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Edited by Bishop Stephen Neill.

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WORLD CHRISTIAN BOOKS

No. 2

CHRISTIAN GIVING

by

V. S. AZARIAH

late Bishop of Dornakal



UNITED SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
LUTTERWORTH PRESS
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Preface By The General Editor

The beginning of the twentieth century was a period of hope for the Christian Church. The Western Churches appeared strong and rich, and great new Churches were growing quickly in almost all parts of the world. It seemed that the Gospel might spread through the whole earth without meeting serious opposition. Fifty years later all is changed. Every Christian knows that these are hard days for the Church. The old faiths are taking on new life and new power of resistance to the Gospel. New faiths, such as communism, are attracting millions of believers. Christians are convinced that Jesus Christ is the last Word of God to man, and that all the future is in His hands; but they know also that the Faith cannot survive and grow unless Churches and individuals receive new life, new confidence and new power to witness. In these days every Christian must be an evangelist.

To-day it is not enough to believe—it is necessary also to understand. From every part of the world comes the demand for books that will help the Christian to understand his faith, to find the answers to the questions that he and other men are asking, and to know how to present the Faith to others. The series *World Christian Books* is planned to help in this particular area of Christian need. The books are directed in the first place to the "younger Churches", but the old distinction between younger and older Churches no longer really holds. All Churches are faced by the same problems. In all countries the same questions are being asked. The series is specially planned for those who are called to preach and teach, in the hope that the materials given

in these books may help them to carry out their task more effectively. But the aim has also been to write so simply that ordinary members of the Church who wish to study their Faith may be able to use these books as individuals or in study groups and so to grow in knowledge and understanding.

The books are being published first in English, but it is intended that as soon as possible they should be made available in the main languages of the Christian world. Writers have been chosen from various countries and various branches of the Church, with special emphasis on the younger Churches. This means that there will be a variety of voices, but the aim and the hope is that through many minds and many tongues the Faith of the Church in its one Lord may be clearly set forth.

STEPHEN NEILL,
Bishop.

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The Scripture quotations in this book are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible

FOREWORD

Christian Giving was written by Bishop Azariah in Tamil in 1939, in the months which followed the great meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram near Madras. The book was quickly translated into Telugu; and before long there was a demand for an edition in English. The English version, of which the present book is a revision, was published before the end of 1939 by The Christian Literature Society for India.

The situation in the Christian Churches has changed a good deal since 1939; but it is believed that Bishop Azariah's message has permanent value, and that much of what he wrote fifteen years ago is still most relevant to the needs and tasks of the Churches to-day. The first five chapters, in which Azariah gave at some length a survey of a number of Asian Churches, have been shortened and combined with other material to form the first two chapters of the present book. The rest of the original English text has been carefully revised throughout, and all quotations from the Bible have been brought into line with the Revised Standard Version.

Azariah spent his life in India, and almost all his illustrations are drawn from Indian conditions. Although this book is intended for use in many other countries, it has been felt that to cut out these Indian elements, or to reduce them to general terms, would take much of the freshness out of the book, and would put a barrier between the original writer and the reader. An attempt has been made to render these Indian allusions clear to those who do not know India; and it is believed that

Christians in other parts of the world will easily be able to translate them to suit the conditions in their own Churches.

It is hoped that the brief Memoir of Azariah prefixed to the book will give the reader some idea of the quality of the man whose acquaintance he will make in *Christian Giving,* and will help to keep alive the memory of one of the greatest Christians of our time. A longer account of his life, *Azariah of Dornakal,* by Carol Graham (London, S.C.M. Press), is readily available. But the writer of this brief memoir has relied in part on recollections of the fifteen years during which he knew Azariah intimately as friend and colleague.

VEDANAYAGAM SAMUEL AZARIAH
1874–1945

Among all the great leaders whom the younger Churches have produced in the twentieth century, none has been greater than Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, first Bishop of Dornakal, and first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church in India. One friend wrote of him, " When the good God had made Azariah, He broke the mould ". Other leaders have been equal to him in one way or another; few, if any, have had so many and such varied gifts. Azariah had at the same time strong faith in God, great powers as a teacher and leader of men, vision, courage, eloquent speech, and a deep inner spiritual life. It was all these things together that made him what he was.

He was born on August 17th, 1874, at Vellalanvilai in the Tinnevelly District, about fifty miles from the southern tip of India, where his father, Thomas Vedanayagam, was the village pastor. His family was not of outcaste origin, as has sometimes been said. They were Nadars. The Nadars are not admitted to Hindu temples, and therefore they are considered by Hindus to come low in the social scale; but they are a vigorous and intelligent people, and under the influence of the Gospel they have produced many leading men and women. Just because they are not accepted in Hinduism, they listen readily to the Gospel, and hundreds of thousands of them have become Christians. Azariah, the great Mass Movement bishop, was himself the product of a Mass Movement.

In 1838 the Welsh missionary John Thomas came to Megnanapuram, " the Village of True Wisdom ", then

a tiny village in a sandy waste. The next year Azariah's father was baptized. By 1870, when John Thomas died, the Church had come into being in hundreds of villages, and a great central Church, with a spire 192 feet high, had been built to seat 1,500 people. How were all these thousands of new Christians to be cared for? It was John Thomas who won the day for the idea of "a village ministry for village people". Before that, it had been thought that Indian ministers should know English and Greek and Hebrew and all kinds of theology. The result was that, in 1846, there were eighteen missionary clergymen in Tinnevelly District and only one Indian. On the advice of Thomas, it was decided to take some of the best of the village workers, to give them a short course of training in their own language, and then to ordain them. The first six men were ordained in 1849. They did so well that after that no difficulty was felt about taking others; many were ordained, and among those chosen was Azariah's father, Thomas Vedanayagam, who was ordained in 1869 with thirty-one others, in the greatest ordination that has yet taken place in India.

This story is important, since sixty years later Azariah was to do again in Dornakal what had been done in Tinnevelly. Near by some other missions were working on the other plan; only men of good education were taken for the ministry; as a result there were more European missionaries than Indian clergymen. Azariah followed the Tinnevelly method; he took faithful men who had worked well in the villages, even though they had had but little education, and ordained them. When he became bishop in 1912, there were only six Indian clergymen in his diocese; when he died in 1945, there were more than a hundred and fifty.

All the influences round the young Azariah were good. His father was a simple, earnest, godly man, who lived by what he taught. A far greater influence was his mother. She belonged to that wonderful type, still to be found in that area, of women whose only book is the

Bible, but who know it almost by heart, bring God into everything that they do, and make Him real to those about them. Although Azariah was her only son, greatly longed for, and born after thirteen years of waiting, she never gave in to the temptation to spoil him. In that house, duty was duty, and order was order, and she could be very stern, when wrong had been done.

As a boy Azariah was sent to the famous High School of Megnanapuram, a school which is proud of the record that it has produced more ordained ministers of the Gospel than any other school in the whole of the East. The Headmaster was the Reverend Ambrose Thomas, a very much older half-brother of Azariah. He was a remarkable man, who had taught himself both Greek and Sanskrit. In teaching his boys, he laid great stress on the right use of words and on accurate understanding of their meaning—a lesson which Azariah never forgot. But, above all, in the school, as in the home, the atmosphere was that of the Bible. Each week-end the boys had to learn by heart a whole chapter of the Bible, and that chapter had to be known. One who was in the same class with Azariah has recalled : " Before I was twelve, I knew the whole of the Epistle to the Colossians by heart; of course I didn't understand it, but it was a great thing to have so much of the Bible in my head."

Azariah was in the first class to take the Matriculation examination of Madras University. This made it possible for him to go on to two years of College study in Tinnevelly, and then for two more years to the great Christian College in Madras. And then followed his first period of Christian service, as a Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. He was already known as an earnest Christian with a keen desire to win others for Christ. His work for the Y.M.C.A. lasted for more than ten years; in the course of it he travelled to every part of India and beyond, speaking and preaching, trying to stir up the life of the Spirit especially among the students and young men.

Those years brought him the friendship of a young

American, Sherwood Eddy, also a Y.M.C.A. Secretary, and this friendship was to be of the greatest value to both the two young men.

Eddy was able to help Azariah with two very deep problems, each concerned with a conflict between good things that had come to him from the past, and other good things that God seemed to be showing him for the future.

Just at the time of Azariah's birth, the Church in Tinnevelly was passing through an early experiment in giving more authority in the Church to Indians. New duties and powers were given to men who had not been prepared for them; they were left without the guidance and help of missionaries. As a result, the Church fell into great disorder, and many evils entered into its life. Azariah was well aware of these troubles. Perhaps that was why always in later life he insisted that such changes must be made gradually: otherwise they might bring about more evil than good. After ten years a new set of missionaries came in. It took them twenty years of hard work to restore order in the Church. They were great men and great saints. But they had had to exercise a very strict control in order to do their work, and they had come to have very little trust in the power of Indians to take responsibility or to manage the affairs of the Church. They were the rulers rather than the friends of their people. Azariah had learned to look up to these men and to reverence them. Yet he had seen already that this state of things must change, and that Indians would never grow up, unless they were trusted to take authority and to make their own mistakes.

Eddy showed Azariah that it was possible for Indian and Westerner to be friends on perfectly equal terms. The two friends learned to share everything; in this way, Azariah came to be one of the very few Indians who have ever understood how the Western mind works, and so to be able to enter into such equal friendship. He learned that to disagree with a friend, sometimes to oppose him,

even to find fault with him, is not disloyalty—it is a part of friendship. So he came to see that it was possible both to love the older missionaries and to honour them for their great work for Christ; and at the same time to feel that they were wrong in many of their methods and that great changes must take place in the life of the Church.

These older missionaries held a very strict view of the Bible as the Word of God: to them every word was true, and to doubt it was sin. This was the view in which Azariah had been brought up, and which his father and mother had also held. The Bible had meant so much to Azariah himself that it was not easy for him to accept modern views, which hold to the truth of the Bible in a way different from that in which he had been taught when young. Here again Eddy was able to help him very much: he showed him how much new truth the modern way of studying the Bible has brought to light, though it also leads those who accept it to give up some old ideas; he assured him that it was possible, without disloyalty to the Bible, to accept new views and methods of study and to use them to understand the Bible better. Later on, as bishop, Azariah was to insist that all his students of theology must come to read the Bible as God's gradual revelation of His will, and not to take everything in the Old Testament as though it had the same authority as what is in the New.

These years of service with the Y.M.C.A. brought two great events in Azariah's life. The first was his marriage in 1898. Azariah was happy in finding the woman who could be the perfect helper both in his home and in his work; Mrs. Azariah was an educated woman of high intelligence; she was as devoted as her husband to the work of the Lord. Four sons and two daughters came to add happiness to the life of the home. Three of the sons, as clergyman, doctor and agricultural expert, are to-day active in the service of the Church.

In 1903 Azariah took the lead in founding the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevelly. India had received so

much help from the West that it seemed to Azariah and his friends that the time had come when Indians should show their gratitude, and their own power to serve, by taking up missionary work on their own, with Indian money and with Indian men. A field of work was chosen in a corner of the Nizam's Dominions, where the language spoken is Telugu, and the headquarters were placed close to the railway junction of Dornakal. At that time the name Dornakal, now so famous throughout the world, was almost unknown. Much of the country was still jungle, the home of tigers and other wild beasts. Most of the people were very poor, and none of them had ever heard the Gospel.

Azariah went far and wide through India, making this new work known, and urging young people to commit themselves wholly to the service of Christ, especially in direct missionary work among the non-Christians. At one meeting, when Azariah had made such an appeal, a student said to him: "Why do you not go yourself?" To such a challenge there could be only one answer. Azariah decided to go to Dornakal as a missionary. To many of his friends this seemed a strange decision. The Indian Church had very few leaders such as he; already he was a well-known man, and had great influence in the Churches. Could it be right that he should go and bury himself in the jungles of Dornakal? Azariah had no doubt as to his duty. He went to see Bishop Henry Whitehead of Madras. The bishop gladly accepted his offer of service, and advised him to be ordained.

Henry Whitehead, more than any other one man, spread abroad in the Churches the idea that the Mass Movements among the "outcastes" were God's plan to win the heart of India. Almost all the early missionaries went first to the higher castes, and won few converts among them. When thousands of the outcastes began to press into the Church, many missionaries and Indian leaders were anxious as to the results. The outcastes were ignorant and dirty, and had many bad habits; it was

felt that, if the Church was filled with them, it would be despised by the higher castes, and that that would make it even more difficult to win them for Christ. It was actually said: "If all the fifty million outcastes in India were converted, that would not bring the conversion of India as a whole any nearer." Bishop Whitehead did not agree. He had read in the New Testament that not many mighty, not many noble were called; he thought that, as in the Roman Empire, it might be God's will that India should be converted from the bottom upwards.

Bishop and Mrs. Whitehead received Azariah into their home and treated him almost as a son. For some years the Whiteheads had felt that the time had come when the Indian Church should have an Indian bishop; it was not long before they were convinced that God had brought to them the man who could be the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church in India. In June, 1909, Azariah was ordained deacon; the night before, Bishop Whitehead told him of his hope for the future. It was with the almost crushing weight of this possible future upon him that Azariah entered upon the work of the ministry.

When it became known that Bishop Whitehead was planning to have an Indian assistant bishop, opposition was very strong in many quarters. Many missionaries felt that the Church was not ready for such a step. Some of them did not trust Azariah personally. Indian Christians drawn from the so-called higher castes were indignant that this honour was to go to a Nadar; many years later, one of that group said: "With one exception, I never heard a Christian of high-caste origin say a good word for Bishop Azariah." But Whitehead went on patiently with his plans, and gradually his idea came to be accepted. The wise old Bishop Copleston of Calcutta insisted that the first Indian bishop must have a diocese of his own, however small, and a title, to prevent the growth of the idea that the natural position for an Indian

bishop was that of assistant to a European. So it was arranged that a new diocese of Dornakal was to be created from the missionary area of the Indian Missionary Society; and that in addition the new bishop should help Bishop Whitehead in the Telugu-speaking areas of the vast diocese of Madras.

While all these discussions were going on, Azariah had won fame in another sphere. In 1910, the great World Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh. It was almost wholly a Western conference; out of 1,300 people present, only eighteen were from the younger Churches. But one of those eighteen was Azariah, and he was the chosen speaker on the subject of the relation between missionaries and their colleagues of the younger Churches. He spoke with deep feeling, and ended his speech with the words: "Through all the ages to come the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We ask also for *love*. Give us *friends*." This was unfair; it seemed to deny the love and friendship for which there is so much evidence in the century before Azariah spoke. But the words did sharply remind missionaries and their friends all over the world that the time had come for a great change in relationships: Azariah was far from being alone in his view that on many mission stations relations between missionaries and their colleagues were far below the Christian level.

At last all was ready. On December 29th, 1912, all the eleven Anglican bishops in India joined in laying hands on the head of their first Indian colleague, and Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, aged 38, was Bishop of Dornakal. Ten days later he took possession of his tiny diocese, with six Indian clergy and about 8,000 Christians. As he himself used to explain long after, Bishop Whitehead, in trying to break down opposition to his appointment, had said: "After all, it is a very

small area; and if he makes a mess of it, it won't matter very much."

From the start, the new bishop made it clear in his "very small area" that, conscious as he was of the authority which Christ had given him as a bishop in the Church of God, he had come to rule. A tireless and faithful worker himself, he could never endure idleness and self-indulgence in others. The Methodists, in another Mass Movement area near by, looked on with wonder at the work of this young Indian bishop, who ruled his field so much more sternly than any missionary would ever have dared to do. Many years later, one of his colleagues said: "There is no doubt that the bishop is very greatly feared." Azariah was so perfectly master of himself that only those who knew him very well ever saw any sign of the inner strains and struggles which he had to pass through. But that outward calm was won only at a great price. It is clear that in these early years Azariah was very far from sure of himself; he knew that he was being watched by many eyes, not all of them friendly, and he felt that he had to keep himself under strong control all the time, and to be on his guard against making mistakes. In later years, as his position became more assured, he became more gentle and mellow. But he never encouraged any intimacy on the part of those with whom he worked, fearing perhaps that wrong advantage would be taken of such a relationship. While the European bishop of his old home, Tinnevelly, let it be known that he would gladly accept an invitation, when on tour, to a meal at the parsonage, Azariah would never take food in the house of an Indian clergyman, and this rule he kept till the end of his life.

But these stern methods paid. Christians in the Dornakal area increased rapidly, and new life came into the Christian groups. It was clear that the new bishop was a leader of real spiritual power, and that he was capable of bearing far greater responsibility than had been given him at the start. From the first he had

been helping Bishop Whitehead in the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras diocese. Gradually his authority was increased until he was in almost complete charge of those areas. When, in 1930, the Anglican Church in India became an independent Church, the position was made regular, and Azariah found himself bishop of a diocese as large as England, with at that time more than 100,000 Christians in it.

Even before that date, the bishop had been able to make a very great change in the order of his diocese. In 1922, Bishop Waller of Tinnevelly had decided greatly to increase the responsibility given to Indians in his area; the office of district missionary was to be done away with, and leading Indian clergymen were to be put in charge of all the Churches and schools and evangelistic work in the villages. Azariah, who always kept in close touch with his old home, decided to take the same step in Dornakal; it was more difficult to do there, since the work in Dornakal was nearly a hundred years younger than that in Tinnevelly, but Azariah felt that the risk must be taken and the experiment made. But there was one great difference. In Tinnevelly, the Europeans, except for the bishop, played a very small part in the ordinary work of the Church; in Dornakal, Azariah to the end kept Europeans in many of the most important positions in the diocese. A group of great missionaries—Elliott, Tanner, Gledstone, Emmet, Spear, and others—worked in close fellowship with the bishop; they took from him all the business side of the diocese—finance and administration; they watched over the clergy and dealt with many problems that otherwise would have come to the bishop. Content always to remain in the background and to let the bishop have all the credit, they carried heavy burdens which otherwise he would have had to bear, and set him free to do the work which only he could do. In one other respect, Azariah had a special advantage. It was felt that the first Indian bishop must be given the best possible chance to do well; so

special arrangements were made to raise money in England for Dornakal; and at a time when the other Anglican dioceses were suffering terribly from lack of funds and were closing down their work, Dornakal was able all the time to expand and to go forward.

Before we try to give a picture of the bishop doing "the work which only he could do", we must look at the inner and private life by which that work was made possible. Like almost all good Christians in India, Azariah was accustomed to rise very early, not later than 5 a.m. A long time was spent every day in prayer, before it was light. It was his habit to pray daily by name for everyone who held any position of importance in the diocese; as the diocese grew, this must have meant praying for a hundred colleagues every day, apart from the many other subjects for prayer, which must have crowded upon him. To the end, Azariah was really a very simple man. To him, Jesus Christ was Saviour and Lord; it was his one aim to be made like Him. The whole purpose of his life as bishop could be summed up in the words "That God in all things may be glorified." But he was also a man of considerable intellectual power, and a real student. The centre and focus of all his studies was the Bible. From his boyhood he had known it almost by heart in Tamil. Now he added to this simple knowledge careful study of the best books in English, aided by a fair knowledge of Greek—Hebrew he never learned. He had the great advantage of being able to read anywhere and at any time; a long train journey would give him great joy, as, free from interruption, except those from heat and dust, which he did not very much mind, he could sit hour after hour with his books, taking in and remembering what he read.

Azariah was a born teacher, and much of his ministry as a bishop was carried out through the work of teaching. He believed that the simplest outcaste villager could understand the Bible, and that he must be made to understand it, if he was to live as a Christian. He had

the great advantage of having been a villager himself, and of knowing how village people think. Before a Confirmation service, he would always spend a long time with the candidates, trying to find out what they knew, helping them to understand the step they were taking, and making real to them the glory of being a Christian. Sometimes his efforts to put himself on the level of simple people met with difficulties. He used to relate how, in one of these groups in early days, he said to one of the candidates: "Well, old chap, which village do you come from?" to be met by the answer "Confirmation is that rite in which by the laying-on of hands of the bishop . . ." It was some time before village clergy and teachers understood that such learning by heart, without much understanding of what was being learnt, was not at all to the taste of the bishop.

Azariah knew well that much of the treasure of a people's memory is to be found in their songs. Even if people cannot learn the Gospel by hearing it, they will learn it by singing it. It was for this reason that he encouraged the writing of songs and lyrics of all kinds for his people. Telugu is a beautiful language, and the Telugus are one of the most musical races in India. Gradually there grew up a great body of Christian songs on the life of Christ and other Christian subjects. The Canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer were re-written in Indian form and sung to Indian tunes. Plays and dramas on Bible subjects were written and acted in the villages. In all these forms, the Gospel was coming home to the people.

Azariah had great faith in his village people. He thought not so much of what they had been, or of what they were, as of what they could become through the power of Christ working in them. Therefore he insisted from the start that they could and must be witnesses for Christ. At his desire, the Indian Church has added to the three promises usually made by the candidate for Confirmation—of renunciation of evil, of faith, of obedience

—a fourth promise to be a faithful witness to Christ. He would tell the candidates to put their hands upon their heads, and say solemnly: "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel of Christ." Sometimes the bishop was asked how it was possible for such very simple and ignorant people to be witnesses; his reply was: "If a man only knows one Bible story, he can go and teach that story to someone else, and then come back and learn another story himself."

It was on this principle that the bishop planned the great week of witness, which takes place every year in the hot season when there is not much work in the fields. Then thousands of Christians go out into the villages around to tell of what Christ has done for them. It was the bishop's desire that every communicant should take part in this work. One year he reported that thirty-six per cent had taken part, and he was not at all satisfied with this; but where else in the world do more than a third of the communicants take part in active witness for Christ? The rule was that pastors and other paid workers should prepare the people for the work of witness, but that they should not preach during the week of witness—that all the speaking should be done by the ordinary men and women of the Churches. And this witness proved powerful. Earlier on, people had believed that the conversion of all the outcastes in an area would not lead to the conversion of a single high-caste man. Now the miracle began to happen. The high-caste people could not help seeing the change in the Christians. Christians in Dornakal, as in other places, are very far from perfect; but when drunkenness is driven out, singing of hymns takes the place of quarrelling and evil speech, and disorder gives place to order, others are certain to ask questions, and to try to find out what it is that brings about such remarkable changes. So it was here. Each year after the week of witness, a number of outcaste villages would ask for teaching about this new and strange doctrine, and some high-caste men would express

their desire to know more.

Part of the work of Azariah consisted in the writing of books. He usually wrote in Tamil; although he spoke Telugu well, it was not his own language, and he did not trust himself to write in it, leaving the work of translation to others. He did not write a classical style in Tamil, but had learned to express himself clearly and in well-chosen words. In reading his books, it is possible to see how, as he grew older, he grew from strength to strength. The first book, on *Holy Baptism,* is rather dull; it is mostly taken from well-known English books, and there is little in it that is alive with the bishop's own faith and experience. Later all is changed. He wrote short studies on a number of books of the Bible, such as Job, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Revelation. Here he still uses the best English books to help him; but he is writing of what he knows from within through having lived it himself; everything is alive, and everything is seen in relation to the needs of the Indian Church. Then he turned to practical problems. He was troubled by the low level of sexual morality among his people, and the wrong and non-Christian ideas of marriage; so he wrote a book on *Christian Marriage,* based on the Bible and his own experience of nearly forty years of happy Christian married life. In this same series came our present book on *Christian Giving.*

Azariah was a leader in helping the Indian Church to face the problem of its own support. He saw, and has said in his book, that wrong ideas of self-support could do great harm to the spiritual life of the Church; but also he was sure that, if people came to learn the right ideas about Christian giving and the joy of it, they would soon give all that the Church needed for all its work and more. When he came to study the life of his people in Dornakal, it seemed to him that, though the people were very poor, they were not as poor as the missionaries had believed them to be. The missionaries had been so sorry for these poor folk that they had taught them to receive

rather than to give. Azariah was sure that all this needed to be changed. He began with the women. He asked them, whenever they cooked, in putting the grain into the pot to put aside one handful for God; at the time, the gift would hardly be noticed, but over weeks and months it would amount to quite a large sum. This was very practical and very Indian. The method was adopted in many places; and the sight of the women coming once a month to church with their bags or baskets of grain is a familiar one in hundreds of Indian villages. *Christian Giving* is not the work of a scholar sitting in his study; it gives us the thought of a man who knew from experience all the right and all the wrong ways of raising money, and had related the question of finance directly to the question of living faith in God.

In Dornakal, Azariah had neighbours and friends in the Methodist, Congregationalist and Lutheran missions. From early years, he was concerned with the question of the unity of the Church of Christ in India. In 1919 he was present at a famous Conference of Indian ministers at Tranquebar, which sent forth a challenge to all the separated Churches in India. Their message can be set forth briefly in the words: " We are weak because of our divisions; let us unite, in order that we may set ourselves to the task of winning one-fifth of the human race for Christ." From then on till the time of his death, Azariah served on the Committee which was trying to bring the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Methodist Churches together into one great united Church. This was by no means an easy task. Azariah had great love for other Churches; but, as he grew in his ministry, he came to set an ever higher value on the riches of the life of his own Church; he was firmly resolved that, in coming into a united Church, none of these riches should be thrown away or wasted. But he was sure that the union must come. Alas, he did not live to see the day, in September 1947, more than two years after his death, when the Church of South India came

into being. But the Scheme of Union owed a great deal to his wisdom and patience, and the Church of South India will not forget one who was among the greatest of its builders.

Many honours came to Azariah outside his own diocese. For years he was the chairman of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon. Cambridge University gave him the degree of Doctor of Laws. At the Lambeth Conference (in which Anglican bishops from all over the world meet once every ten years) he was listened to with affection and respect. He travelled far and wide—Europe, America, Australia—and, wherever he went, his words carried weight. The village pastor's son from Vellalanvilai had become one of the greatest and most honoured Christians in the world. But in his heart he remained the simple village boy, who had learned his first Bible lessons from his saintly mother.

One of the greatest days in his life was January 6th, 1939, when the Cathedral in Dornakal was consecrated, in the presence of bishops and other leaders from all the five continents of the world, and of a vast throng of Indian Christians. The diocese had now outgrown its mother diocese of Tinnevelly, and had in it more Christians than any other diocese of the Indian Church. Gifts for the Cathedral, which was built in an Indian style that combined Hindu, Moslem and Christian elements, had come in from every part of the world. Fifteen hundred communicants took part in the service of Holy Communion. There were many memories of the hundreds of missionaries and Indian Christian workers who had made that day possible. But the central place in the thought of all was for those two who in so deep and real a sense were the father and mother of the diocese, Bishop Azariah and his wife.

The last years of Bishop Azariah were marked by a good deal of sadness. Family life continued as happy as ever, and the birth of one grandchild after another

added new joy to it. But many old friends had died or had left India; on one occasion the bishop said to the present writer, "I think you are the only person now living who calls me Azariah"—everyone else addressed him by some title of respect. The work in the diocese presented new difficulties. It had not been possible to keep up the enthusiasm of the early days, when everything was new and growth was very rapid. Christians of the second and third generation are different from new converts. Christianity has come to them as an inheritance, and not as a matter of personal choice. They have a different set of problems, and have to be handled in a very different way. The bishop found himself less at home with these younger people than he had been with their grandfathers, and sometimes he was rather hard in his judgments on them. Some among the educated people were no longer content with the paternal methods of rule, which had been quite suitable thirty years before; a good deal of unkind criticism was directed at the bishop, contrasting the methods still followed in Dornakal with the much more democratic system which had developed in his old home, Tinnevelly. Azariah was grieved by the many delays in bringing in the Church Union for which he had worked so long. So many times it had seemed just at hand, and then once again delay set in. It seemed to those who had known him in earlier days that the bishop was less patient than he had been; he did not always listen to what other people said, and did not always take the trouble to understand their arguments.

He was certainly growing older. But no one, not even those nearest to him, had any idea that the end was near. At Christmas time, 1944, Azariah, who had already passed his seventieth birthday, went out as usual for a tour in the villages, preaching, confirming, administering the Holy Communion. As ever, he was happy and full of vigour in this work. On December 28th he returned home, ill with fever; but in India this is no uncommon

thing, and no special alarm was taken. But it soon became plain that at last the long years of prayer and labour had completely worn him out; he had no power to resist the sickness, and he would not get better. About midday on January 1st, 1945, he entered quietly into rest.

All day long, thousands of people came to look on him, as he lay so peacefully, and to wonder at the look of happiness on the face of the great man of God, whom they had so long known as their father in Christ. In the evening they laid him to rest in the garden of the great Cathedral which he had built.

" Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" Even nine years after the event, these last sentences have been written with tears, as the writer has thought again of his friend and companion. Azariah had great gifts, but these gifts were wholly dedicated to God; he would never hesitate for a moment to bear witness " By the grace of God I am what I am ". If so few others in the younger Churches have risen to the height of his achievements, is this perhaps because they have not learned equally the lesson of total surrender to the will of God? Who then will now rise up, not to imitate Azariah, for that he never would have wished; but to follow Jesus Christ as Azariah tried to follow Him, and so to share as he shared in building up the Church, which is the body of Jesus Christ upon earth?

CHAPTER ONE

TO KEEP THE CHURCH GOING

Very few Christians really know how the Church is run. The Church is there, and they go to it on most Sundays in the year. The plate or bag for the offerings comes round, and they put into it a coin, sometimes the smallest which they happen to have with them. But they do not ask where the money goes, or what use is made of it, or how much of it is spent on each part of the work of the Church. From time to time the minister tells his people from the pulpit that they ought to be giving more than they are, or asks them to give as much as they are able to some special object for which money is being raised. Perhaps for a few weeks they give a little more, but usually such good resolutions do not last very long. The Church has always been there; they feel that it always will be there to serve them when they need it. It is only in times of danger, when the Church no longer seems to be safe, and the order of its life is threatened, that the ordinary Christian wakes up to what is happening; then he is driven to ask what his own share is, or should be, through his life and through his gifts, in keeping the life of the Church going.

Much of this is true even in the younger Churches that have come into being in the lands where the great majority of the people are non-Christians. It is strange that it should be so, since most of those Churches are weak and Christians are few, and it is never certain that their life can be carried on from year to year. But customs can take deep root in a very few years, and Christians in these younger Churches learn as quickly

as their brethren in older Churches to take things for granted, and to believe that all will go on for ever as it is now. It is hard for Christians to understand that the Church is their Church, and that it can live only by their life. In many of the younger Churches, wrong teaching was given at the start; or perhaps it would be truer to say that the right teaching was not given at the start. New Christians were taught that they must give themselves to God; they were not shown clearly that this self-giving must show itself, among many other ways, in gifts of love made to God and to His Church. They were not taught how and why, as Christians, they should give. It is not easy for right teaching later on to drive out wrong ideas that have already taken root.

It is easy now to see why mistakes were made.

At the start of the work, before any converts were won, the missionaries were the only Christians. If anything had to be paid for, they were the only people who could pay for it. Some of the first converts were driven out from their homes and their villages. They had lost everything; the missionaries had to give them food and clothes and home, until they could find work. Many of them took up work in the mission as teachers and preachers, and naturally the mission continued to pay them for their work. If a church had to be built, there were usually kind Christian friends in Western countries who would send the money with which to build it. Sometimes these friends built such large churches that the people were not able even to keep them in good order; and for that, too, the missionaries had to find the money. In the old days, it was a common custom that, instead of parents paying school fees for their children, the parents were paid for sending their children to school. The parents said, " We are poor people. Our children work, and we cannot do without their work. If you want the children to come to school, you must pay us for the time they spend in school to please you instead of working for us." This seemed a fair argument; and the missionaries were

so eager to have children in their schools that they often agreed to this plan, without seeing that by agreeing to it they might be doing great harm to the future of the Church.

We must not forget that most of the early converts of the missions were very poor. It is as true as it was in the days of the New Testament that not many wise, not many mighty are called into the Kingdom of God. Now, as then, it is for the most part the poor and weak who have heard gladly the good news of God. The missionaries, seeing the poverty of their people and being sorry for them, felt that it would be laying too heavy a weight upon them to ask them to give for the support of their Church. This does not mean that those simple Christians gave nothing; but, when offerings were collected, it was usually for some special object and not for the day-to-day work of the Church. Even in those days, missionaries often spoke of the time when the younger Churches would have to become independent; but by their actions they denied their words. By giving too much and too long, they taught the younger Churches to be dependent on the West in matters of money and support. They gave the impression that kind friends in the West would continue to give, and that there would be no limit to the funds that they could provide. On the whole, the younger Churches were well pleased to have it so. Had they not been told that salvation in Christ is freely given? In old days, they had had to take animals from their flocks to offer very expensive sacrifices to the gods; was it not much better now to have many fathers and mothers in Christ, who would see to it that their children lacked nothing?

For a long time people did not see clearly how dangerous this situation was. The nineteenth century was a time of long peace. The wealth of the West was growing all the time. Interest in missionary work continued to grow also. It seemed that this state of affairs could go on for a very long time, and that there was no need to

make any great change in the relations between the older and younger Churches.

In the twentieth century all this was changed. Interest in missions no longer continued to grow in the Western Churches, as it had grown in earlier years. Gifts increased, but they could no longer keep pace with the demands of the work; and growth in one direction had to be balanced by cutting down work somewhere else. The value of money began to fall all over the world. In 1931 the great Trade Depression hit the world; people gave less to the Churches, because they had so much less to give; grants to missionary work had to be seriously cut. Many of the younger Churches were compelled to realize for the first time that they could not count for ever on gifts coming from the West in the same way and on the same scale as they had always come in the past; if they wished to live, they must learn to grow up, and to take a far greater share of responsibility for the life of the Church than they had ever done before.

Many sharp lessons were learned through the first world war. German missionaries were removed from many areas where they had been working. German money could no longer reach these fields. Help was provided by other Churches, and means were found to keep the work going until the end of the war and after. But a new question had been asked of the younger Churches. If a time comes when you are wholly cut off from your friends in the West, and can no longer receive from them any help in the way of money or of the service of missionaries, will you be able to carry on your work? Will you be able to stand firm and to witness, living on your own resources without any outside help?

This question made clear the difference between a real Church, and a Church which was living merely as a colony of a Western Church. In the political sphere, great countries like Canada and Australia, which had begun as colonies, had grown into independent nations. It was seen that the time had come when the younger

Churches must cease to be colonies, and must grow up to be independent Churches, within the great family of God which is the Universal Church. But a Church which cannot itself find the money which is needed to carry on its work, and is always asking for gifts from another Church, can never be more than a colony. Progress towards self-support is a necessary element in progress towards spiritual independence.

The same warning came from another source. In many parts of the world the work of the missions had been able to grow quickly only because governments were willing to help mission schools, and to pay a large part of the salary of the Christian teachers. This was true of India, of Indonesia, and of large parts of Africa. The twentieth century has been marked by the rapid rise of national feeling all over Asia and Africa. It was clear that, when the peoples of Asia and Africa gained their freedom, the new governments would not be Christian governments; it was probable that they would wish to take over all education themselves, and that they would no longer be willing to spend their money on Christian schools. So the Churches were faced with the question what they would do if they lost all the help which had been coming from the government. How many schools would they be able to keep going from their own funds? And, in the thousands of villages, where the village teacher, paid mostly by the government, had been in charge of almost all the work of the Church as well, how could all this work be kept going? New plans would have to be made to meet a new situation.

CHAPTER TWO

GIVING CHURCHES

In 1938, the third world meeting of the International Missionary Council was held at Tambaram near Madras. Section 12 of the Conference was to deal with the economic basis of the Church. In preparation for its work, careful studies were made in many countries of the state of the Churches, to find out how far the duty of Christian giving was understood by Christians and how far the Churches were able to maintain their work without help from the West. It was found that there were very great differences between the Churches, and that some had made much more progress than others towards self-support. It was not always the richest Churches which had made the greatest progress; much more seemed to depend on the kind of teaching that had been given to the Christians from the beginning, and on the extent to which they had been led to see Christian giving as part of their duty towards God.

We may give here a sketch of a few Churches in which specially good progress towards self-support had been made.

THE KAREN CHURCH

In Burma, the Karens are a people quite distinct from the Burmese. When the Gospel first reached them 130 years ago, through the American Baptist Mission, they were poor, backward and superstitious. But they had among them a tradition of the coming of the "white brother", who would bring them back their lost "book," and lead them back to God. While progress

among the Burmese has been very slow, the Karens were ready to listen to the Gospel, when it was preached to them, and the Church now numbers not less than 400,000 Christians.[1] The first baptisms took place in 1828. Only three years later the Karens began to build their own prayer houses. In 1845 there was a heavy drop in the funds which came from America; the Karens met the situation by beginning themselves to raise money for the salaries of their pastors and all the other work of the Church. The independent Karen Church was founded in 1853.

Here is a definition of the task of the Church as set forth by a Karen Christian elder many years ago: "No money help from others; lift the race by education; give each generation better ideals; provide endowment for the work; provide a leadership a little ahead of the members in education; evangelize new peoples."

As the Church developed in numbers, it took over more and more responsibility, until at last it was able to support not only the local Churches but also most of the schools and other institutions, and even the theological training school. Some of the poorer areas were more generous in their giving than others which were richer; but it was found that those districts where giving was at the highest level were also those which had the best record in personal service and witness to the Gospel. Most of the gifts are in kind, as is natural among farmers: in some places the "Lord's Acre" plan has been followed, one plot of land being set apart "for the Lord" and all the produce from it given to the work of the Church.

These good results have been possible only because the ideal of independence was placed before the Karen Christians from the start; the Church was to be their Church, and they must learn to support it. The ideas

[1] The *World Christian Handbook* for 1952 records more than 500,000 non-Roman Christians in Burma, of whom a large majority are Karens.

of independence and self-support were thus brought together from the beginning. The character of the Karen people is sturdy and independent. These ideals met with a ready response among them, and they were willing to make the sacrifices necessary in order that the ideals might become realities among them.

In 1942 the Japanese overran Burma. Christians had to suffer many things at their hands, and of course the Churches were cut off from all help from the West. In those hard times, the work of a century was tested and found good. Almost all the Christians remained faithful to the Gospel. The Church continued to maintain itself and to grow. Since the war, the strife between the Burmese and the Karens, and the Karen campaign for independence, have brought new difficulties; in spite of these, the Church has continued to show itself a living Church, and to make progress.

THE BATAK CHURCH

In the highlands of Northern Sumatra live the Bataks, a hardy and vigorous people. The first two missionaries to enter their land were quickly killed and eaten by cannibals. Thirty years later the German missionary Nommensen, of the Rhenish Mission, was able to enter the region and to begin Christian work. He was a great preacher of the Gospel, and won the hearts of the people both to himself and to his message. The Church began to grow very quickly, and now there are among the Bataks more than half a million Christians. It was a great help to the work that all the people were of one race and spoke one language, and that only one missionary society was working among them. The German missionaries were able to plan wisely, and to organize the life of the Church down to the last detail.

From the start, teaching was given about the duty of giving to God. Each family was expected to give a fixed amount to the work of the local Church. But in addition

to this sum and the regular offerings in Church, much more was raised through special offerings at the time of the great Church festivals, or on such special family occasions as the birth of children, birthdays and marriages. Women gave their gifts separately, and children had their own little boxes, in which to collect towards their offerings. A large part of the offerings was in kind. One quarter of the sums raised in the local Churches was sent in to a central fund. Half the salaries of school teachers was paid by the government.

These methods were so successful that the Batak Church was able not only to meet all the expenses of the local Churches, but also to support some of the institutions and to organize the Batak Missionary Society, which had sixty evangelists at work preaching the Gospel to the non-Christian Bataks.

The Bataks are a strong people, proud of their race, and eager for independence. They have shown the same strength and drive in political as in religious affairs.

Three main reasons can be given for the rapid growth of self-support and independence in the Batak Churches :

(1) From the start the mission had made up its mind that no money help was to be given to the local Churches.

(2) From the start lay people were drawn into the service of the Church, both by giving them work to do, and by laying upon them responsibility for some parts of the life of the Church.

(3) From the start it was planned that the work should not be allowed to grow more quickly than the power of the Batak people to support it.

In Sumatra, as in Burma, the second world war brought many trials to the Churches. The German missionaries were all taken away from their work, and the Church was left to care for itself. Even after the war, the Batak Church had little touch with the outside world, though now again it is beginning to ask for the help of missionaries from other parts of Asia and from the West.

No Church is perfect; and during those years it was seen that the Batak Churches, though very strong at some points of their life, were weak in others. But the fact that the Churches were able to hold on and to grow through those years in which they received no help at all in men and money from the West, shows that what the German missionaries had built was well built, and that the rules of self-support and self-government which had been taught to the Batak Churches were sound.

THE KOREAN CHURCH

One of the last of the great countries to be entered by the Christian mission was Korea. But when the work started, in the 1880s, the Koreans gave a ready hearing to the Gospel, and the Church grew rapidly. Most of this growth was due to the work and witness of the Korean Christians themselves. With the growth of the Church went an unusually rapid growth in self-support. At the end of fifty years it was found that, in the Presbyterian Church, the Korean Christians were giving six times as much for the work of the local Churches as the mission was spending for the central work (schools, hospitals, and so on), apart from the missionaries' salaries.

The leaders gave three reasons for this steady and wonderful growth:

(1) The whole life of the Churches was built up on the Bible. Every Christian was expected to attend Sunday School or Bible Class, and regular Bible teaching for all has been part of the life of every Sunday.

(2) Stress was laid from the start on the duty of every Christian to pass on to others what he had himself learnt of Christ. Most members of the Korean Church have been won by the simple witness of ordinary Christians, whose changed lives as well as their words have made clear to others the power of the Son of God.

(3) Clear teaching was given on the duty of every Christian to give part of his income to God. Pledge cards were used, to help Church members to plan their giving and to give regularly. Many Christians, though not all, had learned to give one-tenth of their income. Much of the giving was in kind; a father might agree to set apart for the Church all that was grown in one part of his field, a mother might promise to give to the Church all the eggs laid on Sunday, and so on.

During the war in Korea, the Churches have suffered more perhaps than any other Churches in the world. Ordinary Church life has been made impossible, and many Christians driven from their homes. Yet the inner life of the Church has gone on. As soon as it has become possible, pastors have again gathered their people round them. Even in this time of suffering, men and women have been won for Christ. Again we see that, if the foundations have been good, a younger Church can live and grow, even when it cannot receive any help from the older Churches, and even when it has to face very great difficulties and trials.

THE SAMOAN CHURCH

In the three countries of which we have written, Christians are only a small minority, and the great mass of the people are still non-Christians. But there are some countries which at the beginning of the nineteenth century were entirely non-Christian, and are now entirely Christian. A good example of this situation is Samoa, in the Pacific Ocean, where the whole population (now about 100,000) has long been Christian. Orderly government and the development of trade have made the islands rich; giving on the part of the Christians has been on a generous scale. For some time, the Churches have been entirely self-governing and self-supporting, receiving no money help at all from outside. Their problems

have arisen from the presence of many white men on the islands, and from the clash between the old simple life of the South Seas and the quite different kind of life that the white man has brought with him. Because of these problems, it has been felt wise that the Churches should still have the help of some missionaries from the West. In all other matters, they are now fully able to stand on their own feet, and to order their own life.

THE CHURCH IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

All the examples so far given have been of Churches growing up among people of the same race and language, and all more or less on the same level of wealth or poverty. The life of the Church is made much more difficult when the Christians are poor, and those around them are rich. This is specially the case in India, where the caste system makes such deep divisions in society. On the whole, the wealth is in the hands of a few castes at the top; those below them are either poor or very poor. Most of the Christians in India and Pakistan come from the poorer classes, and many from among the outcastes, the very poorest class of all. This has made difficult the growth of self-support; partly because the people were so very poor, partly because, having been always so poor and accustomed to being ruled over by others, they had not the same desire for independence as people like the Bataks and the Karens.

Still, in some areas very great progress had been made. Tinnevelly District, in the far south of India, has in it one of the oldest and strongest missions and Churches in India. By 1939 the Christians were raising enough money to pay for all the local work of the Churches, including the salaries of the clergy. They also raised every year a large amount of money for Church building, and gave thousands of rupees to the Indian Missionary Society, for work in parts of India where the Church was less developed. Much money was received from the govern-

ment by way of grants for schools. Almost the whole of the money received from England went to pay the salaries of the missionaries, or to maintain the colleges and other central institutions of the diocese. Not many Churches in India could show such a good record in self-support.

Missions in India in the nineteenth century did a great work in education. In consequence, in the twentieth century there are a great many educated Christians, and many of these are in good positions and are rich or well-to-do. It is sad to report that this does not always mean that they give more to the Church. A survey of Bangalore, a large city in South India, made shortly before the second world war, showed that the poor give a larger share of their income to God than the rich, and that some of the Christian government officials were not giving even as much as one per cent of their income to the work of the Church. This shows clearly, what we shall often find again in our study, that self-support does not depend so much on wealth or poverty as on Christian faith and sense of responsibility—or the lack of it.

It has been said that, if all Indian Christians gave one-twentieth of their income to God, it would be possible for the Churches to maintain all their local work, including village schools and the preaching of the Gospel to the non-Christians, without asking for any help from outside at all. Then the missionary societies would have to carry only the salaries of missionaries, and the higher education, which the Church is not yet able to support.

This claim for self-support can be put in the wrong way. To put it very simply : in the past, missionaries have sometimes said, " Now we pay the bills, and therefore we have the right to rule the Church. When you pay the bills, you will have the right to rule the Church." It has been natural for the Christians of the younger Churches to say to themselves, " Now we are grown up : we want to manage our own affairs. We must buy these missionaries out by paying for the work of the Church ourselves :

and therefore we must give more than we have given in the past." When this view is taken, self-support becomes a kind of selfishness or the expression of national pride, and this has nothing to do with Christian giving. All our study will go to show that Christian giving is a spiritual matter. When it is on a low level, the cause must always be sought in a poor and shallow Christian life. When Christians live in close fellowship with God in Christ, their love for Him and their joy in the salvation which He has given them through Christ show themselves in their gifts of love; and this generous giving is itself a source of new spiritual power.

We may end this introductory chapter by quoting some sentences from the Report of Section 12 of the Madras-Tambaram Conference on "The Economic Basis of the Church":

(1) That the economic life of the Church be put in its proper setting as essentially a spiritual problem, and that Scriptural principles of giving be systematically taught and emphasized.

(2) That the problem of self-support also be put in its proper setting as a spiritual problem, and viewed as in part a result of voluntary witness and Church growth.

(5) That in opening up new fields the principle of placing new groups of Christians upon their own resources for the support of their own work be applied from the very beginning.

(6) That due emphasis be put on the responsibility of the Church in every place both to undertake its own financial support and to contribute towards community service.

In the light of the facts and principles set forth above, we now turn to the Scriptures, and to a series of Bible studies, setting forth the Scriptural principles of giving.

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF INADEQUATE GIVING

Lack of Spiritual Vigour

Inadequate Christian giving is due in the first place to lack of spiritual vigour. Christians do not give their money to God, because they have not first given themselves to God. A proper recognition that all that we have belongs to God, that we have been bought with a price—the price being nothing less than the "precious blood of Christ"—and that nothing we can give is adequate recompense for such a love, is what is lacking in most of our people. The low ratio of giving is a symptom of this low level of Christian life. The sooner we recognize this the better!

The "Self-support" Conference held in Nagpur, India, in July, 1938, gave expression to the same conviction. "Self-support, however defined, is not sufficient, and should not be the chief aim. The duty and privilege of Christian stewardship should be taught to the converts from the very beginning of their Christian life. In congregations where this has been neglected, nothing less than an awakening to a deeper experience of the Christian life, and faithful teaching on stewardship on the New Testament lines, can bring about a realization of the duty of sacrificial giving."

Here is a paragraph from the Report of the Tambaram Conference:

"The support of the Church must be rooted in its spiritual life. The use of the Church's gifts must make for spiritual growth, otherwise giving proves unfruitful. Through his gifts the worshipper expresses his growing inner life, his gratitude to God, and reaches out to the

entire brotherhood of Christians and to those outside. Sacrificial giving is one of the essential elements in promoting true spiritual growth."

We appeal to all who are concerned with the life of the Church seriously to take this to heart, and to labour and pray for our people that, by the grace of God's Holy Spirit, a deeper experience of God's love in Christ and a greater realization of our dependence upon Him may be granted to them; this will lead to deeper consecration of themselves and all that they have to Christ and His service.

Over Emphasis on the Financial Aspect of Self-support

A second cause of defective Christian Giving is the over-emphasis placed on the mere financial aspect of self-support.

The goal of "self-support" can become a real hindrance to the full development of the Churches. Pastors and lay leaders and treasurers of Churches, church councils and missions sometimes come to be fully occupied with plans calculated to take them to this goal, paying very little attention to evangelism. Evangelism is the life-blood of the Church. If evangelism occupies a minor place in the programme and budget of the Church, it will not be long before its spiritual life will occupy a minor place too, spelling spiritual lethargy and death. A survey of an Indian city and its Churches states:

"Very little attention is given to evangelism. The Churches need to realize that they exist not for themselves but for witnessing for Christ, and that it is not a big achievement if they become self-supporting. The goal of self-support is not beyond the reach of all nine Churches in the city. If every earning member would pay in the ratio of one half-anna to the rupee, i.e. one-thirty-second part of his income, the Church would be easily able to meet all its financial obligations. Thus it

is necessary to shift the emphasis from self-support to service for Christ."

The Tambaram Conference also drew attention to this danger. Says the Report of Section 12: "There is real danger in over-emphasis on mere self-support by a Church or group. It may, for instance, lead to the neglect of the evangelistic task. . . . From its very beginning every Church should bear witness. Such work beyond its own borders will never hinder self-support."

The writer in his experience has seen some other dangers. Where "self-support" as an ideal has dominated all Church work, the pastors have become little more than money-raising machines, having been sapped of all spiritual power. Self-support has so overshadowed all other activities that help to the poor, social service, missionary effort outside and home-evangelism are all looked upon with disfavour and even dislike. Efficiency in the work of the ministry is disregarded, inasmuch as ministers of inferior education who can be paid lower salaries are preferred to educated men. Pastorate boundaries have been so unduly enlarged and unwieldy charges placed on ministers that pastoral supervision and administration of sacraments have been reduced to a perilous minimum. Self-support and self-government have been so often made inter-dependent that many a city parish has been eager to support itself in order that it may become autonomous and bear arrogant rule over the mission and the minister. Giving has not been a means of grace, but has been such a prolific source of schism, jealousy and quarrels as to make many wish the Church had never become self-supporting!

The Duty of Giving Urged on Wrong Grounds

"Giving" is certainly preached in the Indian Churches, and no doubt in many others, too. Indeed, it is preached to a wearisome extent. In most cases, however, the immediate motive supplied is inadequate, unworthy and ineffective.

(*a*) Very often it is urged on the ground that grants from the missionary societies have been reduced. The layman who hears this wonders why he should pay because someone else is failing in his duty. If the societies have sent out reduced grants, he argues, let the salaries of the missionaries be reduced and not anything else.

The real weakness of this argument is apparent, when we realize that Christian Giving is a duty, whether a foreign Church provides money for a missionary Church or not. The reduction of these grants may well have caused an acute crisis in the Church's finances. But the duty of Christian Giving was always there; if that duty was not taught because for a time others were supplying all the Church's financial needs, there was a serious gap in that Church's life and teaching.

(*b*) The duty of Christian Giving is also sometimes urged on the ground that the pastors' salaries were being reduced, that schools were being closed, or resident workers sent away for lack of funds. The ordinary layman slyly argues that in any case the pastors are paid too much, and a few rupees less cannot hurt them overmuch. If workers are sent away, there is probably another Church near by that is ready to step in with the free offer of a resident worker—the Roman Catholic Church or one of the many new sects that are eager to enter any half-open door. In any case, the argument is false. If a Church should suddenly inherit a legacy of a hundred million pounds, that would meet all the Church's needs for several decades; but could the Christians, thus benefited, be exempted from the duty of giving to God?

(*c*) Giving is also sometimes encouraged by appeals to self-respect. Is it not a disgrace—says the Mission Treasurer—that you should still be receiving money from a foreign country? After so many years of existence, should you still be dependent on outside help? Have you no shame, no self-respect, that you receive money help from foreigners, and then talk of the indigenous Church and

its rights?

Such an appeal to "self" very often produces a rebellious reaction. Feelings are hurt. Friendship is strained. The will to wipe off the disgrace makes men produce money in a larger measure than they did before. Self-support is then soon attained with a vengeance. Expenses are reduced, evangelists are dismissed, contributions to missionary work are stopped, fairs are held, fancy sales are organized, lotteries are advertised, every smallest coin is kept in the Church's own money-box and "self-support" is attained. And to what purpose is all this being done? To remove the disgrace of being known as recipients of foreign charity! When the stage of freedom from foreign help is reached, relationships do not improve. The independence so attained is proudly displayed and selfishly enjoyed with a vengeance. The spiritual relationship of fellowship between the missionary and the Church disappears. You cannot sow self and reap the Spirit!

(*d*) Self-support again is very often made a condition of self-government. "He who pays the piper calls the tune," says a missionary; "we" (with an emphasis on *we*) "provide the money and we" (again an emphatic and exclusive *we*) "shall determine how it may be or may not be spent." How often has such an argument killed all co-operation between the Indian Christian and the missionary!

The logic of the argument cannot be gainsaid. But pitiless logic kills all Christian fellowship. The relationship of co-partners in the common enterprise of the heavenly Kingdom becomes that between "controlling benefactors and irritated recipients of charity".[1] So much local contribution, therefore so much share in the government of the Church, and so many seats on the Committee—this logic cannot be extended to spiritual spheres. Those who talk thus forget that the essence of

[1] H. Kraemer in *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, p. 426.

the Gospel is in that verse: "God so loved the world, that He *gave*", and that the only justifiable attitude in this respect is the Christian attitude of love. Love must determine giving: giving must be the result of love. To strike bargains with the recipients through our gifts is not to love. We quote Tambaram once again: "Giving may be vitiated for both giver and receiver by the intrusion of an element of condescension. Grants-in-aid sometimes may lead to undue domination or control by the givers."

The Duty of Giving Enforced by Wrong Methods

Christ's work requires money; Christ's followers do not provide the money as readily as they should; hence the almost universal recourse to wrong methods.

ASSESSMENT. Assessment is ecclesiastical taxation. Some levy a poll tax. They demand so much (Rs.1-0-0 or Rs.2-0-0 per head) of each communicant. An assessment must be paid; and therefore naturally those who levy the assessment must discipline those who fail to pay. There are direct and indirect ways of enforcement. In some cases, the services of the Church are refused at moments when they are most desired, such as the calling of banns of marriage, until all unpaid dues are paid up. There are various methods of making those who have not paid feel the disapproval or contempt of the more virtuous members of the Church. Such methods may produce more money, but they do not help to educate the people in *Christian* giving. In fact, the effect of them is just the opposite; people come to hate the idea of giving, and what ought to be a joy is turned into a burden.

COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS. In most of the Churches in Asia, salaried Christian workers provide a large proportion of the local income of the Church. We give here one striking illustration.

The central congregation under the Malwa Church Council had a total income in 1936 of Rs.2450 (in round figures). Of this, Rs.900 was the interest on a permanent

fund built up in the past; Rs.1470 was received through the central Church collections, and the balance from the rural centres attached to this central congregation. Of the " Church collections ", 45.5 per cent was contributed by the missionary staff, 38.8 per cent by mission employees, and 15.7 per cent by the independent members of the congregation!

In all such cases we are bound to ask how it is that paid workers supply such a large proportion of the total income. We fear that the answer in many cases must be that it is through compulsory deductions from salaries. Giving is the duty of every Christian; if left to themselves, so it is thought, even Christian workers will not contribute as much as they should; and so recourse is made to this gentle-persuasive-compulsory method! How much better it would be if teaching on Christian Giving were given to these paid workers, and they were given the choice of spontaneous giving " according as each has purposed in his heart "! For " God loves a cheerful giver " (2 Corinthians 9 : 7).

Methods of Indirect Compulsion. Christians ought to give of their substance to the work of the Church, and they do not; how can we then twist money out of them for this good cause? This seems to have been the problem of the early missionaries and ministers.

The answer was: Levy fees. Levy a Banns fee, a Marriage fee, a Burial fee, a Cemetery fee, and so on.

The alms-bag looks like an instance of indirect compulsion. It is very difficult to put nothing into the alms-bag, as it is stretched before you in church by a churchwarden under the watchful eyes of your neighbours.

The subscription book can be another. It is taken round month after month to the Church members to make them give what they ought to give spontaneously. This is to make people give " reluctantly " and " under compulsion ", is it not? The method of the subscription book is quite different from that followed by the Christians in Macedonia, who gave of their own accord,

begging the Apostle earnestly for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints (2 Corinthians 8 : 3).

There is no need to quarrel with some of these methods as such. A subscription book may be a help to many willing givers, who receive monthly salaries and who want to be reminded every month of their duty. Our contention is that this and many other methods in practice in the Churches have the undoubted tendency to destroy that spontaneity which is characteristic of the New Testament teaching on Christian Giving.

If we want to introduce Scriptural methods of Giving, we must adopt Scriptural principles. Giving based on these principles is sure to be "a grace", fruitful of spiritual enrichment in all directions.

What are these Scriptural principles?

CHAPTER FOUR

SCRIPTURAL REASONS FOR GIVING

When our Lord was once questioned as to the rightness or otherwise of paying taxes to the Roman rulers, He replied: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).

Man, the creature, is bound to give of his substance to God his Creator. It is again and again stated that God is not only the Creator of all, but also the Giver of all things. And it is man's duty to give to Him of His own. The Jews were urged to make their offerings to God on the additional ground that they had been redeemed from Egypt. Since He had redeemed them, it was urged, they ought to show their gratitude to Him by bringing to His temple a part of all their substance—of all they enjoyed in the land that He had given them for an inheritance.

There are thus three grounds upon which Scripture urges the duty of giving: God the Owner of all; God the Giver of all; God the Redeemer of all. Therefore, "Render to God the things that are God's". What does recognition of God's ownership of all things mean? The Scriptures state this in various ways.

Psalm 24:1 says: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof". It is interesting to remember that the Jewish grace before meals probably included the recitation of this verse. The Jew was thus constantly reminded of the fact that he owed his food to the Giver of all good gifts, whose is the earth and all the fullness of its bounty.

If we own land and enjoy its gifts, let us remember that exactly as the State has a claim upon it and there-

fore to the State the tax is rightly due, so also it belongs to God, and, in consequence, to God is rightly due a share of the income from it.[1]

See further Psalm 50:10-12: "Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine". The inspired Psalmist reminds us that our farm cattle and domestic fowls, too, ultimately belong to God. We thus see the reason for the prophetic teaching that the first-born of all the cattle and fowls ought to be given to God in recognition of this ownership.

Further, in David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29 : 11, 12, 14, the acknowledgment is made: "All that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine. . . . Both riches and honour come from thee. . . . All things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee". It is good for us to read such a frank recognition of God's right to all. It is equally good to be reminded that, when we give to God of our substance, we are only giving to Him what really belongs to Him. When David and the people of Israel willingly offered various articles for the building of the Temple, David prays: "O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building thee a house for thy holy name comes from thy hand, and is all thy own" (1 Chronicles 29 : 16).

God Himself gives to all life and breath and all other things. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17 : 28), and St. Paul adds that this recognition that God is the permanent source of our life and being is found even in ancient non-Christian poets. Our dependence upon God moment by moment is a truth universally acknowledged. What the Psalmist says of the animal world is true of man, too:—

> "These all look to thee,
> to give them their food in due season.

[1] In India all land is regarded traditionally as belonging to the State; those who use the land are "occupiers" or tenants.

When thou givest to them, they gather it up;
when thou openest thy hand, they are filled
with good things.
When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;
when thou takest away their breath, they die
and return to their dust" (Psalm 104 : 27-29).

Hence our prayers in the morning on rising, and our prayers at night before going to bed. These ought to be constant reminders that day by day we receive from the hands of our loving Father life, breath, and all things we value in life.

From the earliest days man recognized that all the increase of the earth and the increase of the cattle came from the bountiful hands of God, and that it was man's duty to acknowledge this bounty by offering Him gifts. Does not the ancient story of Cain and Abel indicate this? "Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions." (Genesis 4 : 2-4). St. Paul refers to this universal truth in his address to the heathen people in Lystra. God " did good ", he says, " and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness " (Acts 14 : 17).

When the Israelites were given possession of the land of Canaan, they were enjoined to give to God and His worship a portion of whatever they enjoyed as the produce of the land.

The three Feasts that every Jew was directed to observe were all festivals connected with agricultural operations. The *first* was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It occurred at the time when they began to " put the sickle to the standing grain " (Deuteronomy 16 : 9); it synchronized with the first cutting of barley—the earlier crop—and the people were enjoined to bring " the sheaf of the first fruits of their harvest " to God for an offering (Leviticus 23 : 10). The *second* was the Feast of Weeks,

which came seven weeks after the first barley harvest. This took place at the end of the reaping season, when all wheat and barley had been cut and gathered, and marked specially the termination of the wheat harvest (Deuteronomy 16 : 9, 10). The *third* was the Feast of Tabernacles—the Jewish Harvest Festival, celebrated when all the harvests of fruit, oil and wine had been gathered in (Deuteronomy 16 : 13). All the three festivals thus were connected with harvests of one kind or another, and at all three the Israelites were to make their thankofferings to God in recognition of the fact that all the produce of the land was a bounty from the hands of God Himself, and that He was entitled to such an acknowledgment of the fact.

Deuteronomy enjoins : " The Lord your God will bless you in all your produce, and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful. Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God . . . and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you " (16 : 15-17).

Someone may here object that, after all, the harvest is the result of the husbandman's labours, and that he is certainly entitled to the fruit of his toil. This is true enough; but the Bible looks deeper than this obvious point. Deuteronomy says : " You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth " (8 : 18).

When we come to the New Testament we are confronted with additional arguments for generous giving. Our Lord's answer to the Scribe who asked which was the first commandment is well known : " You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength " (Mark 12 : 30). One way of showing our love to God with all our *mind* and with all our *strength* is surely by consecrating to Him what we earn with our mind and

our strength, and offering to Him of our earnings!

In setting forth the commandments regarding giving to the poor, the prophets often reminded the Israelites that it was their duty to help the poor, because once they had themselves been poor, needing other people's help and sympathy. After the injunctions regarding free-will offerings and harvest offerings at the time of the Feast of Weeks, it is said: " You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt: and you shall be careful to observe these statutes " (Deuteronomy 16 : 12). Gratitude for God's redeeming mercies was made the ground upon which generous giving was recommended.

Far greater in scope and extent than the redemption of Israel from Egypt was the universal redemption of the Cross. When the Apostle Paul urges sacrificial giving upon the Christians at Corinth, he draws his argument from Jesus Christ Himself: " You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich ". And again, as the crown of all arguments, he adds: " Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift " (2 Corinthians 8 : 9; 9 : 15).

These, then, are the fundamental reasons why we should give—God is the Creator and Preserver of all; God is the Giver of all good gifts; God is our Redeemer. We therefore owe our all to Him.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUR LORD'S TEACHING ABOUT MONEY

There are few subjects on which our Lord has given clearer and fuller teaching than that of money.

In this chapter we shall consider the more important of the passages in which He has dealt with this subject.

Luke 12 : 16-21

The Lord saw the great danger that money could be to a man's salvation. There were many men in Palestine in His day—as there are men everywhere to-day—who considered that a man's life consisted in the abundance of the things which he possessed. When their fields yield plentifully they say to themselves: "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years". A plentiful harvest-yield is not reckoned an opportunity for plenteous service, and thus they fail to be "rich toward God". Stupid indeed they are who miss God-given opportunities for laying up treasures in heaven.

Luke 16 : 1-13

By the right use of money, men can make to themselves friends in heaven, who, when the earthly riches can no more be of any use, will receive them into eternal habitations. To be faithful in handling money entitles a man to receive the reward of fellowship with God, and permanent enrichment of life in righteousness, holiness, peace and joy. To be faithless in money matters, whether one's own or other people's, means to become poverty-stricken in true riches, and to lose the opportunity of winning treasures that can for ever be one's own.

How common it is to find Christian men who have not learned to use their money for their own spiritual benefit! How sad, too, it is to find Christians not perfectly trustworthy in handling other people's money! Misuse of money wrecks reputation, character and soul.

Luke 16 : 19-31

Our Lord came across many men whose love of luxury resulted in their spending all their riches on themselves, and made them callous to the needs of others. Channels of pity and service were thus choked up, and, what is worse, all their knowledge of the Law and the Prophets was rendered useless, their hearts becoming closed to the claims of God. Our Lord depicted such men in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In this life, He says, they receive their good things; in the life after death, how great their loss!

Mark 10 : 17-22

The Lord Jesus came across sad cases of earnest and good men, upon whom riches had such a death-grip that to release them from their money was the only way to save them. Such a one was this young man, who " ran " to the Lord to ask what he should do to inherit eternal life. The young man knew what the commandments were, and he could unhesitatingly say : "All these I have observed from my youth ". There was no doubt about his genuineness, his honesty and his religious zeal. But one thing was lacking. His possessions had a firm grip on his heart and soul; and the only remedy, as Christ saw it, was to sell all that he had and give to the poor that he might have treasure in heaven. The young man's countenance fell at this demand, and he went away sorrowful.

Giving all away would alone have delivered his soul from death. Does the Lord give the same reply to many Christians in our day?

This sad incident brought forth from our Lord further

teaching regarding riches and their danger: "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! . . . It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Why? Because of the nature of money! Where generous giving—giving according to one's ability, giving as the Lord has prospered a man—is not strictly practised, money is capable of killing all a man's superior faculties, leading him to spiritual bankruptcy.

Luke 12 : 32-34

This is spoken to our Lord's followers—the disciples, the "little flock" which had accepted His pastoral leadership. They are told that, in order to inherit the Kingdom which the Father's good pleasure would give them, they should take care of their relationship to money. "Fear not, little flock," He says, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The Master's thought is once again clear. The real remedy against the money-disease creeping over your heart and soul is to give it away for purposes of the Kingdom.

Matthew 13 : 22

The Lord Jesus had preached throughout Galilee for a year or so, and the response was meagre. In the parable of the Sower, He analysed the causes of this poor result. The cause was not in the Sower, nor in the seed, but in the nature of the soil—the hearts where the seed was sown.

Among the strong forces that counteract the power of the Word in a soul is the glamour of wealth. These are the thorns that choke the Word and make it fruitless.

The cares of the world in the poor, and the deceitfulness of riches in the wealthy—both have the same effect. Our Lord said to the poor: " Do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink . . . your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness " (Matthew 6: 25, 32, 33). To the rich, on the other hand, He said: " No one can serve two masters . . . you cannot serve God and mammon. . . . Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . where your treasure is, there will your heart be also " (Matthew 6 : 24, 19-21).

God or gold—which do you serve?

God or gold—which of these has possession of your heart?

This teaching was not pleasing to " the Pharisees, who were lovers of money " (Luke 16 : 14). When they heard it they scoffed at Him. Let us beware lest our disregard of God's Word is due to " love of money " !

John 12 : 4-6

Here is the inner story of Judas Iscariot's fall. He was habitually taking away for his personal use what was put into the common money-bag (v. 6). If he had fallen into the habit of being dishonest with the company's funds, he must have become a hardened sinner. For, had not all the Lord's teachings quoted above been given in his presence? Did not all those warnings about the danger of covetousness (Luke 12 : 15), about being faithless in that which is another's (Luke 16 : 12), about riches being the thorns that choke the Word (Luke 8 : 14) fall on Judas's ears? Yes; that was perhaps why he put in at this juncture a plea for the poor, almost in our Lord's own words to the rich young man and to His " little flock ": " Why was this not sold . . . and given to the poor?" But he had gone too far, and this love

of money, fostered by constant theft of the Lord's funds, was leading him to the great sin and to ruin.

What a warning! Are there not men to-day who take away for personal use the funds put into their hands—public funds, a Co-operative Society's money, church collections, repairs grants, alms given for the service of the poor? Have we learnt to be most scrupulous in regard to other people's money—never to touch the smallest part of it for personal use?

CHAPTER SIX

A FEW EXAMPLES OF GIVING

In both the Old Testament and the New there are some noteworthy examples of Giving. A study of these will form the subject-matter of this chapter.

Cain and Abel (Genesis 4 : 2-4)

Giving to God a part of the fruit obtained by tilling the ground, and the firstlings of the flock, was, according to this story, recognized as man's duty from the very earliest days.

Abraham (Genesis 14 : 20; Hebrews 7 : 4)

To Melchizedek the priest of God Most High, Abraham gave a tenth in return for the blessing Melchizedek gave him. This is the first mention in the Bible of the tithe. It suggests that the custom was observed among peoples of all religions long before the Mosaic law was given.

Jacob (Genesis 28 : 22)

Jacob made a vow that, if he returned to his father's home in safety and peace, he would give to God a tenth of all that God had given him. Evidently the custom of giving the tithe was practised long before the time of Moses.

Israelites for the Work of the Sanctuary (Exodus 36 : 2-7)

This story is interesting in that the people gave to the service of the sanctuary *more* than was needed! The people brought their freewill offerings every morning, and the workmen having finished the work are said to

have gone to Moses to complain that the people brought much more than was necessary for the work. In consequence, it proved necessary to give orders to restrain the people from bringing any more. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work, AND TOO MUCH. Would that this were true of our people also in their church-building enterprises!

Israelites for the Construction of the Temple (1 Chronicles 29 : 1-14)

The same story is told several hundred years later of the people of King David's day, when they were asked to make their offerings for the construction of the great temple at Jerusalem. King David said to all the congregation: " Who then will offer willingly, consecrating himself to-day to the Lord?" The princes and the people offered willingly all that was needed. The people rejoiced, and David rejoiced, because the people offered willingly with a perfect heart.

Freewill offerings always bring joy and satisfaction to the givers and to the receivers; compulsory offerings, never.

Zacchaeus (Luke 19 : 1-8)

We now come to New Testament times. It appears that among the Jews the giving of alms, tithing and giving to the temple treasury were all practised in our Lord's time. Tithing of the smallest grains was common —" mint and dill and cummin " (Matthew 23 : 23)— though this was not always accompanied by taking heed to justice, mercy and truth. The Pharisee in the parable (Luke 18 : 9-14) made a boast of giving tithes *of all that he got.*

Zacchaeus, a prominent public official in the Roman Customs Department, said in the presence of the Lord Jesus: " Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold ". This decision to put his money matters

straight brought this man the assurance from the Lord: "To-day salvation has come to this house". Does our conversion extend to our pockets and purses and to all that we get?

The Poor Widow (Mark 12 : 41-44)

Rich and poor cast money into the temple treasury. The rich cast in much. The Lord sat down over against the treasury, and watched the offerers and their offerings. Does the Lord now, too, observe how much we cast into the collection box or alms-bag, or write in the subscription book?

Then "a poor widow came and put in two copper coins, which make a penny" (the smallest coin of the day). This delighted the Lord, and brought forth the comment that that poor widow had cast in more than all the others, "for they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living". The Lord considers not how much we give, but how much we keep back for ourselves.

The Lord commended this widow's gift. She did not ask what she would do for her next meal. She did not question where that money was going, nor on whom it was spent, nor whether the priests were worthy, nor whether audited accounts were submitted for the sum found in the treasury. She simply gave, gave until there was nothing left, and GAVE TO GOD! Hence our Lord's praise. What a lesson to us!

The Early Church (Acts 2 : 44, 45)

One result of the constraining power of the Holy Spirit on the Christians of the early days in Jerusalem was that they "had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (see Acts 4 : 32-35 also). One man's name has come down as a striking illustration of such self-effacing giving—Barnabas. He, having a field, sold

it, " and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet " (Acts 4 : 37). St. Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement, the friend and fellow-worker of St. Paul, is thus known as the patron saint of all who sell all that they have, and, accepting voluntary poverty, spend themselves in the service of God.

The Gentile Churches (Acts 11 : 27-30)

There is a great famine over all the world. The Christians in Judæa feel it more acutely than others. Then the Christians in Antioch determined " every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judæa : and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul ".

This is the first recorded instance of famine relief funds, the Christians of one area offering help to the brethren of another area.

The same was repeated about twelve years later. On this occasion the Churches in Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia all joined in sending relief to the saints in Jerusalem. (See 1 Corinthians 16 : 1, 2; and also 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.) We shall take up the study of these last two passages in the next chapter. Here let us note that St. Paul laid down certain rules for the guidance of his Churches :

1. They were to set apart the offering Sunday by Sunday. " On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up."

2. The amount of the offering he would leave to each man's conscience. "As he may prosper " is the only guide.

3. He did not wish that any collection should be taken when he himself was present on his apostolic visit, lest there should be confusion in the minds of his people between his pastoral ministry and the collection of funds.

4. In those days when there were no regular accountants and audits, he sought the best practicable method of keeping himself above suspicion in handling the bounty of the Churches. He therefore suggested that each

Church should appoint its own representative to carry and deliver the gifts to the Church in Jerusalem. A list of these brethren is given in Acts 20: 4-6.

These are some rules for the guidance of those who are in charge of the Churches of to-day. Regular weekly offerings—not spasmodic; according as each man has prospered—not according to a rule of uniform assessment; keeping spiritual ministry and the task of collecting money apart, so that financial considerations may not dominate the spiritual ministrations of the missionary or pastor; taking special care that no suspicion falls on the way the minister handles Church money or charity funds —these are up-to-date and healthy rules for the clergy and ministers of to-day. It is always the duty of a pastor to suggest to his people practical rules in regard to Giving, and not to burden them with impossible demands. That great Apostle, a master-builder, is our pattern even in handling the Church's financial problems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA

Chapters 8 and 9 of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians form the classic passage on Christian Giving. In these chapters, St. Paul first cites to the Church in Corinth the example of the Churches in Macedonia, and then commends the cause of the Jerusalem poor with his own persuasive arguments. We shall study these chapters to draw out the principles St. Paul lays down on this subject.

Giving is a Grace (8 : 1)

" We want you to know about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia." The mind to give, and give liberally, is a divine grace, a gift of the working of the Spirit of God in the heart of man. Giving is thus intimately connected with the state of the spiritual life. Where we see generous giving to God and His work, there we may recognize the work of God's Holy Spirit. Where there is lack in this matter, we have to grieve—not primarily over inadequate giving, but chiefly over the lack of spiritual life. Giving is the sign of new life. It is evidence of God's gracious work in the hearts of men.

This word " grace " associated with Giving occurs five times in this chapter. If judged by this test, we find that many of our congregations occupy a very low place. Is it not our duty to pray as we have never prayed before, that God's grace may so quicken the hearts and minds of our people that they will exhibit true evidence of grace in this respect also?

Affliction is no Obstacle to Giving (8 : 2)

The Churches in Macedonia gave liberally in spite of the severe afflictions by which they were tried. This may have reference to the persecution and tribulation caused by their non-Christian countrymen. (See Acts 16 :20; Philippians 1 :28, 29; 1 Thessalonians 1 :6; 2 :14; 3 : 3-9.)

So it will be to-day, too—when God's grace descends upon our people. The fact of distress, persecution and affliction, and the consequent life of constant dread and anxiety, will not interfere with the relationship of our Christians to God, and to Giving. The excuses usually made on these scores will not be heard.

Poverty is no Bar to Generous Giving (8 : 2)

Historians tell us that almost the whole of Greece " was in a dire condition of poverty and distress at this period ". The contribution therefore of the Christians of Macedonia at this time was really comparable to the giving of the widow's mite (Mark 12 :44). There were, no doubt, a few wealthy families, like that of Lydia of Philippi. But evidently by being liberal and generous they escaped the temptations of the rich—to be miserly and parsimonious. It is noticeable that there is no warning against the temptations of wealth in the Epistles to these Churches, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philippians (J. H. Bernard in *Expositor's Greek Testament*).

The excuse of poverty is very often urged by our rural Christians, when the duty of Christian Giving is taught. It is always and everywhere true that Giving does not depend upon wealth. Very often it is the poor who have the grace of giving more than the rich or well-to-do. The poorest man, even the man who lives by begging, gets something to live on; and it is his God-given obligation to give to God, in recognition of what he enjoys from God's hands. So did the widow who gave her two mites. So, too, did the Macedonians. Never accept the plea of poverty as an excuse for not giving.

The Standard of Giving (8 : 3)

The standard adopted by the Macedonian Christians was not one that was arbitrarily fixed by the authorities of the Church. Each one " according to his means " was the standard fixed; and it is said those Christians very soon passed that standard of " according to their means ". " They gave, as I can testify, beyond their means." Giving must bear a recognized proportion to income, but this proportion must be fixed by the giver himself and not by others.

A flat assessment on every family is contrary to this principle. Each individual and household should give as God has prospered him.

The Macedonians gave, says the Apostle, even *beyond their means.* Some of them evidently made themselves poor by giving. Christians have the example of their Master, who became poor for their sakes (v. 9).

Giving must be Spontaneous and Voluntary (8 : 3-4)

All assessments, taxation and rates for Christian Giving are, according to this rule, contrary to Scripture. They take away the spontaneity of the gifts, and these do not become " a grace ".

There are some Churches to-day in India which levy Church taxes, like the temple poll-tax of the later Jewish Church. Almost all Churches levy banns fees, marriage fees and similar fees, as means of raising Church funds. It is difficult to see how these methods will inculcate voluntary giving!

The Macedonians begged the Apostle to receive their gifts. " Begging us earnestly for the favour of taking part . . ." It was not a case of subscription books being taken round by the catechist or the sexton. It was a case of the Christians taking their offerings to the Apostle and begging him to receive them from their hands—so that they might have the privilege of sharing in this ministry. When will our compulsory systems give place

to such gracious giving? When will collections cease, and *offerings* take their place?

Giving means Fellowship in Service (8 : 4)

Here it was " fellowship in the relief of the saints ". In the case of our Churches to-day, it may be fellowship in Christian poor relief, or in provision for the Church's worship, or in the erection of a church building, or in the maintenance of its ministry, or in the preaching of the Gospel, or, it may be, in the printing and distribution of Holy Scripture, or even in sending the Gospel message to a distant field. It is all " fellowship "; the giver becomes a sharer in the work of God.

This motive ought to be placed in the forefront of all appeals for meeting particular needs of the work of God. And it tells.

Consecration to God precedes Contribution (8 : 5)

The Macedonians made this offering an occasion for self-dedication. Their offering would not be an offering to God unless it came from a dedicated life. And they made this an occasion for drawing near to God in humble consecration of themselves to His service.

Oh, how very different from this are a great many occasions of Giving in our Churches in India! Sometimes it is no occasion of a spiritual offering, but one for the exhibition of one's wealth and position, or an opportunity to demand right of membership on Church committees and councils. True Giving to God should be preceded by giving of oneself to God.

Giving is a Christian Grace in which Christians must Increase and Abound (8 : 7)

Giving is a Christian grace; it is therefore important that, as Christians increase, and are expected to increase, in faith, utterance, knowledge, earnestness and love to their Church leaders, so they should increase in the grace of liberal giving.

We often preach about faith and love; we impart to

our people knowledge of divine things; we train them to speak, to preach and to give witness. Giving is likewise a Christian grace, and leaders must see to it that Christians increase in this grace also. Christian character is defective until it ripens in the matter of Giving. Repentance, faith, conversion, earnestness and love are imperfect until they reach deep down into the purse. Attendance at worship, Sunday observance, regular partaking of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, are all being required of young Christian people. Is Giving treated as a Christian duty equally binding on the followers of Christ, and inculcated with equal insistence and vigour?

Giving is perhaps the grace, more than any other, in which Christians, in the younger and in the older Churches alike, need to abound and increase.

Giving cannot be Commanded by Authority; it can only be Commended on Spiritual Grounds (8 : 8)

"I say this not as a command," says the Apostle to his converts; neither can *we* by way of commandment speak to our people. We can only commend to their earnest consideration Christian duty as it comes out in the pages of Holy Scripture and in the splendid examples of other Christian individuals and Churches. Giving, to be acceptable, must be spontaneous and free, and not the result of rebellious submission to authority.

Where do our methods stand in the light of this principle?

The Model and Measure for Christian Giving is Christ's Giving (8 : 9)

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

Christian Giving is based not on certain Old Testament passages or on the Mosaic legislation, but on the

supreme self-giving of God Himself and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who accept this wonderful revelation of God's love and Christ's self-dedication are called upon to show their gratitude in self-giving—to Him, to the brethren, and to the world. " God so loved the world, that He gave . . ."

Moreover, this Giving went into the depths of His being, so that He emptied Himself, He became poor—in order that others might become rich. No Giving can be called too much in the light of this love. No percentage can any longer be considered impoverishing in comparison with Christ's hundred per cent giving of Himself.

It is one Function of the Church's Ministers to enable Christians to fulfil their Obligation to Give (8 : 10-12)

It is noticeable that the Apostle who furnishes so many considerations and arguments for Christian Giving also suggests ways in which his converts may fulfil their obligations. It is clear that Titus was sent especially to help them in this matter. " We have urged Titus, that as he had already made a beginning, he should also complete among you this gracious work " (v. 6). Now he places himself behind Titus, and urges them to fulfil whatever they had promised before.

It is thus perfectly legitimate for ministers to devise easy ways in which people can make their offerings, and to provide facilities for them to give at convenient seasons: harvest offerings for agriculturists, weekly or even daily collections for wage-earners, opportunities for monthly offerings for salaried people—all are suitable. Some of these methods of collection may be troublesome and difficult, but the procedure in St. Paul's days must have been still more troublesome, demanding a great deal of planning, account-keeping and organizing. Evidently for the sake both of the givers and of the recipients he considered it well worth while.

Christian Giving is based on the Rule of Christian Fellowship and Christian Sharing (8 : 13-14)

Christianity lays upon Christians the sacred duty of fellowship in the brotherhood. Fellowship involves going to the help of the brotherhood when there is need, and sharing what you possess—however small it may be—with those in want. At the present time, says the Apostle, your abundance ought to supply the wants of your fellow-Christians in Judæa; it may be, that on some other occasion, in some other matter, their abundance may supply some want of yours. There must be equality. Those who have been blessed with earthly possessions ought to consider it their privilege to share with their fellow-Christians who are in distress; and it is possible that their faith, their prayers and their fellowship will more than compensate in spiritual grace and enrichment.

This truth may also be applied to the older Churches of the West which give to the building-up of the younger Churches. It is only right that the younger Churches should make a return for this in terms of spiritual values —such as prayer, sharing of spiritual gifts, and giving to the older Churches that strength that comes from Christian fellowship.

Yes, there are great rewards in communicating generously to others of our earthly possessions. We give material gifts, we reap spiritual blessings. Or we receive spiritual blessings and give in return of our material possessions. Thus the giver does not really lose. His money going forth is no loss; it is only exchange, in which giver and receiver are both made spiritually richer than they were. This thought recurs in Chapter 9.

Christian Giving Thrives in an Atmosphere of Honest Handling of Gifts (8 : 21)

We avoid, says the Apostle, that anyone "should blame us about this liberal gift which we are administering, for we aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men". He was

anxious to avoid suspicion, gossip and unfair criticism; and each Church was in consequence asked to appoint a delegate to carry its gift to the brethren in Judæa.

For the same reason some Churches require that the church offerings should be counted then and there in the church by the lay members of the congregation, and entered in the register countersigned by them, to be forwarded to the treasurer in due course. It is also required in some cases that the offerings should not be used by the ministers as part-advance on their stipends, but must be paid into the treasury in cash as soon as they come in, to avoid the danger of mixing up private money with public funds. As Christian ministers we must do " what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men "—even of evil men.

Healthy Emulation in Giving is Proper (8 : 24; 9 : 1-4)

The Apostle did not hesitate to move his people to generous giving by creating a spirit of wholesome rivalry. He cites the good example of the Churches of Macedonia to the Church in Corinth; and had not hesitated to quote the example of the Church in Corinth to Macedonia! " I know your readiness," he says, " of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, that Achaia has been ready since last year; and *your zeal* has stirred up most of them " (9 : 2). This was why we cited some cases of the Churches in Eastern Asia in the opening chapters of this book.

Care must, of course, be taken to see that we quote facts, and not exaggerated versions of facts.

Giving must be evidently and truly "Not an Exaction but a Willing Gift" (9 : 5)

A correspondent says: " We levy one rupee a family as a church contribution, and often the arrears of ten or fifteen years are collected from a person when he comes for the wedding of a son or daughter." This is not a willing gift!

A minister writes: " When the annual subscription falls due, our lay elders sit near the only village well, and no woman from the family which has failed to pay is permitted to draw water until Church dues are paid." This is surely exaction!

" Defaulters' names are published on the church door, or announced from the pulpit, to bring them to shame," says another. This the Apostle would call " exaction ", not a " willing gift ".

Until all such coercive methods are abandoned, we cannot expect generous Giving in our Churches.

Give Generously, not Sparingly but Bountifully (9 : 6)

" The point is this," writes St. Paul; " he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Niggardly giving is all too common. Demand for change into the smallest copper coin is often greatest on Sunday mornings! It has even become in some places a regular custom for the lay member who presents the alms-bag to give change to the parsimonious giver, who wants three-quarters of his anna back!

" He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Generous Giving Demands Purpose and Plan (9 : 7)

" Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Let there be planning ahead in this matter, says the Apostle. Make up your minds beforehand what you will give, and then carry out your purpose with reverent faithfulness.

Some people make promises readily, but the fulfilment is often very tardy. If you form a purpose even in your heart of hearts, says the Apostle, complete the will by the deed. But always it must be cheerful giving.

One man promises at a meeting, momentarily moved

perhaps by the eloquence of a speaker, that thenceforth he will give a tenth; let him consider it a sacred pledge and devise every means of faithfully keeping it. If, however, he sees that he cannot do it, then let him revise his decision, in order that whatever he gives may come under the category of cheerful giving.

For many people such planning may mean keeping a careful account of all that comes in and all that goes out, so that they may loyally carry out their purpose. Generous giving has become impossible to many a man, because there is neither definite planning, nor a definite purpose honestly to fulfil the plan.

Generous Giving Brings Rich Reward (9 : 8-14)

In Old Testament times prophets and priests told the people of Israel that, if they gave to God, He would return them their gifts with interest. " He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed " (Proverbs 19 : 17). " That it may go well with you " was the oft-repeated Deuteronomic promise. " That the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands " was the reason given for giving to the poor (Deuteronomy 14 : 28-29; 15 : 10; 24 : 19). The prophet Malachi, in a familiar passage—familiar to preachers on Giving and Tithing—said : " Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing " (Malachi 3 : 10). It is said that this was the ground on which Tithing was urged and taught in some of the Korean Churches in the early days. It had the immediate effect of increased contributions. The contributions went down after a few years in a year of drought and famine! The people naturally argued that, even though they had obeyed the Scriptural injunction to tithe all their incomes, God had not fulfilled His promise.

St. Paul does not urge Christian Giving on such

grounds as these. "God," he says, "is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work . . . He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness" (vv. 8-10).

God is powerful, and, in return for the gift that is given to Him, He will increase all spiritual graces in the giver, to the end that the giver having always all sufficiency may abound yet more unto every good work. Generous Giving increases the power to give. It enlarges the giver's heart and soul. It increases his love and devotion. It gives him joy and satisfaction in seeing more and more of the results of his beneficence. Enlargement in the spiritual life and increased capacity to give are the rewards of Giving.

When liberality increases and abounds, it produces increased thanksgiving to God (vv. 12, 13). For, says the Apostle, the rendering of this service not only meets the material needs of your fellow-Christians but it results in thanksgiving to God by many. Many glorify God for your gifts and praise Him for His love. In other words, your liberality not only enriches your own inner life, it enriches the inner life of the recipients, leading them to greater love to God, and to praising Him and glorifying Him for His love towards them, and His mindfulness of them in their dire need.

Not only so; generous gifts inspire in the recipients many prayers and intercessions on behalf of the givers. "They long for you and pray for you" (v. 14). They can repay the givers at least in one direction; they can plead before God that the donors may be richly rewarded for this ministration and service. The giver gives his money; the receiver gives his prayers. This is true Christian exchange, and the Christian giver seeks no other reward for his giving.

Giving increases fellowship (v. 14). A new bond is

forged between the giver and the recipients: "They long for you . . . because of the surpassing grace of God in you."

During the first world war, the writer happened to be in an old German mission station, standing in front of the local Lutheran Church. He soon found himself casually discussing the subject of the war with the pastor and a few local leaders of the formerly German Mission Church. The missionaries had all been withdrawn from this field. "Would you like your missionaries to come back to you again, if it were possible?" was the question. The men were visibly affected, and said with tears that certainly they would all wish to have them back any day in their midst. "Why, sir, they brought us the Gospel, they built us this church, they educated our children; how can we wish anything else?" Yes, German Christian Giving had forged chains of love and loyalty, unbreakable even by the stress of war. "They long for you."

We give; we get back love and devotion.

No Giving of Ours can be an Adequate Return for the Wonderful Gift of God (9 : 15)

The Israelite was urged to give because God had redeemed him from Egypt, and given him the land which flowed with milk and honey. The Christian is urged to give because he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and has received the gift of all gifts—Christ.

Can anything we give be too great? Can any proportion be too high?

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHAT IS MEANT BY GIVING TO GOD?

Holy Scripture will help us in answering this question, and so we first turn to the Old Testament. Offering to God did not mean placing the offerings before Him and then using them for oneself. The devout Israelite gave to God in three ways:

(1) For the worship of God; (2) for the support of the Priest and the Levite; and (3) for the poor. These were all reckoned as Giving to God Himself.

The worship of God required in early days a Tabernacle, and in later times a Temple. The erection of these sanctuaries was made possible by the generous free-will offerings of the people. We have already noted these gifts in Chapter 6.

Besides these places of worship, the continual maintenance of worship needed accessories which had to be provided by the people's gifts. The oil for the lamps, the incense for the Altar (Exodus 30:36), the shewbread for the Holy Table (Leviticus 24:9) and the animals for the daily sacrifices (Exodus 29 : 39-42)—these and other things necessary for worship under the Old Covenant could be obtained only through outlay of money, or as gifts in kind from the faithful. In one way or another, all were provided by the people. Malachi probably refers to these when he speaks of "food" in God's house (Malachi 3:10).

The ministers of God had to be sustained by the gifts of the people. The Levites and the Priests had no inheritance in the land; and, since they gave themselves wholly to the service of God and His sanctuary, every Israelite had to share a portion of his income with the Levite.

God accepted this as given to Himself. " To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting. . . . The tithe of the people of Israel . . . I have given to the Levites for an inheritance: therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel " (Numbers 18: 21-24).

Deuteronomy makes some additions to this: " The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. . . . And this shall be the priests' due from the people, . . . the shoulder . . . the first fruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him " (Deuteronomy 18: 1-5).

The poor had also a claim on the gifts of the Israelite. In his festivals the Israelite had to share his gifts with the fatherless, the widow and the poor (Deuteronomy 16:11; 24:19; Leviticus 19:9, 10). Deuteronomy taught that " at the end of every three years " the people should bring all the tithe of their increase and set it apart by itself, and " the Levite . . . and the fatherless and the widow, . . . shall come and eat and be filled " (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29). "I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land " (Deuteronomy 15:11).

But how do all these commandments apply to Christians? Admitting that it is the duty of the Christian to give to God, what are the objects to which he should give, in order that he may satisfy himself that he is discharging his duty in this respect?

There are, for the Christian, too, three objects to which he must give, if he desires to fulfil his duty to God in this respect.

The Worship of God and the Maintenance of His Ministry

CHURCHES. Among us Christians, too, the due wor-

ship of God as befits Him and His majesty demands *a separate place of worship*. This is in no way because God cannot be found except in a church building. No. Where two or three are gathered together, there He is in their midst. But a place set apart for God's worship increases in the worshippers the sense of His presence, aids reverence in the approach to Him—that reverence and awe which are due to God from man, to the Creator from the creature, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from His redeemed children; and it helps a congregation of the faithful to experience that inspiration and spiritual glow which come through fellowship in common worship. The church building is the one place in which the family of God can come together as a family.

We need not labour this point in India. " In a village where there is no temple, never seek to build your house " is a well-known South Indian proverb. Church-building enterprises are as a rule most enthusiastically supported by Indian Christians. We know of Christians taxing themselves for years to raise money for churches. This should always be encouraged by leaders of Churches and Missions. The natural enthusiasm of indigenous Christians should be allowed to have the fullest outlet in church-building enterprises.

Not only is a place required, but a certain amount of money is needed for the MAINTENANCE of the building and the continuance of its worship. The lighting of churches, provision of furniture—reading desk, Holy Table, Altar linen, etc., books for the reading of services, the elements for the celebration of the sacraments—all these require funds; and these must be provided by the faithful.

The MINISTERS need support. If they devote themselves wholly to the ministry of the Church and the people, their stipends have to be provided, and that not on a niggardly scale, demanding of them sacrifices which the people themselves do not make, but on a generous scale, enabling them to live free from worry, to entertain

the stranger, and to give adequate education to their children. Their travelling, too, has to be provided for, if they shepherd more than one congregation.

The Poor

In the time of the Apostles, most people were poor, and the gap between the rich and the poor was very great, as it still is in many parts of the world. To-day, modern methods in agriculture and industry have made it possible to raise the standard of living far higher than would have been thought possible even a hundred years ago. There is a world-wide movement in favour of equality and a fairer distribution of wealth. There is a new sense that each member of the community is responsible for the welfare of all, and must try to see to it that to each is given according to his need. Great plans have been put in force by governments to care for children, the sick and the old, and to guard against sudden disasters. The Christian can only give thanks for all these things. Christians ought to take the lead in every movement for social justice and better living standards. They ought to be interested in such things as better use of the land and increase of its products, so that there may be a larger share for all. They should be working for a time when there will no longer be any poor.

But it will be a very long time before that happy state is reached. Until then, care for the poor and needy will be a great Christian responsibility, and the object of much Christian giving.

The first duty of Christians is towards the members of the Christian family. The widows and the helpless must become the care of the local Churches. The example of the Jerusalem Church is well known (see Acts 6 : 1). The Relief Fund for the Jewish Christian poor, organized and administered by St. Paul, is a notable instance of this same Christian duty to the Christian poor, even beyond the local jurisdiction of the giving Churches. The Lord had said : "As you did it to one of the least

of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25 : 40); and Christians were always urged to recognize that the poor among the brethren should be their special care. (See also James 2 : 15; Hebrews 13 : 16; Galatians 6 : 10.)

For a Christian to go about begging should be considered a disgrace to the Christian Church. In order to avoid the evil of relief given without due thought and knowledge, it is advisable for all Christian people to contribute to a Church Poor Fund, and to place the Fund at the disposal of the Minister or a Committee, for fair and equitable administration among the poor and helpless Christians of the Church of the locality.

But we must not limit our sense of duty only to the Christian fellowship. All who are in need have a claim on our sympathy and our service. Sometimes the very best form of Christian witness is loving help to those who are not Christians. The one who receives the help may then ask: "Why do you do this for me? I am not one of your people." This opens to us the door to tell him of the one loving Father, who cares for all alike, and has taught us to show forth our faith by our works.

The Furtherance of the Gospel

The commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, like the promise of Christ's presence with His people, was given to all Christian people living in all ages to the end of the world. This is the Church's mission. This is the reason for its existence. When Christians are gathered into the community of believers in any locality, they are not only called to be Christ's witnesses in their own immediate neighbourhood (in Jerusalem)—they must also in some way discharge their obligation to those farther away (in Judæa and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth). They cannot, of course, witness in these latter regions with their lips; but they can send their representatives—their missionaries—to be witnesses in their stead to those in distant parts. Christians, therefore, are under obligation to set apart some of their gifts

to God for the purpose of the missionary work of the Church in non-Christian lands. This was how the Church in Philippi was able to have "partnership" (with the Apostle) in furtherance of the Gospel "from the first day" (Philippians 1:5; 4:15). Foreign missions—that is, the organization for evangelizing outside the area of the Church—thus have a claim on all Christians. Support of foreign missions ought not to be the hobby of a few pious people; it ought to be the glad duty of all who bear the Name of Christ; it ought to be an integral part of all Church work; it ought to be felt as a duty by everyone who is a follower of Christ.

The other question that requires an answer in this connexion is: How much should a Christian give?

We shall again first study the law and custom of the Jews to discover what their practice was.

It is very difficult to ascertain how much the Jew gave in all to the three objects we outlined before. We may be sure, however, that at least in later times the faithful Israelite was expected to give in the following proportions:—

A Tenth of all his Produce

There are several references to the Tithe in Mosaic legislation. The following are typical:

Leviticus 27 : 30, 31. "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it."

Deuteronomy 14:22, 28, 29. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year. . . . At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite . . . and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow . . . shall come and eat and be filled."

Numbers 18:21. "To the Levites I have given every

tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting."

Tithing, as we have already noticed, appears to be a very ancient custom among primitive peoples. Compare the case of Abraham giving tithe to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20 and Hebrews 7:2, 4); and that of Jacob vowing to God a tithe of all he might possess (Genesis 28:22). Prophets and priests laid down regulations from time to time, the Levitical priesthood claiming a tithe of all the produce for themselves. The prophet Malachi charged the Jews who had returned from the captivity with having turned aside from God's ordinances, because they did not bring all their tithes to the sanctuary: "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?' In your tithes and offerings. . . . Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of Hosts" (Malachi 3:8, 10).

This practice continued among all pious Jews even in the time of our Lord. The Pharisee in the parable says proudly: "I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get" (Luke 18:12). In our Lord's great rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees, He referred to their habit of tithing the smallest crops they raised ("You tithe mint and dill and cummin"), and condemned them for omitting the weightier matters of the law, "justice and mercy and faith". "These you ought to have done," said He, "without neglecting the others" (Matthew 23:23).

Firstlings and First Fruits

Apart from the tithe there was also an injunction to offer to God all the first-born of cattle and all the first fruits of the field.

The first-born of the oxen and sheep were to be offered to God (Exodus 22:30). The firstlings among beasts were claimed as the Lord's. If they were of an unclean beast, they had to be redeemed at their price with twenty per

cent added to it (Leviticus 27 : 26, 27). These firstlings were to go to Aaron and the priesthood (Numbers 18 :12).

All the first fruits of the land also were to be offered to God. So the Israelites are said to have done in the times of Hezekiah. " The people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field " (2 Chronicles 31 :5). The ancient legislation ordered : " The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God " (Exodus 23 :19; 34 :26). This was set out more fully in Deuteronomy 26 :1-11. All these first fruits were given to the Priests and Levites : "All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the first fruits " of them all were the Lord's, and He gave it to them (Numbers 18 :12).

Freewill Offerings

Apart from these, there were many types of free-will offerings—such as offerings of vows (Leviticus 7 :16), thankofferings (Leviticus 7 :13, 15), and free-will offerings that were to be offered at the Feast of Weeks. " You shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you " (Deuteronomy 16 :10).

Someone has said that, if we thus reckon together all that a pious Israelite gave to God and His ministers under the Old Covenant, it would probably work out to be about a third of his total income.

What Should the Christian Give?

The New Covenant is not a covenant of *law* but of grace. The Christian is not under commandments and regulations, but under the more compelling rule of love. Consequently, the New Testament never commands the offering of tithes, first fruits or firstlings; but reiterates the principle of freewill offerings, as man's response to

God's wonderful love in Jesus Christ. Among the disciples at Antioch, every man gave " according to his ability " (Acts 11 :29). Christians in Corinth were urged each to set apart Sunday after Sunday, " as he may prosper " (1 Corinthians 16 :2). The Churches of Macedonia were commended because they gave " according to their means " and " beyond their means " (2 Corinthians 8 :3).

So in the New Testament we have examples of carrying out in practice this principle of freewill offering. The Pharisee in the parable gave a tenth (ten per cent) of his income (Luke 18 :12). Zacchæus gave one half (fifty per cent) of all he possessed (Luke 19 :8). The widow and Barnabas gave their all (a hundred per cent) (Luke 21 :4; Acts 4 :37).

It is urged that the tenth was levied on the Jew because God had given him the land, and that this included the land-tax also. When the Israelites had kings, we may be sure that they levied many other taxes besides land-tax!

The Christian is thus not under the Law of Tithes, precisely as he is *not* under obligation to observe the Jewish feasts, or to offer the Levitical sacrifices or to obey the laws of the Sabbath. To enforce, therefore, the Tithe on Christians as a Biblical command involves a misunderstanding of the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New.

God has now given man His all. He expects man's relationship to Him to be a relationship of gratitude, thanksgiving and love. Moved by such a love, the redeemed man must determine for himself what his response should be in terms of money. This response is bound to vary for different persons. She loves much to whom much is forgiven (Luke 7 : 47). Consciousness or recognition of God's love and forgiveness decides the proportion. Again : " Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more " (Luke 12 :

48). Material endowments and spiritual gifts must also determine the proportion. This is Christ's law.

To apply this to ourselves. If Christians recognized in any measure the height and depth of God's love which has made them partakers of the redemption wrought by the Cross, there would be no need to make rules about Giving. If they adequately realized that much of the material prosperity and social opportunities that have come to them as Christians in this world have come to them from the hands of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then they would be the first to recognize that of them the more would be expected. Inadequate Giving is positive evidence that this recognition is feeble—or, in other words, that the spiritual life is at a low level.

Missionaries and Church leaders who complain of inadequate Giving in our Churches must ceaselessly agonize in prayer for an infusion of new life among Christians. A new vision of the love of God as shown forth on the Cross, a new assurance of the forgiveness of sins in their own hearts, a new gratitude and thankfulness for all the things that *with Christ* God has given them—these alone will in the long run result in generous Giving. The Church where for a whole year Christians were gathered together (for Bible Classes) to be taught (Acts 11 : 26) was the Church that organized the first Christian Famine Relief Fund. The Korean Church of to-day gives to God a much higher proportion than many another Church, because it is nurtured and trained in Holy Scripture.

The same will be true of all our Churches to-day, if we can fulfil the same conditions.

CHAPTER NINE

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The patient reader who has followed the author thus far may well ask the question: How can I go about this business of instilling the duty of Christian Giving into the members of my Church? In this last chapter we shall endeavour to attempt an answer.

The first thing to do is to abandon all un-Christian ways, now in vogue, of raising money for God's work

By this we mean not only the giving-up of all lotteries, raffles, and all other methods intended merely to make people give in exchange for a little excitement or enjoyment. We mean also the methods of assessment, Church-tax and compulsory fees for the administration of sacraments now prevailing in many Churches. Along with these must also go all penal methods of enforcing the payment of Church dues. Giving must be lifted up to the level of spontaneity and voluntariness, and set free from all ideas of compulsion by threat of public exposure or open disgrace, or by exclusion from privileges.

Nor is it right that privileges and powers should continue to be offered in exchange for the performance of the Christian duty of Giving. God has freely given Himself to us; and we should freely give to Him ourselves and all we have, asking for no other reward save that of knowing that we are doing His will. It is, of course, good that those who are to take the lead in the life of the Church should be chosen from among those who have given generously to its support; but there are other qualifications which are much more important than this.

Any Constitution of Church Councils or Committees which suggests that the payment of Church dues is the first or only qualification for membership ought to be altered at the earliest possible date.

Another bad practice to be abandoned is compulsory deductions from the salaries of paid workers of the Church. If it is convenient that the offerings of Christian workers should be collected by way of deduction from their salaries, the workers should be given the chance of determining how much they desire so to be deducted. Never suggest what the gift should be, never impose a proportion, however small.

In short, lift this whole subject up to the plane of freedom and make it a matter of voluntary personal decision. You will not regret the result.

Remove all False Ideas in Connexion with Giving

There is the ill-directed use of Malachi 3 : 10, which—as we have seen—often misleads people to think of Giving to God as a bargain with God. We do not give because *we want to receive*; we give because *we have received.*

Many non-Christian ideas of merit and of votive offerings enter even into much Christian Giving. Vows probably account for a good many of the gifts of Indian Christians. Vows conditional on God granting some request—for restoration to health of a child, for a son, for success in examinations—are fairly common. Thank-offerings for mercies received are right and proper, but promise of offering to God, if God should grant a request, is Hindu, is Jewish, is Old Testament at best. Let us teach our people to give because it is our bounden duty to give; because we are guilty if we do not give.

Encourage Indigenous Ways of Giving

No alms-bag is passed round in Hindu temples; offerings are deposited by the worshippers in a receptacle provided for the purpose. Carrying a bag round in church is very much akin to passing round the hat; both

savour of begging. God's portion ought to be voluntarily offered, and not extracted by begging.

Encourage worship in family groups on all domestic occasions. Let these be the times when thank-offerings are made for mercies received—the birth of children, baptism of infants, wedding engagements, marriage festivities and suchlike domestic events. Such methods present themselves as perfectly natural in the Indian scene. Hindu worship is never congregational except on great festival occasions (like the Car Festivals of South India); it is always individual worship or family worship. Family visits to temples for worship and for making offerings are common practice. Let us encourage these in Christian churches, of course as a part of the regular worship of the congregation, not as separate from it.

Note that rural congregations rarely possess money except after the harvest season. The Hindu Festivals are mostly celebrated in March, April or May, which to the agriculturist is the off-season. That is also the season of most of our Christian Festivals—Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. These are the months best suited for Harvest Festivals in most parts of India. Christian gatherings and celebrations of various kinds should be timed for such seasons.

Offerings in kind are the natural way of giving in any rural community. In India, any beggar or holy man will get his handful of rice, if he presents himself at the door of a house. Let the people be encouraged to bring their first fruits—their first eggs, first pluckings from their gardens, and first day's wages in kind—to church, and let them be offered to God as solemnly as the offering in coin.

Let the offering to God of the people's gift be a distinct ceremonial act in public worship. The habit of singing a lyric at collection time and getting the collection over before the singing is finished is anything but dignified, and takes away from the idea of offering as part of worship.

Rectify Faulty Methods of Handling Church Money

Let all offerings be counted and entered in the book as soon as the service is over, and in the presence of representative members of the congregation. Let them know that the whole amount is regularly paid into the church treasury, and not used by the pastor or lay worker as part advance on salary. It would be a good rule that anyone borrowing from the Church Fund must repay the loan with twenty per cent added to it (Leviticus 27 :31).

Let all ministers be most scrupulous in handling Church money. All money voted from the Church Funds for buildings or repairs should be economically spent, scrupulously accounted for and faithfully audited. Remember St. Paul's example (2 Corinthians 8 :20, 21). If the faithful reverently make their offerings to God, those who receive them must handle them with equal reverence as in God's presence.

Men and women of good will may refrain from asking how their gifts are utilized. Very often, however, they wish to know where the money has gone. An annual statement of the contributions of the people and how they have been disbursed creates confidence, increases interest and helps further sacrificial giving.

Devise Methods Adapted to the Conditions of the People

If the men of a congregation are largely educated men with monthly salaries, a system should be devised by which they can make their offering on the Sunday following pay-day. If the members are labourers living on daily wages, it ought to be possible to receive a portion of their wages daily or once a week. A man who earns four annas a day can easily give a quarter of an anna to God, either by depositing it in a box or by handing it to the minister whenever he gets his wages. An anna in the rupee—that is, one-sixteenth of the income—is an easy proportion for any Christian to adopt.

In the West, the Duplex Envelope system is very largely in use. Persons getting monthly salaries put into one side of this envelope what they wish to give for the support of the local Church and its ministry; and into the other side what they contribute to foreign missions. God's money-boxes can be similarly devised with two compartments and two slits—" for Church " and " for Missions "—into which each household can deposit whatever the members wish to give.

For those who receive their wages in grain, or who own land, the produce from which is used for home consumption, the easiest method is to set apart for God a handful of rice whenever a meal is cooked. The Church may provide distinctive bags, preferably marked with a cross; into this the handful of rice or other grain can be put. (The writer has found that if every woman in his Church learns to give the handful every time a meal is cooked, the minimum offering per family will be not less than one pound of grain per week—which would easily bring from Rs.2-8-0 to Rs.3-8-0 per family per year according to the grain used. This would be more than double the whole income now received from the people.[1])

Gifts of Firstlings and First Fruits should be Encouraged

The writer understands that cows and she-buffaloes ordinarily bear about five or six times in their lifetime; smaller domestic animals like sheep, goats, etc., even more often. The dedication of the first calf, the first lamb, the first setting of eggs, readily appeals to the people, and enables them to contribute one-fifth to one-tenth of the increase.

Similarly, the giving of the first month's salary, the first day's wages, the season's first income (e.g. transplantation, weeding, harvest, etc.) ought all to be definitely suggested and encouraged. The first pickings,

[1] The price of grain has greatly increased since 1939; but the principle here stated remains valid.—Ed.

the first vegetables from the kitchen-garden, the first pluckings of vegetables may all be lovingly offered to God in church.

The giving of tithes may be attractive to many people. One consecrated writer says that the Christian who dedicates himself to do his duty in the matter of Giving may begin with one-tenth.

If a man decides to give the tenth, he must apply the principle to all that he receives from every source. The salary must be tithed, as well as the income from the land and other sources. If a man gets Rs.100 a month he may at least begin with setting aside Rs.10 for the three objects which we indicated in a previous chapter. If his garden brings forth a hundred mangoes, it is not too much to give ten to God. If he gets ten eggs, he can easily offer God one of the eggs. Ten bags of rice or wheat; one is God's and nine yours. Such a recognition given by a Christian to the claims of God on all items of income will certainly be the means of great spiritual blessing to himself.

A native physician, who decided to give to God a tithe of all his income, provided himself with an earthen pot and put into it a tenth of all his professional takings as they came in. At the end of the year, to his great surprise he found that he had in the pot Rs.28 and more; and this he joyfully handed to the pastor, instead of the two rupees which he had given regularly for years as his annual subscription.

The minimum income of a poor Christian family in the Telugu country has been given to me as about Rs.120 a year—the average probably is near Rs.200 a year. If each family began to give for the support of the Church a half of the tithe (the other tithe being for the poor, for missions, etc.), that is, one-twentieth of the income, the contributions to the Church would rise from Rs.2 to Rs.6 per family per year. This, if given, would support the entire work now carried on by the Church, including

that which depends on grants from Government and from the Missionary Societies!

Freewill Offerings

Syrian Christians[1] have an age-long custom by which one-twentieth of the dowry exchanged at marriages goes to the Church Funds, and another twentieth to the pastor. If Indian Christians dedicated to God as thank-offering one-tenth of their marriage expenses and one-tenth of the dowries exchanged, the Church coffers would certainly be full to overflowing!

In some Churches, an annual Thank-offering Day is observed, when heads of families come and offer on the Holy Table what each has determined in his own heart to give to God that year. Women may also have a separate Thank-offering Day when they make their special offerings. This also appeals to the Indian people. Much is made of such a day in many places. The neighbouring clergy are called in, special addresses are given, the church and the village are specially decorated to mark the day—and the people rise to the occasion. In some places, with a view to stopping the habit of delay in the payment of money promised, the clergy refuse to take any money from anyone who is not present on the day to offer his gift in ready cash on the table.

Harvest Festivals, or Ingathering Festivals

These are a great feature in most rural churches. Even in town churches, the sense of our dependence on the heavenly Father for all good things is so strong that the Harvest Festival is one of the most popular services of the year. But there is a danger of these services becoming artificial. Far better a small offering of flowers or eggs that the people have really raised in their own backyards than a much larger offering of goods that have merely been bought in the shops. And all offerings in kind at

[1] The ancient Church in South-west India, believed by its members to have been founded by the Apostle St. Thomas.

a Harvest Festival should be related to God's good gifts in nature—in the fields, in the waters, in the home.

An Annual Harvest Thanksgiving Festival must really be an occasion for Harvest Thanksgiving. The best from the vegetable garden, one of the calves of the year from the cattle-shed, a hen with all her chickens just hatched, a few baby pigs have often been among the offerings at such a Festival in rural areas. If the congregations are given adequate time for preparation, people love to offer these with evident joy and satisfaction.

Almost every middle-class household in India makes some form of indigenous cakes for the light morning meal each day throughout the year. It has become the custom in some places for the women, each one according to her ability, to bring a single day's cakes to God on the Harvest Festival day. These are brought and offered at an early celebration of the Holy Communion and then sold to the people that gather for the Festival. This has been found to appeal to the women with special fascination. It reminds one of the meal offering of old, a dedication of "the kneading dough"—an offering to God for an odour of sweet smell.

Teach Simplicity of Living, Economy and Self-Control

Dr. Merle Davis says: "The same enemies of society are at work in each Asian country in the form of extravagant social custom, easy credit, high interest rates and life bondage to debt. These enemies attend the family from one generation to the next, deprive it of the margin needed for Church support and delay the day of an independent Church.

"The practice of an additional group of cardinal virtues needs to be preached—simplicity, economy, self-control. These qualities should be the theme of frequent sermons, of Sunday School lessons, of classes for catechumens and enquirers, and should be made synonymous with the Christian life."[1]

[1] *Mission Financial Policies*, p. 93.

The evils that are common in certain communities in India must also be attacked, the attack being based always on the truth of the Gospel. Such evils are drink, with its attendant ills of drunkenness and quarrelling, extravagant marriage expenses, large dowries, keeping one's children in school and college beyond one's means, and so incurring heavy debts. Teaching should be followed up by a direct appeal in terms of Christian duty and responsibility.

The Church of Christ, if it is to discharge efficiently its God-given task, needs edifices for worship, ministers to shepherd the believers, evangelists to carry the Gospel far and wide, teachers to instruct the new converts, social activities to reach out to those who cannot otherwise be touched. These needs cannot be met without the expenditure of money; and God does not provide goldmines in Church lands to be utilized for these purposes. All this programme of work depends upon the gifts of God's people. If God's people will not exercise economy and self-control, and offer their money for these purposes, the work simply cannot be done. We become guilty not only of extravagance and self-seeking, but also of hard-headed indifference to God-given opportunities for the service of the Kingdom of Christ.

Information as to methods of Giving found useful by Christians of one land ought to be made available to other lands to encourage healthy rivalry.

Here, for instance, is a list from China. Local sources of income are :—

1. Sunday offerings.
2. Annual pledges redeemed on a fixed Collection Day.
3. Group offerings—Sunday Schools and Societies which contribute to Church Funds through their group organizations.
4. Thank-offerings, such as birthday offerings, etc.
5. Children's offerings.

6. Contributions from absent members. These were written to and gifts obtained from them for the Mother Church.
7. Contributions from farm produce.
8. Lord's Acre plan—the income of Church lands cultivated under a system of co-operative communal farming.
9. Tithe of incomes.
10. Animals or poultry raised by members for Church.

The Church in the Philippines adds to these:—

1. Every member canvass, in which the elders of the Church obtain a promise of a gift from every man, woman and young person in the congregation.
2. Institutes and Conferences, to discuss with local leaders the Christian duty of Giving.
3. Classes in Stewardship, where the Scriptural basis of all Giving is regularly taught.
4. Literature on Stewardship—leaflets and pamphlets, some illustrated—to bring home the duty of Giving.

Systematic Teaching on Giving based on Holy Scripture is Bound to be Effective in the Long Run

The Self-Support Conference held in Nagpur in July, 1938, said: "The duty and privilege of Christian stewardship should be taught to the converts from the very beginning of their Christian life. In congregations where this has been neglected, nothing less than an awakening to a deeper experience of the Christian life and faithful teaching on Christian stewardship on New Testament lines can bring about a realization of their obligation to sacrificial giving. The evidence placed before the Conference is such that we must confess that these constitute the greatest needs everywhere at the present time. If, through the working of God's Holy Spirit and faithful teaching in this subject, Christians

could be roused to do their duty to Christ and His Church in the matter of giving, the Conference is convinced that far more than what is necessary for the support of the ministry could be provided by the indigenous Church itself."

The example of the Church in Korea leads us to the same conclusion. Bible Study and Systematic Giving always go together. So it was in Antioch (Acts 11 : 25-30); so it is to-day in Korea. The same source of inspiration and authority is available also to every Church throughout the world.

It is to help pastors and other leaders in this task that we have compiled this book, with its Lessons on Giving. May God's Holy Spirit send it forth in its mission to quicken, to inspire and to compel all readers to give to God that which is God's, and thus to become fellow-workers and partners with God in hastening the coming of His Kingdom.

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