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## **HOW MUCH WILL YOU GIVE?**

Dear friends we are not going to pass around the contribution box now, but thinking this to be an all-important question, one upon which depends, perhaps, as much the interest of every one of us, as any question we could propound, let us each for himself carefully consider it.

We do not ask how much will you contribute towards paying for the organ in the church, nor how much will you subscribe toward paying the minister, nor how much you will subscribe toward sending the gospel to the heathen, nor even how much you will contribute for the relief of the poor, though each of these may be considered commendable objects in their time and place; but how much will you give for the gospel of Christ?

But do you say, is it not a free gospel? Does not the prophet say "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that has no money come ye, buy, and eat; yea buy wine and milk without money and without price?" Yes that is a correct quotation, but there is nothing in the passage quoted to indicate that a man who has money can have the gospel and still keep his money; those who are to have it without money are those who have no money to pay. But sincerely my brother, my sister, my friend HOW MUCH will you give for the Gospel? It is exceedingly valuable and you should not expect to get it for nothing, you should not be willing to take it for nothing if you could, neither can you expect to give an equivalent for it, for "its price is beyond rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto it."

Now if you have some faint idea of its value, perhaps, you will be willing to make some offer for it. Offerings are in order for it now, this is "the acceptable (receivable) year of the Lord," and we are close to "the day of vengeance of our God;" and if you want a chance in the high calling, you need to be quick and prompt about it; we expect the quota under this call will soon be filled and hope you will not be among the number who will "stand without knocking and saying open unto us," when it will be forever too late. Again we ask how much will you give? Suppose we consider the word give (as it has a number of significations) first in the sense of yielding, in the phrase to "give ear," which signifies to hear, to listen; now are you willing to give your attention and thought to this gospel? Are you willing to bend your mind to it? Are you willing to carefully, prayerfully and persistently consider it? Are you willing to give it all the thought which you have hitherto given to matters of little or no importance? Consider it well; think of the hours you have spent reading works of fiction, wit and humor, perhaps in playing some sort of game for diversion, or even in reading history or secular news, mainly for the purpose of being considered "well informed," or possibly for the purpose of being qualified for some position of honor (worldly) or fame.

Are you willing to give way, to give that attention to the gospel that you have to these? Do you answer in the affirmative? That is well so far, but that is not enough. Are you willing (notice, these questions are for you to answer to yourself in the present tense, not to-morrow) to give in the sense of quitting as in the phrases, to give place, to withdraw, to make room; are you willing if this gospel requires it, to give place to principles which will antagonize those which you have hitherto entertained? Are you willing to have a radical change made in your mind, and in your manner of reasoning, i.e., so that instead of reasoning from an earthly or natural standpoint, it shall be from a

spiritual or gospel stand point, for earthly wisdom "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual; devilish." James 3:15.

Earthly wisdom would reason, "if thine enemy hunger let him starve," and everything else on the same line, but heavenly wisdom waits to have our heavenly Father who understands all the weaknesses of our natures, and all the influences that have been brought to bear upon us, adjust matters for us, instead of taking them into our own hands and managing from an earthly plane, and with earthly wisdom; that is to say, looked at from an earthly standpoint, we resign our own wisdom and become fools for Christ's sake. You think that is giving considerable do you? Well it is, but you cannot become a vessel fit for the master's use without. Are you willing? Yes. Very well that is good, but that is not enough, for this gospel requirement, very likely will reveal to you that very many things which you have hitherto considered harmless in their nature, are really very injurious to you and you will be called upon to give in the **[R210 : page 4]** sense of relinquishing, or in the still stronger sense of abandoning, i.e., to let go of in the sense of never taking hold again – a long good bye – to the things you once loved; among them may be earthly hopes and expectations; this heavenly wisdom will teach you that all these are transitory and vain, and that the more you depend upon them the more you will be deceived by them, and the greater will be your disappointment, for your expectations will fail to be realized, and your hopes will be blasted. You will find everything turned around under the influence of the gospel, and that the things which are highly esteemed among men are abominations in the sight of God. Luke 16:15.

Notice the words "highly esteemed among men;" earthly things needful for our physical well being are not to be despised, nor will heavenly wisdom prompt us to despise them, nor are they the things referred to as highly esteemed among men, for men will sacrifice

these for the highest interests of the soul, and if you will give way to the influences of the gospel upon you, you will be led to abominate that which is HIGHLY esteemed among men.

Let us see what things are highly esteemed among men; what do they make the greatest sacrifice for? Probably the greatest effort that men make is to be worshiped; honor, fame, a name among men; not so much to be superior as to be regarded superior.

To have men cast out your name as evil, that is a terrible thing for a man who knows nothing of the gospel of Christ; to lose his reputation is one of the greatest if not the greatest calamity that can befall a man, he will not mind as much the loss of his character, but the loss of his reputation is most terrible, to the man of the world, for if you lose this you will lose your worldly friends mostly, some of them will stand by if you have plenty of money, but it will take a great deal even of money to hold many friends after your reputation is all gone, so if you relinquish your reputation for the sake of the gospel (nothing else should induce a man to part with it) you will be doing pretty well, you will be giving considerable. Do you think you can do it? Y-e-s? Well can you not say it with emphasis? "By the grace of God I will!" That is good. You are giving yourself poor, after the wisdom of this world, aren't you? Never mind, look not at the things that are seen; they are temporal. But you have not given enough yet – Have you any money? (No, we are not going to pass the contribution box now.) Yes, some. Well much or little you will need to give it, not to pay for the gospel but out of gratitude and that it may be sent to others, and there are some of the Lord's brethren living near your house that are hungry or sick and need help, so your (?) money will be needed, and with it will go those few friends who stuck by you for your money's sake after your reputation was gone; you found by bitter (blessed) experience that a great share of your friends left you when your reputation did, and now the rest of your worldly friends will go

and you will be left alone; will you do it? "Yes, by the grace of God I will!" The sting of death (to the world) is past, isn't it? How much easier it is to say yes, now. Praise the Lord! But you have not given enough yet.

Now, my dear friend, you are not far from the kingdom. Will you sacrifice your ease, your comfort, yea life itself if called upon? Will you let it be worn out, or burnt out, or in any way used up for the sake of the gospel of Christ? You will? Thank God! I am so glad; you will be so rich. Now let us look over this covenant. You have given your attention, your time, your mind, your reputation, your friends, your money, your life – seven items. You have given yourself poor indeed, haven't you? I acknowledge the fact, it is so, poor, very poor, and you have done this willingly. It makes me think of something I have heard, and while I am looking at you, your countenance seems changed; you remind me of some one I have known. Ah, it comes to me now, Jesus of Nazareth was his name, why how much you resemble him, you must be his brother. "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. Why you have done just as he did and just what he intended when he said: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:15. Well that is the best kind of will you could make, and I am glad to greet you as my brother, I also having done the same things – "for which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren." Heb. 2:11.

You can afford to be poor and go about in disguise for a while, now, inasmuch as you are an heir of the kingdom. "Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James 2:5. And now you will learn faster and be able to prepare yourself for regal employment in the regal family; for "if any

man will (wills or wishes to) do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.  
John 7:17. You now belong to that company so aptly described by the  
poet when he said:

"What poor despised company  
Of travelers are these,  
Who walk in yonder narrow way,  
Along the rugged maze?"

"Ah; these are of a royal line,  
All children of a King.

Heirs of immortal crowns divine,  
And lo, for joy they sing!"

"Why do they, then, appear so mean?  
And why so much despised?"

Because, of their rich robes unseen  
The world is not apprised."

"But why keep they that narrow road  
That rugged, thorny maze?"

Why that's the way their leader trod;  
They love and keep His ways."

"What! is there, then, no other road?  
To Salem's happy ground?"

Christ is the only way to God;  
None other can be found."

J. C. S.

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