

ren gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods" on festive days, shall not kings and subjects, princes and peasants, masters and servants, parents and children, all join in a Sabbath offering to the Lord of the universe and the Saviour of mankind!

3. The method for providing needful resources. "Let every one of you lay by him in store.

A clear definition is needful, the term *Weekly Offering* being often applied to two distinct processes. Primarily, it signifies the offering to God in Sabbath worship a due proportion of realized income, placed away in a separate treasury, or entered in a private account book, ready for use as occasions demand. This was the Original Pauline Weekly Offering. Secondly, it imports the dedication of some part of this fund at the house of God, towards ministry, worship, mission and kindred objects. This also has Scriptural authority, "Bring an offering, and come before him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (1 Chron. xvi. 29), and was generally practised in, and long after, apostolic times. The primary, personal method, is essential to the satisfactory and permanent practice of the secondary method. Together these two practices would furnish a full treasury for joint-Church purposes, besides large balances for private distribution. Fitful occasional gifts can never reach the ever-swelling demand. An ever-replenishing treasury, fed from myriads of private stores, alone can meet such necessities. Only such a process is likely to make Christians generally earnest and faithful in their stewardship for God. Is not the want of a store in hand a chief cause of frequent refusals to give? Men discern the need for and wisdom of laying by in worldly matters. Is not a store practicable for spiritual interests? Does the process involve any special difficulty with him who is as determined to meet religious, as he is social claims?

4. Proportion in the measure of giving. "As God hath prospered him."

By constituting man the assessor of his own gifts according to the amount of his means, God honours his fidelity and love. The proportion to be devoted depends upon his position and means, under a due sense of mercy and responsibility, and of the value of immortal souls, not in the atmosphere of the counting-house, but of the cross and sanctuary. Different social positions justify different proportions from the same income. An increased income should constrain a higher ratio of offering.

Many Christians have given a tithe to religious and benevolent objects, believing that a tithe of the Jews' annual income was his full required offering. It is palpable that it was nearer a fourth, or a third, than a tenth of his income. Can then a tithe of an affluent Christian's income be sufficient? If persons devote a tenth, as regarding a Christian's obligation as at least equal to a Jew's—and who that admits the superiority of the Christian to the Jewish dispensation, and the wider range of Christian than Jewish beneficence, can doubt this?—ought they not to consecrate more than a tenth to objects so commanding and momentous? "Pastor Oberlin, happening to read one day with more attention than usual, the account of the tithes in the books of Moses, was so struck with some of them, as to resolve from that moment to devote three tithes of all he possessed to the service of God and the poor. The resolution was no sooner made than put into execution. From that moment he scrupulously adhered to the plan, and often said that he abounded in wealth." A tithe must be manifestly below the obligation of the rich, of the principle of estimating a gift by the amount retained, rather than by the amount given. Tithe, a patriarchal measure, should be at least a Christian minimum, except with the very poor.

One conspicuous feature of the times is selfishness. This also is a plague-spot and heart-cancer in the church. Few Christians retain equal ardour of piety with increase of wealth. Mr. Wesley once said he knew four who did; subsequently he affirmed he knew not one. This selfishness dishonours God, besides causing its possessor to miss the true enjoyment of property, alleviating others' woes, and winning them to heaven.