

**LORD, TEACH US
TO GIVE**

V. P. BLACK

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PREFACE

The material presented here is not original with me, and much of it may seem familiar, for it is made up from excerpts and notes carefully gleaned through the years as the subject of giving was studied. It is no longer possible (however desirable it would be) to give credit where due to the many Christians and other religious sources freely and fully used in order to put the subject before the student in the best possible way. I can only hope that such has been accomplished, and that much good will come from its use.

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P. O. Box 10835
Plateau, Alabama 36610

First Printing

Lesson One

Identifying Marks of A Faithful Steward

GOLDEN TEXT

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." I Peter 4:10.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Do you give God what is left or what is right?"

PURPOSE

To impress upon the mind that the things we possess in this world do not belong to us.

INTRODUCTION

Webster says of "Steward—an officer or employee in a large family, or on a large estate, to manage the domestic concerns, supervise servants, collect rents or income, keep accounts, etc., an administrator, or supervisor; a manager." We learn from this definition that a steward is one who takes care of material things that belong to someone else. It is impossible for one to be a faithful Christian unless he realizes that he is only a possessor and not the owner of material things.

The 1926 edition of the Oxford New English Dictionary gives much information on the word steward. We learn that a steward was an official who controlled the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of the master's table, directing the domestic, regulating household expenditures. This word also became the title of an officer of a royal household known as "Lord Steward of the King's Household." The duty of this steward was to control the king's household.

A steward is really an administrator or a manager or an official. In England a steward is a high state official. In Scotland the steward controlled the royal household, had great administrative powers. We must ever keep in mind that as Christians we are the stewards of God in every sense of the word.

I. ONE MUST REALIZE THAT HE IS TO GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP

We all are stewards of God whether we like it or do not like it. In I Corinthians 4:7 we read, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if

thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (I Timothy 6:7) "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." (Deuteronomy 8:18). "Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." (I Chronicles 29:10-16)

In Romans 14:10, we are told that we must all stand in the judgement and it will be here that we will give an account of our stewardship.

The only question for a person to decide is whether he will be a good steward or a bad steward. You are the only one who can decide that. If one is a good steward he will be wonderfully blessed in this life and at the judgment will hear the Lord say "Well done thou good and faithful servant." But if one has proven to be a bad steward because he refused to learn the marks of a good steward, he will hear at the judgment, those awful words, "depart from me." If one is a poor steward in managing what God has given him, he will find himself inexcusable for his mis-management. I had rather stand, if possible, in the shoes of a drunkard at the judgment and expect mercy, than to stand in the shoes of that member who has embezzled God's money, then has the audacity to gloat over the fact that he will not study what God has said about stewardship.

II. A GOOD STEWARD KNOWS THAT GOD OWNS EVERYTHING

The very first thing that a good steward does is to recognize the fact that God is the real owner. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of

lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17) The early Christians recognized this fact: "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32)

God's title to the whole universe and everything that is in it is clearly established in the Bible, and he has never for one moment relinquished his title. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) We did not have one thing to do with the creation of the world. We are here only to be good stewards. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalms 24:1) "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. (Haggai 2:8) "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." (Psalms 50:10) Our very souls belong to God. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekial 18:4) When Paul had so many good things to say about those Macedonians and when he talked about their liberality, he said that they "First gave their own selves to the Lord." (II Corinthians 8:5)

III. A GOOD STEWARD WILL HONOR THE LORD WITH HIS SUBSTANCE

A good tenant will pay to his landlord all that is due him. What would you think of a tenant who gathered his crop and instead of giving the landlord his share, he just brings him a sack of potatoes and says, "Thank you." It seems that some members of the church do not even as much as say, "Thank you" to God.

When we honor the Lord with our substance we are richly blessed. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9-10)

It is interesting to observe that at the times when God's people were at a very low spiritual condition, and when Israel was having her greatest spiritual declension and most severe material reverses, it was always when they did not give to God liberally. Listen to Malachi. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (Malachi 3:8-9)

Hear what Nehemiah has to say. In Nehemiah, the thirteenth chapter, verses four and five, "And before this, Eliashib, the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and

the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests." Now listen to verses ten, eleven and twelve. "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries." When people brought their offerings into the house of the Lord, they had plenty. (II Chronicles 31:5-10)

IV. A GOOD STEWARD PRACTICES SYSTEMATIC GIVING

God has given to us a systematic way of giving. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Corinthians 16:1-2)

This plan is adapted to everyone. It is definite, systematic, proportionate, and it provides a regular income that the church may have the money to preach to the world, feed the hungry, and promote every good work. A good steward is conscious of this and assumes his responsibility in this work.

Many members have a hit or miss method, if it could be called a method. Suppose our government should just take up a free-will offering on the fourth of July? We all know that the government must have some system in raising money in order to operate.

V. A GOOD STEWARD IS FAITHFUL

A faithful steward will be faithful to Christ regardless of the cost. The test of his love and loyalty will be his obedience to Christ's command to "preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15-16) (Matthew 28:19-20)

The faithful steward will consider seriously the uncounted hosts for whom Christ died, who have never yet heard His name, who are without God and without hope, who are perishing for the bread of life and famishing for the water of salvation, and he will do his best to get the good news to them before it is too late.

The good steward realizes that God has many claims upon us. Isaiah mentions three of them. (Isaiah 43:1)

1. The claim of creation—"He who created you."
2. The claim of redemption—"I have redeemed you."
3. The claim of providence—"I have called you."

If we could fully realize that we belong to the Lord, it would not be difficult for us to be faithful stewards.

The parable of the talents recorded in Matthew 25:14-30, is one of the richest sources for stewardship illustration and teaching that may be found among the parables of the Lord. In this parable two of the stewards were faithful and were commended by the Lord. One of the stewards was not faithful and was condemned.

If your teacher should ask you to stand and describe your stewardship before the class, would you be embarrassed or do you believe that you are a good steward?

QUESTIONS

1. Repeat the golden text.
2. What is the thought for today?
3. What is the purpose of the Lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. Define the word "Steward".
2. When is it possible to be a faithful Christian?
3. What does the Oxford Dictionary say about "Steward"?
4. What is a steward in England?
5. What is a steward in Scotland?

I. MUST REALIZE HE IS TO GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP

1. Are we all stewards?
2. Explain I Timothy 6:7.
3. Who gives power to get wealth?
4. Read and discuss in class I Chronicles 29:10-16.
5. What one question must a Christian decide?
6. What will be said to a good steward at judgment?
7. What will be said to a bad steward at judgment?

II. A GOOD STEWARD KNOWS THAT GOD OWNS EVERYTHING

1. What is the first thing a good steward does?
2. Explain Acts 4:32.
3. To what does God hold title?
4. Read in class and discuss Psalms 50:10.
5. What did the Macedonians first do?
6. What does II Corinthians 8:5 mean?

III. A GOOD STEWARD WILL HONOR THE LORD WITH HIS SUBSTANCE

1. What will a good tenant do?
2. When are we richly blessed?

3. Explain Proverbs 3:9.
4. When was Israel in spiritual declension?
5. Explain what Nehemiah was talking about.
6. What happened when people brought their offerings?

IV. A GOOD STEWARD PRACTICES SYSTEMATIC GIVING

1. What is God's systematic way of giving?
2. What will systematic giving do?
3. To whom is this plan adapted?
4. How do many members give?

V. A GOOD STEWARD IS FAITHFUL

1. What is the test of one's loyalty?
2. What will the faithful steward consider?
3. What three claims are mentioned in Isaiah 43:1?
4. Explain the parable in Matthew 25:14-30.
5. What was wrong with the one talent man?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Two

Things Money Cannot Buy

GOLDEN TEXT

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phillipians 4:11).

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The death of covetousness comes through the birth of charity.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Someone has said, "Rake, scrape, borrow and save, you lose it all when you go to the grave. Money, a dead man's hand won't hold, nor can life be purchased with silver and gold."

A preacher visited a middle-aged couple to talk about spiritual things. They virtually closed the door in his face with this excuse, "We have set as our goal the accumulation of investments which will enable us to soon retire comfortably and to build a beautiful new home. Both of us work, and after a few years when we have saved all we need, we will come to church." The years passed and the couple made money. Their savings reached a substantial figure and their mansion-like house was nearly completed. The week before they were to resign their positions and move into their new house, the husband died of a heart attack. We see these things happen so many times in life. The man who puts his trust in money is indeed a foolish man.

There are some things that money will buy, such as an automobile, bonds, clothes, dishes, entertainment, flowers, gasoline, houses, etc. There are some things that money will not buy, such as bliss, happiness, health, character, devotion, equality, friendship, gratitude, etc.

Someone wrote, money will buy a bed but not sleep. Books but not brains, food but not appetite, finery but not beauty. A house but not a home, medicine but not health, luxuries but not culture, amusements but not happiness, a crucifix but not a Saviour. The following definition of money has been given as: "Money is the universal passport for everywhere except heaven, and the universal provider for everything except happiness."

I. MONEY CANNOT BUY HEALTH.

One rich man said, "I would give all my wealth if I could sit down and eat any food that I like without being sick." A millionaire

walking down the street saw a boy eating a crab apple. He said, "I would give half of my fortune if I had a stomach like that boy's."

A group of men were discussing various subjects. Someone said, "Money can buy anything." A wealthy man offered one thousand dollars to anyone who would or could just name four things that money could not buy. Not believing that anyone could meet the challenge, he smiled confidently when one man took out his pencil and began to write. After scribbling four short lines, the challenger passed the paper to the merchant. He glanced at it carelessly at first, then he gave it a more careful look. The paper listed these four things: A baby's smile; youth after it is gone; the love of a good woman and entrance into heaven.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Timothy 6:6-10).

II MONEY CANNOT BUY HAPPINESS.

Andrew Carnegie once said, "Millionaires seldom smile and never laugh." It is very unfortunate that the average person has a warped conception of money. The ordinary man believes that riches will bring to him happiness, and there is not anything that could be farther from the truth. If riches brought happiness, then the rich people would be the happiest people in the world. But it is a known fact that the rich are not the happiest people in the world.

Some time ago a young man of Washington, D.C., enclosed in a personal letter, a mimeographed page containing some startling information concerning a group of eight of the most successful financiers in America. It is most interesting to note that this information about men of wealth was collected by a millionaire by the name of Lurie, from San Francisco. It is interesting to observe that the young businessman who sent the information, added the footnote, "What shall it profit a man if . . . ?"

In 1923, a group of the world's most successful financiers met at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago with these present:

1. The president of the largest independent steel company.
2. The president of the largest utility company.
3. The greatest wheat speculator.
4. The president of the New York Stock Exchange.
5. A member of the president's cabinet.

6. The greatest "Bear" on Wall St.
7. The president of the Bank of International Settlement.
8. The head of the world's greatest monopoly.

Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States treasury, and for years newspapers and magazines had been printing their success stories and urging the youth of the nation to follow their example. A few years later, let's see what happened to these men:

The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schuab, lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died broke.

The president of the largest utility company, Samuel Insull, died broke and in semi-disgrace.

The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died abroad, insolvent.

The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was recently released from a Federal prison.

The member of the president's cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

The greatest "Bear" on Wall St., Jessie Livermore, committed suicide.

The head of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivie Krueger, committed suicide.

All of these men had learned how to make money, but not one of them had learned how to live. Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." (Mark 8:36).

Solomon was exceedingly rich, his income has been estimated at about twenty million dollars a year. He lived in one mansion that took thirteen years to build. If anyone is qualified to speak on the subject of riches, certainly Solomon is the man. He said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Surely we have said enough to prove beyond doubt that money as such never brought happiness to anyone.

III. MONEY CANNOT BUY A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

There are many rich people today who would give all their riches if they could have a good, godly family. King Midas according to the old Greek legend, was cursed with an overwhelming love for money. The God Dionysius gave him the power to change everything he touched into gold. At first, Midas went about touching all his possessions, chairs, beds, clothing, and was delighted as they

turned into glittering gold. When his daughter came running to greet him, his casual touch turned her into a golden statue. Love of money can change friends and family into frigid metal, people who sacrifice love for gold.

Some of the happiest families living today are composed of people who live in just an ordinary house and where the head of the family draws a modest salary and is very liberal to the church. But so many times we find the head of the family like the man of whom Christ spoke in Luke, the twelfth chapter. "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21) We should pray for more homes where the father is teaching his children to lay up treasures in heaven. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

IV. MONEY CANNOT BUY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If one had all the money of the world he could not buy the Holy Spirit. "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Acts 8:20). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (I Peter 1:22). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter 1:18-19).

One does not purchase the Spirit of Christ with money but by obeying the will of the Lord. Read Acts 2:38 and Romans 8:9.

V. MONEY CANNOT BUY HEAVEN.

Some judges can be bribed, but the Judge of the Universe cannot be bought. All of the wealth of Egypt could not have stopped God's punishment on Pharaoh, the death of the first born, nor the drowning of the soldiers in the Red Sea. God warned his people in ancient time, "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver

them in the day of the Lord's wrath." (Zephaniah 1:18). "They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord." (Ezekial 7:19). One must give of his means as God has prospered him. (I Corinthians 16:1-2), and at the same time obey the other commands of God to the best of his ability. The liberal giver who understands the teachings of the Bible never thinks of himself buying heaven, but simply laying up treasures in heaven as the Bible teaches one must do.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the thought for today?
4. What is the purpose of the Lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. What has someone said?
2. What happened to the middle aged couple?
3. What about the man who puts his trust in his money?
4. What will money buy?
5. What will money not buy?
6. Give a definition of money.

I. MONEY CANNOT BUY HEALTH.

1. What did one rich man say?
2. What did a millionaire say?
3. Name 4 things that money cannot buy.
4. Godliness with contentment is what?
5. What did we bring into the world?
6. What will we carry out of the world?
7. What about those who would be rich?
8. What is the love of money?
9. How have many pierced themselves through with many sorrows?

II MONEY CANNOT BUY HAPPINESS.

1. What did Andrew Carnegie say?
2. What does the ordinary man believe?
3. What if riches brought happiness?
4. What is a known fact?
5. What did Christ ask?
6. Discuss the eight men in our lesson.
7. What did Solomon learn?
8. What did Solomon say?

III. MONEY CANNOT BUY A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

1. What would many rich men be glad to do?
2. Discuss the Greek legend.

3. What happened to his daughter?
4. What can love of money do?
5. Who are some of the happiest families?
6. Read and discuss Luke 12:16-21.
7. What should we pray?
8. Read and discuss Matthew 6:19-21.

IV. MONEY CANNOT BUY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. What did Peter tell Simon?
2. To whom is the Spirit given?
3. Read and explain I Peter 1:18-19.
4. Read and explain Acts 2:38.
5. Read and explain Romans 8:9.

V. MONEY CANNOT BUY HEAVEN.

1. What can happen to some judges?
2. Can one bribe God?
3. What did Zephaniah say?
4. What did Ezekial say?
5. What must one do?
6. How does the liberal giver think?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Three

Christian Giving

GOLDEN TEXT

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Only one life, twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.

PURPOSE

To impress upon the mind that sacrifices are involved in living the Christian life.

INTRODUCTION

One has never learned to live until he becomes a liberal giver. There are at least three benefits that will come into the life of a Christian when he becomes a liberal giver. First, he will have a heightened and intensified sense of the presence of God when he begins to practice liberality. Second, the liberal giver soon discovers a new feeling of responsibility in his financial dealings, each one being invested with a new sanctity. This inevitably produces a heightened sense of the presence of God. Third, one comes to a sense of the daily companionship of the Father, as each day's work is dedicated to the cause of Christ. One man said to me: "I date the beginning of a new spiritual experience from that day that I decided to be a liberal giver."

A liberal giver has great influence. Again and again it has happened that history has been determined by a small group of adventurous souls who have been supremely dedicated to a great ideal. The fifty-five founding fathers who gathered in Philadelphia to draft the constitution for the American Republic influenced the history of mankind more profoundly than great marching hosts tramping across the field of battle.

In every congregation those faithful, liberal givers are influencing the life of the congregation. It is through their liberality that mission work is being done, orphans are being fed and the church of the Lord is extending her borders.

I. WHERE DOES CHRISTIAN GIVING BEGIN?

Man has been giving to God since the time there was only one family upon the earth. We never read of any one in any age of the world that gave less than a tenth of his income to God without being rebuked and condemned.

The giving of the Egyptians is known to us by the labors of many scholars. Found among the Egyptian writings: "I have not cut short the rations of the temple." "I have not diminished the offerings of the gods." "I have not stolen the property of the gods." The ancient inhabitants of the Nile Valley, both great and small, were accustomed to dedicating the first fruits of their harvest to deity. We learn from their history, that the claims of their gods had to be satisfied before those of men. A tenth of the slaves, cattle and precious metals was set apart for their gods. The Babylonians and the Romans offered at least one tenth of their income to their gods. This was also true of the Greeks.

Since all ancient people centered their giving around the tithe, we conclude that tithing began with Adam. When the people multiplied and were scattered throughout the world and corrupted their worship and even made their gods with their own hands, they still remembered the law of tithing that was binding when they were all in one family.

Someone says we are not under the law where they were commanded to tithe. The New Testament does not command tithing. Should grace get less out of a Christian than the law could get out of a Jew? Love is a poor thing if it can't get more out of a person than law can get out of him. A son is hardly worth the name if he does not love with a giving love. God so loved that he gave; and we don't know about it if we don't love with a love that loves to give.

Are we to tithe today? We are not under the cold, legalistic tithing system. But this does not mean that we are to give less than the Jews. We are under a greater system; therefore, our obligations are greater. God has taken us out from under the legalistic tithing system and put us on the honor system where we are guided and motivated by love to give. Is it reasonable to suppose that God is pleased with us when we give less than the Jew? Our giving should begin with the tenth and go onward and upward.

II. HOW DID THE JEWS GIVE?

The Jews were a very liberal people and God always blessed them for their liberality. There were times, however, when the Jews did not give as God had instructed them, and when this hap-

pened they always suffered at the hand of God. (Proverbs 11:24; Malachi 3:9)

Now let us learn how the Jews gave. In Leviticus 27:30, we read, "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." This tithe was given for the support of the Levitical Priesthood. In Deuteronomy 14:22-23 we read, "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always." In Deuteronomy 14:28, 29 we read, "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates; and the Levite, (because he hath no part or inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."

Suppose you had a dreaded disease and you go to a doctor and he tells you that he cannot heal you, but can ease the pain and prolong your life for a while. He reminds you that each treatment is one hundred dollars; you find another doctor that can heal you and he does it. You ask him, "How much do I owe you?" He says, "Just pay me according to your love and appreciation for what I have done." You give him five dollars. This would be an insult. Jesus Christ has died for us and when we show proper love for what Christ has done, we will be liberal in the giving of our means to Him who has done so much for us. Now, suppose you sit down and compare your giving with the giving of the Jews.

III CHRISTIAN GIVING BEGAN THIS SIDE OF THE CROSS

In the very chapter that records the first sermon that was preached in the name of the risen Christ, we also read of disciples selling their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. In all probability the most liberal people in the church of Christ were those who obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost, and other Jews who were members of the church during the first century.

There were four main reasons for the liberal giving of those early Christians:

1. They lived in the shadow of the cross. They, no doubt, had seen and known of many members of the church who had suffered physically and socially because of their love for the church. The

persecution that came upon them motivated them to give their very best to God.

2. Their background motivated them to be liberal givers. They had been reared in homes where from childhood giving, to God, had been indelibly impressed upon their minds.

3. They had, while members of the Jewish economy, practiced giving not just one tithe but three tithes. Two tithes every year and a third tithe every three years. (Leviticus 27:30; Deuteronomy 14:22-23; Deuteronomy 14:28-30)

In addition to these tithes there were many free will offerings they performed. (Leviticus 19:9-10; Exodus 22:29; Deuteronomy 16:10-11; Exodus 36:6-7)

4. They knew what Christ gave. It would motivate all of us to be more liberal givers if we would always keep before our minds the tremendous price that Jesus paid for the church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25) ". . . To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28).

IV. CHRISTIAN GIVING IS BASED UPON BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

We cannot expect people to be liberal givers if they have no knowledge of what the Bible teaches on the subject. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6) The Bible has more to say about giving than it says about faith, repentance, confession, baptism and church organization all combined. There is no reason for a person to remain in ignorance on this subject and to do so is to suffer the awful consequences of refusing to learn what God has said on this subject.

V. MATERIAL BLESSINGS FOR LIBERAL GIVING

In the New Testament alone, the subject of giving or money, is discussed over three hundred times. The subject of giving is discussed in the Old Testament more than in the New Testament. Many, many times in discussing giving, God has promised material blessings for liberality.

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9, 10) "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also

himself." (Proverbs 11:24, 25) "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10) "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:29) "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38) "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) "Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all; and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17-19).

QUESTIONS

1. Repeat the Golden Text.
2. What is the thought for today?
3. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. When does one really learn to live?
2. Name three things that will happen to a liberal giver.
3. What has happened again and again?
4. What is happening in every congregation?

I. WHERE DOES CHRISTIAN GIVING BEGIN?

1. How long has man been giving to God?
2. Do we read of anyone giving less than a tenth?
3. What do we learn about Egyptian giving?
4. Describe the giving of the Babylonians and Romans.
5. Where did tithing begin?
6. Should love motivate more than law? Explain.
7. Are we to tithe today?

II. HOW DID THE JEWS GIVE?

1. Were the Jews liberal?
2. When did the Jews suffer?
3. Explain Leviticus 27:30.

4. Explain Deuteronomy 14:22-23.
5. Explain Deuteronomy 14:28-29.
6. Discuss in detail the man being healed.
7. How does your giving compare with the Jewish giving?

III. CHRISTIAN GIVING BEGAN THIS SIDE OF THE CROSS

1. What is said about giving in the second chapter of Acts?
2. When was the church composed of the most liberal givers?
3. Name and discuss the four main reasons the early Christians were so liberal.
4. Read and explain Ephesians 5:25.
5. Read and explain Acts 20:28.

IV. CHRISTIAN GIVING IS BASED UPON BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

1. Read and explain Hosea 4:6.
2. How much does the Bible talk about giving?
3. What are the consequences of remaining in ignorance of the subject of giving?

V. MATERIAL BLESSING FOR LIBERAL GIVING.

1. How much is giving discussed in the New Testament?
2. Does God promise material blessings for liberality?
3. Read and explain Proverbs 3:9-10.
4. Read and explain Proverbs 11:24, 25.
5. Read and explain Malachi 3:10.
6. Read and explain Matthew 19:29.
7. Read and explain Luke 6:38.
8. Read and explain Acts 20:35.
9. Read and explain Philippians 4:17-19.

— N O T E S —

Lesson Four

The Truth About Money

GOLDEN TEXT

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Timothy 6:10)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The worst thing about money is it costs too much."

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind that man cannot serve God and mammon.

INTRODUCTION

Someone has said, "Tell me how you get your money, spend your money, and I will tell you what kind of a person you are." When one learns how to deal with and properly handle his money, he has learned one of life's great lessons. No one has learned how to handle money until he learns to put God first. When one does put God first in his giving he will have at least five great surprises:

1. At the amount of money we have for God.
2. At the deepening of our own spiritual life.
3. At the ease of meeting our obligations with what we have left.
4. At the ease of going on to larger giving.
5. At ourselves for not practicing liberality sooner.

Throughout the Bible we are warned against the love of money. Judas said, "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" The soldiers were given large sums of money to say he was not risen from the dead. Of the thirty-eight parables Jesus spoke, twelve of them deal with money.

I. ILLUSTRATION ON THE LOVE OF MONEY

A man once took up his abode in a fine house, bringing his wife, his only son, and his servants, and his other belongings. He was warned that in this house (this life) there dwelled a deadly snake (the demon of avarice), and he was urged at once to hunt out the reptile and kill it, which he was fully resolved to do. But, when he came to kill the snake, he found that it had left for him a piece of gold of the finest mintage. The man reasoned, "Surely,

this snake does not wish us any harm, or he would not have left this piece of gold." So he let the snake alone, and day after day it brought the gold piece. After a while, it bit the man's horse and the animal died. The neighbors urged the man to kill the snake before it should do worse damage. He was about to do so, when the fatal coin again met his eye and caused him to reason that with the fast accumulation of gold, he could buy another horse and still have money left.

So it went on from day to day, until the servant was bitten and died; then the son; then the wife; the man vowing vengeance each time, cursing the house and bewailing his lot that he ever came into it, in each case. In each instance, however, the bright and shining gold piece salved the sore, and the man's plausible reasoning let the snake live on. Years passed by and the man became a miser gloating over his wealth, but one day as he was counting the gold, the snake bit him, and he became ill.

No physician could cure the man, but he prayed to God and vowed that he would mend his life and kill the snake if God would spare his life. God heard his prayer, the man recovered, but when he went to kill the snake, he found instead of the usual coin, a magnificent pearl. That was a fatal sight! The man who became a miser, had now become a fool for money. He hesitated to kill the snake, declaring that he would take better care and not let the snake bite him again. Once more, after many pearls are his, he is bitten again. He prays again, but God's patience is now exhausted. ~~The wretched miser died, rejected by Jehovah.~~ Think of the times that we have seen this thing happen in the lives of those we know. The love of money is the root of all evil. Read I Timothy 6:17-19.

II. MONEY IS POWERFUL

If money falls into the hands of honest, God-fearing Christians, it can do much in spreading New Testament Christianity. If it falls into the hands of greedy, selfish people, it can be the means of destroying their souls. Money is neither good nor bad. It is neither moral nor immoral. It can accomplish good or evil, depending upon who is using it. As long as one can control his money, he is in a position to use it to advance the cause of Christ. "Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." (Proverbs 23:4, 5) Money seems to have the power to make one believe that he possesses money, while in reality, money possesses him. It can become the master of a man's soul and yet make him think he is the master. Paul tells us that many have such an inordinate desire for money

that they have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (I Timothy 6:10)

King David had the right attitude toward money and God. "And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, Thy Lord thy God accept thee. And the King said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." (II Samuel 24:22-24) How many of the church offer unto God that which cost them nothing? When we give to God our left overs and scraps, we are offering to God that which cost us nothing.

III. GLORIFYING GOD WITH OUR TALENTS

We learn in studying the Bible that God did not give all people the same talent. This is what Jesus is teaching in Matthew twenty-five. One man may have the talent to sing. This man should use his talent in singing praises to God. Another man may have great ability as a speaker. He should use this ability to promote the cause of Christ. Another may have great ability as a personal worker and he should use this ability to promote the cause of Christ. Another man may have great ability to make money and since God has given him this ability he should use it to the glory of God and for the purpose of advancing the cause of Christ. The individual who has been blessed with the ability to make money and manage it well, must never forget that God gave him this ability and if he does not use it to extend the borders of the Kingdom of heaven, he will be punished as was the man in Matthew who did not use his talent. This person must remember that God gave him the power to make money. "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." (Deuteronomy 8:18) Since God gives this man the ability to make money, why should he act as though by his own power he has made this money?

IV. CHURCH SHOULD COME FIRST

Why would you like to have an increase in salary? To have a better standard of living? To wear better clothes, to take more vacations? Just why? Where does God come in? In all my preaching life, I have had one man to tell me that he wanted a raise so he could give more money to the church. It is right for a man to provide food, clothing and the necessities of life for his family,

and to refuse to do so is to deny the faith. (I Timothy 5:8) The Bible does not condemn a person for providing for sickness, old age and the necessities of life, but does severely condemn the man who worries, frets, hoards and refuses to give because he thinks he is going to starve to death in old age. This man needs to pray for God to help his unbelief. (Matthew 6:25, 26)

We should desire to prosper because of what it will enable us to do for the cause of Christ. Having the things of this life simply for self's sake, must not be the leading motive for business enterprises owned and run by Christians. ". . . Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28) Here is the motive. This makes the ability to give, the controlling motive for working in order to possess what the Bible calls "mammon" or earthly goods. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts." How sad to think that most of the money that is made, even by Christians, is made with their pleasure being of first consideration. This can never be right. Read James 5:1-5.

V. CONTROLLING OUR MONEY AFTER DEATH.

Does this sound strange? Yes, it is true, that we should control our money even after death, if we leave any wealth. For a Christian to assume that he is responsible for his money just as long as he lives, is foolish indeed. The only thing a man can control after his death, is his wealth. It is for this reason that a man should make a will even though he may own very little of the world's goods. He may have only a few hundred dollars, yet he will be held responsible how this is spent, for the simple reason he has the ability now to do something about it. "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity." (Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19)

Soloman realized that it was possible to leave his wealth to some fool. It is so sad to see a Christian father accumulate much wealth in his lifetime and instead of making a will and leaving it to some great and good cause such as Christian Education, or some other worthy cause; he dies and leaves it to his kin-people, who many times care nothing about the church, orphans or Christian Education. The people, in some instances, despise the very thing that this brother loved so much while he lived. When this thing happens, this man though he is dead, will be held responsible, for he could have seen to it while he lived, that this money would be used for some good cause.

I am not saying children or other heirs should be categorically cut out of the will. I am saying a person should do some serious thinking about how he is going to leave his money. If a person, while living, gets a joy out of supporting the church and Christian Education, why not, after putting his children in the will, put some Christian college or some good work in the will, and then these good causes will continue to be supported for many years after you are dead. Even though you may be dead, you will be speaking, ". . . And by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4) If you have not made a will, why don't you do it in the near future, and then you will have the joys of knowing that the money you leave will never be used to promote evil but good works.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the thought for today?
4. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. How is one way of telling what a person is?
2. When does one learn one of life's great lessons?
3. Name five surprises one will have when he puts God first
4. Of what are we warned?
5. Name some sins where money was involved.

I. ILLUSTRATION OF LOVE OF MONEY

1. Tell the story of the man and the house.
2. What is the moral of the story?
3. Why was God's patience exhausted?
4. How can the love of money destroy a man's soul?
5. Read and explain I Timothy 6:17-19.

II. MONEY IS POWERFUL

1. What if money falls into the hands of honest men?
2. What if it falls into the hands of bad men?
3. How can money accomplish good or evil?
4. Read and explain Proverbs 23:5-6.
5. What does money have the power to do?
6. What did Paul say money had done?
7. Describe the attitude of David and make application.

III. GLORIFYING GOD WITH OUR TALENTS

1. Do all people have the same talent?
2. Discuss how God has given different talents.
3. What should each man do with his talent?
4. The man who has ability to make money should remember what?

IV. CHURCH SHOULD COME FIRST

1. What is the right motive in wanting increase in salary?
2. Must a man provide for his own?
3. What if one does not provide for his own?
4. Does the Bible condemn providing for old age and sickness?
5. What does the Bible condemn?
6. What should be the real motive for a Christian wanting to prosper?
7. Explain Ephesians 4:28.
8. Why is it some do not receive when they ask?
9. Read and explain in class James 5:1-5.

V. CONTROLLING OUR MONEY AFTER DEATH

1. Is one responsible for his money just as long as he lives? Explain.
2. Why should a man make a will?
3. Read and explain Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19.
4. What did Solomon realize?
5. What is sad to observe?
6. About what should a Christian do some serious thinking?
7. How can one be dead and yet speak?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Five

Some Facts About Our Contribution

GOLDEN TEXT

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."
John 8:32.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

I put in a dollar; it did not seem right
I could not be proud of that curious sight.
So, I took out my check-book and tried to be square,
For I wanted my giving to look like my prayer.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind that God wants us to know the truth about giving just as He wants us to know the truth about the Church, the Lord's Supper or baptism.

INTRODUCTION

If the preacher should walk down the aisle each Lord's Day and observe what each member is putting into the collection plate, some members would be surprised, some embarrassed, others mad, and, no doubt, a few delighted. But we must keep in mind that the all-seeing eye of God sees everything that we do, including the giving of our means. God's eye must behold some strange sights at the time the collection plate is being passed. Every person should give as if Jesus Christ should be sitting by his side for in reality Christ is near and He is observing how we give. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them. Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." (Mark 12:41-44).

The Lord not only sees what we put into the collection plate, but He sees the motive, attitude, frequency, proportion and sacrifice. These things just mentioned, determine the measure of acceptability of a gift.

I. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE REGULAR AND PROPORTIONATE

Giving is an integral part of the Christian life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). We enjoy giving to those we love. It is for this reason that a father wants to give to his family. When a young man falls in love, he brings to the lady gifts and ultimately a ring. When we love the Lord we desire to bring gifts to Him. Worship demands giving. In the very first part of the book of Genesis we read of the offerings of Cain and Abel. (Genesis 4:3-8). When Solomon dedicated the temple, he presented 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. The wise men brought gifts to Christ. God's command; "none shall appear before me empty? You can't have genuine Christianity without loosening of the purse strings. When we open our heart to the Lord we will open our pocketbook.

One of the strong evidences that one is a faithful Christian is his generosity to the Lord's work. One may give without loving but you can't love without giving. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." (Psalms 96:8). One preacher remarked, "When I look at my well-dressed congregation, I ask, 'where are the poor?' When I look at the offering plates, I ask, 'where are the rich?' "

Not only should a Christian give, but, his giving should be regular, and liberal. Paul told the Corinthians, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

It is true that Paul here refers to a particular collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, that he wanted taken before his arrival. The first day of the week is the day that Christians meet to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and it was on this day that they laid by in store or gave of their means. It would be a little difficult for Christians to give into the treasury of the church without assembling together. We learn from I Corinthians 16 that every one is to give, the rich and the poor. Everyone is to give as he has been prospered. Our giving is to be regular, not spasmodic. It is easy to fall into the habit of haphazard giving. It is easy for this person to imagine that he is giving far more than he actually gives.

II. WE SHOULD BE SINCERE IN OUR GIVING.

I heard of a sixteen year old girl who ran away from home and lived a wayward life. On Father's Day, Christmas, and his birthday, she sent her father gifts, but these gifts meant virtually nothing to her broken-hearted father. His desire was for her to live a decent life.

Before King Saul went to battle with the Amalekites, he was divinely ordered to destroy all the sheep and oxen and all of the people. When he returned from battle with the best of the sheep and oxen, he was met by Samuel who inquired about why he had disobeyed God. Saul tried to excuse his disobedience by saying that he had brought the sheep and oxen to offer a great sacrifice to God. Samuel replied, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (I Samuel 15:22, 23). God had rather not have our gifts if we are living in rebellion to His law. To please God our gifts must be backed by sincerity of heart. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the righteous is his delight." (Proverbs 15:8). When Jeremiah was talking to those who were not sincere in their sacrifices, he said, "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me." (Jeremiah 6:20).

Our Lord is more interested in us than our money. Paul commended the Corinthians who "First gave themselves to the Lord." (II Corinthians 8:5). Whatever the size of the gift is that we make to God, it must come from a heart of love. "And though I bestow all my goods to the poor, and thought I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (I Corinthians 13:3). We must never forget that our giving is to come from an honest and sincere heart.

III. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE CHEERFUL.

It has been said that on the island of Jamaica a group of religious people adopted the following rules:

1. We will all give.
2. We will give as the Lord has prospered us.
3. We will give cheerfully.

It was the local practice for each person to walk individually to the communion table and deposit his gift under the eye of the presiding officer. One well-to-do member delayed until he was painfully noticeable. When he finally came forward to deposit his gift, the presiding officer said, "That is according to the first resolution, but not according to the second." The member returned indignantly to his seat, taking back his money. Either conscience

within or pressure without, kept working until he came forward again. Doubling his contribution and muttering, "Take that, then." The presiding officer commented, "That may meet the first and second resolutions, but it is not according to the third. Again the giver returned to his seat. A few minutes later, accepting the rebuke, he came up the third time with a still larger gift and a good-natured smile. Then the chairman exclaimed, "That is according to all the resolutions." "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:17). A Christian must give liberally, but he must also give cheerfully. "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35).

Our countless blessings should motivate us to give cheerfully. Many members of the church reason like the little boy who was given a dime and a quarter and was told to put the quarter in the collection. Later, on being questioned, he confessed, "I put the dime in the collection and spent the quarter on myself." His explanation was this. "The preacher said the Lord loves a cheerful giver and I felt much more cheerful about putting the dime in." He may have expressed the sentiments of many members of the church. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." (Exodus 25:1, 2).

IV. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE SACRIFICIAL.

"I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." (II Samuel 24:24). Yet how often do members of the church offer unto the Lord that which cost them nothing. Malachi rebuked the people because they offered to the Lord blind, lame and sick animals which were not good to the owner, thus there was no sacrifice involved at all. "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? in that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts?" (Malachi 1:7-9). In this society that most of us know today, we know very little about sacrifice. In many instances our comforts come before the Lord's work. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1). It is not just what we give but what we have left after we give that determines the sacrifice.

V. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE BASED UPON OUR LOVE.

No one should give just to be seen of men. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (Matthew 6:1, 2). Can you feature a man sitting in a worship service, and when the collection plate is passed, he stands, pulls a trumpet out from under his coat, gives about three loud blasts, gets the attention of the people, then makes a liberal contribution? Our Lord condemns this. This is not teaching that others are not to know what we give, for in this same connection Christ said when you pray enter into your closet and shut the door. Christ is teaching that we are worshipping God and not doing it just to be seen of men.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the thought for today?
4. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION.

1. What would happen if the preacher should watch to see what the members gave?
2. Who is watching?
3. What did Jesus do?
4. Tell about the poor widow.

I. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE REGULAR AND PROPORTIONATE

1. What is giving?
2. What motivates a father to give to his family?
3. What did Solomon offer to the Lord?
4. How shall men appear before the Lord?
5. What is strong evidence of Christianity?
6. What did a preacher say?
7. What did Paul tell the Corinthians?
8. When should one lay by in store?
9. Who is to give?

II. WE SHOULD BE SINCERE IN OUR GIVING.

1. Tell the story of the sixteen year old girl.
2. Tell the story of King Saul.
3. What was King Saul's trouble?
4. How did Saul explain?

5. What did Samuel say?
6. Read and explain Proverbs 15:8.
7. Read and explain Jeremiah 6:20.
8. In what is our Lord interested?
9. What must govern our giving?

III. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE CHEERFUL.

1. Tell the story of the people in Jamaica.
2. What were the three resolutions that were made?
3. Read and explain II Corinthians 9:7.
4. Read and explain Acts 20:35.
5. What should our countless blessings do for us?
6. Who is the person the Lord loves?
7. Read and explain Exodus 25:1, 2.

IV. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE SACRIFICIAL GIVING.

1. Read and explain II Samuel 24:24.
2. What do people often do?
3. Read and explain Malachi 1:7, 8.
4. Read and explain Romans 12:1.

V. OUR GIVING SHOULD BE BASED UPON LOVE.

1. Should one give just to be seen of man?
2. Read and explain Matthew 6:2, 3.
3. Read and explain Matthew 6:4.
4. What are these verses teaching?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Six

The Greater Blessing

GOLDEN TEXT

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35).

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Great wealth and contentment seldom go together.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind that we are blessed one hundred fold for our giving.

INTRODUCTION

Christianity is a religion of love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

God has so loved us that He gave and pronounces a blessing upon us when we give.

The word "blessed" or a synonym of the word, occurs over six hundred times in the Bible. It is more blessed to give than to receive, stands supreme among all the beatitudes of the Bible. It is the very center of the Bible. I am not talking about the geographical center, but the spiritual center of the Bible. Someone has said that Acts 20:35 is the most disbelieved verse in the Bible. If this is true, this is the tragedy of all tragedies. This disbelief springs from the very center of man's sin, his inverted ego, his selfishness and his perversion of the image of God because of this false idea, human misery can be accounted for: lust instead of love, grasping and greed instead of generosity, selfishness instead of service..

Someone has said the nerve going to the pocket-book is the most sensitive in the personality and preachers shrink from preaching on it, for he is afraid that someone will accuse him of preaching for money. This nerve is sensitive because it is inflamed by the congestion of covetousness. When the osteopath finds a painful area, he knows there is congestion. He works out the congestion and gives relief. If preachers would teach people to give as they should, many of these infected and inflamed areas would be healed, and brethren would get rid of the spiritual neuritis and rheumatism that is so common and so painful. At least we can show them that the pain, when the pocket-book nerve is touched, is due to financial congestion or a disease concerning money.

I. CHRISTIAN GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE.

The whole system of Christianity is built upon love. Someone has observed that love can be measured by the degree of sacrifice that one is willing to make. A father will work long hours and deny himself the necessities of life that he may bestow them upon his family. What would you think of a father who complained all the time about what he had to give to his wife or to his children? The man who loves his family will rejoice in making sacrifices for them. God gave His Son for us because He loved us and when we learn to love we will learn to give.

It is because of the love of God that is in our hearts, that we give to construct church buildings and send missionaries to all parts of the world. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (II Corinthians 5:14). When this love that Paul spoke of, controls our lives, we will get a great joy out of practicing liberal giving.

The church of Jesus Christ is the most precious institution in all the world. It was so precious to Jesus Christ that He gave His life for it. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28).

We must realize that Christianity is a religion of love. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (I John 3:14). Could a father love his family when he takes everything he makes and spends it on himself? Would you think a father loves his family when he gives to his family only those things that he does not want for himself? The reason so many have trouble in deciding to be liberal, is that basically they have trouble loving God.

II GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS THE GREATER BLESSING BECAUSE IT IS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING CHARACTER.

God does not need our gifts for He is rich. Our giving is not to enrich God but to enrich our own lives. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those that dwell therein." (Psalms 24:1). "For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills." (Psalms 50:19). "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2:8). See Acts 17:25.

"All souls are mine." (Ezekial 18:4). God does not need our gifts, but in His divine wisdom He has chosen to make His Kingdom dependent on our gifts in order that we may develop Christian

character. To always be on the receiving end tends to make a person warped and selfish; on the other hand, to give often and generously, enlarges the heart and develops the highest qualities of Christian character.

In the land of Palestine there are two seas. The one is known as the Sea of Galilee. The other is known as the Dead Sea. Much of the ministry of Jesus took place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, which is a most beautiful body of water. The Sea of Galilee is located in the northern part of Palestine. It is eight miles across at the widest point and thirteen miles long. It is fed by the River Jordan, which in turn is fed by the water that flows from the melting snow on Mt. Hermon. The Sea of Galilee is a sparkling jewel of beauty. It is filled with all manner of marine life. It is surrounded by grass and flowers and trees where birds and animals make their homes.

There is another body of water south of the Sea of Galilee known as the Dead Sea. The waters of this sea are twenty-five per cent mineral, which means that it carries five times as much mineral as ocean water. It is because the waters of this sea are so heavy with minerals that in it a swimmer cannot sink to the bottom. This sea is surrounded by barren deserts, no flowers or grass grow on its banks. The only life around its shore are a few snakes, lizards and scorpions. There are no birds to sing.

What makes the difference? The main difference is this: The Sea of Galilee has an outlet, the Dead Sea does not. Yes, the difference between the two seas is that the Sea of Galilee receives and also gives, while the Dead Sea always receives but never gives. The Sea of Galilee is a blessing while the Dead Sea is a huge stagnant pool.

These two seas symbolize two classes of people. Those who receive and are liberal to give are like the Sea of Galilee. Those who receive and are not liberal givers are like the Dead Sea.

Love that is hoarded moulds at last,
Until we know some day;
The only thing we ever keep,
Are the things we give away.

III GIVING IS A WAY OF LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

If one intends to be rich in heaven he must make investments in the Kingdom of God while on earth. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where

thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

How may we lay up treasures in heaven? By investing in the Kingdom of God. By putting the Kingdom first. By being a liberal giver. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:18-21).

An old legend tells of a wealthy woman who was a nominal Christian. One night she had a dream. ~~She dreamed she had gone to heaven. She was met by Gabriel, who took her to a little shack. She said in disappointment, "But I lived in a palace on earth." To which the angel replied, "I am sorry, this is the best we can do with the money you sent on before your arrival." "All that you hold in your cold dead hand, is that which you have given away."~~

IV. CHRISTIAN GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT IS SO REWARDING.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure; pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38). God will entrust his larger gifts to those who use the smaller ones well. Real Christian living is gained through giving. Only the liberal giver knows the meaning of abundant living. The way of gain is to give. We find this law at work in every area of life. The farmer gains energy in plowing the field and preparing it for seed. Then he gives of his money to purchase seed with which to sow the field. The farmer who plows, sows, and cultivates sparingly, will have a scant harvest; but the farmer who plows, sows, and cultivates bountifully, will reap a rich harvest. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:29).

V. GIVING IS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT MAKES US STRONG.

God could have propagated His cause by miracles if He had so desired. Jehovah could have preached the gospel to all parts of the world without the help of His children but He did not choose this method. We are called upon to support the gospel and we are told that we are blessed for so doing. No doubt, this method has

been selected for our benefit. While we are supporting the gospel, people are being saved and we are being made stronger by our giving. We give for our benefit, not God's. God is rich. The earth is the Lord's and all things therein. When God called upon Abraham to give his son, Abraham did, we learn in reading Genesis, the twenty-second chapter. Your strongest people in the church, without exception, are the most liberal givers.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the thought for today?
4. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. What about the person that loveth not?
2. How did God love us?
3. Discuss the word "blessed."
4. Read and quote Acts 20:35.
5. From what does disbelief spring?
6. Give the illustration of the osteopath?
7. What do preachers need to do?

I. CHRISTIAN GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE.

1. Upon what is Christianity built?
2. What has someone observed?
3. What will a father do?
4. What motivates us to do good work?
5. What constrained Paul?
6. Read and explain Acts 20:28.
7. How do we know we have passed from death to life?
8. When does a father show his love for his family?

II GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS THE GREATER BLESSING BECAUSE IT IS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING CHARACTER.

1. Does God need our gifts?
2. Read and explain Psalms 24:1.
3. Read and explain Psalms 50:10.
4. Read and explain Haggai 2:8.
5. Read and explain Ezekial 18:4.
6. Upon what does the church depend?
7. Tell about the two seas in Palestine.
8. Why is one called the Dead Sea?
9. How do these symbolize two classes of people?

III GIVING IS A WAY OF LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

1. What if one wants to be rich in heaven?
2. Read and explain Matthew 6:19-20.
3. How may one lay up treasure in heaven?
4. Read and explain Luke 12:18-21.
5. What can we take from this world with us?

IV. CHRISTIAN GIVING MAY BE SPOKEN OF AS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT IS SO REWARDING.

1. What did Christ promise?
2. To whom will God give larger gifts?
3. What must the farmer do?
4. Read and explain Matthew 10:29.

V. GIVING IS MORE BLESSED BECAUSE IT MAKES US STRONG.

1. How could God have propagated His cause?
2. What are we called upon to do?
3. What happens while we support the gospel?
4. What do we learn in reading Genesis 22?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Seven

God Wants The Heart First

GOLDEN TEXT

"For out of the heart flow the issues of life." Mark 7:21.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who giveth himself with his alms, feeds three
Himself, his hungry neighbor and me.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind that true giving must come from the heart.

INTRODUCTION

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (II Corinthians 8:5. ". . . For I seek not your's but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (II Corinthians 12:14). God is more interested in our fellowship than our money. He is far more interested in leading you to live a rich life of joy and faith and love and obedience than getting your money. The Lord knows if people are strong spiritually they will give, and yet one cannot be strong spiritually until he learns to give.

When God called upon Abraham to take the life of Isaac, and even went so far as to permit Abraham to bind Isaac upon the altar; it was not Isaac that God wanted, but it was Abraham. (Read Genesis 22:1-14). It is never difficult for a Christian if he will first of all surrender his life to God. On the other hand, it is not likely that one will be a liberal giver unless the church comes first in his life. There is not anything to motivate this person to give.

I. THE AMAZING CHRISTIANS OF MACEDONIA

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (II

Corinthians 8:1-5). Paul was telling the Corinthians that they were wonderful people in many ways but that they needed to grow in this grace of giving. How many times is this same thing true in our congregations today? Paul said that the Macedonians abounded in this giving. They gave even beyond their power. Literally, they gave all they could give, even more than they could give by any human standard.

They also gave out of deep poverty. Many would think that poverty would prevent people from giving. It never does, unless it is spiritual poverty. The Christian who has something to eat, has something to give. The Christian who has money or possessions or anything else, can have money to give to God. Poor giving does not come out of material poverty. (Mark 12:44). Poor giving comes out of spiritual poverty. Where would the church be today if it were not for the giving of the poor people and especially the giving of the widows in the Lord's church.

These Macedonians did not have to be begged to give. Paul tells us that "beyond their power they were willing of themselves; pray-us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." (II Corinthians 8:3-4). What a wonderful thing it is for a Christian to give, not because the preacher insists, not because the missionary pleads, but because in his own heart he wants to give, he enjoys giving with holy devotion and zeal he brings his gifts. These Macedonians had much in common with the people we read about in Exodus 35:4-9.

II GOD WANTS MORE THAN A GIFT.

Surely no one believes that money in the collection plate satisfies all of God's requirements of a Christian. The prophet Isaiah gave God's message to Israel that their sacrifices, their offerings, their services, had become abominable to God because of their sins. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make your prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (Isaiah 1:11-15). It is very clear from the reading that God wants the heart and He wants the heart first.

Saul tried to cover up his disobedience by offering gifts unto God. (I Samuel 15:22-23). God could not use a king who thought that serving God was a matter of routine. No, God made all the cattle on a thousand hills. God Himself created the sheep and goats and rams. How could a few of these poor things given to Him satisfy the longing heart of God, who wanted love and obedience and surrender from those who serve Him? Saul was not fit to be a king. Rebellion is as bad as witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. There is more involved in just giving our money, God is interested in knowing what the gift represents. It is possibly true that Jesus is more concerned about what we have left than He is about what we give.

The Bible teaches over and over that we must be liberal givers, but the point we are trying to get over is that we must first give ourselves and then and only then, will God accept our gifts. You see, God wants the man first and then the money. (Read II Corinthians 8:1-12).

III. WE ARE GIVING TO JESUS CHRIST.

Many Christians do not know that all things that were created, were created by Jesus Christ. The Father said, "Let us make man in our image." In Colossians 1:16, 17 we read, "All things were created by him, and for him." In John 1:3 we are told "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." We have even been bought by His blood. We love Him because He first loved us. He died on the cross for us and we owe Him everything. Our debt to Him is so great that if we had a thousand lives we could never repay Him for what He has done for us.

That grand hymn of Isaac Watts says:
See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the saints at Rome. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1). Paul seems to be saying it is reasonable for me to suffer the loss of all things, to fight the lions in Ephesus, to be shipwrecked in the deep, to be beaten, scourged, chained in jail and finally beheaded all for Jesus! And so, because of the loving mercy of God, he besought Christians

to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. Again Paul wrote, "The love of God constraineth us." (II Corinthians 5:14).

Let me ask you a sensible question: Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you grateful in your heart for all He has done for you? Are there tears of gratitude in your heart? Do you ever praise Him sincerely with trembling lips and the sacrifice of thanksgiving? Then why not lay your life on the altar in absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ? If you will do this, you will have no trouble becoming a liberal giver.

IV. WE GIVE TO JESUS BECAUSE THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO GIVE TO HIM.

There was a man making a plea for people to give to support a missionary. There was a lady who came forward to give a ring that her father had left her. The preacher tried to give it back and tried to impress upon her mind that she was not expected to give the ring. She said, "I am not giving the ring to you; I am giving the ring to Jesus." When we really understand giving, this is what it is all about.

A bridal couple stands and takes holy vows. The radiant bride, all in white, crowned with orange blossoms and veil, may solemnly promise to take this man as her husband for riches, for poorer, through sickness and health, for better, or for worse, until death do us part. Do you think that if a husband asks that much, anything less will satisfy Jesus Christ?

Patrick Henry stood and solemnly dedicated himself to the cause of freedom for the American Colonies. He said, "To sink or swim, survive or perish" he would live or die to bring about the freedom of the colonies. And other noble men agreed to place their property, their lives, and their sacred honor on the altar for the freedom of their country. If patriotism demands so much, do you think that Jesus Christ will be pleased with us with anything less than a complete surrender? "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

V. JESUS PROMISES BLESSINGS FOR GIVING.

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging

the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:27-29). In Luke 6:38, Jesus said, "Give and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Lest someone should feel that stewardship may be over emphasized, let him remember that more than one-third of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus deal with money or possessions and His teachings are rich in exhortation to sacrificial service. The parable of the rich young ruler, the wealthy farmer, the talents, the needle's eye and the faithful steward are among these.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. Explain the golden text.
3. Read the thought for today.
4. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. What did the Corinthians first do?
2. God is more interested in what?
3. What will strong spiritual people do?
4. Read and discuss Genesis 22:1-14.
5. When is it not difficult for a Christian to give?

I. THE AMAZING CHRISTIANS OF MACEDONIA

1. Their poverty abounded unto what?
2. What did they first do?
3. How did they give?
4. What did Paul desire of Titus?
5. In what did they abound?
6. In what other things were they asked to abound?
7. What do many think of poverty?
8. Read and explain Mark 12:44.
9. Read and explain II Corinthians 8:3, 4; Exodus 35:4-9.

II. GOD WANTS MORE THAN A GIFT

1. Does giving satisfy all of God's requirements of a Christian?
2. What did Isaiah say about sacrifices?
3. God said he was full of what?
4. What does God want first of all?
5. Read and explain I Samuel 15:22,23.

6. What is rebellion?
7. What does the Bible teach over and over?

III. ALL ARE GIVING TO JESUS CHRIST

1. What was created by Jesus Christ?
2. What did God say?
3. What did Christ do for us?
4. Read the poem in class.
5. Read and explain Romans 12:1.
6. What does the love of God do?
7. What is necessary to become a liberal giver?

IV. WE GIVE TO JESUS BECAUSE THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO GIVE TO HIM

1. Tell about the lady with the ring.
2. What does a bride promise to do?
3. What does Christ expect of us?
4. What did Patrick Henry dedicate himself to?
5. To what should a Christian dedicate himself?
6. Read and explain Matthew 16:24.
7. Read and explain Matthew 6:33.

V. JESUS PROMISES BLESSINGS FOR GIVING

1. What did Peter say?
2. How did Jesus answer him?
3. What did Jesus say in Luke 6:38.
4. How many parables deal with money?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Eight

Giving More Than A Tenth

GOLDEN TEXT

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

PURPOSE

To impress upon the mind that Christianity is superior to the Jewish system.

INTRODUCTION

There are many members of the church who believe that when they give one-tenth of their income to the church, they have completely fulfilled all obligations in the realm of giving. In most instances this person feels that he is giving as the Jew did under the Law of Moses. But, when we study the giving of the Jews, we learn that they gave not just one tithe, but that they gave three tithes, two tithes every year and one tithe every three years. These tithes were known as the Priestly tithe, the Festival tithe and the Poor tithe. The Priestly tithe is recorded in Leviticus 27:30: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." The Festival tithe is recorded in Deuteronomy 14:22-23: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always." In Deuteronomy 14:28-29, we read of the Poor tithe: "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow which are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."

In addition to these tithes, there were many other laws concerning giving that the Jews observed. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy

field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger; I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:9-10) "When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow." (Deuteronomy 24:19-20)

From the foregoing we learn that at the time of fruit-gathering, the owner was to leave for the needy, fallen fruit, overlooked olives, and small bunches of grapes; while in the harvest field he was not to care for forgotten bundles nor gleanings, loss of corn dropped from the hands of the reaper, and the corners of his fields, he was not even to cut. How large the corners left were to be, the Mosaic Law did not specify. In Gill's Exposition of the Old and the New Testament, we read these words concerning "the corner": "They do not leave less than a sixtieth part."

There was also the annual claim upon the Jews of their first fruits. Exodus 22:29; Exodus 13:12; Numbers 3:46-48.

1. The first of the fruits from his people.
2. The first born of the cattle.
3. The first born of the children.

There were still many free-will offerings they made. Read and study the following scriptures: Deuteronomy 16:10-11; Exodus 36:6-7; Leviticus 22:24; Deuteronomy 23:21-23. No one can seriously study these foregoing scriptures without coming to the conclusion that one is to give more than a tenth in this Christian age. Now we shall give some reasons why a Christian should give more than a tenth.

I. FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

God is the great owner. Nothing of all our earthly possessions is really our own, not even our bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) That our riches may take wings and fly away is convincing proof that they do not belong to us, but to God. (Proverbs 23:5) God is the owner of all things and Christians are mere stewards of that which has been intrusted to their care. Yes, a Christian is a steward, and only a steward, and a good steward ought to so manage the property intrusted to him as to make the most for his employer; whereas, it seems that the average church member in many cases,

places the money passing through his hands into his own private banking account, draws upon it for his own wants, wishes and whims, and then has the audacity to offer to God some of that which is left over. Such a person is not worthy of the name steward. The person who gives in such a haphazard way is in no sense of the word glorifying God.

One should take pride in being faithful to an earthly employer, on the grounds of loyalty. Our giving to God should be an act of loyalty and worship. We should remember that we are offering that which is God's own to our King. The kind of giving that makes God a beggar, dishonors Him before the world, and degrades Him in our own mind, is not scriptural giving. Just think of the thousands who attend church and put the one dollar bill into the collection plate, offering to God something which cost them nothing, and showing by this very act they think God to be worthy of nothing. David said, ". . . Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." (II Samuel 24:24)

II. GOD HAS MADE THE ADVANCEMENT OF HIS CAUSE DEPENDENT UPON MONEY.

This is not true in the realm of nature. The lily blossoms, whether there is or is not beneath its roots a mine of gold; and animals increase their number whether there is a lack of money or plenty of money. But, you stop giving money into the church treasury—you stop the spreading of the borders of the Kingdom of God.

It is a great sin, therefore, to steal the Lord's portion by hoarding it and spending it upon our own selfish desires. The Lord's work, so often, is hindered through the unfaithfulness of church members who have no sensitive feeling of stewardship. We must keep in mind that God is only accepting from his creatures that which is already entirely His own. We must not forget that the church needs money to preach the gospel to every creature in the world. If only members would just glorify God in their giving!

Those who give without purpose, without system, do not purpose, keep no record, and give as little as possible, may make themselves believe that they are liberal, but if they were to put on paper the amount they give and then compare this amount with how much they make, they, many times, would be ashamed of giving so little and also realize just how much they have robbed God. "Will a man rob God? Ye ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (Malachi 3:8, 9)

III THE BLESSING THE GIVER RECEIVES

The whole history of Israel shows that when God's people were most liberal to God, they prospered most. This was so generally believed among the Jews that there was a rabinnical saying, "Pay tithe and be rich." I have many, many brethren who say to me, "Brother Black, I don't know how, but after I started practicing liberality, I have prospered more than ever in my life." This is what the Bible so very plainly teaches. Hear with what authority the Bible speaks along these lines: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9, 10) "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:24, 25) "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10) "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38) How can anyone read these verses and many others that teach the same thing without realizing he should give more than a tenth?

IV. IT IS AN EXCELLENT CHECK ON COVETOUSNESS.

We have heard of the man who was baptized who had his pocket-book baptized with him in order that his possessions as well as his person might be consecrated to Christ. The sad truth is, many people are baptized and the pocket-book is in no way consecrated to God and His cause.

Of all the sins discussed in the Bible, none is worse than covetousness, and none can hold the human heart with a deadlier grip. The sin of covetousness inspired Achan to steal, it motivated Ananias and his wife to lie, and turned Judas into a traitor. The covetous love of money will cause many members to be lost in a devil's hell.

In Acts 20:35 we read, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Receiving tends to make one selfish. His numberless blessings come to be regarded as a matter of course. He, many times, becomes like the swine under the oak, too busy eating the

acorns to look to see from whence they come. God has promised much for giving, but nothing for receiving. Since receiving has its rewards only on earth, but giving its recompence both here and hereafter, we need no longer doubt that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

V. WE HAVE GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Jewish law the people were responsible for their own little nation. We have the responsibilities of carrying the gospel to the whole world. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19) Brethren, we have the money in the Lord's church to do this and we had better get busy and each one do his very best to carry the gospel to the whole world.

Take a look at our fine church buildings that we have built for ourselves, look at the automobiles in our parking lots, look at the houses in which we live. Now, look at the millions lost because many members will not give their money so that others may hear of Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the golden text?
2. What is the thought for today?
3. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. What do many believe about the tenth?
2. How does this make us feel?
3. How many tithes did the Jews observe?
4. Name the tithes.
5. Explain each tithe.
6. Explain other laws they observed.
7. Read and explain Leviticus 19:9, 10.
8. Read and explain Deuteronomy 24:19, 20.
9. Explain the claim of the firstfruits, first of cattle, and first born.
10. What conclusion must one reach?

I. THE GLORY OF GOD

1. What do we own?
2. What may happen to riches?
3. How should a good steward manage his affairs?
4. What does the average church do?
5. In what should one take pride?
6. What is not scriptural giving?
7. How may we offer to God that which costs us nothing?
8. What did David say?

II. GOD HAS MADE THE ADVANCEMENT OF HIS CAUSE DEPENDENT ON MONEY.

1. What is not true in nature?
2. What happens when one stops giving?
3. What is a great sin?
4. What is God accepting?
5. What about those who give with no purpose?
6. Read and explain Malachi 3:8, 9.

III. THE BLESSINGS THE GIVER RECEIVES

1. When did God's people prosper most?
2. What was a Rabinnical saying?
3. What have many testified?
4. Read and explain Proverbs 3:9, 10.
5. Read and explain Proverbs 11:34, 35.
6. Read and explain Malachi 3:10.
7. Read and explain Luke 6:38.

IV. IT IS AN EXCELLENT CHECK ON COVETOUSNESS

1. What is a sad truth about giving?
2. What is one of the worst sins
3. Tell what sin has caused some to do.
4. Read and Explain Acts 20:35.
5. What does receiving tend to do?

V. WE HAVE GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. For what were the Jews responsible?
2. For what are we responsible?
3. Read and discuss Mark 16:15.
4. Read and discuss Matthew 28:19.

— NOTES —

Lesson Nine

Our Lord's Teaching About Money

GOLDEN TEXT

"And he said unto them, take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

It is not wrong for a man to have possessions but it is wrong for possessions to have a man.

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind that the Lord has taught us how to deal or handle our money.

INTRODUCTION

Our Lord's teaching on money, if obeyed, would forever banish all limitations on the Lord's work. The teachings of Jesus about money may, to many, seem radical, but if his teaching was obeyed it would revolutionize the Lord's work and also our lives. The average member of the church knows so little about the teaching of Jesus on material things, that to many his teaching seems like a dead language. If we should put these sublime and unique teachings of Jesus into our lives, the effect not only upon benevolent work, but upon our whole spiritual character would be astounding. We learn by closely observing the lives of the Macedonians what takes place in life, heart and character of people who are dedicated to the Lord. (II Corinthians 8 and 9)

We must keep in mind that the Bible talks more about money than it does about faith, repentance, confession, baptism, church organization and qualifications of elders and deacons all combined. There is not a book in the New Testament that does not mention giving. Since the Bible says so much about giving, we need to learn what it is all about.

I THE PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

The basis of Christ's teaching about money is the fundamental conception of stewardship. "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season." (Luke 12:42) Also read Luke 16:1-8.

Not only money, but every gift of God is received in trust for

his use. Man is not an owner, but a trustee, managing another's goods and estate, God being the one and only original owner of everything. It is required of a steward that he be found faithful and wise. So many members of the church do not realize that God expects them to handle wisely the material things of this life. The vast majority of the members of the church, it seems, leave God out of their thought when they engage in making and spending money. Men are prone to consider themselves owners; they make money by their industry, economy, shrewdness, and feel that it is their business to do with it as they please. There is little or no sense of true stewardship with such people. If such people could think of themselves as stewards, accountable to God for having wasted his goods, they would change their thinking on such matters. We must remember there is a great reckoning day coming when the wasters, hoarders and unfaithful stewards will be called upon to give an account "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Corinthians 5:10)

II. INVESTMENT IN THE LORD'S WORK.

In Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter, we hear the Lord teaching on investments: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." Verse 27. The Lord refutes the unfaithful servant on his own plea, which his cause shows to be not an excuse, but a pretext. It was laziness as much as fear that lay behind his unfaithfulness. The Lord expects us to use the material things of this life to advance his cause.

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:16-22)

This narrative illustrates what money can do to a person's heart. With all the good traits this man had, he was a slave. Money was not

his servant, but his master. When the Lord dealt a blow to his god, his idolatry became apparent, and this slave to greed walked away sorrowful, clinging to his idol. It was not the man's having possessions that was wrong, he was such a slave to money that he refused to break the fetters.

III. SUPERIOR BLESSINGS

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)

Jesus Christ taught over and over that He will entrust larger gifts to those who use the smaller ones well. Perhaps one reason for so much poverty in the church is that we have never learned what it means to be a good steward. The future may reveal that God has been withholding from us because we have been withholding from him.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) Whatever the blessings of receiving may be, that of giving is on a higher plain. Whatever I get, and whatever good it brings to me, I only am benefited; but what I give brings good to others. And we have the promise of God that whatever we surrender or give to others will come back to us in a much larger blessing. No one has ever really learned the joy of living, until he learns the joy of giving.

True giving has another's soul in view, and hence bestows upon those who cannot and will not repay, who are too destitute to pay back, and too degraded, perhaps, to appreciate what is done for them. This is like God giving to the evil and unthankful. This is giving motivated by love. He is the true giver who thinks of the good he can bring to another's body and soul. This kind of giving shows God likeness, and by it we grow into the perfection of benevolence. As a result of our unselfish giving, God opens the windows of heaven and pours blessings upon us that there is not room enough to receive. (Malachi 3:8-10)

IV. GIVING BY COMPARISON.

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this

poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." (Mark 12:41-44)

How does our Lord reckon gifts? Our Lord teaches in Mark twelve, that it is by comparison. The Lord watched the offerings cast into the treasury. There were rich givers that gave large amounts of money. There was one poor widow who threw in two mites, and Jesus declared her offering to be more than all the rest because, while they gave out of a superfluity, she gave out of deficiency—they gave out of their abundance, she gave out of her poverty.

She who cast her two mites into the sacred treasury, by so doing, became rich in good works and in the praise of God. Had she kept them, she would have been the same poor widow. But, when she cast in these two mites, she went down in history and will never be forgotten by those who love the truth about giving.

Jesus tells us here how he estimates our giving—not by what we give, but by what we keep—not by the amount of our contributions, but by their cost in self-denial. This widow's whole offering was about two-fifths of a cent. In one way this amount was so insignificant! But, the two mites constituted her whole means of substances. The others reserved what they needed or wanted for themselves, and then gave out of their super-abundance. The contrast is emphatic; she gave out of poverty and they gave out of super-abundance.

It will do all of us good to compare our giving with the poor widow, or with Barnabas, (Acts 4:35) or with the Macedonians. (II Corinthians 8-17) It would be impossible for some to realize how little they give until they compare their giving with the liberality that is taught in the Bible.

V. TRUE RICHES.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19-21) It is wonderful to know that we can take the material things of this life and properly use them and they will become spiritual and eternal. Here is a man who has a hundred dollars. He may spend it all on a banquet, or party, in which case the next day he would have nothing to show for it. On the other hand, he may give liberally into the church treasury and the hungry

may be fed and the gospel preached to those who have never heard of Jesus Christ.

Whatever we give for the advancement of the cause of Christ will be recorded in that great ledger of life. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Philippians 4:17). Never will the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world be accomplished until most of the members of the church change their attitude toward money. The selfish attitude that many manifest only leads to hoarding and covetousness, and this attitude blinds us to the needs of the church and devises for us flimsy excuses for using the Lord's money for our own selfish purposes. When one learns to give on scriptural principles, he learns also to enjoy giving.

Once it was necessary to proclaim to the people of God that what they had brought "was more than enough." "And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing." (Exodus 36:6) This should always be the case with God's people. Is it not a shame and disgrace that there are people who have never heard the gospel because we won't give that the gospel can be carried to them?

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. Repeat the golden text.
3. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION.

1. What if we obeyed the Lord's teaching about giving?
2. What does the average member know about Christ's teaching on money?
3. What should we do with the teaching of Jesus?
4. What do we learn in studying about the Macedonians?
5. What should we keep in mind?

I. THE PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP.

1. What are the fundamental principles of stewardship?
2. Read and explain Luke 16:1-8.
3. What is man in relationship to money?
4. What is required of a steward?
5. What are men prone to do?
6. What would cause one to change his thinking?
7. Explain II Corinthians 5:10.

II. INVESTMENT IN THE LORD'S WORK.

1. What was wrong with the one talent man?
2. What question did the man ask in Matthew 19?
3. Why did the man walk away?
4. What did Jesus tell him to do?
5. What does this narrative illustrate?
6. What was wrong about his possessions?

III. SUPERIOR BLESSINGS.

1. Read and explain Luke 6:38.
2. What did Jesus teach over and over?
3. Read and explain Acts 20:35.
4. When does one learn the joy of giving?
5. What does true giving have in mind?
6. What happens when we give liberally?

IV. GIVING BY COMPARISON.

1. Where did Jesus sit while people gave?
2. How does our Lord reckon gifts?
3. What did the poor widow cast into the treasury?
4. Why was her gift different from the others?
5. How may one estimate his giving?
6. What would do us good?

V. TRUE RICHES.

1. Read and explain Matthew 6:19-21.
2. What is wonderful to know?
3. What may a man do with his money?
4. What is recorded?
5. What does a selfish attitude lead to?
6. Read and explain Exodus 36:6.

— N O T E S —

Lesson Ten

Reasons for Liberality

GOLDEN TEXT

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury . . ." (Mark 12:41)

PURPOSE

To impress upon the mind that there are many scriptural and logical reasons for being liberal.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Sitting there in silence He's watching yet today;
Watching as they come, yes, come and go away.
Will it be Jesus, the widow's precious mite
Small, but yet a sacrifice, and precious in His sight?

INTRODUCTION

Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (I Peter 3:15)

If someone should ask us why we teach that baptism is for the remission of sins, we should be able to give him a Bible answer. If one should ask why we believe the Church of Christ is right in doctrine and practice, we should be able to give a Bible answer.

Often we are asked, "Why do you put so much emphasis upon liberality? In this lesson we want to give several Bible reasons for being liberal in our giving. Let us all approach this study with an honest heart and a sincere desire to learn the truth on this important subject. Our lesson today will consist of reasons for being liberal.

I. BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES HIS PEOPLE NOT TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM EMPTY.

"Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty." (Exodus 23:15).

Since God has told his people of the long ago not to appear before him empty, it is very important that we learn this great lesson today. Man is always able to offer something to God, and his offering should be such that it is a liberal offering. Poverty

should not keep one from being liberal. The poor widow only gave two mites yet Jesus Christ commended her and said, “. . . Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.” (Mark 12:43)

Christ lived in poverty and think what He gave. William McCormick said of Christ:

He gave his head to the crown of thorns.

He gave his back to the cruel lash.

He gave his cheek to those who smote him.

He gave his face to rude, dirty spittle.

He gave his shoulders to be draped with the robe of much human royalty.

He gave his clothes to his murderers.

He gave his mother to the beloved apostle John.

He gave his hands and feet to be transfixed with nails to the accursed tree.

He gave his body for the life of the world.

He gave his spirit to God.

He gave himself, he gave everything, for me.

II. BECAUSE THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH DEMAND IT.

God has placed upon the church a great responsibility in preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world. The church is also charged with great responsibility in work of benevolence. If it had pleased God, he could have put a pot of gold on the lectern of every church building and replenish the pot every week, or He could have used miracles to propagate His cause. We would not have been benefited by these methods, so God has commanded us to support the gospel. It is by our support of the Lord's work that we are drawn closer to God and when we put our money into the Lord's work our heart will be in it. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:21)

If the church had the money it could preach the gospel to the whole world in a matter of weeks. My brethren, can't we see the great need of the church? Just think of the souls that are dying without ever hearing one gospel sermon, and it is all because many, many members will not give as God has prospered them. (I Corinthians 16:1-2) Since we have the wealth to evangelize the world, think what our condition will be at the judgment if we don't do it.

III BECAUSE THE EXCUSES FOR NOT GIVING ARE VAIN AND DECEPTIVE

It is a common thing to hear one offer excuses for his lack of liberality. Here are some excuses offered for not giving:

1. The elders don't spend it wisely. If a congregation has a hundred members, each one would have a different way to spend the money. With this way of spending, it would result in chaos, and disorder. Who is to decide how the money is to be spent? This is the responsibility of the elders. If it is not used wisely, the giver will not be held responsible but the elders will have to give an account. The members must respect the decision of the elders. (Hebrews 13: 7, 17, 24)

2. The preacher gets it. This is not true. The preacher works on a salary, and the amount of the contribution on each Lord's Day has nothing to do with the preacher's salary. If the contribution is one thousand or five thousand dollars, the salary of the preacher is set by the elders and this is what the preacher gets.

IV. BECAUSE CHEERFUL LIBERALITY DESTROYS COVETOUSNESS.

Covetousness is one of the ugliest sins known to man, and we must be free of it in order to go to heaven. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." (Ephesians 5:3) "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Colosians 3:5, 6)

It has been said that David Lipscomb told his class on different occasions how he overcame covetousness in the matter of giving. He said when he first began the Christian life, he had trouble giving. When he purposed to give five dollars, the devil would suggest to him that there is Brother Smith worth more than I am and he was only giving fifty cents, or when he purposed to give twenty dollars, the same suggestions that someone else with more of this world's goods than he, would give less, hence he was giving too much. He said he was being tempted at this point and made up his mind that every time the devil suggested his making his gifts smaller, after having purposed to give, he would double it. Hence, when he purposed to give twenty dollars and the suggestion to reduce it came to his mind, he made it forty. He said it wasn't long until the devil ceased to tempt him. This is what James meant when he said, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) The man who refuses to give will die without obeying the Lord's command just like the man who refuses to be baptized. If you want to get rid of this terrible sin of covetousness, become a liberal giver.

V. BECAUSE IF YOU GIVE FIVE DOLLARS WHEN YOU COULD EASILY BE GIVING TWENTY-FIVE, YOU ARE MOCKING GOD BY GIVING HIM THAT WHICH COST YOU NOTHING.

Many members of the church don't even as much as tip God. When we eat out, we tip the waitress ten to twenty per cent of the bill. Just think of a person calling himself a Christian, when he does not even give God as much as he would tip a waitress. Brethren, we had better wake up. How many times do we give God that which is left over? Many give to God as they would give to their dog, or hog, they give the scraps or what is left over. Our giving to God should come off of the very top, the first and best is what God demands.

In the days of Malachi they were giving to God the scraps. Here is what God says to them through Malachi: "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar: and ye say, wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 1:7, 8)

Listen again. "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which is torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." (Malachi 3:14) There would be a great increase in the contributions if all members gave to God as they have been prospered. (I Corinthians 16: 1, 2) The time is fast coming when you will have no earthly opportunity to be a co-worker with God.

VI. BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, YOUR MONEY IS GOD'S. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO USE IT AS IF IT WERE YOUR OWN.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Corinthians 6:19, 20)

This farmer was showing the preacher his land. I own this land and that land as far as you can see." The preacher asked, "Whose will it be one hundred years from now?" In just a few more days you are going to leave every earthly thing you have, so why will you refuse to be liberal? Read Matthew 19:16-30. Also Luke 12:13-20).

VII. BECAUSE WHATEVER YOUR DIFFICULTIES ARE IN GIVING, IF YOU REGULARLY GIVE EVERY FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK AS THE LORD HAS PROSPERED YOU, YOU WILL BE BLESSED.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) Doubtless, the average Christian who refuses to give liberally of his increase to God, could say of his stewardship what the farmer said about farming. An agent had been giving a strong sales talk to the farmer to subscribe to a magazine on farming. The farmer listened to the end; and as the salesman came to his conclusion, trying to clinch the sale, the farmer refused by making a simple statement. "Stranger, there is no need for me to subscribe to your paper, for I am not farming now as well as I know how." This little story teaches us the lesson that most Christians who refuse to give liberally, are not suffering for want of knowledge about scriptural giving, but rather are suffering from lack of Christian obedience to the truth they know. This is certainly true after studying what the Bible teaches on the subject. It is not difficult to understand that the Bible teaches that God blesses a liberal giver but it may be difficult for some to believe it. Those who have tried it, know God blesses the liberal giver and those who have never tried it, are not competent to say.

"Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together . . ." (Luke 6:38) (Also read Proverbs 11:24, 25) (Phillipians 4:17)

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. Read and explain the golden text.
3. What is the purpose of the lesson?
4. What is the thought for today?

INTRODUCTION

1. Read and explain I Peter 3:15.
2. Give a Bible reason for baptism.
3. Give a Bible reason for liberality.
4. How should we approach the subject of giving?

I. BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES HIS PEOPLE NOT TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM EMPTY.

1. Read and explain Exodus 23:15.
2. Is man always able to offer something to God?
3. Should poverty keep one from being liberal?
4. Give an example of a person in poverty being liberal in giving.
5. Read in class what William McCormick said about Christ.
6. For whom was Christ giving so much?

II. BECAUSE THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH DEMAND IT.

1. What responsibility does the church have?
2. How could God have propagated the gospel if it had pleased Him?
3. What method did God choose?
4. What could the church do if it had the money?
5. Why don't we have the money?

III. BECAUSE THE EXCUSES FOR NOT GIVING ARE VAIN AND DECEPTIVE.

1. What is a common thing to hear?
2. Who is to decide how money is to be spent?
3. Read and explain Hebrews 13: 7, 17, 24.
4. Does the preacher get the contribution?
5. Explain how the preacher is paid.

IV. BECAUSE LIBERALITY DESTROYS COVETOUSNESS.

1. What kind of sin is covetousness?
2. Read and explain Colossians 3: 5 and 6.
3. Tell how David Lipscomb overcame covetousness.
4. Explain James 4:7.
5. What about the man who refuses to be a liberal giver?

V. BECAUSE WHEN YOU GIVE FIVE DOLLARS WHEN YOU COULD EASILY GIVE TWENTY-FIVE, YOU ARE MOCKING GOD BY GIVING HIM THAT WHICH COST YOU NOTHING.

1. How do some give to God in relationship to tipping?
2. How do many give to God?
3. What were they doing in the days of Malachi?
4. Explain, "And ye snuffed at it."
5. Who was the deceiver?
6. Read and explain Malachi 1:13, 14.
7. How are we to give?

VI. BECAUSE AFTER ALL, YOURS IS GOD'S. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO USE IT AS IF IT WERE YOUR OWN.

1. Explain I Corinthians 6:19, 20.
2. Explain Matthew 19:16-30.
3. Explain Luke 12:16-20.

VII. BECAUSE WHATEVER YOUR DIFFICULTIES ARE IN GIVING, IF YOU REGULARLY GIVE THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK AS THE LORD HAS PROSPERED YOU, YOU WILL BE BLESSED.

1. Explain James 4:17 in relationship to our giving.
2. What could some say about his stewardship?
3. From what are many of us suffering?
4. Read and explain in class Luke 6:38; Proverbs 11:24, 25; Philipians 4:17.

Lesson Eleven

My Money and God

GOLDEN TEXT

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
(Romans 14:12)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money. Wealth is not his who has it, but his who enjoys it."

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To get a deep and broad understanding of the attitude a Christian should have toward money.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches that we are accountable to God. It is sad indeed for a man to go through life without ever realizing this fact. Daniel Webster said, "The most serious thought that ever occupied my mind was that of individual responsibility to God." Is there a more sobering thought than the fact that every individual is accountable to God? Man is totally and completely accountable to God as to how he uses his money. If one is liberal with his money he will not dread the reckoning but will welcome it. But, if he embezzles, covers up, mis-uses the money that God has given him the ability to make, then one day he will stand defenseless before the divine Accountant.

Accountability suggests stewardship. Man is not just a steward of his money, but of everything that has been intrusted to his care, such as his ability and time, and yea, his whole life. Some one has said, "He is a steward of all or steward not at all." Christian stewardship is a lifetime disposition of self, and all that self includes, upon the altar of service. The good steward will withhold nothing, waste nothing, dissipate nothing, and clutch nothing to his breath, for he knows in the true sense of the word, everything belongs to God. The good and true steward does not claim to be his own master, or claim to own his life. In every sense, his life has been invaded by the will of God. Just think what this congregation could do if every member was truly a good steward. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul." (Matthew 16:24-26)

I. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN EARN MONEY?

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." (Jeremiah 22:13)

Before any man gives his money into the collection plate, God is interested in knowing how he made the money. Yes, how he made the money or earned the money, is just as much a distinguishing mark of the faithful steward as how he gives it. The Lord's work is not dependent upon the money that comes from those who are dishonest in making it.

When David approached Araunah, the Jebusite, to purchase oxen threshing instruments, and wood for an offering, Araunah offered to give them to him. But David refused. "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." (II Samuel 24:24) David knew he could not make a real offering unless the ingredients of the offering represented honest toil on his part. Just think of the difference in David's attitude in comparison with the attitude of Ananias and Sapphira who lied about their money. (Acts 5:1-3)

It is God's plan that a person should work in order to make money. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." (Proverbs 6:6-8) "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28) "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (II Thessalonians 3:11). "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Timothy 5:8) Much of the joy of life is missed by the person who does not work. We should want to work to make money that we may do good. (John 5:17; John 9:4) It has been said that Thomas A. Edison's wife repeatedly urged him to take a vacation. One day he agreed, "All right, but where?" His wife replied, "Decide where you would rather be than anywhere else on earth, and go there." "Very well," he replied, "I will go tomorrow." The next morning he faithfully kept his promise. He went back to work in his laboratory! We are not saying one should not take a vacation, in fact, one should if he desires. We are saying a Christian should get a real joy out of working that he may have money to help those in need and to preach the gospel.

II A CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY.

Money is much like water in that it is neither good nor bad. Water can sustain human life, wash away impurities and nourish vegetation. It can change a desert into a paradise. But water can be dangerous. Uncontrolled water can flood great cities. Polluted by bacteria it can spread disease through entire communities.

Lay a dollar bill before you. Look at it carefully. Read the printing, study the symbols. The only conclusion one can arrive at is that money is a harmless bit of green paper. The good or the harm depends all together on the use that is made of it. That same dollar can print filthy magazines or New Testaments. It can build hospitals or honky-tonks. Money can send missionaries or guns to other nations.

The use that one makes of money depends upon his attitude toward it. This is why a good steward must successfully pass the test of attitude toward wealth before he begins to think about the stewardship of the use of money. We must remember the Christian stewardship includes the motive and intent of the heart.

In Matthew 6:19, we learn of the attitude that a Christian should have toward money. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In I Timothy 6:10, we read, "For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." To love money is the tap root of all kinds of sin. Money is not tainted. Money is neither a devil nor a saint. But, the love of money; that's the problem. He who refuses to fall in love with money has the making of a good steward. Most people cannot control money. At a time when Israel was doing well financially, it is said, "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou are grown thick, thou are covered with fatness: then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." (Deuteronomy 32:15) Jesus Christ said, ". . . A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:14) The disappointing thing about money, it does not keep its promise. "Own this and you will happy." "Buy this and you will be the envy of all who know you." Did you ever watch a piece of fly paper? When the fly first makes a three-point landing, he thinks my fly paper in a short time. The fly paper says, "My fly." Listen to Jesus describe the rich fool, "My corn, my barn," but no doubt, in death he could hear the barns say, "My fool, my fool." (Read Luke 12:16-23.

III WHY DO I GIVE MONEY?

" . . . Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) The world says that happiness comes by satisfying every personal desire, while Jesus taught that those who find their lives will lose them. (Mark 8:35) The world says greatness comes through the position one holds, while true greatness comes through service rendered. (Mark 10:44) The world magnifies the pleasure that comes from earning, getting and receiving, but Jesus taught, " . . . It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) More joy in giving than in getting; more satisfaction in sharing than receiving. How strange are these words to our ears. How contrary to popular thinking.

As vital as giving is, other matters come first, and unless they do come first, the giver had just as well keep his money for himself. Paul mentions this in his description of the churches in Macedonia. Although the members were poverty stricken, their offerings had been most generous. Paul explains their liberality. "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (II Corinthians 8:2-5)

Every Christian should realize why he gives his money. The reasons are many for liberal giving:

1. The preaching of the gospel.
2. Caring for the needy.
3. Edification of the saints.
4. Building of meeting houses.
5. Buying of literature, and many, many other great and worthy causes.

IV. HOW SHOULD I GIVE?

We should be very liberal in our giving. A brother asked the preacher to help him to decide how much he should give. He did not want to give less than he should, but he certainly did not want to give more than his obligation. Sensing this attitude, the preacher said, "I am sorry, I cannot help you. Each time you figure, the Lord loses. When your spirit changes, I can help you." The wife said to the husband, "Can you give me a little money?" "Yes," he replied, "How little." This is the way many treat the Lord.

Suggestions to help us in our giving. No one can claim to be a liberal giver unless he gives more than a tenth of his income. (Acts 4:34-37) The person who bases his giving on how little he can, violates the whole spirit of giving. (II Corinthians 9:6) A liberal giver will freely give of everything that comes into his possession, income, gifts, interest, rents, royalties, etc. Those who have most trouble in determining how much to give, are those who do not want to be liberal in the first place.

V. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN SPEND HIS MONEY?

Many times a person reasons after this order, after I have given liberally to the Lord, I can use the rest of the money as I please. This is not true. It is a sin to waste money anytime. The money we have left after we have given liberally to God, should be used only for wholesome purposes, because we will have to give an account of all we possess. (Romans 14:12) Quite frequently, a person with a lower income has a higher standard of living than one with a better income. The difference is in management. A careful steward learns well how to manage money so that it will achieve the most possible good for himself and others. Spurgeon said, "A fool may make money, but it needs a wise man to spend it." A good steward is one who has learned how to manage money. All should study this art. If you will learn to be a good steward, you will have no trouble in giving liberally to God.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the thought for today?
4. What is the purpose of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

1. What does the Bible teach about accountability?
2. What did Daniel Webster say?
3. What if one is liberal?
4. What if one has embezzled?
5. What does accountability suggest?
6. What has someone said about stewardship?
7. Who does not claim to be his own master?
8. Read and explain Matthew 16:24-26.

I. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE?

1. Explain Jeremiah 22:13.
2. What is God interested in knowing about our money?
3. The Lord's work does not depend upon what?
4. What did David say?

5. What did Ananias and Sapphira do?
6. What is God's plan?
7. What does Proverbs 6:6-8 teach?
8. Should the church care for those who won't work?
9. Should a Christian get a joy out of working?

II. A CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY.

1. How is money like water?
2. What all can be done with money?
3. What use of money will one make of it?
4. Explain Matthew 6:19.
5. Explain I Timothy 6:10.
6. How is the love of money the root of all evil?
7. What happened to Israel in time of prosperity?
8. Tell the story of the rich man in Luke 12:16-23.

III. WHY DO I GIVE MY MONEY?

1. Explain Acts 20:35.
2. What does the world say?
3. What comes before giving our money?
4. Read and explain II Corinthians 8:2-5.
5. Give some reasons why members ought to be liberal.

IV. HOW SHOULD I GIVE?

1. What did a brother ask the preacher?
2. When can one claim to be a liberal giver?
3. Read and explain Acts 4:34-37.
4. Read and explain II Corinthians 9:6.

V. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN SPEND HIS MONEY?

1. How do some reason?
2. How should our money be used?
3. What happens many times with people of lower income?
4. Who is a good steward?

Lesson Twelve

The Church And The Preacher

GOLDEN TEXT

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:14)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

An unemployed preacher with a good physical build wanted to join the police force. The commissioner interviewed him, expressed gratification at his physical condition, then asked some routine questions. Among them were: "What would you do to break up a rioting mob?" The minister thought for a minute, then answered, "I'd take up a collection."

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To show that it is the duty of Christians to give and the duty of those who receive the teaching to support those who teach.

INTRODUCTION

It has been made clear in previous lessons that it is the duty of every Christian to give. After the Christian gives, the responsibility is then on the elders to see that the money is spent wisely. We have shown that every Christian is accountable to God and must take his instructions from God. When a Christian gives, the money goes into the church treasury and is spent by the elders (always under their instruction) to promote the Lord's work. It would be impossible for the elders to spend the money in a way to please every member of the church. If there are five hundred members, there would possibly be five hundred different suggestions as to how to spend the money. Since the money cannot be spent five hundred different ways, the elders are to decide, with a sincere desire to please God, how to spend the money to get the best spiritual dividends on the money. When children of God love and respect the eldership, they will be well pleased with the way the elders spend the money. Because of their love and respect for the elders, they sincerely believe the elders are doing the very best they know in using the Lord's money. Yes, it is wrong for a person to withhold his contribution just because the elders don't think it is wise to support his little pet project. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Corinthians 16:2).

I. THE LOCAL CHURCH RECEIVES OUR CONTRIBUTION

No local congregation is perfect since it is made up of imperfect

individuals. It is through the church that God wants us to glorify Him. The Lord's business is carried on through the church. It is good for Christians to sit together and hear the word of God preached. It is good for Christians to assemble together and sing praises to God. It is good for Christians to unite their hearts in prayer. It is good for Christians to plan together about the things that should be done that will promote the Lord's work. For all the things to be done it takes money; and it is for this reason that every member should be a liberal giver, and to be a liberal giver, we mean one who gives more than a tenth of his income to support the Lord's work.

It is through the church that we preach the gospel. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." (Ephesians 3:9-12).

God has placed upon the church a great responsibility, and since the church is made up of individuals, it simply means that there is resting upon each of us a great responsibility in giving of our means that the church may be able to do all the good works that God expects it to perform.

II THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

In the book of Acts we are told that people brought their gifts to the church in Jerusalem and laid them at the apostles' feet. "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts 4:34-37). "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:1-3).

There was, as far as we know at this time, no foreign mission programs, and the needs to be met were only local needs. When abuses arose in the distribution of funds, they were promptly corrected. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was

multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:1-4). It is never difficult for Christians to settle their differences. It is only when the servants of the devil get into the business affairs of the church that there is trouble. It is for this reason that we are told to mark those that cause division. (Romans 16:17).

We must remember that when it says, "They had all things in common", this was not a command, but was the spontaneous out-pouring of love on the part of the Christian. The plan was an emergency measure there and as far as we know was not practiced in other congregations. They were not commanded to do this, but because of the persecution of the church, the great love that these brethren had for Christ and the church, motivated them to do this, and under those same circumstances we should be willing to do the same thing. No, this does not teach communist doctrine, because this was an act of love and they were not forced to do it.

III. THE SUPPORT OF THE MINISTER.

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:13, 14.) "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Galatians 6:6). "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Corinthians 9:9-11).

Certainly these verses and many others teach that the preacher should be supported by the church. I suppose that just about everybody believes this, but many do not believe that a preacher should be properly supported. It has been in recent years that ministers of the gospel have received decent support. Even in this age many preachers are having to leave the pulpit and go to secular work in order to support their families. One of the main reasons that such a large part of the world remains in spiritual darkness, is

because churches have refused to support the preacher adequately. Many of the restoration preachers almost starved to death. Their families went without the necessities of life. I am aware of the fact that some churches are properly supporting their preachers but at the same time many are not. All those who are informed know that any successful preacher with his training, ability to lead and his drive, could go into secular work and make much more money; so it is very unfair to say that a man is preaching for money when he could turn his talents to the secular world and make twice as much and sometimes even more than this amount.

IV. EXPENSES OF THE PREACHER.

When a preacher is employed by the elders, he has expenses that other members do not have and this is not taken into consideration many times. We want to mention some of the expenses of the minister that the average member does not have to any great degree.

1. The preacher and his family must be properly dressed seven days a week. Where the average member may have from one to three suits, the minister must have several and because of constant wear, it is necessary to buy suits often. The laundry and dry cleaning is an expensive item, because the church expects their preacher to be neatly dressed at all times.

2. The preacher drives his car like a taxi. He visits the hospitals and does daily visitation and often takes people to the doctor's office or hospital. He often brings people to church services or takes them home. All of this is very expensive and the average member does not drive his car like this.

3. The preacher must entertain. The average preacher does possibly five times as much entertaining as the average member. He does this because he enjoys it and also because he knows the church would not want a preacher who is not hospitable. This is another very expensive item.

4. The preacher must support every good work. He teaches the members to be liberal; therefore, he realizes he is to practice what he preaches. In addition to the regular contribution of the preacher, he is constantly supporting other good works, and if he is not; it is because he does not have money to do it or he is not the kind of preacher he ought to be.

5. The average preacher moves many times during his life-time as a minister. Someone has said that three moves are equal to a burn out. If this is true, many preachers have been burned out many times. Even though it is true that the moving expenses are paid, there are always many other expenses involved in moving.

6. The average preacher has no retirement, other than Social Security. Most all members have a company retirement in addition to Social Security.

V. THE PLATEAU CHURCH.

For twenty-seven years I have been preaching for the Plateau Church. They have always supported me well. The Plateau Church has given me a life-time estate in the house where I live and if I pre-decease my wife, she will have a life time estate in this house. The church has also set up a good retirement program for me. I have given my life to the Plateau Church, and is it not right for them to make provision for me when I am old and can no longer work? I write this hoping that other churches will think about the welfare of their minister. Elders should not let some stingy, selfish, covetous, disgruntled child of the devil keep them from looking after those who give their lives to the ministry.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. Quote the golden text.
3. Read in class the thought for today.
4. What is the purpose of the lesson?

INTRODUCTION

1. What is made clear in previous lessons?
2. For what are the elders responsible?
3. Can the elders please everybody?
4. What should elders try to do?
5. Is it wrong for one to withhold his contribution?
6. Read and explain I Corinthians 16:2.

I. THE LOCAL CHURCH RECEIVES OUR CONTRIBUTION.

1. Why is a congregation not perfect?
2. How is the Lord's business carried on?
3. What is good for Christians to do?
4. What does it mean to be a liberal giver?
5. How is the gospel to be preached?
6. What has God placed upon the church?
7. What should the church do?

II. THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

1. What are we told in the book of Acts?
2. What did Barnabas do?
3. What did Ananias and Sapphira do?
4. What happened to them?
5. What happened in the early church?

6. What did the apostles say?
7. What did they do?
8. Were they commanded to sell their property?

IV. EXPENSES OF THE PREACHER.

1. Read and explain I Corinthians 9:14-15.
2. Read and explain Galatians 6:6.
3. Read and explain I Corinthians 9:9-11.
4. What do these verses teach?
5. Why are some preachers leaving the pulpit?
6. How were the Restoration preachers supported?
7. Are some preachers well supported?
8. Why is it unfair to say a man is preaching for money?

V. EXPENSES OF THE PREACHER.

1. What, many times, is not taken into consideration?
2. How does the community expect the preacher and his family to dress?
3. How do many preachers operate their car?
4. How much entertaining does the average preacher do?
5. What should be the preacher's attitude in supporting all good works?
6. What about the preacher moving?

VI. THE PLATEAU CHURCH.

1. Has Plateau supported its preachers well?
2. What should the church do for the minister who has given his life for the church?
3. What should elders not do?

— N O T E S —

Lesson Thirteen

Some Questions and Answers About Our Giving

GOLDEN TEXT

"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." (II Corinthians 8:8).

PURPOSE OF LESSON

To impress upon the mind the things that giving indicates.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"It hurts some people to give money to the Lord because they have never given themselves to the Lord."

INTRODUCTION.

It is natural that objections and questions should arise in the minds of people about liberal giving. Perhaps many of these questions are already settled in your mind after studying this course on giving. However, we want to ask and answer several questions that we feel will give us guidance and understanding concerning liberal giving. We will ask and answer as many questions in this lesson as time permits.

I. WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER FOR ONE TO GIVE AS HE FEELS INSTEAD OF MAKING IT A RULE TO BE A LIBERAL GIVER?

Answer: No, it would not be better. Would it be better for a person to pay honest debts only if he feels like it? Should a Christian's morality depend simply upon how he feels, with no regard for the law of God? Honest people pay rent because it is due; pay their debts because that is right. They tell the truth because they are truthful people. They are faithful because it is right and members of the Lord's body ought to be liberal givers because it is right and it is right because God has taught us to be liberal givers.

A man said to the preacher, "I give as liberally as I can to the Lord's cause, but I find that I begrudge the money. What shall I do about it?" He had heard preaching that, "God loveth a cheerful giver." He hoped that the preacher would tell him not to give until he could give cheerfully. But the preacher answered very wisely, "If I should find that I were begrudging my gifts to the Lord, I would simply quit grudging. I would confess the grudging as a sin, ask God to take it out of my heart, but I would go on doing right about giving anyway." Instead of stopping one's giving because of a covetous and grudging heart, this one should ask God to forgive him of his covetousness and grudging heart and pray for God to help him become a liberal giver. This person should also read the

following verses: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Proverb 3:9-10). "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:24). "Bring ye all thine tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive." (Malachi 3:10). Read also Matthew 19:27-30; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6; Phillipians 4:19.

II BUT IS NOT LIBERAL GIVING HARD ON THE POOR?

Answer. The liberal system of giving is not a burden nor does it work a hardship on the poor. The liberal giving system is the most fair and reasonable arrangement in the world. There is not a hint that the poor man is exempted from liberal giving. Liberal giving is simply regarded as a plain duty and a great privilege, and a universal duty. Actually, God's plan of liberal giving is a blessing to the poor man.

The poor man has to pay just as much for meat as a rich man. The poor man has to pay just as much for a gallon of gasoline as the rich man. Multiplied thousands of poor people use tobacco, and a package of cigarettes costs a poor man just as much as it costs a rich man. A ticket on the airliner costs the poor man just as much as the rich man. But the poor man gives to God as he has been prospered. The rich man who is prospered more would give much more. The poor person gets just as much joy out of giving as the rich.

A congregation was trying to raise money for some mission work. A poor sister with several children who worked hard to earn just a modest living, gave five dollars. The preacher said, "But that is too much for you to give. We can raise the money without your sacrifice. You keep this money and we will make it up some other way." The poor widow began to weep. "No, no," she said, "I have a right to help. I have a right to the joy of giving just the same as everybody else." Under this system of grace, everyone is to give as has been prospered. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

III. IS IT NOT WRONG TO GIVE TO THE LORD BEFORE YOU MEET OTHER OBLIGATIONS?

Answer. Our debt to God is greater than our debt to anybody

and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). One ought to take the Lord's part out of every dollar first. God demands first place in our hearts. God promises that those who seek first His will and His Kingdom will have their needs supplied. When one gets his check he should take off of the very top that which he intends to give to God, and when one does this, it will be much easier for one to meet his other obligations. No one has ever been prospered with the money that he kept for himself that he ought to have given to God. Yes, man should pay every debt he owes, but he should pay the debt to God first. God should come first in every sense of the word. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind." (Matthew 22:37).

I would feel much better about a debt owed to me by a man who gives liberally to God than about a debt owed to me by a man who does not obey God and does not have God's blessings upon him. Besides, there is often a selfish motive back of this objection. Actually, when one pays debts, he is paying for goods or service he himself has received. Really, people want to put themselves and their comforts first and put God's work last. We made our debts and we should not pay them with that money that we ought to give to God. Let us pay the first debt first and then ask our Father in heaven to help us that we may promptly pay all other debts. This false idea in the church, where one believes that he can take care of himself first, take care of his neighbor first, pay obligations to man first, and then if anything is left over, give God a little of that; is a false conception and will cause one to lose his soul.

IV. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN PREACHERS PREACHING FOR MONEY.

Answer: No one should enter the ministry for the purpose of making money, and enlightened people know that if a man should enter the ministry to make money, he is certainly very foolish and in for a great disappointment. No preacher ought to make his salary the principal object of his preaching. A preacher ought to do what God tells him to do whether he gets paid or not. But then why should not everybody else have the same attitude? Why should a preacher do right and everybody else do wrong? Why not just say that nobody ought to live for money? Why not just say that no Christian has a right to put money-making first? This is just as true about the elders, deacons and every other member of the church. The love of money is a sin. The preacher nor any of the members should be guilty of this sin.

Let us see what the Bible teaches about the support of preachers. "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the

mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care of oxen, or saith he is altogether for our sakes, For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto your spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things, If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar, even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:9-14).

God says the soldier is supported by the government. He says that the one who plants a vineyard should eat of the fruit of it, and one who keeps a flock should eat the milk of the flock. He reminds us that the Old Testament law provided, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." So the preacher that does the preaching ought to be provided for because of that reaping. We also have the plain statement, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

If there is anyone that is doing the cause of Christ an injustice, it seems to me it is the man who will not devote his full time to preaching, but will get a good secular job and preach for a church for about half price, and thereby keep the church from getting a full time man. These men are doing the cause of Christ a great injustice. If this man is being fully supported on a secular job, let him preach for a small mission point, or start a church, or preach for a church not able to support a preacher, instead of working with a church on Sunday and keeping them from getting a full time man.

V. THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS WANTING MONEY.

We need to keep in mind that our giving is to the Lord. For the church to carry on her great mission in life it takes money. The only reason that church leaders ask for money is to do the things that the Lord wants done. The reason so much teaching has to be done on the subject is because the average church has not been properly taught on the subject.

If preachers for the last one hundred years had been teaching on the subject, then most members would know about their duty along these lines. The church at Macedonia was a liberal church because Paul and his co-workers taught them on the subject of giving. "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded

unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we should receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (II Corinthians 8:1-6).

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject?
2. What is the golden text?
3. What is the purpose of the lesson?
4. What is the thought for today?

INTRODUCTION

1. What is natural?
2. What are we trying to do in this lesson?
3. About what do we need an understanding?

I. WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER FOR ONE TO GIVE AS HE FEELS INSTEAD OF MAKING IT A RULE TO BE A LIBERAL GIVER?

1. How should one feel about his debts?
2. Should morality depend upon how man feels?
3. Why do people pay rent?
4. Why should one be a liberal giver?
5. What did this man say to the preacher?
6. How did the preacher reply?
7. Read and explain Proverbs 3:9-10.
8. Read and explain Proverbs 11:24.
9. Read and explain Malachi 3:10.
10. Read and explain Matthew 19:27-30.
11. What is the meaning of Luke 6:38?
12. What does II Corinthians 9:6 mean?
13. Read and explain Philippians 4:19.

II BUT IS NOT LIBERAL GIVING HARD ON THE POOR?

1. What about the liberal system of giving?
2. Is the poor exempted from giving?
3. How should liberal giving be regarded?
4. What does the poor man have to do?
5. How does the poor man give to God?
6. Why did the poor sister want to give?
7. Read and explain I Corinthians 16:1-2.

III IS IT NOT WRONG TO GIVE TO THE LORD BEFORE YOU MEET OTHER OBLIGATIONS?

1. What about our debt to God?
2. Read and explain Matthew 6:33.

3. What does God promise?
4. What should one do when he gets his check?
5. Can one prosper with money he keeps that should be given to the Lord?
6. Read and explain Matthew 22:37.
7. Why is there often a selfish motive?
8. What do many want to do?
9. What is the false idea in the church?

IV. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN PREACHERS PREACHING FOR MONEY.

1. What if one enters the ministry to make money?
2. What attitude should all have ?
3. What is true of all?
4. What about the love of money?
5. What does the Bible teach about supporting preachers?
6. Read and explain I Corinthians 9:9-14.
7. What did the Old Testament law provide?
8. Who is doing the cause of Christ an injustice?

V. THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS WANTING MONEY.

1. What should we keep in mind?
2. Why do church leaders ask for money?
3. What if the preachers in the last hundred years had been teaching on money?
4. Read and explain I Corinthians 8:1-6.

— N O T E S —

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