

taken possession of in the matter of consecrated means. The Church of God is doing nothing to-day in comparison to what she might do and ought to do. We feel ashamed, however, to speak of giving as a *duty*, because it grows on our convictions more and more that we ought to lose sight of it as a duty, and only think of it as a transcendent *privilege*. There is something in love that takes off the asperities of duty. "I delight to do thy will, O my God." That is the atmosphere of service—not the *law* atmosphere—"I *ought* to do this thing," but the *love* atmosphere, "My *meat* is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Now, in this unclaimed and untrodden region with regard to giving, there are three or four things to which we want to call especial attention.

In the first place, *individual* giving is a region beyond, yet to be reached by the Church of God. "Let *every one* of you lay by him in store." God's principle is not that the rich should give, nor that the poor should give, but that rich and poor should alike give; and every man, woman, and child thus have part in this consecration of substance.

Then we need *systematic* giving. "*Upon the first day of the week* let every one of you lay by in store;" at stated times, with regularity, as a matter of habit, so that, just as regularly as the week comes round, there should be an account with God that is audited, corrected, adjusted, to see that there be no failure in this part of our duty. Just as we are to bring a certain portion of our time and set it entirely apart to God, so we are to bring a certain portion of our substance, steadily and habitually offering it to the Lord.

Then there must be *proportionate* giving. We must give, first, *according to our ability*, and, secondly, "*as God hath prospered us.*" And this law of proportion must never be overlooked. The difficulty with the Church to-day is that, too often, we are calculating how little we can give to satisfy the claims of conscience, whereas we ought to ask, "How much can I give to God? and how little can I reserve for myself, and yet satisfy the absolute necessities of my own reasonable wants?" We ought to turn the rule of our giving entirely round. Give to the Lord the first portion, not the last. Give to the Lord the largest portion, not the least.

Then there ought to be *self-denying* giving, which lies still further beyond in this untrodden territory. A woman went round in a church to get offerings from the women of the congregation for foreign missions, and her uniform plea was, "You can give this, and you will *not feel it a bit.*" That was the damaging recommendation. Here is the trouble in the Church of Christ: we give and we do *not* feel it; neither does the world feel it very much! We cannot conceive how God can take much pleasure in a gift that costs us nothing; and let us pray God never to let us use such an argument as that. Rather give until you *do* feel it.

Much is said from time to time about the generous giving of disciples. There are thirty millions of Protestant Church-members to-day, and twelve millions of dollars is the aggregate sum that is given to foreign missions by