

## **TOO MUCH MONEY – FURTHER OFFERINGS REFUSED**

– *NOVEMBER 7. – 2 KINGS 11:21-12:16. –*

A LESSON FROM THE FAR PAST ON GIVING FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES – TREASURERS WITHOUT BONDSMEN – THE TEMPLE REPAIRED – TYPICAL APPLICATION OF THIS EVENT – NECESSITY FOR A RETURN TO BIBLE STUDY – DOING OUR PART IN THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF SPIRITUAL ZION.

**"God loveth a cheerful giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7.**

SIXTEEN years passed after the incidents of our previous Study and found King Joash in his twenty-third year. Already he had made suggestions to the priests respecting the repairs of the Temple, which was considerably dilapidated; for the people were still half-hearted in the worship of Jehovah. The influence of the idolatry of the surrounding nations was yet upon them. Some of them continued to burn incense upon the altars for Baal worship.

### **PRIESTS POOR BUSINESS MEN**

King Joash found that allowing the priests to collect the money wherewith to repair the Temple showed no results. Not every good-hearted man has executive ability. The record does not tell that the priests were dishonest in the use of the money collected for their affairs; nor does it say that they spent the money unwisely. Possibly the people did not have confidence in the priests, and did not give so freely on that account.

However, the king noted the fact that the Temple continued to be dilapidated. He called for the priests and said to them, "Why repair ye not the breaches of the Temple?" The answer of the

priests is not given. But the king's mandate was, "Now, therefore, take no more money from your acquaintances." The king passed over the matter as lightly and courteously as possible, without charging the priests with embezzlement or neglect.

A new procedure was to have an especially prepared money-chest inside the Temple Court, convenient to the worshipers who passed in and out, and under the care of the priest who served as doorkeeper. This method proved successful. The money speedily accumulated. Ere long there was a sufficiency to make the repairs and more. Further donations for this purpose were refused. The Temple was put into good order, and a general blessing followed the experience.

There is a lesson in this matter for us. People like to see results. They wish to know that moneys donated for benevolent purposes are not all absorbed for office expenses. Volunteer offerings have the approval of both God and man, rather than offerings that are importuned, coaxed, begged, wheedled from saints and sinners. Whoever gives to the Lord's Cause is advantaged thereby. He not only forwards a benevolent Cause, but cultivates generosity in his own heart. Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" – where the giving is willing and voluntary.

Church begging is undoubtedly doing great harm. Some one has remarked that in some churches the chief item of religion is begging for money – private solicitation, and also public solicitation, by the passing around of the collection box. Church fairs, church suppers, grab-bags, etc., are still more reprehensible than the collection box and private solicitation. Some one has called such efforts "the milking of the goats." The Lord's people are supposed to be *sheep*; the world's people, *goats*.

## SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF GIVING

The proper thought seems to be what the Scriptures inculcate; namely, that each Christian should give according to his ability and his interest in the work; and that non-worshippers should not be expected to give nor requested to do so. But who does not know that a large proportion of the money collected for church purposes is unwillingly given by people who are not only often uninterested in the projects, but sometimes even opposed thereto! Thus Protestant business men often give to Catholic charities, rather than offend good customers. Likewise Catholic business men donate to Protestant enterprises with which they have no sympathy.

It is a good time to return to the Gospel admonition. (1 Corinthians 16:2.) Let each one of you lay by in reserve on the first day of the week according as God has prospered you – for religious and charitable objects. Only such voluntary giving has any merit whatever in the sight of God or in the sight of good men. Only such will receive the Divine blessing upon it, whether it be the widow's mite or the rich man's munificence. [R5789 : page 316]

## BREAKS IN THE TEMPLE WALL

Viewing the spiritual Temple, we perceive that outwardly, as represented by the magnificent churches of metropolitan cities, nothing more could be desired than what is now enjoyed. Describing the church conditions of our day, the Scriptures portray these conditions under the figure of the Laodicean Church, saying, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy

of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." – Revelation 3:15-18.

It is from the spiritual standpoint, therefore, that the Temple of today needs to have repairs. Outwardly, the Church is rich; spiritually, she is poor. The majority of her educated, including ministers, have abandoned all faith in the Bible as the Word of God. Yet they are not known as infidels, but by the less harsh terms, Higher Critics, Evolutionists. With many even the faith in a personal God is shaking; and they incline to wonder whether, somehow or other, we have not an unintelligent god – Nature – and whether mankind and all other intelligences are not merely evolutionary products.

The cause and foundation of this disastrous condition is not far off. The absurdities of the creeds formulated during the Dark Ages are so great that intelligent people can no longer accept them. We have made the mistake of supposing that these absurdities are based upon the Scriptures and well supported thereby. The truth is that the creeds of the past not only contradict each other, but contradict the Bible. To learn this, to believe it, signifies a return to Bible study with the colored spectacles of our fathers removed and with our hearts uplifted to God that He may give us the light promised to His faithful people in the end of this Age. Of this we read, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts." – 2 Peter 1:19.

## **THE DUTY OF THE HOUR**

Noting the spiritual impairment of the House of God, the Church, all who love the Lord and who worship Him should do their part, should make their contribution, toward the

improvement of these spiritual conditions. The work is not to be left wholly in the hands of the clerical or priestly class. The people in general are to appreciate the situation; and each is to delight to do his part in the rebuilding of the spiritual walls of Zion. Those spiritual walls consist of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." – Jude 3.

Each Christian should ask himself, "What am I doing toward these repairs? How am I manifesting to the Lord my zeal for Truth and righteousness and my hatred for sin and untruth?" And as an answer to these questions, each should redouble his efforts to understand the Truth and to help others to an understanding of it, whatever the cost to the creeds and systems of the Dark Ages.

