reply, if it stands by itself, and there is no other, it is, certainly, but if it is one among many higher than itself it is recognized in Holy Scripture as the passage quoted, II. Cor. ix. 6. Know we not that it is written that Moses had "respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 26)? and if our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ touches himself upon the question of reward, as the Sermon on the Mount indicates, and His apostle as we have seen, then there will be no blame attaching to us if we also "have respect unto the recompense of the reward," and give liberally because for this and other better reasons it is promised that we shall receive liberally.

(2) Then secondly, Christian giving must not be that doleful, regretful, compulsory thing which, alas, so often it is, where one looks, if he does not say, "Yes, I will give, but I would much rather you had not asked me," or "Yes, I will give, I suppose I must," or "Yes, I will give, but do not come to me any more." This is the language of the worldling. This is not the language of those who are "bought with a price," and who realize before God that all they have and all they are comes from the "Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift." Anyone who so thinks or speaks has tarnished his gift; has spoiled his gift; has made his blessed Lord turn with displeasure from a gift so proffered. I do not care if it is a gift up in the hundreds, or even thousands, if we give it in that spirit and way, God would rather that we would give the smallest coin that we have, and give it cheerfully, for "He loveth a cheerful giver."

(3) Wherefore, then, in the third place, I say we have to give cheerfully, cheerful to the extent of joy and gladness. We may alter the aphorism, "Who gives quickly he gives twice," and say, "He gives three times who gives cheerfully." Let us not forget that fact. I look into my Greek Testament and am struck with this truth, that the word translated "cheerful" is connected with our own English "hilarity" (*ilaroudoten*). What a change in the giving spirit this would mean if people remembered this, and if we had in our congregations those who would give with "hilarity"! It would simply transform present conditions, often depressing enough. It would mean that