April 30. True Charity

J.R. Miller:

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing!" Matthew 6:3

There are some people who want every good thing they do, to be well advertised. If they give money to some good cause — they want to have it noticed in the papers. If they are kind to the poor or relieve some case of distress — they are particular that the matter should be duly published. They take pains that their charities shall not fail to be credited to themselves.

But this is not the kind of spirit our Lord enjoined on His disciples. He told them that seeking publicity marred the beauty of their charities; that instead of announcing to others what they had done — they should not even let their own left hand know that their right hand had been doing commendable things.

Of course, Christ did not mean that we should never give to charities — except where the act would be absolutely secret. It is the heart-motive that Christ was enforcing. His disciples should never give for the sake of men's praise. Our good works instantly lose all their value — when any motive but the honor of God and desire for His approval, is in our heart. We should not even think about our charities ourselves — but should forget them, as the tree forgets the fruits it drops.

We should train ourselves therefore to do our good deeds — without seeking the praise or recognition of men. We should not be so anxious to have our name posted on every gift we send. We ought to be willing to do good, and let Christ have all the glory — while we stay back unknown and unrecognized.

Florence Nightingale, having gone like an angel of mercy among the hospitals in the Crimea until her name was enshrined in every soldier's heart — asked to be excused from having her picture taken — that she might be forgotten, and that Christ alone might be remembered as the author of all the blessings which her hand had distributed!