

An Attempt To Listen To God On  
Gibing

By

Rowan Jennings

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## Introduction

### The Scriptures Are The Manifested Mind And Wisdom Of God

It is so easy for we who are children of God, due to our familiarity with the Bible, to lose sight of the glory of them. They are the scriptures of truth (Dan. 10:21), and not a collection of historical events and data for study and consideration. They are written manifestation of the wisdom and love of God for our instruction and learning. It is only by them the man of God will be fully furnished. Consequently, when we want to learn God's evaluation of a subject relative to our spiritual development and conformity to Himself, the scriptures become our only source of instruction.

Before our Lord went to Calvary He told the disciples about the coming Holy Spirit. There was understanding given why He was coming and that was threefold:

- 1) to bring all things to their remembrance
- 2) to guide them into all truth
- 3) to show them things to come.

In reference to "guide you into all truth", this is done in a twofold way. First by guiding the writers of the epistles what instruction to impart to other saints due to arising situations. For this, they were given the gift of knowledge. An illustration of this is when Moses and the man gathered sticks on the Sabbath. We also need the Holy Spirit to guide us into an understanding of the truth, thus preventing it from being dead theory and head knowledge. In the consideration of finance and giving to the Lord, God graciously used a situation to cause Paul to write the wisdom of God to the saints at Corinth and for us today. Therefore, this is not just a piece of data but the graciousness of God manifested in granting us wisdom to know how we ought to give, what amounts we ought to give and the character of those who convey the aid.

The next observation is on its placing in 2 Corinthians for it cries aloud the parable of our Lord regarding giving. He taught if thy brother has ought against thee, leave thy gift and be reconciled and then offer the gift. 2 Corinthians has dealt with exhortation for the complete restoration of the brother who did wrong, the gloriousness of the new covenant, that which lies ahead after death and the gloriousness of our reconciliation to God, chapter 5:18. Following that is instructions on how to live, his writing concerning a brother who had done wrong and now the matter of money. All must be cleared, reconciliation restored and then bring your gift.

### The "Borrowing" Of The Children Of Israel In Egypt

For 400 years the children of Israel laboured under the Egyptian taskmasters and the great Prince. The time for their release was at hand and through Moses God instructed His people to "borrow" things from the Egyptians (Ex. 3:22, 11:2). We further read, "the people found favour in the eyes of the Egyptians and they 'lent' unto them such as they required".

When we use the word "borrow" it indicates the intention to give it back. Yet, in the case of the Israelites "borrowing" from the Egyptians, there was no way these metals and materials would ever be given back! (Psa. 105:37) This was no sudden impulse by God. Hundreds of years before, God had promised that he would judge the nation that they served and would bring them out with great substance (Gen. 15:14). On the surface, the borrowing of the Israelites and the lending of the Egyptians appears to be an act of deceit by the Israelites, and one that was planned and backed by God!

This is clarified when some observations are made. The words translated "borrow" and "lent" is the same Hebrew word "sha'al", which means to ask. It is used this way in Gen. 24:47 when the servant asked, "Whose daughter art thou?" In 1 Sam. 20:6, He "earnestly asked", and to the ancients they never would have thought of its meaning to lend to get back. The Israelites simply went into the homes of the Egyptians and asked for, for instance, the gold bracelets, copper looking glasses and silver coins, etc., and they were freely given.

It could be argued that this was God's repayment to them for the many years of labour, and that would have been right, but is that where it would have ended? Applying this to ourselves, every week or month we receive wages

## Giving

from a job the Lord has given to us; are the wages given with no other reason than because we have worked for “x” number of hours, or is there a spiritual dimension? Does life consist of nothing more than eat, sleep, to get money to buy the necessary items for living, a better car, the newest computer gadgets or new appliances? Is there a spiritual dimension why God gave to the Israelites and to us that which we earn?

It was the intention of God, for those who were redeemed by blood and delivered from the great Prince, to build Him a dwelling in the wilderness, a place where He could “sojourn” with them as they travelled the waste wild wilderness.

This leads to the fundamental question; “What would they build the dwelling place of God with?”

- 1) The materials needed to build His tabernacle were given to them by God from that which they got from the Egyptians. There was a spiritual dimension!
- 2) They were going to take from that which they had received and give to the Lord. They would give gold, silver, various cloths and skins, as well ultimately many offerings.
- 3) Does this mean God is a taker, who gives to ask for things back again? Not in the slightest. God gives abundantly and when they gave to Him He gave them great spiritual blessings for their material givings. Because they gave the materials, God permitted them to build Him a tent to dwell in and they had His continual presence. In that building it was not only a shadow of things in Heaven, the pattern which was shown Moses on the mount, but it became a figure of the body of the Lord in His early pilgrimage.

Another truth was also seen in the way they and we give.

- 1) It was a very real test of their attitudes to material things and true values. The command by God to build a tabernacle demanded them to determine what they should give to the Lord? They had beautiful gold vessels, delightful copper looking glasses which women loved and silver in mass. How much should they give to the Lord and what should they keep for themselves?
- 2) It was a test of true values. Which was more important to them, holding that which was material or giving it to God for the glory of God?

The reality was that had God not given it to them, they would not have had any of these things, but the human heart can rationalise why it is ours. It is so easy to speak of “this is my home”, “I have so much money in the bank” or “this is my car”. We can so easily miss the reality that all we have is from God. It is He who gives us health, strength and all our faculties; as well as every material blessing. Nebuchadnezzar made the costly mistake of saying, “Is not this great Babylon that I have builded?”. God is far more interested in people than things. Being God, He could make whatever things he wanted but the real desire of His heart was the restored fellowship of humanity to Himself.

## The Need For A Vision

### Present Situation

It is easy to say that we believe that the coming of the Lord draws nigh (James 5:8), but James also twice over tells us that faith without works is dead, (James 2:20, 26). Reality forces us to face the fact that we are surrounded with millions of never dying souls in need of the gospel. There are thousands of saints living in poverty while many have food enough and to spare. Furthermore, the mission of the church is being restricted because of the lack of funds and for many, the cause of Christ is treated with less personal exercise than a mere earthly hobby.

A quick perusal of the assembly address book will show that there are approximately 1,376 assemblies in the USA and Canada. With an average number of 40 people in each assembly, it means that each Lord’s day some 55,000 saints meet in assembly capacity. We sit in very comfortable seats, often listening to expensive organ music, some with beautifully robed choirs and ministers of music, etc. All this is very nice and there is nothing wrong with being comfortable so that one can enjoy the message, but where is the reality of that which we profess to believe concerning eternity? It is almost as if our comfort for a few hours in a week is more important than

sharing the comforting knowledge of sins forgiven and peace with God.

An infidel said:

“You Christians do not believe. If I were to believe as you do, that there is only one way of salvation and it's through Christ and without Him men and women are condemned to an eternal hell of everlasting punishment and suffering, forever to be separated from God; I would sell all that I possess and give myself to the business of serving Christ and making His name known to those who have never heard of Him. No, you do not believe.”

The population of the world is increasing at approximately 134,000,000 a year! The startling reality is that all 134,000,000 are born in sin, slaves to sin and all will forever be damned in Hell if they:

- 1) do not hear the gospel,
- 2) do not understand the gospel,
- 3) do not avail themselves of the salvation of God.

To answer this reality the Holy Spirit informs us:

- 1) How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?
- 2) How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?
- 3) How shall they preach without a preacher?
- 4) How shall they preach except they be sent?

To this one must add:

- 1) How can the work be maintained unless they are supported?

From another perspective, the death rate of the world:

- 1) In Canada, 1 person dies every 2.1 minutes.
- 2) In the USA, one every 12.6 seconds.
- 3) In the UK, one person every 51 seconds.
- 4) In Australia, one every 3.7 minutes.
- 5) In South Africa, one every 38.2 seconds.
- 6) In Brazil, one every 25.7 seconds.
- 7) In India one every 4.3 seconds.

This indicates that in these countries alone, on average one person dies every 70.21 seconds. The vast majority of them are unsaved. Hell is a place of unspeakable weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. It is a place of eternal torment, people having a conscience that knows no peace and a breast that will never know happiness again.

The tragedy is that the moment an unsaved person dies they go from:

- 1) opportunity to no hope
- 2) apathy to reality
- 3) happiness to grief
- 4) laughter to tears
- 5) and indifference to horror and that for all eternity!

How can the work of God in spreading the glorious gospel be maintained if:

- 1) Saints are hoarding that which God has given them?
- 2) Saints are giving little to maintain a lifestyle?
- 3) If the eternal salvation of an individual is a knowledgeable theory and not a living felt reality?

It is not sufficient to pray! Prayer is both a noun and a verb! A verb in that it demands activity and that activity is giving of that which we have. It can be difficult to feel for others because we are not in the circumstances ourselves. i.e; it is hard to feel for those who are starving when few of us have ever, under severe circumstances, had to go without food. Would to God that we could consciously be aware of the reality of hell and the sufferings of the Saviour. Paul felt it when he prayed that if possible he be accursed from God for those who were unsaved (Rom. 10:1).

## Bibing

Unconsciously we have become earth dwellers<sup>i</sup> in mentality and substance. It is possible that we can settle into this world, becoming so like the ungodly who must immediately get things for personal comfort and satisfaction, so selfish that life is little less than a series of getting things and often living without giving a care for those who are dying in their sins. The Lord said, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

### The Work Of God Suffering

Not because of lack of funds but the funds are in the wrong place. I heard about a brother who was asked to speak at a ladies meeting. These ladies were all very wealthy and the chair lady spoke of a certain need and asked the preacher to ask the Lord to provide for it. The man replied that he could not do that because they already had more than enough to supply the need!

When the tabernacle was to be built, the people gave in abundance until they had to be restrained. When Joash repaired the temple there was money in abundance. In the sacrifice of Josiah there were 155,900 animals offered. In Hezekiah's day, so much food was gathered that there was plenty for everyone with some left over (2 Chron. 32:10).

Interestingly, the amount of funds indicated the spiritual level of the people and it was a revival. A revival is the awakening of believers which flows to the salvation of sinners. In 1960 Mr. H.K. Downie wrote, "If the amount of money given today is an index of our spiritual condition, then that condition is very low".

### The Scriptural Admonitions

- 1) Love of filthy lucre.
- 2) Heb. 13:5....Be content with such things as ye have.
- 3) Prov. 22:7....The rich rule over the poor and the borrower becomes the lenders slave".
- 4) Prov. 22:3....It is wise to look ahead. The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, the simple go on and are punished.
- 5) Heb. 13:5.....Let your way of life be free from the love of money.
- 6) 1 Tim. 6:10..The love of money is the root of all evil.
- 7) Ecc. 5:10..... he who loves money ...

### True Stewardship

Just as the children of Israel were stewards of that which God had given to them, so also with us. All we have is on a short term trial basis, bounded by our salvation and duration of life. This is made clear in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:13). The recipient is told "Occupy till I come". Whose were the pounds he was to do business with? They were the Lord's. Again we have the same truth in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:15). When we realize and live in the reality of the fact that nothing we have is ours, then not one red cent is mine to do with as I want. We have been given stewardship of everything we have so that if we are faithful we will use all for His glory.

There is the possibility of viewing things as mine instead of realizing that everything I have belongs to God and I am responsible for its usage. I own absolutely nothing, not my car, house, RRSP's or bonds, etc. I am nothing other than a steward. All belongs to God. It is a very good exercise to stop and ask myself, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

God will remind us that we are not our own, being His by:

- 1) Ownership.....Acts 17:28

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<sup>i</sup> There is in the scriptures a distinction made between earth dweller and those who inhabit the earth. Earth dwellers are those for whom this earth is their home, they live for nothing outside of it.

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- 2) Redemption.....1 Cor. 6:20
- 3) Obligation.....Rom. 12:1; Heb. 12:28.

This introduces the subject of “When does stewardship end?”

### Giving And Our Wills

It must be considered that the stewardship of the goods and monies the Lord has given to us does not end at our death. The matter of our wills and physical relationships often overrides the spiritual. Many believers will that which God has given them stewardship over to:

- 1) Unsaved children and family members, or children who have no interest in the things of God.
- 2) To children who have absolutely no needs and are exceedingly well off, independent of the parents.

Why should that which the Lord has entrusted to the saints, individually or collectively, be used to assist the devil in making our families more forgetful and independent of God? Of course one should leave something to their children (2 Cor. 12:14) but not at the expense of robbing the Lord. At the Judgment Seat, how we had our goods used after our departure will be reviewed by the Lord.

Another consideration is, our children would be very upset and angry they are not getting everything the parents had. Parents need not worry for if the children do not know what is being done by that which God has entrusted to them and they have gone to be with the Lord, who will they get angry at? If they do, then it is a display of their own selfishness and presumptuous thinking. Parents are accountable to the Lord with that which He has given them, not to the children.

### Giving And Our Profession

If we are going to say, “That in all things He must have preeminence”, then it needs to be practiced in our wills. When our Lord died He left only that which was of spiritual value to His own. It is a very major lesson for us.

### Giving And The Assembly

The same truth is to be applied to assemblies for it is possible that when an assembly closes and the assets sold, the money is just given to a society, which may be good in itself, but without any thought of personal exercise as to where or to whom it should go. This, I would suggest, is a sin!

### Giving In The Present

Another aspect is that of brotherly love. It is easy to say, “we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren”, yet there are saints who are living well below the poverty line. There are thousands of saints who have food enough and to spare. The mission of the church is being restricted due to the lack of funds and for many, the cause of Christ is treated with less personal exercise than a mere earthly hobby.

### Money Needed To Operate

The reality is that mankind lives in an intangible world and needs money to operate. The Lord has promised to supply the church’s needs (Phil. 4:19) and does so through his body.

Christ given gifts were designed to be self supporting (Eph. 4:16). I quote, “the edifying of itself in love”. One of these gifts is giving (Rom. 12). That is the reason why no apostle or other servant in the new testament ever appealed to the unsaved for money to do God’s work. God is a living God and is more than sufficient in resources to support his own work through his own body on earth.

It is very wrong to have a man come and minister, or serve in any capacity, then give him a cheque that cannot be used because of the country in which he lives. Even worse, to send money at a later date is inconsiderate as the individual may need the money right away. To give him nothing at all is stealing and going contrary to the



scriptures in Galatians. It is much better to give the person cash if possible, and a cheque, some of each, while they are there with the assembly.

### The Reluctance Of Full Time Persons To Speak

#### The Judging Of Motives

Despite the admonition by the Holy Spirit to judge nothing before the time relative to motives, yet if a full time worker speaks about finances it is viewed as being in bad taste. He is seen as pleading for money and of little faith by not depending on the Lord. Full time workers are not supposed to speak about this and as we judge others, we are revealing ourselves. The result is that when we judge the motives of others as wrong, God tells us in 1 Cor. 4:5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come". The words of scripture are stark, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15). If one personally gets defensive about this fact being spoken concerning them, then it also shows the obnoxiousness of pride within them.

Sometimes preachers make great boastings that they have never asked for a penny but only told the Lord of their needs. I have known a brother who, according to his own son, told from platforms that he has never asked for a penny but as the son said, he knew who to write letters to.

There is the tendency to overlook the fact that the teaching in the church epistles concerning finance was given by a full time worker!

#### Paul And Giving

If a full time worker was to do today that which Paul did, such a one would be degradingly spoken about for a lifetime.

- 1) Paul told the saints to whom he was writing that he looked to them to bring him on his journey to Spain, (Rom. 15:24; again in 2 Cor. 1:16) and concurring others (Titus 3:13).
- 2) Philemon is asked to prepare a lodging for Paul (Phm. v. 22).
- 3) He asked for the saints to assist Phoebe (Rom. 16:2), and for other assemblies (1 Cor. 16:1).
- 4) John speaking of others gave the same admonition (3 John 1:6).

If the motives of the speaker are pure before God, and if one is to teach the whole counsels of God (Acts 20:27), then this subject must be taught. I must acknowledge that despite being in assemblies for 51 years, only once have I ever heard the subject taught. When I reviewed major assembly magazines, I found approximately 5 articles on finances in 50 years!

While it is plainly recorded that Paul did encourage the needs of the saints, it must be clear that it was not for his needs nor his project, but for the needs of others. When it came to himself, he was ready to work annually to supply his own needs and the needs of others as well (1 Thess. 2:9; Acts 18:3; 2 Cor. 11:7-9).

Paul was never embarrassed to teach the saints about proper financial stewardship. The reason being that he had a much higher motive than getting more for himself. Indeed, it was for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, since Paul practiced what he preached, he must have practiced the exhortation of money as being for the glory of God. He saw it as God giving the saints the privilege of sharing in the glorious work of spreading the gospel or in assisting the building up of the saints. It was a full time worker who tells us all we really need to know about the subject.

The reason Paul had no problems in teaching the saints about finances and their obligation was because his goal was for the glory of God and the spiritual enrichment in time and eternity for them. "For the laying up of treasure for yourself in heaven" (Matt. 6:19-20). It is fruit to their account; a deposit in their celestial bank book (Phil 4:17).

### Why Should We Give?

#### Giving From The Heart Results In:

- 1) For the glory of God.....2 Cor. 9:13
- 2) The bonds of love are strengthened.....2 Cor. 9:1
- 3) It results in equality.....2 Cor. 8:14, 9:12
- 4) It expresses a brotherhood.....1 John 3:17; Acts 11:29; cp Isa. 58:7
- 5) The Lord is well pleased.....1 Cor. 9:7; Heb. 13:16; Phil. 4:18
- 6) Relief is brought to needy saints.....2 Cor. 9:12
- 7) It stimulates others to like behavior.....2 Cor. 8:1, 2,
- 8) It promotes thanksgiving.....2 Cor. 9:11-14
- 9) It increases capacity for further giving.....2 Cor. 9:8-10; Prov. 11:24; Luke 19:24-26
- 10) It produces fruit.....Phil. 4:17; 2 Cor. 9:10
- 11) Eternal benefits.....Phil. 4:17; Matt 6:19-20

The Lord spoke often about finances and the laying up of treasure for yourself in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20). Indeed seventeen of His parables had to do with giving.

### Why We Should Give Sacrificially?

- 1) Because He gave sacrificially for us by coming to die for our sins and made us spiritually rich (2 Cor. 8:9).
- 2) Because He offers us opportunity to make deposits in the Bank of Heaven (Luke 16:9; Matt. 6:20).
- 3) Because where our treasure is stored, there our heart's interest will be centered (Luke 12:33-34). It is a manifestation of how true our evaluations are and to what is our treasure.
- 4) Because everything we have belongs to God (1 Chron. 29:14). We should make it freely available to Him.
- 5) Because to withhold that which we can honestly give (cp man in Old Testament gives a sheep when God has given cows and bulls) and offerings is called by Him "robbing God" (Mal. 3:8).
- 6) Because as we give, so God will give in the same degree to us (Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6).
- 7) Because Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- 8) Because after we have given liberally, the Lord promises to supply all our needs (Phil. 4:18-19).
- 9) Because giving is an act of worship to God (Matt. 26:7-11).
- 10) Because the Lord noticed giving (Luke 21:1-4).
- 11) It is the character of our supreme mentors.

### All Belongs To God

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." (1 Chron. 29:11). Again in 1 Chron. 29:14, in his prayer he said, "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee".

When one considers that God owns everything and out of His abundance He gives to us, how grateful we ought to be.

God is the supreme Giver. He has reserves that are abundant and a generous spirit that is beyond comprehension. God is not stingy, for in love He gave His only Begotten Son. The LORD is a beneficent God whose purpose is the glory of Christ. No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, no need is too big for Him. Giving does not impoverish God and withholding does not enrich Him. As we consider the many billions of people there are on earth, totally dependent on Him, and out of his resources He provides ample for all. The greed of man in destroying and withholding food to the starving does not mitigate this truth.

All the things which God has given to us are to be held up to Him from open hands, letting Him take what He wants from us to use for His glory.

### God Is A Mentor

God the Father gives Aesthetically:

- 1) In creation.....Gen. 2
- 2) Spiritually.....Eph. 1:3
- 3) Physically.....Acts 17:28
- 4) Intellectually.....Prov. 2:6
- 5) Purposefully.....Rom. 8
- 6) Materially.....Deut. 8:18

The Holy Spirit asks a searching question, (1 Cor. 4:7), “What do you have that you did not receive?” NABS. It is God who supplies us with all things richly to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17), and when God gives He gives abundantly.

He gives:

- 1) Freely.....Rom. 8:32
- 2) Liberally.....Jam. 1:5
- 3) Richly.....1 Tim. 6:15
- 4) Abundant life.....John 10:10
- 5) Abundant mercy.....1 Pet. 1:3
- 6) Riches of His goodness.....Rom. 4:2
- 7) Riches of His grace.....Eph. 1:7
- 8) Riches of Christ.....Eph. 3:8
- 9) Riches of His glory.....Eph. 3:16

He is able to do:

- 1) Exceeding abundantly.....Eph. 3:20

There is not a stingy iota in God or in any of the divine persons.

### Christ As A Mentor

Christ the Son gave Himself (Gal. 2:20), as an offering and sacrifice and He is presently giving Himself in devoted service as High Priest and Advocate. He gives eternal life (John 17:2).

### The Holy Spirit As A Mentor

The Holy Spirit gives understanding and enlargement of appreciation.

God is not stingy! He loves to give and He is not enriched by withholding nor impoverished by giving. This all begs the question, “With mentors like this, how can I do else but give?”

### [Such Is The Importance Of Finance Teaching. It Is Under Five Headings.](#)

#### 1) The Parables Of The Lord

In reading the discourses of the Lord He speaks of giving on a number of occasions, some with money and at least having to do with hospitality. Some readily known ones would be:

- a) The purchasing of the field.....Matt 13:44
- b) The purchasing of the pearl of great price.....Matt 13:46-46
- c) The creditor and two debtors.....Luke 7:41-43
- d) The lost coin.....Luke 15:8-10
- e) The pounds.....Luke 19:11-27

## 2) The Only Specific Teaching Of The Lord In The Acts

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). That which is remarkable is that these words are not found in the gospels and the Old Testament context was much wider than finance.

Paul speaks of supporting the weak. This comes from Isa. 35:5 and it has to do with giving sympathy and support to the weak. However, in the context of Paul’s message it has to do with financial help. Herein is a major need of tenderness for the one receiving. It is very humbling to be in such a strait that one is reduced to a dependence on others. Such a saint may be greatly humiliated and indeed in “pride” reject any overture of aid. They have lost their independence and dignity.

I remember, many years ago, my parents used to constantly save a little which enabled them to make up little parcels of food for the poor saints at Christmas. I recall one incident when they went to one of the saints in the assembly, a widow lady with a mentally challenged son, and to this lady was given the little parcel. In moments the son came out and basically threw the little parcel at them shouting, “We don’t need your charity”. In doing such a work great care must be given not to offend and if it is rejected, not to be offended or stop the whole work.

## 3) The Practice Of The Early Church

- a) Acts 2:44 “And all that believed were together, and had all things common”.
- b) Acts 2:45 “They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need”. Barnes notes that, “possessions” refers to fixed property such as lands, houses and vineyards; whereas “goods” refers to personal or movable property. Also chapter 4:34-37.
- c) Acts 4:32 “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common”.
- d) Acts 4:34 “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.”
- e) Acts 11:29 “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea.”
  - i) Note: They did not sell all their possessions but gave according to their ability. Because the collection was sent before the famine came, there is the possibility they had the wherewithal to buy food before the famine starting in AD 45.
- f) Acts 20:35 “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” As far as I know these are the only words of the Lord that are recorded outside the gospels.

## 4) The New Testament Epistles

- a) Rom. 12:8 “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity”. The word simplicity means singleness of heart, not having an ulterior motive.
- b) 1 Cor. 16:2-3 This was the given order in all the churches:
  - i) The first day of the week
  - ii) Let every one of you
  - iii) Lay by him in store
  - iv) As God has prospered him

The idea is that whether at home or at the assembly, there must be an amount laid aside for the Lord. Barnes has a very interesting comment on this verse, “Let him do this by himself while he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity”.

- c) Gal. 6:6 “Him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things”. It can be translated, “The individual who is ‘instructed’ in the scriptures, let such a one ‘contribute’ unto the teacher in the good things of life”. It is to be observed that this is NOT leaving it to the assembly to have fellowship with the teacher, but the individual. It is biblical to do it collectively.
  - i) Rom. 15:27 “For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things”
  - ii) 1 Cor. 9:11 “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things”
  - iii) 1 Cor. 9:14 “The Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”
  - iv) 2 Cor. 9:12 “The administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.”
- d) Eph. 4:28 “Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the things which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth”, that is to share with one who is needy.<sup>ii</sup> <sup>iii</sup> It is also seen here that the reason for working is not to gain more things, but to help others. It is to be done for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).
- e) Phil. 4:10-19 Ye shared with me in my necessity, I was not desiring a gift but fruit to your account. In this passage, the fellowship from Philippi is viewed in several ways:
  - i) The saints are seen as a fruit tree and this is the fruit manifested.
  - ii) They are seen having a bank book and this is credited to their account.
  - iii) It is then lifted to a higher level for it is seen as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice to God. Because of this, He will supply all your need according to his riches.
- f) 2 Cor. 8-9 Due to this scripture being the major passage dealing with finance it is important to consider it more in depth. It is readily seen that the two chapters deal with two different matters, chapter 8 dealing with the receiver of the gift and chapter 9 with the donors. They are also seen as follows:
  - i) Chapter 8: 1-15 The blessing of the receiver
  - ii) Chapter 8:16-24 The character of the conveyers
  - iii) Chapter 9:1-15 The blessing for the giver.
- g) 1 Thess. 2:8-9. “So being affectionately desirous of you, we gave you our lives, we worked hard and long, not to be chargeable to any of you as we preach the gospel.”
- h) 2 Thess. 3:7-9 “We behaved not ourselves disorderly”, that is eating other peoples food and sponging off of them
  - i) Compare Ezek. 34
- i) 1 Tim. 5:9. Let a not widow be taken into the number.
  - 16. Those who believe and have widows, let them help them and not let the church be chargeable
  - 17. Elders receive a double honor, for the scripture says don’t muzzle the ox.
- j) 1 Tim. 6:17-18. Those who are rich do not trust in your riches but in God. Do good and be ready to distribute, willing to share, laying up a good foundation for the time to come, lay hold on eternal life.
- k) Phi. 1:18. “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.”
- l) Heb. 13:16. “But to do good and to communicate with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

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<sup>ii</sup> There must be the distinction between one who is needy because they cannot work and one who is needy because they are too lazy to work. 2 Thess. 3:10 teaches that if a person would not work, neither should he eat!

<sup>iii</sup> The giving and sharing is not a one way street from the saints to full time people for in Acts 20: 35, Paul labored to help support the weak and the needy. Full time workers also have a responsibility to help others. Furthermore, even as a full time worker, Paul helped support Himself (2 Thess. 3:8).

## Giving

- m) James 2:15-16 If a saint is naked or destitute of food, do not say be filled and warmed and you don't do anything about it, what profit is there in that?
- n) James 5:4 The wages are fraudulently being kept back and God will judge you by making you a pauper.
- o) 1 Pet. 4:9 "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."
- p) 1 John 3:16-18 We lay down our lives therefore we see the love of God manifested, but if one sees a saint in need and shuts his compassion off, how does God's love dwell in Him? "Love not in word, nor with tongue; but in deed and in truth."
- q) 3 John 1:5-8 What you have done is well known to the saints and strangers, bringing the saints on their way, they do not trust or look to the unsaved to provide the needs, receive such so that we can become fellow helpers in the truth.
- r) Rev. 12:11 "They loved not their lives unto the death."

### 5) The Number Of Chapters Devoted To It

It is well known that:

- a) Heb. 11 ....is the great chapter on faith
- b) 1 Cor. 13.. is the great chapter on love
- c) Isa. 53 .....is the great prophetic chapter on the sufferings of Christ.

When it comes to giving there is no one great chapter devoted to it as with love and faith but two; 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. Even if there were no other mention of it in the scriptures, this in itself indicates its importance. Appendix 1 will give a cursory consideration of these chapters.

### True Giving Necessitates:

- 1) A freedom from bias toward the individual.
  - a) So often extra is given to someone because that individual is a friend, and while another individual does the same work they would not get nearly the same.
- 2) "A willing mind", (2 Cor. 8:12; Ezra 2:68-70, 3:5, 7:16) that is, not something given reluctantly, or by coercion, but with gladness for the opportunity to advance the work of God, to glorify Christ and to assist other saints in need. With the Macedonian saints there was great joy in their giving. God loveth a cheerful giver.

Ananias and Sapphira gave but one would question how and why it was done. Was it to give the appearance of keeping up with the Joneses in spiritual devotion; if so it was not in truth. I question if I can really condemn them for are there not times in my life when I find a little resistance in my heart? Is being this sort of Christian too expensive? Then I must stop and ask myself, "Am I any different from Ananias and Sapphira?"

They just wanted to keep a little for themselves, a little nest egg. For us to withhold any gift which God has given to us and not use it for His glory is robbery. Malachi preached, "Will a man rob God?" (Mal. 3:8). God is generous beyond description. Peter put at the Lord's disposal the boat the Lord had entrusted to him. Did he lose out by giving to the Lord? No, the Lord rewarded him handsomely (Luke 5:1-8).

In the scriptures the Holy Spirit will constantly give us real life illustrations of those who are to be followed:

- 1) In 1 Cor. 11, Paul desires that the saints in Corinth will be followers of him as he is of Christ.
- 2) In 2 Cor. 9:2 Paul had used the Corinthian saints to boost the Macedonian saints to collect.

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These were only men, but since God tells us to give generously, He is the supreme example.

There must be a waiting before God for His thoughts on the amount and who assistance is to be sent to. In connection with this, it must be brought into consideration the cost of living where the recipients are working, the dependants they have as a family and if married and the degree to which they are known and supported. It is utterly wrong to send \$250 to a husband and wife with two little children in Japan and send the same to a single man in Canada. In the United Kingdom a litre of gas is approximately \$2.88. If the brother travels a lot he will have a very large gasoline bill. For example, my friend Jimmy in Macedonia visits some 17 little groups of saints every week and travels over 1000 kilometres. Consequently, someone here who travels little would not need nearly as much.

There also must be considered the individual obligations to the assembly for utilities such as heat and light, etc.

There must be the prioritizing of needs and to the urgency of the need. This was a habit of George Mueller. If there were two needs or if money was being saved but not earmarked for a certain work on a certain date, then if an immediate need came up that one got the funds.

When money is designated for a certain individual, irrespective of what they have, it must be given to them. To do otherwise is to usurp the place of God. We cannot question the exercise of another saint for there may be needs that only God knows about and the designated funds are for that need.

### Descriptive Terms

#### Clarification Of What A Gift Is

Some years ago I was asked, "Do you get paid when you go somewhere?" Since I go by faith and this was another individual who also goes by faith, I asked him what a gift was. Paraphrased, he replied that it was something received that one did not work for, to which I agreed. He was then asked, "If you go to a place and speak and they give you \$100, is that a gift, a gratuity, a stipend or being paid?" No answer was given. A gift is that which one receives when nothing has been done. Anything else is first, a reimbursement for expenses and after that, an indication of fellowship.

#### Illustration:

An individual is invited to go to an assembly and then given \$100. However, if it cost \$20 in gas to fulfil the request, then in actuality, they were not given \$100 fellowship but \$80. Had they not been asked, they would not have spent \$20 on gas. However, if they go without being asked but by personal exercise, then if given \$100; all that is then fellowship with the work they are doing.

We often hear acknowledgment letters referring to the "gift received", but as aforementioned, it is only a gift if nothing was done for it. Otherwise, we should use one of the terms Paul was by the Spirit used to describe it. In the case of the Macedonian saints, it was for the saints at Jerusalem a gift (2 Cor. 8:4), "would receive the gift".

It is called:

- 1) Rom. 15:26 A certain contribution Gk. "Koinonia" which means contribution, participation, fellowship
- 2) Rom. 15:27 Carnal things, Gk "sakikos" which means that which is temporal, which pertains to the natural. In Heb. 7:16 the same word is used of the law. Within the context of material given the same word is used in 1 Cor. 9:11.
- 3) Phil. 4:10 Your care for me Gk "phroneo" which means your concern, thoughts for me, interest in, affection toward. This word is translated, "ye were" and "careful" in the same verse.
- 4) 1 Cor. 16:2 Gathering, Gk "logia" which means collection, contribution.
- 5) 1 Cor. 16:3 Bring your liberality, Gk "chairs" as 2 Cor. 8:4

## Giving

- 6) 2 Cor. 8:19 This grace <sup>iv</sup>, Gk. "charis" which means this benefit, this bestowment which they had given.
- 7) 2 Cor. 8:4 Gift, Gk. "charis" as in v. 19
- 8) 2 Cor. 8:4 The fellowship Gk "koinonia" Rom. 15:26
- 9) 2 Cor. 8:20 This abundance, Gk "hadrotēs" which comes from the word "hadros" which means plumpness. This is the only time the word "hadrotēs" is used in the New Testament.
- 10) 2 Cor. 9:1 The ministering to the saints, Gk "diakonia" which means in this context, this service, relief.
- 11) 2 Cor. 9:5 Bounty, Gk. "eulogia" which in this context means this blessing, consecration benefit, largeness.
- 12) 2 Cor. 9:10 seed, Gk. "sporos" which means that which is scattered.
- 13) Rom. 15:27, Fruit, Gk. "karpos" fruit depending on context, cp. The vine cannot bear fruit, the evidence of that within.

### The Method For Collection

Since the scriptures are silent on this subject, it is a matter left up to the decision of the elders. There is no extra spirituality in it being a box at the door, Old Testament; or a bag passed round the saints.

- 1) The book of Acts covers some 30 years, years of vast increase in the number of needy saints, yet never once is there a mention of the needs for workers or their material needs.

Aspects of giving:

- a) Do not give your alms before men, give a drink of cold water, food, the giving of nutrition and refreshment.
  - b) The widow and her two mites, the giving financially. This lady gave out of her poverty, her need and the Lord gave the divine evaluation. It is a matter to remember that each Lord's Day the Lord "sits over against the treasury and watches that which is given.
  - c) The man whose friend called at midnight, the giving of material goods to help in hospitality, cp Lydia (Acts 16:15).
  - d) The good Samaritan, giving physically and caringly.
- 2) The only thing the Lord ever asked for we never read of Him receiving, a drink of water (John 4).
  - 3) That which is given by the saints is not to be hoarded, nor must it be used foolishly but distributed according to knowledge and needs.

### How Much Do I Give?

It is oftentimes forgotten, or possibly not known, that in the Old Testament they gave proportionately. Ezra 2:69 states, "They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work". This was under law when they were to give tithes. One of the principles of God is that His people give that which they are able, whether it is little or much. In Mark 12:42, there is a poor widow who cast in two mites, then in chapter 14:3 there is a woman who takes her alabaster box of ointment which would have sold for 1200 times that of the woman who gave two mites. Was the two mites belittled because it was so little? Each gave all that they had of devotion and the Lord appreciated it. This is the driving force of giving, it is love. When there is love for an individual the cost of an article is irrelevant. Could we ever conceive either of these women regretting that which they had done?

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<sup>iv</sup> What is this "grace"? It is not that of God's attitude in giving salvation? In v. 2 it is the attitude of the Macedonian believers, but in v. 19 it is the gift itself.



Again, the Lord said, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).

These verses teach that it was not the size of the gift that mattered. The widow only gave 2 mites, very little in human standards. The second gift was only a cup of water, again very insignificant in human standards. The preciousness and vastness of the value lay in the devotion that was being shown to God and Christ. These givers are showing complete dependence and trust in God.

How much do I give? As much as I can comfortably give from a heart that is filled with love for the Saviour.

### When Do I Give?

The easy answer is, on the first day of the week however, that leads to a problem. If I see a saint in need on a Monday through Saturday, have I to wait until Sunday to put money in the bag for a specified saint and then they receive it perhaps a couple of weeks later? I recall in 1977 I was very ill with pneumonia. We didn't have the money to get the medication and my wife had to go and ask for it on credit. Had someone known of our plight, would they have had to wait until Sunday to come to our aid?

Personal private giving can be made at any time. The man who came to his friend at midnight asking for bread could not afford to wait until the Sabbath. It was needed immediately. Furthermore, private giving must be made at home in preparation for the collective gathering of the saints.

### When Is There A Collective Collection From The Saints?

1 Cor. 16:2, on the first day of the week. This is of interest for it indicates the high esteem God puts on that collection. The evidence for this statement is noticed by the fact that:

- 1) Mark 16:9 It was on the first day of the week the Lord rose from the dead. That was a day of superlative triumph.
- 2) John 20:19 It was on the first day of the week the Lord met with His own after His resurrection. For Thomas that was a day of rebuking confirmation.
- 3) John 20:26 On the first day of the following week the Lord again met with the disciples in the upper room. That was a day of revelation for Thomas.
- 4) Acts 2:2 It was on the first day of the week the Holy Spirit came down. That was the day of empowerment.
- 5) Acts 20:7 It is on the first day of the week the saints are to gather to remember the Lord. That is a day for remembrance and consecration.
- 6) 1 Cor. 16:2 It is on the first day of the week we collectively give of, not our means, but of that which God has given to us. That is the day of heart felt practical devotion.

Glorious privileged honor that on the very same day the Lord rose from the dead and the Spirit came down. He revealed Himself to His own and the saints remember Him. On that day the Lord deigns to accept our paltry offerings. What an honor it is to give to the pierced hand of the Lord of that which He has given us.

### Who Should Give?

Those whose lives are touched by the Lord always give.

- 1) Zacchaeus.....Luke 19:8
- 2) The early saints.....Acts 2:45
- 3) The disciples.....Acts 11
- 4) The ladies.....Luke 8:3
- 5) Full time workers, illustrated by the Levites in the Old Testament (Num. 18:25-32).

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However, in 1 Cor. 16:1-2 we read “Let every (that means it is comprehensive) one, means that it is individual; you, means that it is personal.

Therefore every saint should give. We should give from our wages, legacies, tax returns, unexpected extras, etc. All are given by God as tests to show us that which is in our hearts.

### To Whom Should I Give?

#### Distribution

In the distribution of assembly funds and in the funds of the saints there are certain debts that must be paid first.

- 1) The expenses of the building. i.e.; rent, upkeep, telephone, bread, wine, etc.
- 2) Debts to tradesmen for work done (Rom. 14:8).

God’s desire is for us to share with others in need, just as He shares with us. This sharing brings about fellowship through equality.

At times the latter gifted persons supported themselves and most often were supported by churches already established (Acts 20:33-34; 2 Cor. 11:7-9 and 12:1-2; 1 Thess. 2:5,6,9; 2 Thess. 3:7-9; 1 Cor. 9:1-23).

We need to be careful when telling others what they can or cannot do. Many years ago my parents were told that it was wrong for saints to have insurance on their little apartment. Being young saints they accepted what others told them and therefore had no insurance. A fire broke out and they lost everything. Now, how many of those saints that told them not to have insurance came and helped them materially or financially? NOT ONE!!! If I am going to direct a person with my personal convictions, then if the need arises I must be ready to back it up in a practical way. Some times it is much easier to tell people what they ought to do than actually do it ourselves. Consequently, we need to be careful when telling others what they can or cannot do.

Distribution is both the individuals and assembly’s responsibility. If a saint knows of a particular need, they ought to tell the brethren so that if they deem it right, assembly funds can be used to assist at such a time.

When an individual who is dependent on the Lord’s provision by His people comes to minister, it is not just the responsibility of the local assembly to give this saint some fellowship. The individual saint has a responsibility. Gal. 6 makes it clear that if I as an individual have been spiritually enriched then I have a responsibility to help them materially. Just leaving it to the assembly is not scriptural.

When the individual or the assembly gives, this giving is to be exercised under the direction of the omniscient Holy Spirit who knows the needs of every saint and every situation. It ought not be based on emotions encouraged by sob stories or set amounts. There is no exercise of God with that sort of individual or assembly behavior.

#### Private And Collective Gatherings

As in the “when do I give” section above; this is again a private and collective matter. Many saints give to individuals and various endeavours to keep the gospel on the radio almost every day of the week. It is also a reality that we all know people with needs who the assembled gathering know nothing about or, because of unbiblical sectarianism, would refuse to help another individual because he or she is not of our group and consequently would not give money to. This is wrong and a denial of the one body<sup>v</sup> and one family.

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<sup>v</sup> This is NOT teaching gathering on the grounds of one body; it is saying that which the Holy Spirit teaches (Gal. 3:28); that in Christ there is neither Jew or Gentile, bond or free, etc. (Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 3:11) and the words of the Lord (John 10:16) “one flock and one shepherd”. This means that there is not two brotherhoods, two groups of saints but one great gathering.

## Giving

### We Should Give To:

Poor saints:	Rom. 12:13 Rom. 15:26 Gal. 2:10	“Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality” “A certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem” “Remember the poor”
Widows:	1 Tim. 5:16	“If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, (personal responsibility) and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.”
Evangelists <sup>vi</sup>	1 Cor. 9:7-14	v. 9...“Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn v. 11...“if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things.” v. 13...“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple?”
Teachers:	Gal. 6:6	“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” It is interesting that right after this statement it reads, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap”. There must be a connection, and it seems to me, that if as individuals and assemblies we fail to provide sufficient funds to cover expenses for their journey and living expenses which keep on going at home; then there will be little in the way of quality teachers to come our way. There is a difference between a teacher and an evangelist and despite the accepted route of an evangelist becoming a teacher, it is biblically wrong. Part of the problem with saints today is that they have been fed evangelist’s teaching and not teacher’s teaching. These are two entirely different gifts.
Elders:	1 Tim. 5:17-18	“Worthy of double honor.” On this there is much discussion and possible disapproval. The reason for disagreement is that we, being people of extremes, are concerned lest we give the impression that we are supporting clerisy, but it is very biblical to give assistance to a man who may be retired or has a job with an average income. Such an elder often times visits the saints bringing something to them. It may be a box of biscuits, bag of oranges or perhaps a spray of flowers. This is not promoting a paid pastor! Interestingly, the very words that are used for the support of a full time man are used by the Holy Spirit in the calling of such an elder (1 Cor. 9:9 & 1 Tim. 5:18). This man not only cares for the saints but long hours are spent in preparation for teaching the word of God. This often necessitates the rejection of a better paying position or working overtime to get the necessities of life. He must be assisted so that he and his family do not run into financial difficulties and his children see the way the father is treated and begin to despise “the brethren”. If he feels that he can afford that which he is doing without assistance, then the funds can be used for another work.

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<sup>vi</sup> If a full time individual is called by God to do a work of evangelism or teaching, then he must be supported while they do the work. If a man is called to be an evangelist then that is his work, just as an individual has to work 8 hours a day at his employment; so the evangelist or teacher the same. Sadly, there is often the attitude that they are accountable to no one except the Lord. The result is that their work can deteriorate into a cushy job, taking a gospel meeting once a week, visiting an assembly during the week and little activity except for a couple of weeks meetings every few months. In a world of several billion people there is an open door for evangelism, yet virtually there is very little advancing into new areas.

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Missionaries: Phil. 4:10-11

“Your care of me hath flourished again. . . Not that I speak in respect of want.” Happy is the individual who, knowing the heart of the Father and the love He has for His Son; realizes that He will not let his work go lacking. There are times when God will hinder funds coming through, at that point the individual must ask why. Is it because he is teaching them a lesson, does he want to move him to another place or is the work not being done right. Deut. 8:2-3 states, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, and know what was in thy heart. And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger. . . . That He might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone”. Ex. 16:4 approaches the subject from a different angle, by the giving of God to prove the children of Israel. “I will rain bread from Heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them.”

### Specially Designated Gifts Can Be Enclosed.

The world's evaluation is measured by getting. God's evaluation is measured by giving.

We read of:

- 1) Collective gifts....Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1; Phil 4:16
- 2) Individual gifts....2 John 5-7; Gal. 6:6; Heb. 13:16; 1 Tim. 6:18

### Loyalty

We should support our missionaries; NOT because they are our missionaries but because ideally we can trust that which they do. <sup>vii</sup>

Charitable organizations who are doing a work we cannot do. I am speaking about groups like the Wycliffe Bible translators and christian places for rehabilitation. If one questions the supporting of these works then two things need to be considered:

- 1) Are they doing a work for God?
- 2) Are they knowing the blessing of God?
  - a) In Mark 9:38 the disciples told the Lord about a man who was casting out demons in His name and they rebuked him. To the disciples, this man was not one of us, he did not follow us. . . and he followeth not us, v. 38, and must be stopped or at least not encouraged to continue. The Lord did not commend them but censured them saying, “Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can speak lightly of me”.

If an organization is doing a work for God and Christ is being glorified, how can it not be supported?

There is the need to face the situation regarding the children of believers who become drug addicts, etc. I speak of believers in the assembly, Halls and Chapels. When this happens they send their children to a facility such as the Salvation Army home for rehabilitation, but will not support it. The idea is we are too separate to be involved, but we will accept any services they offer. There is something wrong with this picture.

The objection of course is that they are not “assembly works”, a phrase which reeks of sectarianism. We must realize that they are doing a work for God that assemblies have neither the qualification or facilities for. People are hearing the gospel and getting saved. Perhaps the most notable was a man called Arthur Stance. He was born

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<sup>vii</sup> If an assembly supports a worker then that assembly or assemblies has every right to know what they are doing and how money is being spent. I have seen advance “warning” of an elder or his wife going to a place and while there, the activity by the missionary is amazing, but only while they are there and advance “warning” has been given. I have suggested for many years that the ideal is just to arrive unannounced on a Monday morning and after pleasantries find out what the schedule is for the week!! Another way is for the elders of the commending assembly to contact the elders of the assembly in the field, or a senior missionary, inquiring of them. Then, as a collective body, and a letter signed by each of them (if an assembly), they can report on how the individual is fitting in, what they are doing and if the home assembly can be of any assistance.

## Bibing

in Balaim, Sydney Australia in 1884, into a family of drunks and sisters who ran brothels. Arthur went from beer to whisky to gin to rum to the cheapest of wine and finally mentholated spirits. On August 6<sup>th</sup> he went to a down and outers meeting in St Barnabas church with some 300 other men. Hearing the gospel, he got down on his knees and accepted the Lord. For many years he got up every morning and went throughout the streets of Sydney, writing the word “eternity” with chalk on the pavement. Untold thousands of unsaved read this simple word. This was soon recognized but, it was not until 1956 that it was discovered who Mr. Eternity was. Today in Sydney there is a plaque with the word “eternity” written on it. When the fireworks died over the Sydney Harbor bridge on New Years Day 2000, across the bridge was “Eternity”, as Arthur had written it. Was that worth while supporting? How many others have been saved by organizations doing a work we cannot do? This activity is supported by the Lord Himself.

### How Should We Give?

Characteristically	Reference
Sacrificially	2 Cor. 8:3....Beyond their power 2 Cor. 8:6....Bountifully Luke 12:41
Spontaneously	2 Cor. 8:3...Of their own accord, willingly of themselves, there was no asking the saints to dig deeper, no raffles, or church drives, etc.  1 Cor 8:3...Gave of themselves, willing of themselves
Sincerely	2 Cor. 8:4...Praying us with much entreaty 1000 miles to travel to deliver the gift, heavy coins, bad roads and possibility might not get there because of bandits; yet leave it to the Lord to protect it, and they begged Paul to take it.
Spiritually	2 Cor. 8:5...They first gave themselves The divine example v. 9
Regularly	1 Cor. 16:2...Upon the first day of the week lay aside.
Individually	1 Cor. 16:2...“you”
Corporately	1 Cor. 16:2...“Every one”
Systematically	1 Cor. 16:2...A proper order
Proportionately	1 Cor. 16:2...“As the Lord has prospered” What if I would like to give more and cannot? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Depends on the circumstances:</li> <li>▶ The amount will possibly vary from week to week depending on the income and expenses for that week.</li> <li>▶ Have I spent so much on self, and in debt, having my toys that there is nothing for the Lord, then I must suffer the consequences; being in a situation where I am robbing God.</li> </ul> Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sell some of that which I have and give to the poor, i.e. The rich ruler.</li> <li>▶ Live as I am and nothing for the Lord.</li> <li>▶ Get another little work and give it to the Lord.</li> <li>▶ And if I cannot get any extra, the Lord understands (2 Cor. 6:12).</li> </ul> 2 Chron. 31:5...The first fruits of corn, wine, honey oil and of the increase of the field. The clause “ of the increase” so it was to be proportional. This thought of giving the first fruits of the increase is referred to again in Prov. 3:9
Considerately	According to the need in the situation, i.e. the country the recipient lives in, the “known” way they are given, the number of dependents at home, the cost of living in the country they dwell

# Bibing

Characteristically	Reference
Cheerfully	Hilariously, laughing to see it go. Because of who it is to and that which it is toward.
Obligational	<p>First and foremost, our families must be looked after (Rom. 12:8; Mk. 7:11-13).</p> <p>Tradesmen that have done work</p> <p>1 Tim. 5:8...Their needs must be met, and God does not want us to send money to missionaries if our own family is in need of food, clothes or medical help, etc. Look after his own household worse than an infidel.</p> <p>Gal. 6:6; Phm. v. 22...If you have received spiritual enrichment, give to the one who gave it.</p> <p>Paul was cared for by the saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Rom. 16:23</li> <li>▶ 1 Cor. 16:6</li> </ul> <p>He is assisted by the church when en route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Acts 15:3</li> </ul> <p>He reminded the saints of their responsibility to the Lord and to help bring him to his missionary field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Rom. 15:24</li> <li>▶ 2 Cor. 1:16</li> </ul> <p>He was assisted by local churches when far away and not with them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 2 Cor. 1:11</li> <li>▶ 2 Cor. 11:7-12</li> <li>▶ Phil. 4:14-19</li> </ul> <p>He was assisted by individual believers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 1 Cor. 16:17</li> <li>▶ 2 Tim. 1:16-18</li> </ul> <p>When Paul wrote to the saints he specifically told them of his expectations of them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ for himself.....Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6</li> <li>▶ for other individuals....Rom. 16:2</li> <li>▶ for other assemblies...1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:5</li> </ul> <p>He was not behind the door in using a little spiritual pressure for he was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ the Galatians as an example to the Corinthians.....1 Cor. 16:1</li> <li>▶ the Corinthians as an example to the Macedonians...2 Cor. 9:2</li> <li>▶ the Corinthians and Macedonians as examples to the Romans, Rom. 15:26</li> </ul>
Liberally	Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Heb. 13:16
Secretly	Matt. 6:3
Honestly	<p>2 Cor. 8:21; Tit. 3:14; 1 Thess. 4:12; Heb. 13:18.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ God does not want, nor be associated with, dirty money.</li> <li>▶ The expenses of the building. i.e. rent, upkeep, telephone, bread, wine, etc.</li> </ul>
Freely	2 Cor. 8:3

## Giving

Characteristically	Reference
Intelligently	Based on confirmed information
Purposefully	1 Cor. 16:1 A collection for the saints due to their need
With preparation	Lay aside in store
Exhortingly	2 Cor. 8:4
Willingly	The children of Israel gave willingly, and this can only be done if the heart is already given to the Lord

### Giving Is An Expression Of Love (John 3:16)

The Lord looks beyond the amount to the giver. He considers why they give and what they have kept or used on non essentials. Giving is not an “I have to” duty. God does not want a begrudged penny (2 Cor. 9:7). It ought to be an act of love. Giving is the result of longing to share.

### The Theme Of Giving In The Scriptures

Giving, in the scriptures, is conveyed along two broad avenues, collective and individual. Within these are several smaller streets which give more in depth instruction.

#### Collective Giving Financially

When it comes to giving in the New Testament, it is more often a collective giving than that of an individual. Collective giving is presented in four major passages and within them there is teaching concerning how to give. The four passages and their immediate context are:

- 1) Acts 11: 27-30 “And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”
- 2) Rom. 15:25-28 “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit.”
- 3) 1 Cor. 16:1-4 “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. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.”
- 4) Phil. 4:15-18 “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 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 odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.”

# Giving

## Collective Giving Materially

### Tabernacle

- 1) In the giving for the Tabernacle it was not for a people but a dwelling place for God. Only once was the Tabernacle made, and one must think of what a lost opportunity and sad commentary on gratitude it would have been for any of those redeemed and delivered people to have not given for such a noble purpose.
  - a) They gave but God only wanted that which was given willingly.
    - i) Ex. 35:5 “Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever [is] of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass.”
    - ii) Ex. 35:21 “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, [and] they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.”
    - iii) Ex. 35:22 “And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, [and] brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered [offered] an offering of gold unto the LORD.”
    - iv) Ex. 35:29 “The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”
  - b) They worked.
    - i) Ex. 36:1.....It was wise hearted men who did the work under Bezaleel and Aholiab.
    - ii) Ex. 35:25-26...ladies spun the threads and hair to make the cloths.
    - iii) Ex. 36:8.....The men made the curtains.
    - iv) Ex. 35:27.....The rulers had a work to do.
    - v) Ex. 35:30-33...Bezaleel had a work to do.
    - vi) Ex. 38:23.....Aholiab had a work to do.

(1) They gave their time, abilities and hard effort.
  - c) They gave as they had.
    - i) Ex. 36:5-7 “They spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. 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. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.”
  - d) 2 Kings 4: 8-11 There is an interesting aspect of giving, for it is a combination of collective and individual. The narrative tells of a woman who when Elijah, and presumably his servant, passed by. She always had a meal for them. Then, speaking with her husband, it was decided to provide a room for him in which would be a table, a bed, a stool and a lamp. It was a perfect situation, a place where he could lie down undisturbed, sit and work and when dark still function having a lampstand.
    - i) This woman, and her husband, gave of their home, their food and their possessions. It was a place of hospitable rest; and for those who travel a great deal, what a blessing that is.
    - ii) Hospitality is a blessing to the traveller, and as in every situation, when the people of God are cared for there is a reciprocal blessing to those who give the hospitality.

## Individual Giving In Parables And Aspects Of Giving

- 1) Luke 10:30-35 The good Samaritan.
  - a) This is giving at great danger.
    - i) This man gave compassion, treatment and secured care



- 2) Luke 11:5-8 The Lord said, “Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. . . because he is his friend. . . he will . . . give him as many as he needeth”.
- a) It was a very embarrassing situation. A friend comes and the individual is totally impoverished. To save from this shame the man is given that which he needed.
    - i) This was not just the giving of food, but in so doing, the man was saved from shame. There are those times when saints fall on very hard times through no fault of their own. Then, not a friend but a creditor who comes to the door, or letters come in the mail and shame engulfs them. If we are made aware of such situations then we should help, not out of friendship but love.<sup>viii</sup>
- 3) Matt. 10:42 “And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”
- a) In giving a drink of cold water how refreshing it would be in a hot climate, but it was more, it was an act of fellowship and sympathy for one who needed the touch of love.
- 4) Eccl. 12: 9-10 “because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.”
- a) The preacher (taking it in its broadest terms: Parents, relatives, Sunday School teachers, spiritual leaders and guides of every level) was wise in four ways:
    - i) He taught the people knowledge
    - ii) He gave good heed<sup>ix</sup>, sought out,<sup>x</sup> set in order the teachings<sup>xi</sup>
    - iii) He sought to find out acceptable words.<sup>xii</sup>
    - iv) That which was written was truth
  - b) Several observations are seen in this mans giving:
    - i) He gave that which had been given to him unstintingly
    - ii) He gave for the enrichment of those who followed him

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<sup>viii</sup> I know what this is like because there was a time when my wife and I, with our three children, due to an unscrupulous man caused us to lose everything to the extent that we did not even have a bed to lie on. Some friends lent us sleeping bags. There was the shame of living in the lowest townhouse complex but worse was the shame of having to tell a pharmacist that we needed medication, had no money and asked if it could be paid at the end of the month.

<sup>ix</sup> He gave heed, that is, he did not just ramble on and fill in time or get up and just see what comes to mind. The work was exceedingly serious. Consequently, he weighted the matter, seriously mulled it over in his mind, meditated upon, or deliberated about either in his own mind or in conversation with others.

<sup>x</sup> The English word “sought” is found in vv. 9 and 10, but they are two different Hebrew words.

V. 9. He sought the best words, the word “sought” means to penetrate, to examine intimately. Furthermore, he sought words which would be suitable to his audience. In recognition of his age to them, (there is nothing worse than a young man speaking down to older believers when he is void of any real experience) their intellectual level and spiritual level.

V. 10 This word means to search out, to strive after. In to seek, to find, to secure, to ask, make request. In the latter two meanings it would indicate in the spiritual level seeking the understanding of God on the matter.

<sup>xi</sup> His teaching was systematic. Often when one listens to one speaker or goes to a conference, there is no continuity of thought but the messages are all over the place. Surely the Holy Spirit can guide conveners to be guided as to what subjects to tell speakers to deal with. Elders are the same. They ought to know the needs of the flock. When one preaches the gospel in any sphere or teaches, it must be systematic. God is the God of order.

<sup>xii</sup> The words might not always be acceptable as we understand acceptability, they were certainly not with the teachings of the Lord, but they were a delight (so trs. In 1 Sam. 15:22) to the ready learners: words that are a desire (trs. 1 Kgs. 10:13), they had a purpose (trs. Ecc. 3:1). For those who seek truth, the words will be acceptable.

## Giving

- iii) He gave that which he had, spent time and effort in seeking to present truth
  - 1. This is that which Dr. Luke did in Luke 1:1-4
  - 2. John sorted out the material to give that which was pertinent to his subject, chapter 20:30-31
  - 3. The writer to the Hebrews did the same, chapter 2:3
- iv) He gave knowledge. He did not fill the time with little stories that entertain.
- v) That which he wrote for them was upright and true. (He gave them written material) Paul and John testified that their writings were true and they were given written material.
  - 1. Paul.....1 Tim 2:7 I speak the truth in Christ and lie not.
  - 2. John.....John 19:36; 3 John 1:12
  - 3. Peter....2 Pet. 1:15

### Individual Giving In The Epistles

It is obvious that before there can be collective giving there must be individual giving, but that which is observed in the following verses is individuals giving apart from their collective giving.

- 1) Gal. 6:6 “Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” God has those whom He has given as gifts to the church, who teach the word of God to the saints. It is a lonely work for it demands enormous hours of time and often the depriving of material things, which one would have if working at a regular job.
  - a) It is clear there were those who spent a great deal of time teaching the saints (1 Thess. 5:12). Paul now applies to the individuals the same instruction that he had given concerning the churches. The Jewish saints had given spiritual blessings to the Gentiles and when need arose materially, Gentiles were to help supply the needs of the Jewish saints (Rom. 15:27).
  - b) In 1 Cor. 9:11 & 14 This same principle is applied to the local assembly and an individual.
  - c) In Gal. 6:6 is an individual who having received spiritual instruction from another is to give them of the good things of this life. <sup>xiii</sup>
- 2) 1 John 3:17 “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”
  - a) The theme of love is one of several repeated themes in 1 John and in this context it began in v. 11, with the expression “That we should love one another”. It is a manifestation that we are children of God, v. 10, but no truth regarding our position in Christ stands alone, each has a practical outflow. Here it is love for the saints, v. 14, and following the example of the Lord, v. 16.
  - b) The argument then follows “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” There is a contradiction between that which is said and that which is done.
  - c) It is irrelevant what day this is, for when it comes to the collective giving, that should be done on the Sunday but personal giving can be down at any time. I know a sister who is out working with the down and outs in Belfast by herself, and it is on a Monday or Tuesday or any day or night, oftentimes to 1:00 AM.
  - d) If there is a need and I have the wherewith all to help that saint then the love of God will prompt me to do so. However, if that individual is in need because they will not work, or if they squander money foolishly, that is another situation and money will not be given openhandedly. They will be assisted in getting work and if they have been foolish they will (if wanted) be helped to learn proper fiscal management and curtailment of foolish spending.

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<sup>xiii</sup> There is the general attitude that if an individual is “in full time work”, then they are not expected to have the lovely things of life. The sometimes unspoken but clear hint is that, if an individual works at a job that is their money and they can buy a nice car, their wife have nice ornaments, etc, however, a full time worker is not to have a lavish car even if it costs, due to age, thousands of dollars less than the newer models others drive. Sometimes the statements are grossly churlish and insulting to the core, i.e “the preaching must be fairly paying”.

Individual Giving In Life

- 1) “And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it” (Ex. 35:22-24).
- 2) Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16). Having been at the Cherish until it dried up Elijah was told to go to Zarephath to a widow. Having gone there the woman was gathering a few sticks to make the last meal for herself and her son. Elijah told her to make one for him first, and gave her the promise of food for her and her son until the Lord would cause it to rain again.
  - a) This woman gave her trust to God putting God first
  - b) She then gave the first cake to Elijah
    - i) It was a manifestation of faith in the naked word of God by a man of God
- 3) The centurion who loved Israel and built them a synagogue. “He loveth our nation and he hath built us a synagogue” (Luke 7:5).
  - a) The “he” is emphatic, “Himself” as Robertson points out, it indicates “all by himself at his own expense”
  - b) The “loveth” is “agape” which indicates a love because of assessment and the object held in high esteem, to be full of good will toward and to love dearly.
- 4) Dorcas (Acts 9:36 & 39). This woman called Tabitha, which is by translation “Dorcas” is recorded to be “full of good works and alms deeds which she did” Some of those were” coats and garments which Dorcas made”.
  - a) Dorcas did not have a group behind her but did these deeds of kindness by herself, and the word “did” being in the imperfect active tense indicates that it was her way of life.
  - b) There is double mentioning of the “widows” vv. 39 and 41 and it was those who showed the “coats” “chiton” and “garments” “himation” which she had made. The coats were the inner garments and the garments were outer clothing.
  - c) This woman had a deep care for those who were widows and who possibly had children. Without the help of Dorcas they would have been destitute of clothing. She must have had a little money and used it for the material comforting of the poor.
- 5) Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2). The word “devout” is at times indicative of a pagan’s devotion and lifestyle, but with the added clause “one that feared God”. It is evident that he was a proselyte who had a great reverence for God. The same concept is seen in the Jews and “those who fear God” (Acts 13:16), “devout persons” (Acts 17:17).
  - a) He was a man of prayer<sup>xiv</sup>. Add to this the fact that Cornelius taught his family the truth he knew, v. 2.
  - b) While we are not told specifically to whom he gave alms, yet it is evident that it was a characteristic of the man.
- 6) Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-8). This man teaches a very important lesson, that being, salvation does not automatically cancel debts or wrongs done before salvation. There is a penal and governmental side to salvation. Christ bore the penalty for sins, that was penal, but when possible, things done before salvation, if possible must be made right. Salvation did not change the relationship between Onesimus and Philemon (Phm. 1:16).
  - a) He had to restore fourfold for that was the law (Ex. 22:1). This had to be after his salvation for no

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<sup>xiv</sup> This man indicates that it is a lie to say that God does not hear the prayers of the unsaved and the first prayer God hears is that of repentance. This man was definitely not saved until Peter went and preached the gospel. In vv. 4 and 31 the Holy Spirit causes it to be recorded that, “thy prayers and alms are come up for a memorial before God” and “thy prayer is heard and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.” The man received the holy Spirit, v. 44, and was evidently saved at that point.

## Giving

lover of money would take from an individual 2 shekels unjustly then have to restore 8 shekels!

- 7) Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:16-17). The giving of this beloved saint is not specified in v. 16 or 18, but that which is focused on is the seeking of Paul out and not being ashamed of him in bonds. In this he stands in contrast to all those of Asia, and in particular, Phygellus and Hermogenes, v. 15.
  - a) The situation of this man was depressing to say the least. Demas had forsaken him, (2 Tim. 4:10); Loneliness enveloped him for Crescens had gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia.
  - b) It would seem from the wording of 2 Tim. 1:18 Onesiphorus had died. If that is so, what a treasured memory Paul had of the man and the last record of him is refreshing the apostle in the Roman prison and not being ashamed to be associated with him.
    - i) On the clause "He sought me diligently and found me" Robertson writes, "He did it at the risk of his own life apparently".
  - c) Furthermore, when Paul was in Ephesus Onesiphorus ministered unto Paul. At this late stage in the apostle's life and in very dark days, this man gave Paul the warmth of Christian fellowship and love.
- 8) Those who must never be neglected when giving to others
  - a) One's own household, (1 Tim. 5:8)

### We Are Giving To The Lord

It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that when money is put in the bag or box, food given to saints who are in need, a kindness shown in bringing food to a shut in or widower etc; it is much more than giving to that individual or institution. It is giving it to the Lord. Therefore, like the priest in the Old Testament who waves the wave offering before the Lord, that which is given must be able to meet the Lord's approval. His eye will scrutinize it for its fidelity and he will evaluate it against that which we have or have not. If I cheat on my taxes and give the Lord an extra \$5, He does not want it, it is dirty money! If I have gotten my means by way of fraudulence and trickery or dishonesty; the Lord needs no part of it.

The day of Pentecost (Acts 2:45), "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

### What Is My Motivation In Giving?

#### Motives:

- 1) Wrong motives:
  - a) Matt. 6:1.....To be seen of men.
  - b) Matt. 6:2.....Do not sound a trumpet, seeking glory from men.
- 2) Right Motives:
  - a) 2 Cor. 8:8.....To prove the sincerity of your love, v. 24
    - i) Love to the Lord, the saints, His work and the unsaved for the glory of Christ.

"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" (Mark 12:41).

- 1) He observed:
  - (a) How they put in.....The motive.
  - (b) How the drink was given...The motive

### The Men Handling The Money

- 1) In Acts 6 the Holy Spirit has recorded for our instruction the character of the men who handle the finances of the Lord's people.

## Giving

- 2) They were full of the Holy Spirit, therefore honest.
- 3) Would to God it had always and was presently always this way.
- 4) Time has shown repeatedly that many who have handled the funds of the saints, either in giving or receiving, have misused their sacred trust, brought ruination on themselves and dishonor to the Name of the Lord.
- 5) Because of indwelling sin there is the danger of misappropriation of the Lord's funds. Therefore, it is wisdom, unless for some unimagined circumstances, never never never let one man or one family be permitted to be the only ones to count, bank or distribute the funds. This is not only relevant to the assembly but to any outreach or organization representing the Lord.
- 6) God has left us guidelines for those who simply carried the money from one group of saints to another (2 Cor. 8:16-24). Since this seemingly minor task required men of the highest qualifications, how much higher ought men to be who have all the dealings with the funds of an assembly. These men were chosen by the assemblies:
  - a) In v. 19, that is since this was a collective gathering from various assemblies they each had a right to choose who would convey their fellowship.
  - b) In v. 18, they are brethren who are known in their concern for the gospel.
  - c) In v. 22, we have a brother who has been proven for such a task from previous experience.
  - d) In v. 23, all of them are said to be messengers of the churches.
- 7) In the Lord's Work the qualifications are moral and spiritual; NOT academic, scholastic, positional or related to the status one has in the community.

### A Word Of Caution

There needs to be a word of caution. The following are situations I have seen and known about:

- 1) The counting of the money must never be in the hands of one man or family to be looked after at home. There is too much room for a slippage of the funds. It must be counted by at least two men immediately after the meeting is over, put in an envelope, deposited in the bank as soon as possible and all receipts kept in an orderly fashion.
  - a) It is morally wrong for large amounts of money to be kept in an account and not used.
  - b) It is wrong for finances of the assembly to be handled by someone not in the assembly.
  - c) It is wrong for the chief elder to take visitors out for lunch and let the assembly pay for he and his wife.
  - d) It is wrong to ask a saint for money because they are known to have it.
  - e) It is wrong to give to Dr. So in So because of who he is and a full time worker be given little.
  - f) It is wrong for a large amount of money to be given to a missionary because he is someones relation or a close friend.

### Three Dangers Are Lurking For Us:

- 1) On the assembly level, there is the danger of equating material success with spiritual blessing. It is becoming sickeningly clear that the modern ungodly way to measure assemblies is the same as the world's system of measurement. They are measured by:
  - a) how many families?
  - b) how big, that is what is the square footage?
  - c) how much is brought in?

The more families, the bigger the building and the more money brought in is touted as the degree of spiritual blessing. Saints of God, this is satanic deceit. God is interested in quality not quantity. In the Lamb's Book of Life and at the Great White Throne, people are seen as individuals. In John 21 the fish were counted as individuals; God never counts His people by families. If we want to know what God thinks about religious buildings then we need to read Matt. 24. That is God's last word on religious buildings, they are all for the fire! The matter of how much comes in is not as important as how it is being used. New landscaping, audio systems, new gowns for the choir, etc., are not signs of God's blessings. For the Lord's thoughts on success see Josh. 1.

- 2) Another danger for any assembly is the danger of becoming increased with goods and in need of nothing (Rev. 3:17). Materialism is one of the greatest foes for the church today. The possibility of being more concerned about things rather than persons. Our Lord gave the command “Go ye and teach all nations” (Matt. 28:19).

### Unscriptural Methods

- 1) This is a day of fast talking and smooth tongued religious salesmen. With sophistication and business marketing techniques, they send out prayer letters that describe personal financial needs, or information letters. Thank God there are few of them among the assemblies, but there are some. The saints need to realize that these are nothing else but sales pitches to get the saints to send money to their project. It is a reality that when “christian” organizations send out letters the response is 8%. This means that for every 100 letters sent out they will get, on average, 8 back. In the letter there will be 3-5 boxes, never 4, and the amount will range from \$10 to \$50. The average person will give to the \$30 level.

#### Illustration:

100 letters are sent out, postage is 52 cents per stamp. This makes 100 letters cost approximately \$65 which includes paper and envelopes. The average return is \$240, a profit of \$175!

- 2) In brazenness they beg. Such behavior is 100% diametrically opposed to the way of God. Search the scriptures. Never do we find the following:
  - a) personal needs paraded before the saints
  - b) pressure techniques
  - c) getting sponsored
  - d) faith promises
  - e) fund raising projects
  - f) appeals for funds
  - g) car washes
  - h) hot dog lunches, etc.

When these ways are resorted to, then it is high time we took an honest look and considered whether this project is from God!

### Unscriptural Usages For Money

Since money breeds control, no servant of the Lord should be hired. To be free from the control of men, one must be free from their employment. Therefore, hired pastors, a position scripture knows absolutely nothing about, is not a scriptural use of the Lord's money. The service of the Lord is not a career but a heavenly calling to be fulfilled. This delivers the individual free from the bondage of men, leaves him free to go where the Lord would have him go and say what the Lord would have him say.

### Questions

- 1) Why have the offering at the Lord's Supper?
  - a) I have partaken of Christ, the Bread of Life, and thinking of the Cup He drank, in pity and concern for my future.
    - i) Then how can I sit selfishly at that place and have no concern:
      1. About the future of others spiritually and materially.
      2. About the future glory of Christ in exaltation.
  - b) These cost money and what better place to give to the Lord. In 1 Cor. 16, it is on this day we are to lay aside for the Lord.
  - c) What better place is there to consider my giving?

2) Does All My Giving Have To Go Into The Bag On Sunday?

It must be remembered that the situation in 1 Cor. 16 was for a special offering. In Rom. 15 the saints had an offering but there is was no indication of when they collected the gifts. It stands to reason that if I see a saint in need during the week, surely I do not have to wait until Sunday to put it in the bag, and have it sent to them!

3) Where Should The Bag Or Box Be Placed?

It has been said that the bag ought to be put on the table because it indicates the unification of our offering with the Lord's. My response to that would be that no sacrifice that we can ever make can be as one with the Lord's.

In many of the countries I have visited in the ministry the Lord has given to me, the box has been at the back of the main auditorium and the saints put that which they have laid aside in it either when coming in or going out.

I believe it is completely irrelevant whether it is a bag (Judas carried the bag) or a box, whether it is put on the table or at the door. The placement of the collection is of no relation to the collection itself; it is neither enriched or impoverished by where it is placed. The more important matter concerns that which is put in it.

- a) Was it honestly gained?
- b) Was it given from love?
- c) Was there any exercise as to its giving?

4) What About Tithing?

We are not commanded to give ten percent because we are not under law (Rom. 6:14, 7:4). An individual earning \$30,000 a year, who has little or no rent or mortgage, then depending on his families needs; 10% may be of little hardship. On the other hand, another individual earning the same but with a high rent or mortgage to pay just to keep a roof over his family, or with little children who need clothing and food; then 10% to him could be an enormous hardship. I have never known an individual who ever gave at least ten percent who was ever neglected by God. God is a liberal giver.

5) Why Not Tithing?

It is a fact that anything done out of law, very quickly becomes a cold non personal exercise activity. That which is done in love is more precious to the heart of God.

As has been mentioned, we are never in the New Testament commanded to tithe. A careful reading of the Old Testament will show that the offerings of the Israelites were much more than 10%.

- a) In Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21-24; Deut. 14:22-27; there were three specific tithes to the Levites.
- b) Again in Deut. 14:28-29; at the end of three years there was a further tithe for the stranger, the widow and the fatherless.
- c) To this was the additional offerings (Mal. 3:8); that is burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass and drink offerings.

Today God does not command this but in this day of grace ought we not try to give all we can?

As the children of God we should be characterized by giving abundantly, not giving as little as possible.

When it comes to the subject of tithing, in the Old Testament there were three tithes every year and four tithes every 3 years; plus all the additional offerings which they had to give to the Lord. Unfortunately, in our day there is much evil talk going about by men who are wolves in sheep clothing. They tell the people to give tithes and you in return will get abundantly. They will be told that God wants you to be wealthy and that if

## Giving

you simply name it you can claim it and God has got to give it to you. It doesn't work like that; not because God tells fibs or lies, but because God puts restrictions that everything must be asked in the name of the Lord Jesus. That is not a formula to ask for things but that is an encirclement in which things must be asked.

On the subject of tithing, if we go before the law, we have Abraham and he tithed in Genesis 14:20. Under law we have Israel and they tithed in Lev. 27 and Num. 18. In the New Testament under grace, there is never a mention of tithing. Someone has aptly said there are three types of givers:

- a) Comparison
  - i) The widow and the two mites.
  - ii) It is what she had left that made this of such great value to God.
  - iii) Set in contrasting similarity to the woman with the alabaster box.

### 6) What About The Prosperity Gospel, "Name It And Claim It"?

Among those who advocate the "Name it and claim it" gospel there are three main verses used. They are:

- a) John 14:13 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"
- b) John 15:16 "That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."
- c) John 16:23 "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."

In the pursuing of the truth of the scriptures, it is a fundamental fact that no verse must be separated from its context. Indeed, one has stated, "A text without a context is a pretext", therefore:

#### a) "What Is The Context In Which These Expressions Are Made"?

John 14:13

In verse 12 the Lord speaks of the works He did. We could do the same and greater". Through the years I have heard this argued the following way:

- i) The Lord did physical healings and we do greater works by spiritual healing! It sounds terrific and would be marvelous if true, but it demands the question, "How many do we see healed spiritually?" To that the answer is things are different today and people do not want the gospel. This is true to a certain degree, but there are thousands who are searching but do not know where to turn. In one assembly I know, they set aside one Sunday a month for baptisms and expected blessing and salvation.

Another argument is that this is not the era of healings, the era for the sign gifts is over. There is a level that the sign gifts were for a particular period. They were for a particular people (although not exclusively), the Jews, cp. Acts 22:21. The sign gifts were for at least two reasons:

- i) To show the Lord even though in Heaven working with the men who had worked with when on earth.
- ii) For the authenticating that they were His apostles, Cp. Mark 16:20. Acts 2:22. ch. 19:11; Hebrews 2:4.

It is foolishness to determine what, when and how God can do things. If we did not believe that God is still in the healing business then prayer for the sick is a pathetic exercise in foolishness. Doctors treat illnesses but only God can heal! Furthermore it is a fact that in places like China God has indeed shown Himself to be the God of healing power in these last years

#### b) "What Does It Mean To Ask In His Name"?

To pray in the Name of the Lord, does not mean to recite as a formula, "In Jesus name" as a child using the "please" word. So often that lovely name is like an aircraft sitting on the runway waiting to get started, and so one begins, "Father, we come to thee in the name of Jesus thy Son" and then we start to lay out our requests and ending it "For we ask it in Jesus' Name, giving thanks, Amen".



To pray in the name of the Lord means:

- i) To approach God in His holiness and in the consciousness that only by Christ's mediating sacrifice this is possible.
- ii) To spend time seeking His will before asking for it to be done. When I stay in homes and the saints give me an open door saying, "Make yourself at home", there is the recognition that there are boundaries. Why should God be treated any different? To pray in His Name means to accept the honored place of being identified with Him. The Lord would never have asked for something with a wrong motive, or for a material thing to make Him feel good and boost His ego. We must do the same. The Lord would never have prayed contrary to the will of God, and if we pray in His name, we will never ask for his assistance or for Him to do that which is not according to His character.

Notice also that to pray in His Name it must be for the glorification of the Father, therefore, it must be right in motive, goal and according to His will.

c) "What Is Meant By The Triple Repeated Expression "Whatsoever"?

- i) They teach that contrary to common belief that the Lord was a poor man, that He was actually rich and Judas was (paraphrase) His personal accountant keeping the bag. This is an error in multiple ways but one will suffice. Had the Lord been wealthy, how could He ever have been qualified as the High Priest who had experienced all the hardships of life and able to feel for those who suffer in poverty?
- ii) In chapter 14:13 the "whatsoever" is for the blessing of God in being able to do greater works than the Lord did. One can pray for God to give the individual a burden to be a clean vessel, to have purity of motive, to spread the gospel etc, and that prayer will be answered.
- iii) In chapter 15:16 the "whatsoever" is for the bringing forth of fruit, that of Christlikeness in the life.
- iv) In chapter 16:23 the "whatsoever" is the ability to see beyond the present storms and have joy in the midst of them.

It will be seen that none of these verses, or any other verses, are carte blanche statements for me to ask God what I want and expect Him to be obligated to give it. God is not my servant! I have no doubt that if an individual is in fellowship with the heart and mind of God, that which they ask will be according to His will, begotten from a heart of love, with the glory of the Father being the motive; and God will answer that prayer.

### The Responsibility of Full Time People

There is a danger of opening the gift to see how much it is first and then giving thanks, greatly depending on its size. Give thanks in sincerity to God first, then open it.

The accountability of those who receive from the people of God enable him to have the freedom of time to work for God:

- 1) accountable of time
- 2) accountable of money
- 3) accountable of gifts

### This Was A Particular Offering

- 1) In Rom. 16 and 1 Cor. 16 special gathering, one of a series of gatherings, for a special need.
- 2) This is not the only time, it is when as an assembly one ought to give, but not as an individual.
- 3) Giving is more than money:
  - a) Some years ago there was a woman in Toronto who, with her husband, set aside a room in her home with clothing for saints in need. She took only new or good used clothing, nothing out of date, torn or in need of cleaning. This proved to be a blessing to many, not only to the saved but as a means of demonstrating christian love to the unsaved.
  - b) I recall, on my way back from Los Angeles I went into a gas station. Seeing the gospel texts on my car, when I went to pay the owner told me the gas was on the house.

Paul was never embarrassed to teach the saints about proper financial stewardship. The reason being he had a much higher motive than getting more for himself. Rather it was for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, since Paul practiced what he preached, he must have included his exhortation on money as being for the glory of God. He saw it as God giving the saints the privilege of sharing in the glorious work of spreading the gospel or assisting in the up-building of the saints. It was Paul, a full time worker, who tells us nearly all we know about this subject.

While it is plainly recorded that Paul did encourage the saints of needs, it must be clear that it was NOT for HIS needs, nor HIS project, but for the needs of others. When it came to himself he was ready to work manually to supply his own needs and the needs of others as well (1 Thess. 2:9; Acts 18:3; 2 Cor. 11:7-9).

### Salaried Men Or Pastors

There are, at times, missionaries returning home for a furlough. During that time they will visit various assemblies to tell of the work being done and how it is progressing. The sad thing is that quite often more time is spent trying to get money for support by putting the saints on guilt trips or exaggerating the work that is actually being done. Sometimes, when on the mission field, they will write letters asking for pledges and promoting projects much bigger than they really are and again will exaggerate the work being done.

That which I have been told, “You have to let the folk at home know the results whether they are real or not, or the money will stop” or “everyone on the field exaggerates for that is the way things are done”. Where is their dependence on God? When those professing to serve the Lord have to stoop to follow the father of lies and deceit, then there is something radically wrong. It is an **“either / or”** situation:

- 1) Either God has stopped support for some reason or it is a trial of faith.
- 2) Either the work has finished no matter how well it is progressing (cp. Phillip Acts 4) or there is another work in manual labour God wants done.<sup>xv</sup> (Acts 20:34-35)

### What Happens When Funds Do Not Come In?

- 1) Is the Lord testing ones faith?
- 2) Should the individual go and get a job until matters change?
- 3) Should folk at home be sent a letter exaggerating (telling lies) to get money quick?

By the use of letters and sob stories the saints in the homeland are made to feel guilty. They are told if funds do not come in then missionaries will have to come home, work programs on the field may have to be stopped or the church will be hindering the work of God abroad. This is wickedness and throws a very bad slant on the heart and character of God.

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<sup>xv</sup> It may be that the full time worker has lost sight of the difficulty it is to earn \$100 and they need to have their feet put back on the ground and not take it for granted. There is a need to remember that when \$100 is given some individual had to work possibly 5-12 hours to earn that amount and approximately \$25 goes to taxes.

## Gibing

I am well aware of all the excuses that can be made:

- 1) The work is going so well it would be wrong to stop it.
- 2) The Lord began it so it must be His will to continue it.
- 3) We must try to find ways to make ends meet so that it can continue and grow.

In all this there is a major missing observation, **this is the Lord's work, not ours!!** Is God incapable of providing that which is needed? Do we think that we can have more of a burden than God for the cause of Christ? It very well may be that the will of God is for the individual to do as Paul did, work with their hands and mingle with the people on the shop floor.

If God wants a work to continue then He can and will supply the means. I have seen it in my own experience many times.

- 1) When my wife and I lived in Northern Ontario in 1975, we had 3 small children and lived in a 2 bedroom apartment. It was decided to try to rent a bigger place and the next day got the newspaper. When looking for a place to rent there was an ad for new three bedroom homes just being built. To qualify one must have a family, be below a certain income and have a deposit of \$2,250. At that time our average monthly income was \$600 and we had nothing to spare. Believing that it was the will of God and taking the scripture, "My God shall supply all your need," we went and saw the homes. We went into the office and decided to pick one out. We had some \$60 in the bank. We were told that the deposit had to be in by Monday and this was Thursday afternoon. We prayed and waited on God. When asked about our living conditions, folk were simply told that we were looking at the new homes being built. We told no one of our commitment! On Monday morning I went to the bank with a cash total of \$2,700 approximately. God provided without any pleadings.
- 2) The present house we are in was received through prayer. Our son in-law told us he would build us a house and sell it to us at cost if we could get the deposit. This was in 1997 approximately. One afternoon I got a call from a company I had worked for some 11 years before. It was a big bakery and due to sickness I was not able to work for them. All papers had been signed that I had no claims upon them and all benefits long stopped. The company representative told me that they were buying all the bakers out and if I wanted I could work for 3 weeks and receive a check for \$50,000. The Lord provided for us and we ended up getting a house built with a basement suite and paying less than we would have on rent.
- 3) In 1994 three of us established an outreach for the 1994 world soccer championships in the USA. We produced 1,750,000 gospel booklets, never asking for one penny but depending totally on the Lord. Our bill came to \$110,000 US dollars (a lot more then than now) and without pledges or guarantees, etc. God provided every cent needed.

The truth is, if a work is the work of God He will supply the means.

When an assembly changes the teaching of the New Testament for the ways of the untaught and unsaved and seeks to have a pastor, they are committing the very sin that Israel did when they rejected the Kingship of God for that of man. It must be clear that it was never God's intention for evangelists to only go or mainly go to already established assemblies. They can go there but their work was to be that of outreach in unchurched communities. It is from the saints in the local assembly that the gospel is to spread to those near and far, not by an unknown by the community coming in and inviting people to a gospel they have little or no interest in. If they are impressed by the gospel being lived in daily life, then they will be more responsive to an invitation to hear the gospel. (1 Thess.1:8) "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord". (Rom 1:8) "Your faith is spoken of throughout the world". It is only the teacher who can go from assembly to assembly, and that because of the gift given to him by God. An evangelist or missionary may stay in one place for several years to see the assembly either established or re-solidified in truth, but then he is to move on. The greatest evangelist the world ever knew, the Lord himself, did this.

- 1) Matt 9:35....."Jesus went about all the cities"
- 2) Luke 4:43...."I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent"
- 3) Luke 13:22..."And He went through cities and villages teaching".

The work the Lord did was supported where homes were opened to Him and his disciples when on the road. He taught the disciples, “freely as ye receive freely give” (Matt 10:8). The religious leaders of His day were characterized by the Lord as heirlings (John 10:13), who did the work for money. Peter and John could say, “Silver and gold have I none” (Acts 3:6).

When there is a paid pastor, then there is at times a contract drawn up of what his duties are and if asked to do a work not in the contract he can refuse. A paid pastor has to watch his words lest Mr. and Mrs. So in So cut down on the benefits he gets from them; a nice car every so often, an extra amount of money or a paid vacation.

It is interesting to look at the three major recorded missionary journeys of Paul. In total he travelled almost 5,000 miles, which in that ancient day, as it is today but more so then, an enormity of travel and yet never once did he ever mention a personal need.

The assembly and the servant of the Lord must look to the Lord to minister through His church rather than using the church to minister to God by a stipulated salary. As Phil. 4:6 says, “Let your requests be made known unto God”. Then in v. 19, “But my God shall supply all your need”. Psa. 23 tells us that “the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want”.

There is never a hint of the Lord ever paying any of the disciples a salary and indeed, although Judas had the bag, it would seem that there was little or nothing in it at times for why else would he ask the Pharisees to show Him a penny or send Peter to catch a fish for temple tax.

Today an itinerant worker is belittled and a resident worker as pastor is viewed as a positive. There may be, as aforementioned, times when a man or married couple must stay in place but, and this is a big but, it is to work themselves out of a job so that the nationals can do it.

It is a fact that nationals can live on less than the foreign missionary so if funds dry up for him it may well be that the Lord is seeking to move him so that the nationals can take over. The missionary, as is seen in very many situations, becomes the big man and then among the missionaries themselves there can be the senior missionary. This is 100% wrong.

The early church knew nothing of hiring a pastor or a man receiving a pledged salary for the work. Such an idea would have been seen as an insult to the heart of God and therefore repugnant. Today a group of saints which do not have a pastor is viewed as a poor cousin, they are not up to par and that a pastor is needed. No man serving the Lord should be hired, and indeed in the Old Testament only false prophets were hired, cp. Balaam. Full confidence must be placed in God alone. The work of God was never meant to be another job, so that John is a baker, Mary is a secretary and Bill is a pastor. The individual depending on God will never be a hired man as man’s servant. Such a one will never play to the platform, or have to watch what he says because Mr. So in So or such and such an assembly will cut off support to him. He is to be God’s servant and not play the political field. There will be no prayer letters hinting or brazenly asking for funds. He will not be swayed to go to another gathering because of better benefits and/or wages. He is not to be a professional clergyman building up a church for a bigger salary. His work is to care for, tend and feed the sheep and the Chief Shepherd will look after his financial situation.

### What About A Paid Pastor? Eph. 4

(Eph. 4:11) The Holy Spirit guided Paul to write, “And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists and some, pastors and teachers”. From this it is stated that it is biblical to have a pastor of a “church”.<sup>xvi</sup> The man is seen as a shepherd, and in large congregations there is the “Head pastor/shepherd, associate pastors/shepherds, etc. This opens several questions:

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<sup>xvi</sup> The word “church” being used as is biblically taught, a congregation of people.

1) What Is The Context Of Ephesians Four?

In the interpretation of any scripture a major matter is context and the decision to be made is, "Is this context dealing with the local church or the corporate church?"

2) Is It Biblical To Have A Pastor?

An answer one hears, and which is given in the KJV, is "Yes", because at the end of 2 Tim. it is written, "The second epistle unto Tomotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians". Again in Titus 3 at the end it is written, "It was written tautest ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians". In the article on "Ephesus" in *Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), David E. Aune writes, "Timothy is remembered as the first bishop of Ephesus ([Eusebius] HE3.4.6), a tradition probably based on 1 Tim. 1:3". (415)

What Are The Advantages To Living By Faith?

It is a major test of the motivation and faith of the individual who is contemplating leaving a paid job to go by faith. Nowhere in scripture does it tell of an individual going to the elders of an assembly to seek commendation to the work. The biblical pattern is the elder sees the spiritual features, and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit commends them (Acts 13). This becomes a wonderful assurance for when funds get low or non existent, then the individual knows that they did not seek this place but it is the one the Lord of the harvest put them in.

It also gives the individual the awareness that he or she is the servant of the Lord, not of men or a certain group of assemblies. They need to be dependent on the Lord for their needs. They will learn to become sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the pseudo leading of Satan. In Acts 16:6-10 the Holy Spirit stopped Paul from going east but in 1 Thess. 2:18 Satan hindered. If a man becomes the servant of men the message will be for the pleasing of men, not for the building up of the saints. T. E. Wilson, that mighty and humble servant of God, said his burden was to build, bind and beautify the saints. If a man has to watch what he says, or where he goes for concern about his income, then sadly he has lost sight of whose servant he is.

The Misusing Of The Scripture "They Went Forth Taking Nothing Of The Gentiles" 3 John 1:7

This passage is one of controversy in which the individual must determine for themselves the meaning of the words.

- 1) There is a school of thought which translates the words as "They went out, were driven out, expelled from the Gentiles". This biblical meaning is given in Matt. 12:43.
- 2) The other thought is that as missionaries they went out from their home church as in Acts 13 and en route took nothing from the unsaved as payment. This, I suggest, is the interpretation.
- 3) There is another distorted view being practiced today by folk who go out in the Lord's work. It is to accept only financial help from those in their group of assemblies. Apart from being sectarian to the core, it is a denial of the truth of spirit baptism. This is included here because of a situation in which a brother from the chapels sent money to a missionary from the halls who he had known for many years. The money was sent back and the young brother, only about 25 years of age, was deeply hurt.

What Is The Passage Speaking About And Who Are The Gentiles?

The word used for "Gentiles" is "ethnos" and is used in 5 different contexts in the New Testament. One of those is Gentile Christians, but that is not the context here. This context deals with hospitality and financial help among the saints. Gaius was marked by love for the saints of God, whether he knew them or not. The better translation in v. 5 is, "Doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and them that are strangers".

Darby, "toward the brethren and that strangers" Young's Literal translation is basically the same.

This is supported by v. 8, "we ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth", and this could not be said if the word "strangers" is applying to unsaved people.

## Giving

For this kindness John commends him, adding “they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles”, that is nothing from the unsaved and pagans. Why was this so important? Paul will stress that while they who are appointed to the preaching of the gospel can live by it, yet he would work rather than have the unsaved get a wrong perception of why he preached!

- 1) In 1 Cor. 9:18 ....he writes, “I make the gospel of Christ without charge”.
- 2) 2 Cor 11:7.....“I have preached unto you the gospel of God freely”.
- 3) 2 Thess. 3:8.....“Neither did we eat any mans bread for nought, but wrought with labour”.

It is an insult to God to go to the children of the devil seeking funds to do the work of God. Can the Most High God, possessor of Heaven and earth (Gen. 14), not finance His glorification of Christ?

- 1) Psa. 24:1...The psalmist will write, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof”.
- 2) Ex. 9:29.....Moses declares, “The earth is the Lord’s”.
- 3) Ex. 19:5.....God says, “All the earth is mine”.
- 4) To these is added, Deut. 10:14, “The heaven of heavens is the Lord’s. The earth also with all that dwell therein”.

This passage plainly teaches that if a child of God is exercised to give to another, help in any way to relieve a burden then not to accept it because the child is “not one of our group”, it is exceedingly wicked for it is rejecting a gift from God.

### The Matter Of Children And Giving

This is teaching children the reason for giving, their responsibility and their giving to the Lord from their own allowance.

The Macedonian believers had heard of a need from Paul but not all Paul’s own necessities. Knowledge brings responsibility and to do the work of the Lord means the need of finances. How quick to take the gospel tracts etc. if we get them for free. We must understand that someone paid for them and in our using of them, we are giving the pretense that we are good spiritual people when in effect we are only using that which has cost us absolutely nothing.

It must also be understood that God is the great giver.

#### Illustration:

Many years ago when I was just a little fellow, maybe 6 or 7 years old, Dad with his own money bought some candies. He asked me for one and I, being a child, gave him the bag. Dad, being a character, took the whole bag and pretended to be eating all of them. I was anxious in case he would eat them all, leaving me without. Would he give me a hope, give me the goods and then leave me destitute? God would not do a thing like that. If I had only known that Dad would have given me more than what he ever took, how quickly and happily I would have given all the candies to him.

When we are dealing with children, one of the first things they must understand about money is the identification of a particular country. It can be any country the parents decide on or the child might have an interest in. Then with each member of the family they work together, or singly, to find out data about the country, and in particular, the family of whom they are working with.

In teaching children stewardship and giving to the Lord, care must be taken, for they never learn the blessedness of giving to the Lord if all they do is give that which another has given them. They need to learn themselves that giving to the Lord’s work demands some sort of a sacrifice. They need to give their own money and to assist them in this privilege several things can be done:

- 1) They might have a little job or chores they can do around the house and then from that which they earn, they can give to the Lord.
- 2) When they are going out with some of their friends, instead of buying a Big Mac for whatever price it is, they put that money toward the missionaries in that particular country.

## Giving

Moreover, it would seem good to me that the focus of that giving should be changed every so often so that the children get a very broad attitude and perspective on the Lord's work.

One of the problems today is that children think, and understand from parents, that they are owed a living, that is, whatever they want they can ask for and get. Such children are brought up spoiled without any value of money in the slightest degree. It is exceedingly bad for them because before too long, when they reach the real world they find that the world does not revolve around them.

In the church, the matter is not how much money comes in to the church, but how the money is used. Very often the money coming into churches is used to finance the building, pay interest on the building and paying multiple pastors. Very often these buildings are only used several times a week and the money is not being used properly.

There needs to be a missionary perspective in any church and in the individual. The Lord spoke in Matt. 13:38 and said "the field is the world". It is a reality that so often Christians sit in plush comfortable churches while more than a billion souls have never heard the gospel that Christ died for their sins.

Our present world is increasing in population at approximately the rate of 400 million each generation. The majority of church people are more concerned about things rather than souls. They are more concerned about goods than people. This was a lesson that Abraham had to learn for he was a man who loved the goods until he learned by God that people were more important. As far as God is concerned, this world and all that there is in it is going to be destroyed by the fire. Concerning the unsaved, God makes it very clear that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). When our Lord was here He put things in perspective when He said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul" (Matt. 16:26). A single soul is worth more than the whole world.

It would seem to me that there is something radically wrong when a church is in the process of buying an organ for \$225,000, almost a quarter of a million dollars, when there are people dying and going into eternity unsaved.

The question that comes up from time to time is "what if I have no income?" In that case God expects nothing. The whole time they were in the wilderness God never asked them for anything except that which they had. When they came into the land, they were to give the firstfruits.

When we give to the Lord or his people, it must never ever be used as a bargaining tool. This happened to me some years ago by a brother in an assembly. I appreciated that every month he would give \$100 to my wife and I. There came a point in time when in the assembly there was a disagreement. Because he had given to me, he expected me to automatically side with him. I didn't and he was not pleased about it.

When we set aside money for the Lord, we are consciously giving it to the Lord and we must wait on Him for the knowledge of how it is to be disbursed.

### Personal Responsibilities

There is a great deal of talk about tax returns. That is, I give so much money to the Lord in an envelope and at the end of the year I get that amount written out so that I can claim it on taxes. To my mind, I give to the Lord and that is it. If an individual gives to the Lord, gets a tax return on it and then gives that money back to the Lord, that is wonderful. But if it is a means for them to get extra money to use as they want, then perhaps a course in honesty would be needed. If they are giving \$40 a week to the Lord and they get \$10 back, then what they are actually giving is \$30. Why not just give the \$30 to start with?

There are some of us who need to travel distances to take meetings or buy tools and equipment for Sunday School or books for our studies etc. That sort of thing comes out of the Lord's money. If people have folks over for hospitality, then that can come out of the Lord's money.

As we consider the many billions of people there are on the earth, totally dependent on Him; out of his resources he provides amply for them. The greed of man and withholding food to the starving does not mitigate this truth.

## Giving

In the matter of principles for giving, there must be equality for all (2 Cor. 8:13-15). One should not be lacking necessities while another has abundance. It must be an individual decision. There is no law telling how much to give, it is a heart commitment. (2 Cor. 9:7) “every man according as he has purposed in his heart.” Those who gave in the tabernacle were called wise hearted. Since God has not legislated how much the individual must give, what man is there brazen enough to usurp the place of God and institute a law on giving?

When funds are given they must always be given to a scriptural cause. It is wrong to support something even though it might have the appearance of being a worthy cause and if it is not true in that which is taught (1 Tim. 6:3 & 5), “If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ... from such withdraw thyself”.

Another principal is that the individual must pay off their own debts, even the assembly for that matter. It is a very bad testimony to give to the Lord when you owe debts to a man. “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another” (Rom. 13:8). Lord will give but never be wasteful. He will bestow abundantly but will never squander.

### The All Sufficiency Of God For Every Need

I expect many people have heard of The People’s Church in Toronto. In an article it was written their missionary budget was around a million dollars. For every dollar spent at home, \$2 went overseas. Some years ago the building became quite unattractive, inadequate and in great need of repair. After consideration and prayer, the pastor and the board felt they could not possibly afford a building program and keep up with the vast missionary outreach. They decided to continue sacrificing for the missions and forget about the building. Seven years later, the representatives of an insurance company came to the officers of the church and asked to buy the land in which the old church stood. The sale was consummated for enough money to build a new church in a better location and at no cost to the congregation. God always has his way on supplying those who are concerned about reaching the lost.

My brother visits the saints in Eastern Germany quite often. Those dear saints are some of the poorest in the world. The saints from Northern Ireland sent three truck loads of goods to them in a year. In itself, a wonderfully kind gesture. However, these saints in East Germany sent 20 trucks of goods to other needy saints. When asked how they managed it, he was told, “When we get anything we divide it in half, 50% for the saints here and 50% goes to others.” Is it any wonder God blesses them?

- 1) This is not the only time; it is when as an assembly one ought to give, but not as an individual.
  - a) Giving is more than money: the assembly in Toronto put up a Christmas tree in November for money to be put in unmarked envelopes. It was then taken down about 3 weeks before Christmas and the money used to buy gifts for various families and toys for the children.

Anthony N. Grooves lived through very hard times when funds from overseas could not reach him. When he anticipated financial support from the United Kingdom they dried up and there was no evident other means of support. In the midst of war and famine there was nothing from England for over a year yet the Lord never let him suffer a want. At one point of time the necessities of life rose by 2000% and every need was met. Had he been waiting for the folks in England to supply the increase, with all due respect, he would still have been waiting!

George Mueller, that mighty man of God, fed thousands of children and educated them by utter dependence on God. Not only he but thousands of people in full time work have lived in utter dependence on God and never lack that which was needed. That which I find interesting is that it is men who do the asking. I have never heard of a woman missionary writing a letter indicating the need of personal funds or asking for them, or asking for pledges, etc. This man of God, knowing that the work depended on God refused to publish a financial statement when funds were tight. He made the situation a matter for prayer. It was the example of men like A. N. Groves and G. Mueller who showed that God’s principles for their work was that of faith in God, not dependance on man and encouraged thousands of others.



### How Was The Gift Received By The Jews At Jerusalem?

His desire was that the contribution of the poverty stricken Gentile saints in Macedonia would be acceptable by the Jewish saints in Jerusalem.

- 1) Why would it not be? One would be inclined to think that it would be received with open hearts, but that is to deny human pride and suspicion of motives! Therefore how was it received? Paul was always thinking ahead and consequently had some wondering about its reception (Rom. 15:31).
- 2) They are not one of us. The return of money to an individual because he was in the chapels!
  - a) These saints were in a sad situation. They had lost their Jewish history being associated with Christ in saying the Jewish leaders, etc., were wrong.<sup>xvii</sup>
  - b) They are very possibly those of Heb. 10 who had known their belongings wrecked
  - c) They were condemned by the Sanhedrin, (cp. Saul in Acts 8:1)
  - d) They were hounded by the political authorities (Acts 12:1).

### It's Promises

To those who gave, God gave this promise (Phil. 4:19).

Now this is all speaking idealistically. It is to be understood that we can only claim the promise, "My God shall supply all your need" if we are actually giving. It is not an openended promise that I can just keep everything I have and then ask God to supply me with more. It is for the laying up of my treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20).

That beloved servant of the Lord, A.N. Groves, considered the gathering of wealth as a hinderance to spiritual development. When at one point of time in his life the necessities of life rose by 2000%; he never once asked a saint for one penny.

In the February 1960 issue of Light and Liberty, brother H.K. Downie made the following remarks:

"The work of the Lord is suffering from the lack of available funds. This does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of money. There is plenty of money but much of it is in the wrong places. It is in the wallets and pocket books of the Lord's people. The great problem is how to transfer it from the place where it is not very much needed to a place where it is greatly needed. A consideration of the Old Testament revivals will indicate that when there was an increase of the moral tone of the People of God, there was an increase in their giving. For the construction of the temple under King Joash, there was funds in abundance. In the revivals under Asa, Hezekiah and Joash, 155,900 animals were slain. In Hezekiah's day when they gathered food there was plenty for everybody and something left over (2 Chron. 32)."

### Micro Commentary On 1 Corinthians Chapters 8 & 9

#### **2 Corinthians Ch. 8**

This is one of those cases where the chapter division mars the continuity of thought, as the first word of the chapter shows. See note on v. 1

The section deals with:

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<sup>xvii</sup> Their poverty issued from several possible avenues: (1) At their conversion and public association by baptism to the Sect, they would have been utterly ostracized socially, economically and religiously by the Jews in Jerusalem as well as their own families. (2) There was a major famine in Jerusalem due to mass population in AD 46 when Claudius was emperor. (3) Being the mother church, Jerusalem had the responsibility to help support, either in part or in whole, the many evangelists and teachers they had sent out to spread of the gospel. (4) When believers would have come to Jerusalem this group of saints would have to provide hospitality. (5) The Jews in Palestine were under a twofold tax, both Jewish and Roman.

The zeal of the Macedonian believers, chapter 8:2-5

- 1) The exhortation to the Corinthians.....chapter 8:6-8
  - a) The supreme example.....chapter 8:9
- 2) The exhortation to the Corinthians.....chapter 8:10-12
  - a) The equalization.....chapter 8:13-17

The men who were sent, chapter 8:18-9:5<sup>xviii</sup>

- 1) Their reputation.....chapter 8:18-19
  - a) A parenthesis, the zeal for fidelity that must be exercised
- 2) Their reputation.....chapter 8:22-23
- 3) The reception they are to receive.....chapter 8:24-9:1
- 4) The reason they are being sent.....chapter 9:2-5

The exhortation to give bountifully apparent casualness and holding back of the Corinthian saints, Chapter 9:7-14

- 1) The exhortation..... chapter 9:6-7
  - a) It is the way to a bountiful harvest....v. 6
  - b) It must be done from the heart.....v. 7
  - c) God will recompense.....vv. 8-11a
- 2) The expectancy.....chapter 9:9-11a
- 3) The end result.....chapter 9:11b-14
  - a) These recipients:
    - i. have their needs supplied.....v. 12a
    - ii. Give thanks to God.....v. 12b
    - iii. God is glorified, v. 13 for the giver's subjection to the gospel and your liberal distribution to all men.

Verse 1

- 1) We do you "to wit". This is translated
  - a) Luke 2:15....The Lord hath "made known" unto us
  - b) John 17:6.... I have "declared" thy name
    - i. So the verse reads "We declare or make known to you"
- 2) "The grace of God bestowed"
  - a) That is not the gift but the character of God's grace, the outward manifestation of it upon the churches of Macedonia.
    - i. This was not the exercise of one church but of the churches in the area, namely Philippi, Berea and Thessalonica.
    - ii. This grace is seen in that these were Gentile saints ministering to the Jewish saints, which would lead to the question, "Would the Jewish saints receive the gift of love and the manifestation of God's grace working in them"?
  - b) This is different from the "grace" of v. 19 which was the collection for the saints.
  - c) This manifestation of God's grace working through them is seen not only in whom they sent the gift to, but in v. 2, the exercise was in spite of their own poverty.

Verse 2

- 1) Any one of these situations would be sufficient to give many of us an excuse for not giving.
  - a) They themselves were in deep poverty which was causing them great difficulties.

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<sup>xviii</sup> There is a general opinion that those who accompanied Paul were Sopater, Aristarchus and Secundus who were from Macedonia, (Acts 20:4); Gaius and possibly Timothy represented Galatia, (Acts 18:23); Tychicus and Trophimus representing the churches of Asia. Although the saints from Achaia contributed, no reference is indicated to those who represented that area.

## Giving

- b) The abundance of their concern for others caused them to give:
  - i) Not just for decencies sake
  - ii) But with heartiness and love.
- 2) The emphatic words here are rich
  - a) The great trial of affliction
    - i) These were not wealthy saints, they scarcely had sufficient for themselves. They did not just give a little, (for they had to look after themselves), neither did they use the reason that they had little and could not help. They didn't have to be pressured into assisting, they saw this with great delight, as an opportunity to help saints in need. What a lovely attitude.
    - ii) They saw the saints in Judea as being worse off than they and their burden was; "How can we help them"; this is love! The poverty stricken were given opportunity to help those even more poverty stricken and were delighted at the opportunity.
  - b) The abundance of their joy
    - i) The overflowing
  - c) Their deep poverty
    - i) Deep is profound. This is the word that is used for the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33).
    - ii) Poverty, down to the bottom, the poverty's of the Lord
    - iii) Gk. Their poverty down to the death of it.
  - d) Abounded unto the riches of their liberality
- 3) There had been from the Macedonian saints a rich generosity. They earnestly pleaded to be part of the collection. Being aware of the poverty of the Macedonian saints, Paul may have been reluctant about asking them to assist or take the fellowship from them.
- 4) The Macedonian saints did not have to be urged as the Corinthian saints had to be, so that Titus had to be urged and seemingly in turn urge the Corinthians to help. To do this Paul will exhort them along three avenues; v. 9.

### Verse 3

- 1) "To their power"
  - a) That is according to their ability, yes and beyond their ability they gave.
- 2) "Willing of themselves"
  - a) That is they chose of their own initiative
  - b) It was that they heard of the situation and there was no asking them for funds, possibly due to their poverty. They of their own initiative chose to aid the Jewish saints.
  - c) They didn't say let their own group help them. They were brothers and sisters, not just in name, and although they did not know them, and despite all the dangers involved in getting funds to them, they had the desire and willingness to do it.
  - d) This is an outflowing of spirit baptism, all one, neither Jew or Gentile.

### Verse 4

- 1) How deep was their genuineness of giving?
  - a) They intreated us
  - b) Lit. "With much entreaty", begging of us the favor and the partnership in the ministry to the saints.
    - i) I have found through the years the truth of the statement that the work of the Lord is not maintained by a few rich individuals but by many poorer folks. Evidently Paul had been reluctant to take from them, but they insisted, urging for the opportunity to assist in this need.
    - ii) While the word for entreaty is oftentimes translated consolation, the deeper thought is that of coming alongside, "para" to give consolation (Luke 2:25), not just verbal exhortation as in Acts 13:15, but active tangible consolation.

## Giving

### Verse 5

- 1) We had hoped, as we had expected, they would give something, but the reason they went beyond their ability was because they gave themselves first unto the Lord.
- 2) They were moved by the will of God (Phil. 2:13), but they having given themselves to the Lord were willing to give. In this we see divine sovereignty and human responsibility united.
- 3) “And unto us”, they submitted to our thoughts on the matter.

### Verse 6

- 1) It seems that the sense of this passage is that they were encouraged by this unexpected success among the Macedonians. We were surprised at the extent of their liberality. Encouraged by this, we requested Titus in Corinth to finish the collection which you had proposed, and which you had begun. Lest the comparatively poor Macedonian Christians should outstrip you in liberality, we were anxious that you should perform what you had promised and contemplated; and we employed Titus, therefore, that he might go at once and finish the collection among you.
  - a) Thus Paul uses the saints and their generosity to put pressure on the saints at Corinth.

### Verse 7

- 1) In writing to the Corinthian saints, there is the acknowledging that they were enriched, but it seems that they were sluggish in this grace.
  - a) In 1 Cor. 1:5 Paul speaks of their being enriched in everything. Then in v. 7, that they come behind in no gift, but in this grace they were somewhat deficient. From 2 Cor. 9:8 it would appear that they were very much like us needing to abound in every good work of which this is one.

### Verse 8

- 1) I do not speak this as a command, for it is you who has the responsibility before God as to your stewardship, but I can tell you what others have done.
- 2) They were exhorted to fulfill their contribution by:
  - a) The example of the Macedonians.....v. 1-5
  - b) By their promised beginning.....v. 6
  - c) By their desire to excel in every gift and grace.....v. 7
  - d) By the example of the Lord.
- 3) They needed to be diligent about this, expedient, v. 10, because:
  - a) A year had passed since they had been ready to help
  - b) Since they had already begun and having put their hand to the plough, they must not turn back, when their intention must reach its culmination, v. 1.
  - c) They had an advantage over the Macedonian saints in that:
    - i) They had heard of the collection before them
    - ii) They were better off than the Macedonians.
  - d) The Macedonians had given without being asked. It was a magnificent gesture of christian love, not only in the giving but in persuading Paul to take it from them. In stark contrast the Corinthians, who had become lax in the exercise, now needed to be exhorted to fulfill that which they had begun.**
- 4) To the Lord ought not to be:
  - a) Just a thing one does because that is the done thing
  - b) It is to be an expression of love:
    - i) For the Lord and His work thus showing my sympathy in His work
    - ii) For the saints in their need.
- 5) The forwardness of others

## Bibing

- a) He is seeking to spurn them on by speaking of the diligence and eagerness that is seen in the Macedonian saints despite their poverty
- b) He also seeks to spurn them on by doing it as an expression of their love.
  - i) Love is a verb, it acts.
    - 1. (1 John 3:17) Whoso hath this worlds goods and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God on him
    - 2. (Deut 15:7) If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren. . . Thou shalt not harden they heart nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother.<sup>xix</sup>
- c) He is also aware that the Corinthian saints has been quite lax and an embarrassing situation was developing, for if the Macedonian saints came with him to Corinth and they had not gone on as they should, that would do several things:
  - i) Shame them
  - ii) Cast a shadow on the ministry of Paul for he had told the saints in Macedonia of the Corinthians and now it would be evident that they had not been as the saints in Macedonia had been told.

### Verse 9

- 1) For ye know the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich.
- 2) The poverty of the Lord resulted in the spiritual enrichment of us
  - a) Materially
    - i) For those who are poor and have nothing in the way of resources, living daily depending on God, proving through the kindness of others, in common language, knowing the embarrassment and humiliation of always depending on handouts, He knows what that is like.
    - ii) What an encouragement knowing that despite the poverty this places me in, it results in spiritual blessings to others and thanksgiving to God. See chapter 9:11,12; glory to God, chapter 9:13 and a leading to the highest gift of all, that of the Lord.
    - iii. For those who have sufficient and have need of nothing, there is to be the understanding that in grace that was given to you for to:
      - 1. Share with other saints demonstrating the:
        - (a) Love between the family
        - (b) The unity of the body
        - (c) The character of the Lord
- 3) Notice the double expression
  - a) Chapter 8:16 Thanks be to God
  - b) Chapter 9:15 Thanks be to God (unto is to)
- 4) To the poor (tois penêsin). Old word from penamai, to work for one's living. Latin penuria and Greek peinaô, to be hungry, are kin to it. Only New Testament instance and to be distinguished from ptôchos, beggar, abjectly poor.
  - a) Thus when we learn of a brother in need, even a working brother, then we have a moral obligation to help them.
- 5) Paul now brings in the greatest illustration of self sacrificing love on behalf of others.
- 6) Paul was accustomed to illustrate every subject and to enforce every duty, where it could be done, by a reference to the life and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The design of this verse is apparent. It is to show the duty of giving liberally, from the fact that the Lord Jesus was willing to become poor so that He might benefit others.
  - a) The idea is that he who was Lord and Proprietor of the universe and who possessed all things; was willing to leave and become poor, so that:

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<sup>xix</sup> This must ever be balanced with those who either waste money or are too lazy to work.

## Bibing

- i) We might become rich in the blessings of the gospel, in the means of grace and as heirs of all things
  - ii) We who are thus benefited and who have such an example, should be willing to part with our earthly possessions so that we may benefit others spiritually. For the physical needs met will strengthen them spiritually.
- b) The poverty of the Lord
- i) The Lord knew a life of utter deprivation
  - ii) Poor in material wealth
    - 1. The only material things that were said to be His were:
      - (a) His own cross
      - (b) His garments
    - 2. The only thing we read of Him asking for is a drink of water. We never read of Him receiving it.
    - 3. The only thing He left to His own was His peace and a feast to remember Him by.
    - 4. He lived in dependence on the provision of God through others.
      - (a) His was a rented stable and another's tomb. He had no money for His embalmment.
  - iii) Poor in national acceptance
  - iv) Poor in fraternal love
    - 1. His brethren mocked Him (John 7).
    - 2. They thought He was mad, being beside Himself
  - v) Poor in spirit.
    - 1. In this case it is material poverty
      - (a) "The foxes have their lairs, the birds their roosting places but the Son of Man hath no where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20).
- c) They are not asked to follow the steps of the Lord in completeness for they are not asked to become poor for the blessing of others (2 Cor. 8:14). That in their want you supply and when you are in want they will supply.
- d) We are rich:
- i) Spiritually
  - ii) Positionally
  - iii) In having a father who will supply our every need (1 Cor. 3:21-22).

### Verse 11

- 1) Good intentions are not sufficient; there must be the outliving of them.
- a) There is at times, within many saints, the longing to give more. The only thing is they do not have it to give. They must then appreciate that the Lord has given them that which they have, it is he who has limited them therefore, they give according to what the Lord has entrusted to them. The Lord appreciates this.
    - i) However, due care must be taken that we do not have money for the Lord and yet have enough for a new CD or something else.

### Verse 13-15

- 1) Paul was very wise in anticipating objections. They had been slack in their continuance of the collection and there was the possibility that they would think:
- a) Does he think we are made of money?
  - b) They could have the attitude, they should be grateful for what they get, or just plain Forget that!
    - i) Paul addresses this in saying that this is not to be an exchange of burdens but an equality of means. There could come a time when you Corinthians are in need and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem having lots would not then come to your aid.
    - ii) However, do not do it with a view to getting it returned. In this, the teaching of the Lord shone through (Luke 6: 31-35). "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. . . If ye love them, what thank have ye? . . if ye do good to them which do good to you. . . If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?" Even sinners do

## Giving

the same! Lend, hoping for nothing in return for in Prov. 19:17, “he that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”

### Verse 16

- 1) Giving comes from an earnest care which is the evidence of the Holy Spirit working within the individual and love being exercised.

### Verse 17

- 1) This now begins a new section within this passage and it deals with those responsible for the conveyance of the money.
  - a) Today we have postal services but those who distribute and have responsibility for the expressions of love from the saints, must see this as a sacred responsibility. The money is not to be given haphazardly but with due care and attention.
  - b) The men who handle it must be of the highest esteem among the saints
  - c) Never must one man be permitted to handle and determine what happens the funds, either of the assembly or for the assembly.<sup>xx</sup>

### Verse 18

- 1) Who this brother was is of no consequence, egotism. If it were, we would like to have our name specified and that is fleshly pride! God causes his name not to be recorded, but what a magnificent commendation he has:
  - a) v. 18... By Paul
  - b) v. 19... By the assemblies
  - c) Ultimately by the Lord Himself
  - d) His commendation is very high.
    - i) v. 18...His praise in the gospel is known throughout all the churches in that area
    - ii) v. 18...He was chosen by the churches
  - e) There seems to be another brother mentioned in v. 22 because of the word “brethren” in v. 23. Thus it appears that there were three men who carried this money
- 2) In Neh. 13:13 the men who were made treasurers were counted faithful and their office was to distribute unto their brethren.
- 3) In Ezra 1:6 the goods were taken from them that offered willingly, and they were numbered, 1:9 and weighed, 8:25 and when they came to Jerusalem each was taken account of, v. 29 and they were written, v. 34.

### Verse 19

- 1) Part way into this verse Paul goes into a parenthesis and it continues with the connecting thought, “And we have sent with them our brother” in v. 22. This being so, the section would read:
  - a) And we sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not that only, but was also chosen of the churches to travel with us. . . . Whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things.
- 2) It was important to see that this brother was not only chosen by Paul but by the churches, thus removing any questioning of Paul or the man.
- 3) In this work of delivering the funds these men are called “ messengers of the churches” in v. 23.
- 4) The parenthesis deal with the vitalness of doing all in highest honesty so that none can be blamed for misuse of the funds. It all was counted before it went and afterward.

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<sup>xx</sup> Several warnings and considerations must be mentioned here for they are things I have witnessed. It must never be that if the brother who has the responsibility to put the money in the bank, takes visiting saints out for dinner and pays for it out of his own pocket unless he has sufficient or has deducted it from the Lord’s laid aside money; neither must he take the Lord’s money and buy lunch for himself and his wife with the visiting saints; Under no circumstances must the money be moved out of the assembly until it has been counted, entered into a ledger and signed. Under no conditions must it be handled by one man or a family. It must not be hoarded, some must be kept in the bank, but not thousands upon thousands. It must not be in the hands of someone not in the assembly. There must be ideally a monthly statement for the saints. There must be an accounting of what is given, in detail, to visitors and missionaries.

- 5) This administration, this service by us, so that, "To travel with us with this grace, which service is by us for the glory of the same Lord."

Verse 20

- 1) How careful Paul was in the matter of money, for this is a danger to all.  
a) In all our financial affairs, but especially those of the assembly honestly must not only be done but everything abundantly above board.

Verse 22

- 1) Again we meet an unnamed brother  
a) His praise is also very high.  
i) He has often been proven to be reliable and faithful in the work committed to him
- 2) Clearly the Corinthian saints had heard of the collection for the saints at Jerusalem, for in 1 Cor. 16, Paul gives them directives about the collection. Whether this was done each Sunday is not clear. One suspects they did for the collection to grow.
- 3) It is also not given to us to know when they were first informed about this collection. It may have been in the previous letter of Paul, which is mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:9 & 11. Or, it may have been by way of the Galatian churches (1 Cor. 16:1). It does not matter how they heard but how they reacted. It is evident that they had begun the collection (2 Cor. 8:10), but it apparently had been "put on the back burner". Why this was we are not told, and while we could conjecture, there is nothing definite. What is clear is that there was a hesitancy, consequently Titus was sent to fan the flames again and to see how they were doing relative to the collection.

## **2 Corinthians Chapter 9**

Verse 1

- 1) A better translation of the verse would be "It is superfluous for me to go on writing to you like this"  
a) Dby. For concerning the ministration which [is] for the saints, it is superfluous my writing to you.  
b) RSV Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the offering for the saints,  
c) Ygs Lit. For, indeed, concerning the ministration that is for the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you.  
i) This can be taken in one of two ways or even both  
1. The contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem  
2. The hospitality needed for the saints arriving with Titus.

Verse 2

- 1) Again Paul mentions the time period as he had in chapter 8:10. At that time they had a readiness, an eagerness, chapter 8:11 to get going with the collection.

Verse 4

- 1) The sending of these men was a step further, no more letters were needed, but by sending this delegation Paul hoped that this would be the encouragement they needed.
- 2) It is clear that a second group, including Paul, were going to Corinth.  
a) Note the "we"  
b) V. 5, They would go beforehand
- 3) Paul wanted to make sure that his boasting of them and their readiness to help did not appear as so much hot air! It would be sad if when Titus came with his delegation the Corinthians were not ready, but if Paul came with the Macedonians and then still not ready; how great would be his embarrassment and shame. The before promised bounty must be ready, thus fulfilling that which they had promised voluntarily, and not have to give grudgingly.

Verse 5

- 1) Covetousness.  
a) That is not as a matter of covetousness, "which it would be, if you gave niggardly.  
i) Wanting to hold onto it for self



## Giving

- ii) Out of pressure because of the glory which others get by their liberality.
  - 1. Cp. Acts 5 with Ananias and Sapphira
- iii) And not like a sort of extortion, wrung from you by mere dint of importunity."--Doddridge. The word here used (pleonexian) means usually covetousness, greediness of gain, which leads a person to defraud others. The idea here is that Paul would have them give this as an act of bounty or liberality on their part, not as an act of covetousness on his part and not as extorted by him from them; for not to give in a true way is to defraud the Lord of His portion and the saints of that which they need.

### Verse 6

- 1) While no precise scripture was being used, yet the truth of sowing and reaping was not just an observation from creation. It may be that Paul had the concepts of various passages in mind. Passages such as:
  - a) Prov 11:24-25 "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that which 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. Furthermore, the Lord Himself said, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).
    - i) Prov. 22:9.....He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.
    - ii) Prov. 17: 19...He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again
- 2) "To sow sparingly". In this case it is not because of lack of funds, but covetousness, of holding on to that which God has given as if it was ones own.
  - a) However, money must not be given without due consideration of:
    - i) Who it is being given to.
    - ii) How it is being used.
  - b) The support of men like Benny Hinn is a manifestation of emotionally and satanically blinded people, void of any spiritual discernment.
- 3) A meditation on this is the bounteousness of the giving of God and Christ and how bounteously they will reap.
- 4) On the other hand, if God is not given His portion, then Haggai 1:6 makes it very plain that man will be sowing much but little is brought in.

### Verse 7

- 1) The giving of fellowship to those in need:
  - a) There were two chests for money in the temple, one for that which was necessary and the other for free will offerings. There were those, who to escape punishment, twelve give in the first but it was grudgingly. They had to or else; this was a duty to be fulfilled.
  - b) How the fellowship should not be given:
    - i) Not grudgingly, that is:
      - 1. Not, "me" the inner feeling, not really wishing to give but giving reluctantly.
      - 2. Not sorry to see the money go and it causing grief.
      - 3. It seems to indicate the inward attitude.
    - ii) Not from necessity, with holding on, Robertson, like pulling eye teeth, not having any way to get out of it.
  - c) How fellowship should be given:
    - i) "As he purposeth in his heart", with a full and delighted will. This is not looking en route on Sunday morning to see what change a wife might have in her purse, nor from a sudden impulse for smug imagined spirituality. It is to be from a heart touched by the love of God and bounded by personal abilities and the balancing of these. i.e; a man with a small family who earns minimum wage, having to rent a place to live, may only be able to give one dollar.

## Giving

However, if he owns a home, has property and very comfortable; for him to give a dollar would be an insult to God and a clear manifestation of his heart.

### ii) Cheerfully

1. This Greek word is only used once in the scriptures and from it we get our word hilarious. It means to be joyful. Its root word means to be merciful and as such, it is translated in Heb. 8:12 when speaking of the New Covenant, God says, "I will be merciful". Thus the word indicates not only the attitude in giving but also the attitude of the giver.

2) How interesting that it speaks of the heart.

- a) Our Lord said that out of the heart proceeds all sorts of wickedness.
- b) It is with the heart man believeth.
- c) He is to give as a result of the meditations of his heart.

### Verse 8

1) Is there a stinginess on ones side relative to parting, or will it cause a strain on ones resources? Then take this as an opportunity to learn the grace of God.

- a) The all sufficiency of God to help you in every trial.
- b) He will make sure that you will have that which is needed.

2) It seems that the idea is, "in this way will the saying in the Scriptures be verified, or the promise confirmed?" The psalmist is describing the character of the righteous man. One of his characteristics, he says, is that he has scattered abroad, he has given liberally to the poor. On such a man a blessing is pronounced.

3) As the individual gives to the needy, God will replenish that which they have and need. His grace is more than sufficient for shortness in their giving.

- a) Dependence on the all sufficient God gives God great delight for He loves to find His children having the same feathers as Himself; for them to trust in Him and there in their need rest, knowing He will provide.
- b) The man of the world, and the degree to which we are earth dwellers will be shown by the dependency we have on self; which in itself makes us idolators.
- c) The word "sufficiency" also means "contentment" being so translated in 1Tim. 6:6, "Godliness with contentment is great gain". There this individual is set in contrast to the individual who thinks gain is godliness. This individual who gives to the Lord's needy people will find God to be all sufficient to them and they will know contentment.

### Verse 9

1) The quotation here is not just to buttress a point but the context in Psa. 112:1 refers to an individual who fears God. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments". . . Verse 9, "he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever." Herein is an additional truth, the fear of the Lord which is clean and enduring forever out of respect for the glory of God and in the wonder of God gladly gives to the poor. There is also the thought that if such an individual does not help his fellow believer then the Lord will impoverish him!

### Verse 11

1) It seems to me that vv. 9-11 are a parenthesis and the theme of v. 8 is continued, thus, "having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.....being enriched in everything to all bountifulness". The greater the giving the greater the enrichment, the greater the sowing the greater the harvest. However, this does not teach that I can give to the poor to get more back, God does not work like that. I recall an incident where (if I can recall the clothing for sure) I gave an individual a very good suit I had. It was not scrappy but one I wore on Sundays. Almost immediately afterward, from a completely unknown source, I was given another suit, but this one was brand new. A brother who witnessed the whole incident said, "had I known this I would have given him all my suits"! All that would have done would be to have left him without one for Sunday!

Verse 12

- 1) May God help us not to take the liberality of other saints lightly, for granted, or for self-glorifying.
  - a) Take every kindness as a manifestation of the sovereignty of God in putting it in the hearts of the saints to assist, to maintain us, and for us to bow in sincere gratitude to God.

Verse 13

- 1) Literally, "For the obedience of your profession of the gospel." It does not imply that there was merely a profession of religion; but that there was a real subjection to the gospel which they professed. This is not clearly expressed in our translation.
  - a) Tindal has expressed it better, "Which praise God for your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ."
  - b) There was a real and sincere submission to the gospel of Christ that is the character of the gospel, which is giving to those in need which manifested by their giving liberally to supply the wants of others. The doctrine is, that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel and proof that our profession is sincere and genuine; is a willingness to contribute to relieve the wants of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer.

Verse 14

- 1) This verse must be taken in the context of the previous two verses. When viewed in this way the sense will be:
  - a) The administration of this service (2 Cor. 9:12), will produce abundant thanks to God.
  - b) It will also produce another effect (2 Cor. 9:14). It will tend to excite the prayers of the saints for you and thus produce important benefits to yourselves.
  - c) They will earnestly desire your welfare; they will anxiously pray to be united in Christian friendship with those who have been so significantly endowed with the grace of God.
    - i) The sentiment is that charity should be shown to poor and afflicted Christians because it will lead them to pray for us and to desire our welfare.
    - ii) The prayers of the poorest Christian for us are worth more than all we usually bestow on them in charity; and
    - iii) He who has secured the pleadings of a child of God, however humble, in his behalf, has made good use of his money
  - d) Thus when I receive fellowship from an individual, it ought to cause my heart to:
    - i) Thank God for their taking character from the Gospel
    - ii) Pray for their spiritual enrichment
    - iii) Pray for their personal needs
    - iv) To just take and ignore the moral obligations is exceedingly wicked, and the evidence of self-interests.

Verse 15

- 1) "Thanks be unto God"
  - a) Whitby supposes that this refers to the charitable disposition which they had manifested; and that the sense is, that God was to be adored for the liberal spirit which they were disposed to manifest, and the aid which they were disposed to render to others.
  - b) However, it seems to me that this falls far below the design of the apostle. The reference is rather to the inexpressible gift which God had granted to them in bestowing his Son to die for them;
    - i) According to the scriptures, "that as a man thinketh so is he and out of the heart", so Paul's mind and heart was filled with this subject; and wherever he began he was sure to end with a reference to the Redeemer.
      1. The invaluable gift of a Saviour was so familiar to his mind and he was so accustomed to dwell on that in his private thoughts, that the mind naturally and easily glanced on that whenever anything occurred that by the remotest allusion would suggest it. The idea is, "Your benefactions are indeed valuable; and for them, for the disposition which you have manifested, and for all the good which you will be enabled thus to accomplish, we are bound to give thanks to God. All this will excite the gratitude of those who shall be

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benefited. How small is all this compared with the great gift which God has imparted in bestowing a Saviour! That is unspeakable. No words can express it, no language convey an adequate description of the value of the gift, and of the mercies which result from it.

2) "His unspeakable gift".

- a) The word here used means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive; higher than language can express.

3) In this verse we may observe:

- a) The Saviour is a gift to men. He is uniformly represented. See (John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; Eph. 1:22; 1 Titus 2:6; Titus 2:14) Man had no claim on God. He could not compel him to provide a plan of salvation. The whole arrangements, the selection of the Saviour, the sending him into the world and all the benefits resulting from his work are all an undeserved gift to man.
- b) This is a gift unspeakably great, whose value no language can express and no heart fully conceives. It is so because:
  - i) of his own greatness and glory
  - ii) of the inexpressible love which he evidenced
  - iii) of the unutterable sufferings which he endured
  - iv) of the inexpressibly great benefits which result from his work. No language can do justice to this work in either of these respects; no heart in this world fully conceives the obligation, which rests upon man in virtue of his work.
- c) Thanks should be rendered to God for this. We owe him our highest praises for it. This appears:
  - i) Because it was mere benevolence in God. We had no claim and we could not compel him to grant us a Saviour. The gift might have been withheld and his throne would have been spotless. We owe no thanks where we have a claim; where we deserve nothing, then he who benefits us has a claim on our thanks.
  - ii) Because of the benefits which we have received from him. Who can express this? All our peace and hope; all our comfort and joy in this life; all our prospect of pardon and salvation; all the offers of eternal glory are to be traced to him. Man has no prospect of being happy when he dies, but in virtue of the "unspeakable gift" of God. When he thinks of:
    - 1. his sins which may now be freely pardoned
    - 2. of an agitated and troubled conscience which may now be at peace
    - 3. of his soul, which may now be unspeakably and eternally happy
    - 4. of the hell from which he is delivered
    - 5. and of the heaven to whose eternal glories he may now be raised up by the gift of a Savior;

His heart should overflow with gratitude, and the language should be continually on his lips and in his heart, "THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT". Every other mercy should seem small compared with this. Every manifestation of right feeling in the heart should lead us to contemplate the source of it, and to feel as Paul did, that all is to be traced to the unspeakable gift of God.

- 1. Kindness is a great pacifier, especially when one is in need.
  - 2. Their very need and supply by Gentiles could be taken, by a distorted mind, as a slight on them and the unbelieving Jews might seek to belittle the Jerusalem Jewish believers, "taking money from Gentiles, have they no pride"!!!
- d) In Acts 21:17, while no mention is made of the gift, they are gladly received by the brethren and then the official reception is in v. 18. Again, while nothing is said of the contribution, they listened to the blessing of the Lord on his ministry and glorified God. However, they did have some concerns as the next part of Acts 21 shows.

[Summarized Commentaries On The Various Portions To Do With Giving](#)

Rom. 15: 25-31

It was not all the saints in Jerusalem but, better “the poor among the saints at Jerusalem”. (Robertson).

- 1) The word “poor” is used of those asking for alms, they being destitute of wealth, beggars.
- 2) They were those of whom John speaks, see your brother have need and if you shut up your bowels of compassion, how does the love of God dwell in you?

Verse 25

- 1) Paul was going to minister to the saints at Jerusalem by the bestowing of the gift.

Verse 26

- 1) It pleased them; that is pointing to their voluntary offering
- 2) A certain contribution. Paul was here letting the Roman believers know that a need had arisen in Jerusalem, and for this particular situation there had been collection a contribution (koinonia).

Verse 27

- 1) Paul uses the word “verily” indicating not just that he was repeating the fact that it pleased them but this really was the truth.
- 2) Then expanding the matter of them being debtors, he speaks of the moral obligation laid on the Gentile believers to minister to the Jewish believers.

Verse 28

- 1) When he has performed this, that is this ministry, also this service, v. 31, of delivering this contribution to the saints and had sealed it, that is made sure they receive it as it was sent, each penny accounted for. The work of the Lord must be done with exceeding honesty. When the gold, silver and the holy vessels were sent by the king to Jerusalem, there was strict accounting for each piece, not only counted but weighted. And when the delegation arrived (Ezra 8:25-26), it is recorded, “And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, [even] the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel [there] present, had offered: I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, [and] of gold an hundred talents; Also the men who were given the responsibility to weigh and count were men of high standing and fidelity (Ezra 8:33). “Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him [was] Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them [was] Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites”.

## Appendix No. 1 - Hoarding

There is wisdom in having some funds for emergencies but how much is some? I have a home, and both my wife and I have cars. How foolish of me to think that I should keep many thousands in the bank in case I have an accident and need another car! What do I pay insurance for? Of course if I had minimum insurance then it would be intelligent to have a large amount put away. Such a thing would be foolishness when insurance is available for very little.

It needs to be retaught that the gifts or funds the Lord has given to the individual or to the assembly is not for personal gain or gaining interest in the bank. Such an attitude betrays the unbelief in the imminent coming of the Lord. At the Judgment Seat, as individuals and those who look after assembly funds will be forced, by God, to give an answer how the funds were used. If they were stashed away, then even at this stage, the individual or individuals needs to read the parable the Lord gave about the misuse of that which has been entrusted (Luke 19:11-26).

Lets not be so naive to think that just because a man is a believer he is honest when it comes to money. Take a look at his attitude toward it, ask

- a) Is there a reluctance to spent that which is necessary for the church use?
- b) Is there a reluctance to give to those who serve the Lord?
- c) Has such an one been shown in the past :
  - i) To be dishonest in his dealings?
  - ii) Made questionable enterprises, if so, can he be trusted with the assemblies funds?
  - iii) Do they seek to hide the amounts from others who have the right to know what is happening?

The scriptures are very clear:

- a) The Lord will judge them severely for not using the money for his glory and purposes as the parable shows.
- b) The individual is ensnared by the love of money and in great danger (1 Tim.6:10) and is not living by faith, depending on the Lord to provide.

The Lord taught, "Give and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). The Lord again taught: "It is more blessed to give then receive" (Acts 20:35.). If the funds coming in are becoming less and less, then it is very possible that it is because it is not being used right? This is not possible because it is contrary to the very character of God. He never ask us to give and leave us penniless. Those who trust Him, He will provide as evidenced when the widow of Zarephath gave the last food she had to the Lord first, did the Lord supply her needs? (1 Kgs.17).

When the saints are in need then God will always find others to come to their aid, as was seen when the earthquake was in Chile and other places. However if they have hoarded then the Lord can and at times takes away even that which they have.

When Israel hoarded the manna it stank (Ex. 16:20). Make no mistake about it, when God has provided the funds for the spread of the gospel and the needs of saints, if it is hoarded it is a stench before God.

To provide for others means giving away that which we have, and only when this is done are we enriched, This again is borne out by the scriptures. It was to the saints at Philippi who were poor that the promise was given "My God shall supply all your need" ( Phil.4: 19)

To give that which has been entrusted to us as individuals or assemblies is:

- a) The evidence of christian love ( 2 Cor.8:8) thus a hoarder lacks the love of God, and such a ones salvation is to be questioned. Again John writes " But whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in Him?(1 Jo. 3:17). Such an individual or assembly is Laodicean in heart and instead of being wealthy is poverty stricken ( Rev.3:17)
- b) Following the example of the Lord and God

## Bibing

- i) The Lord :
  - 1. Who gave Himself for our sins” He hoarded nothing, held nothing back from us
  - 2. “Who gave Himself a ransom for all” ( 1 Tim.2:6)
  - 3. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us” ( Titus 2:14)
  - 4. “ I give unto them eternal life” (John 10:28)
  - 5. “My peace I give unto you” (Jo.14:26)
- ii) God gives abundantly:
  - 1. All things richly ( 1 Tim.6:17)
  - 2. By the exceeding greatness of His power he saved us (Eph.1:19)
  - 3. We are the recipients of the exceeding riches of His grace, ( Eph.2:7)
  - 4. He will do exceeding above all that we ask or think ( Eph.3:20)
  - 5. He has given exceeding great and precious promises (2 Pet.1:4)

There is not a stingy iota in God and for those who do hoard the Lord’s money leads to the decision of an either or situation;

Either they are not saved or they are very far from the character of God and Christ.

It is a great wickedness before God for any gathering to sit year after year with thousands in the bank while many saints go in need. Interestingly of all the ones I know who do control the money and hold it with a tight hand, they are ones with the big money and treat the Lord’s money as theirs. This is wickedness and sadly there is so much money in the wallets of the saints and assembly bank accounts etc that will all be left for Satan and the beast.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by his Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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