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CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP.

"God loveth a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:7.

Paul was taking an offering to relieve human distress. There is no holier giving than giving to a person in need. This kind of giving is as old as the offering to God. Both kinds of giving are as old as civilization itself.

Before we can secure exemption for money given to charity we must give it through an organization. The reason is obvious. If the Government allowed exemption for private giving, there would be a lot of fraud in giving. But much of the best type of giving is still private. Even though people do not get exemption for such giving, there is still a lot of money given in that way. We know some person in need, and we do not want them to have the humiliation of taking public charity, so we relieve their wants ourselves.

The church frequently picks out members or persons well known and gives them aid to save them the humiliation of going to public charity for aid. If this is not carried to the extreme the Government generally allows exemption for such giving. This is not much different to private giving, except that churches, in most cases, would not allow a fraud to pass as a gift.

Public charity must of necessity be cold and formal. If public charities started being warmhearted and sympathetic to every tale of woe they would never get to the deserving ones. The most deserving ones are usually the last to ask for help. Anyone who has ever tried to dispense public charity learns very early that the least deserving are always the loudest in their claims for charity.

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Paul's charity was somewhat like the private giving of the church today. In his day there was no public charity. People who were desperate begged on the streets. Paul picked out those people he knew and helped them, so they would not have to go on the streets begging or starve

Although private giving has a warm and friendly touch often lacking in public charity, it is not always the wisest giving. Some would rather not have money given to them. Some of the giving today reminds one of the two boy scouts who went to the banquet without doing their good deed. The Scout Master told them they would have to go out and do their good deed before they could come in. They were gone only a few minutes. When the Scout Master asked them what they had done, they said, "We helped an old lady across the street." "And why did it take both of you to help her across?" asked the Scout Master. "She didn't want to go," they replied. We are still taking people where they do not want to go to help them.

One of the best ways to help people who are in need is to help them to help themselves. Some of the finest charity ever given was given to help some boy or girl get an education. This is not only fine charity, but a good investment. It often pays the highest dividends of any we make. If we can restore a person's health, renew lost hope or revive lost ambition and set them on the road to an independent career, we have accomplished far more than can ever be accomplished by a bread line or a soup kitchen. But when people are hungry there is some times no way to help them but a bread line or a soup kitchen. It is better than letting them starve.

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In Mexico the Roman Catholic church has encouraged rich people to build beautiful churches with their gifts. Thus Mexico has become^a a land of beautiful cathedrals and chapels of worship. But look at Mexico's boys and girls! In America the pioneers worshipped God in log houses with dirt floors till they could do better. But we took a lot better care of our boys and girls than Mexico did. They invested their money in brick and stone; we invested ours in immortal spirits. Ours will outlast theirs millions of years!

A lady who was a great admirer of Mark Twain once had the pleasure of shaking hands with the great author. She took his hand and kissed it almost reverently and said, "Mr. Clemens, the Lord surely must love you." Mark Twain answered, "I hope so." When the lady had passed on, he said to some one standing by, "I guess she has not heard of our strained relationship." I suppose Mr. Clemens thought of some of the bad things he had done and wondered how the Lord could love him.

Surely God must have loved the American people. He has been very good to us. But when we think how we have used the riches He gave us, we wonder, like Mark Twain, how He could do it. If we had given the Lord one tenth of our income in the days of our peace and prosperity we would not now be paying one third of to the tax collector. We could have relieved the terrible hunger and distress in less favored parts of the world with one tenth of what the last two ^{wars} cost us. Had we done this it is almost certain the wars would have been prevented.

A man was taking his son through the nations capital city. He took him to many places of interest and the boy showed a keen interest. Finally they came to the Senate Chamber.

A man came in clerical garb and the boy asked who he was. The father said, "That is the Chaplain of the Senate." "Does he pray for the Senate?" asked the boy. "No, he looks at the Senate, then prays for the country," answered the father. When we take a look at what use we have made of the riches God gave to America, we feel that some one should pray for the country.

Instead of giving our money away we laid it up to make us secure. We flattered ourselves that we were the most secure of any people on earth. Our security of two seas and the riches of Fort Knox did not keep us out of two of the costliest wars in human history. We still have a lot of our money left, but it does not give us a feeling of security. Dr. Peale says the people of America are so restless and afraid they cannot even take a nap in church.

Recently a minister who was getting along in years was stricken with a malady that threatened the loss of his lower limbs. The surgeon was already preparing to amputate both limbs to save his life. The minister asked for a little time to think it over. When the surgeon came in the next day he was looking over a scrap book with a thousand messages of condolence and prayers for his recovery. He said, "Doctor, I have a thousand people praying for me. I have decided to keep my legs." The surgeon examined his limbs and decided to wait. He still has his legs. When he left the hospital he asked the surgeon for his bill. He said, "If you will get that thousand people to pray for me, your bill is paid."

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." If God made the path of every good man or woman a bed of roses life

would lose some of its best meaning. But every cheerful giver does have God's favor. How many did you ever see begging? How many did you ever see in real want?

Christian giving is a mark of a noble spirit. The man who gives grudgingly cannot love his fellow man much. It is said the word "cheerful" could properly be translated "hilarious". We could as well say, "God loves a hilarious giver." A hilarious giver is one who has a grand time giving his money away. He will give till he has nothing left, then shout over his empty pocketbook. He can even go to sleep in church .

John Bunyan says:

"There was a man
The neighbors thought him mad,
The more he cast away
The more he had."

The hilarious giver has such a grand time giving his money away the neighbors think he is crazy.

One of the signs on the highway reads:

"We made grandpa look so trim
The local draft board's
after him."

This is slight exaggeration, although good advertising. Even with a smooth shave most grandpa's would not have much trouble getting by the local draft board. But there is one sure way to keep young till you are past three score years and ten. There is one sure way to keep the wrinkles from scarring your face till your locks are turned snowy white. Be a hilarious giver. Did you ever see one with a long face? Did you ever see one with a gloomy countenance?

Do you know that people who hoard all they make or spend it all on themselves are the ones who get so tired of living they kill themselves? Did you ever hear of a cheerful giver being tired of living? You never will. He is having such a grand time giving his money away he can hardly wait for the sun to rise on another day.

Do you know the happiest and sunniest life ever lived on this earth? He was born with the sentence of death on Him. Was He downhearted and gloomy? Did He drag His feet along the way of life? His friends found His face like the sun on a cold dark day in winter. His enemies said He was a wine bibber and a glutton. He was so happy they could not stand Him. The reason is that He gave so lavishly.