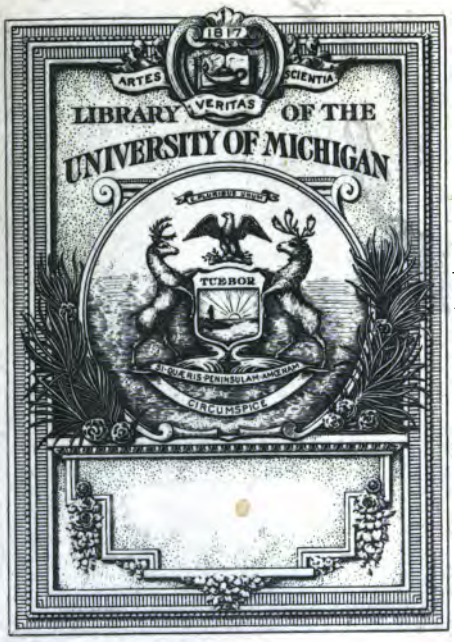

THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY:

DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF SUPPORTING IT.

JAMES A. WYLIE, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE PAPACY," "PILGRIMAGE FROM THE ALPS TO THE TIBER," ETC.

"Quod Deo redditur, reddenti additur."
AUGUST. EPIST. AD ARMEN. ET PAUL.

"Freely ye have received, freely give."
MATTHEW X. 8.

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TO

THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE,

THE BEST MAINSTAY OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY,

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY,

ON ONE OF THEIR HIGHEST PRIVILEGES

AS WELL AS HOLIEST DUTIES,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

A GROWING conviction, strengthened by careful observation and minute inquiry, that the obligations resting upon members of the various sections of the Church, in reference to upholding the ordinances of religion, are in general very improperly discharged, induced the promoters of the

GLASGOW PRIZE ESSAYS

to call attention to the subject, by inviting members of all Evangelical denominations throughout the three kingdoms to compete for two premiums of £150 and £75, to be awarded for the best papers on

THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF CHRISTIANS IN REGARD TO THE SUPPORT OF THE ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL.

The Adjudicators, who cordially accepted the appointment, were the Rev. Dr Robert Buchanan, of the Free Church of Scotland; Rev. Dr John Eadie, of the United Presbyterian Church; and the Rev. Dr William Symington, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The first of these gentlemen, after devoting some weeks to the work of examination, was necessitated to relinquish all mental labour, and remove to another climate for his health. The Rev. D. Patrick Fairbairn, Principal of the Free College, Glasgow, was solicited, and at once acquiesced in assuming his place.

The number of Essays lodged for competition was *eighty-one*, of which fifty-nine were from various parts of Scotland, seventeen from England, and five from Ireland. Many of these papers contained highly valuable matter, tending to elucidate and enforce the subject, and bringing out a great variety of practical suggestions for the faithful discharge of this important Christian duty. It is hoped that a few more of them may yet be given to the public.

The Adjudicators, after careful and patient investigation, were unanimous in awarding the two prizes respectively to the Rev. Dr J. A. Wylie, Edin-

burgh, and the Rev. Joseph Parker, Banbury; while they recommended a third one for publication, being the production of the Rev. Peter Richardson, Dailly. The following is the digest of their report :—

"A considerable portion of the Essays are of inferior merit, but not a few are distinguished by solid thought, careful examination, and a full exhibition of scriptural principles on the subject of inquiry. Having respect to the leading object in view on the part of the promoters of the competition, the Adjudicators deemed it necessary to keep prominently before them, when estimating the comparative merits of the Essays, their relative adaptation to popular use; on which account they were obliged to set aside several which displayed vigorous thinking, and contained much valuable matter, but which failed to present the subject in a manner fitted to interest and impress the popular mind. The Essay that appeared to all the Adjudicators to be the best for the purpose aimed at, turned out to be the production of the Rev. Dr Wylie, Edinburgh. It proved more difficult to decide upon the Essay that should be entitled to the second prize; but after conferring with each other, and comparing together the two or three Essays that seemed to come nearest the point, a unanimous finding was arrived at in favour of number sixty-two, the production, as shewn by the accompanying letter, of the Rev. Joseph Parker, Banbury. Essay number seven approached, in some respects, so near to this, and appeared so well adapted for reaching a considerable class of minds, that the Adjudicators are disposed to recommend also the publication of this Essay.

Signed { PATRICK FAIRBAIRN.
JOHN EADIE.
WILLIAM SYMINGTON."

CONTENTS.

THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.

GOD'S CHIEF END OUGHT TO BE MAN'S CHIEF END.

We set out with what we take to be a fundamental axiom in the region of human duty, namely, that whatever God makes the chief and highest end of His existence, that ought man too to make his chief and highest end. As there is but one Supreme Mind in the universe, and that mind infinitely wise, infinitely just, and infinitely powerful, so there can be but one supreme plan in the universe, and that plan, like the mind of which it is the grand expression, must be infinitely wise, infinitely just, and infinitely powerful. All that exists must exist as part of this plan, and for the end of furthering its execution. Why otherwise should it have existed at all? Not, surely, that the All-wise Arranger should be thwarted at every step by the conflicting agencies of his creatures! No! its Maker meant that the universe, from the planet down to the flower, from the seraph down to the insect, should present the spectacle of one vast army marching as God leads, and contributing, each after his nature and according to his powers, to the execution of that

one and transcendently majestic design. Even reason approves of this as the true idea of the universe.

Revelation says the same thing, and says it yet more clearly. Man was made in the image of God. So says the Bible, and in saying so it decisively proclaims man's chief and highest end. Why should he have been made in God's image, *i.e.*, with intellectual and moral powers akin to those of God, if he was not to be employed in the work of God? We argue the end of anything from its obvious design. Never were there clearer data on which to found an inference—God's image shining in moral glory on man's soul—and never was inference more irrefragably just than this, even that it was meant that there should be the most perfect, continual, and harmonious coincidence betwixt the plans and purposes of man on the earth and of God in the heavens; in other words, that one work should occupy both.

In taking part with God in His work, man finds his highest employment and his chief blessedness.

He finds herein his highest employment. Is it not that which occupies God, and can it be other, therefore, than the highest—the noblest in itself, and the noblest as respects the issues to which it tends? In this work God has concentrated all that is lovely in mercy and illustrious in wisdom—all that is awful in justice and venerable in holiness—all that is sublime in goodness and impressive in power; in it, in short, he has incarnated the ineffable glories and exhaustless riches of the Godhead. Equally exalted is it as regards its issues. To what does it tend? It tends to an end that is inconceivably and inexpressibly sublime, even the highest glory of the highest Being, and the largest happiness of all beings.

To take part in this work ennobles man. As is the work, so is the workman. If *it* is base, he is base; if *it* is noble, he is noble. Not that which entereth into a man, but that

which proceedeth out of him—the purposes of his soul, the acts of his life—lower or exalt, vilify or ennoble him. But *this* is the highest work, and he who is occupied in it is therefore the highest being. He tastes the power, the wisdom, the beneficence of God.

In taking part with God in His work, man finds, too, his chief blessedness.

He finds his chief blessedness herein, because this work, and this work alone, affords scope for the powers of his nature. Man was made in the image of God, and it is here alone that the faculties in which that image consists can find their proper field of exertion and of pleasure. To act is to live; and according to the character of our acts, so will be the complexion of our lives—happiness if in accordance with our nature, misery if in violation of it. When we act with God, then only do we act in accordance with our nature in its originally sound and healthy state, and then only do we find scope for the heaven-implanted aspiration of our bosoms, which is to be like God. Man's fall was through a right aspiration perverted. He sought to be as God—a noble aim, but, through the temptation of the devil, attempted to be realised in a wrong way. But what man impiously sought for by violating the will of God, he may lawfully aspire to by becoming a worker with Him. He can gain the high end of his being only by identifying himself, in purpose and in action, with God.

Here, in a word, man enjoys an infallible guarantee that what he labours to accomplish shall, beyond all peradventure, be crowned with success. Wrong he cannot be, for he follows in God's footsteps. His work bears the stamp of infinite and unerring rectitude. And to whatever God imparts his sanction, to that He will vouchsafe His blessing. That cause shall infallibly prosper. The handwriting of doom is on all that is opposed to God. All plans that are contrary to His

plan—however profound the wisdom with which they were contrived—however great the numbers or vast the power by which they are supported—however dazzling the success with which for a while they may be attended—are destined to but one result, and that is annihilation. God hath said it, and neither man's pride nor power, neither man's wisdom nor craft, can reverse God's irreversible decree. Those projects, now so flourishing, which lift their top to the very heavens, and draw after them the wondering eyes of earth, shall soon be cut down, and wither as the grass; while around their grave shall stand their friends and supporters, casting dust upon their heads, and weeping and wailing, saying, Alas! alas! for the mighty schemes that have come to nought, and the high hopes that have set for ever in darkness.

But no such end awaits the Christian's work. It shall live as sure as God lives. It is rooted in God's being, and shall be borne onwards in God's existence to endless duration. Feeble as the Christian is, he can regard himself as the ally of Omnipotence. And small as his work may appear to be, and insignificant as it may be deemed by a world which neither understands its true character, nor is able to perceive its real grandeur, the Christian nevertheless can look along the line of coming ages and see his work opening out into the all-wise, the all-holy, and the all-glorious plan of God; the complete and perfected realisation of which will bring to Him who devised it a revenue of endless praise, and to him who co-operated in it a revenue of endless blessedness.

But the question remains, What *is* the work of God?

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS GOD'S WORK?

THE work of God must be worthy of God; but in order that it may be so, it must be the exhibition of God. God is the most excellent of beings. His attributes are supremely and infinitely good; and if God would exhibit to the universe the noblest being in the noblest way, He must exhibit himself. And such, accordingly, has been His work from the beginning, even the manifestation of himself. That manifestation has consisted of successive epochs, each epoch permitting the display of a greater number of the Divine attributes than that which went before it, and so going on, step by step, to the full and perfected manifestation of God.

First came creation, a wondrous, a sublime spectacle! In extent how illimitable! How countless the number of its bodies! how vast their bulk! how majestic their movements! how harmonious their action! how exact and perfect the laws by which they are regulated! and how boundlessly beneficent their results! Here is God revealed—revealed as power, order, beauty. But this is not the full Deity: it is only part of God. It is but the lower circle of his attributes. The more illustrious perfections of the Divine character are yet unrevealed.

Next comes man; and with man there breaks on the universe a new and more glorious light. Perfections undiscovered till now—perfections which creation, whatever insight it gave into God's power and wisdom, was not fitted

to reveal—found in man a medium of exhibition. The first epoch, creation to wit, had revealed the physical attributes of God; the second, man, namely, had revealed his moral perfections. Man stood forth as the image of God, which is knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The revelation had been advanced, still it was not perfected. There were depths in the Infinite Essence which had not yet been explored—attributes in the Divine character which had found hitherto no vent in the way of outward manifestation. God had not yet fully developed either himself or his plan. Another step was needed.

Next came redemption. That is emphatically THE MANIFESTATION of God; and for this reason, that it is the manifestation of all God. There remains behind, awaiting some subsequent epoch of manifestation, no new order of attributes. That which could not struggle through nature, because the medium was too opaque, that which could not find vent through man even, seeing his faculties were too narrow to form the channel by which the whole of Divine excellence might flow forth, has found a perfect medium of display in the God-man and the redemption accomplished by Him. Thus, beginning with a revelation of himself as power, and going on to a revelation of himself as holiness, God has ended with a revelation of himself as love; but in revealing his love, He has completed the circle of the Divine attributes, He has exhibited to the gaze of the universe the last and crowning excellency of the Godhead. No farther can even God go: and in the plan that stands connected with that revelation, and which forms, in fact, its channel, the plan of redemption to wit, God has reached obviously what emphatically is His one and great work, because it is a work which yields a display and calls for the exercise of *all* the attributes of His nature.

This, then, is the work of God, even the manifestation of His glory through the work of redemption—the restoration

of man to that purity of nature and that felicity and glory of state from which he fell by sin. In this work God specially invites man to take part.

Let us consider, first of all, how supremely the mind of God is set upon this plan, and how entirely He has subordinated all else that He has done to its advancement. For this He created the world: for this He sent prophets forth to make known His will to the fathers: for this He arranged a train of stupendous providences—now of terror, now of mercy: for this He instituted a system of worship, symbolic outwardly, yet illuminated within by glorious truths, which, like bright lamps, burned all through the ages: for this He permitted kingdoms to arise, legislation to flourish, and the arts to be cultivated: for this, when the fulness of the time was come, He sent forth His Son—God was manifest in flesh. Nor did the work stop here. The culminating point of one dispensation has ever become the starting-point of another. The law carried down this scheme so far, and then handed it over to the gospel: when Aaron and his sons retired from the scene, Christ and his apostles appeared upon it. The temple and its sacrifices vanished, but only to let the CROSS be seen. The type set in the surpassing splendour of the antitype. Thus the mighty plan has gone on: there has been no pause. It is seen rising from the past eternity, and is beheld passing on to the coming one. It has appeared at times to die, but its apparent death has been a real resurrection. As the soul drops this poor mortal body in the dust, that it may emerge on a higher state of existence, so this glorious plan has changed the form of its dispensation only that it might enshrine itself in one more spiritual and glorious. By sublime and majestic footsteps has it been advancing to its predestined issue in God's fully manifested glory and man's completed happiness. The world's redemption was the goal, even when the world's destruction was

the way. There is nothing so distant in time or so remote in space as not to bear on this plan. God never had a purpose in His mind or did a deed of His hand which did not help it onwards. Go round the entire circle of providences, examine one by one the judgments, the wars, the revolutions, the arts which compose the history of mankind, you can trace their several lines of influence, like the radii of a circle, all meeting in the cross. To set up that cross, and by that cross to open to man the portals of eternal blessedness, has been the end of all that God has done; and from the moment that He formed that purpose (though all His purposes are, like himself, eternal), not an agency has been wasted, nor a moment lost, in carrying it into effect. What a combination of forces! what a concentration of energies! what a manifestation of wisdom and power! what a revelation of love!

Is it thus that God prosecutes this glorious scheme? then what a lesson to man! Shall he stand idly by while all else in the universe is hastening to bring aid—the earth becoming the stage of this mighty scheme—the sun meting out the days and years of its accomplishment—and the angels of heaven rejoicing to wing their flight to our distant world on errands connected with it? Shall man, for whom this plan was devised, and to whom it brings restoration to God's favour and the enjoyment of endless happiness, be the only being who is unconcerned and inactive? While the principalities and powers of heaven watch its progress with an interest that grows continually as they see it passing on, stage by stage, to its full accomplishment, shall man stand unmoved, finding nothing here to awaken his rapture, nothing to arouse his diligence? It cannot be. Let him summon all his energies; let him consecrate all his powers; and, placing himself at the head of creation, let him become the leader of all creatures in the glorious work of co-operating with God in the execution of his purposes of mercy towards a fallen world.

CHAPTER III.

HOW MAY MAN CO-OPERATE WITH GOD?

But the question suggests itself—In what way and to what extent does God invite man to take part with himself in this enterprise of love? What part of the work is it that is assigned to man?

Is it the work of expiation? Must man first atone for his sin, and then be admitted into God's favour, and ultimately into heaven? Blessed be God, it is not this. Had it been so, this work would have stopped as soon as it was commenced. To have called man to a work of this sort would have been to sport with his helplessness, and, instead of mitigating, would have aggravated the miseries of his condition, by tantalising him with the prospect of a salvation which he could never possibly enjoy. God does not set on foot futile schemes, or hang out before the eyes of men blessings that are beyond their reach. That part of the work which man could not do God has done. On the cross a full expiation was made; and in the gospel a full salvation is offered—a righteousness to justify man, and a Holy Spirit to sanctify and fit him for God's blessed and eternal presence. The whole of that moral and spiritual agency which is requisite to effect man's recovery has been created by God. Here man can take no part. If he attempts to co-operate here, he but perverts and defeats the whole scheme.

But along with the spiritual and moral agency, God has

ordained a material and human instrumentality. It is here that man's co-operating aid comes in. The *expiation* God has made—the fact of the expiation God has revealed; it is by that *truth* in the hands of the Spirit, applied to the soul, that man is regenerated and saved. But in order that the work of redemption may go on, and reach its objects, it is essential that the knowledge of this *truth*—the doctrine or the expiation, to wit—be maintained among men, and be diffused throughout the earth. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

So stands the case: the blessing is God's—the instrumentality is man's. A Divine hand has reached down redemption from heaven, but men must be its carriers over the earth. And is it too much that man should bestow a little labour on that which occasioned to God infinite cost? Has the Son of God come from heaven to die; and shall man begrudge a small expenditure of his wealth, a little sacrifice of his ease, or life itself even, that he may convey to his fellow-men that "name" in which alone there is salvation? Labour and sacrifice! did we say?—there is, in acting thus, a positive and mighty blessing. The joy of diffusing this redemption is a material part of the happiness ordained to spring from it. To monopolise or hoard its blessings the Christian has neither motive nor wish. In beholding, through his humble instrumentality, the perishing rescued and the miserable made happy, he finds the highest gratification of the unselfish and generous sympathies of his new nature. The happiness he imparts to others comes back upon himself.

In this we behold a grand analogical proof of the divinity of the gospel. That man's co-operation should be necessary in order that the gospel may reach its end, is just what we would expect from observing the procedure of God in other departments of His creation. The law of His working

is this—to do what He, and He alone, can do, and to leave the rest to man, that, by affording scope for his activities, He may provide for his enjoyment. There is not a function in nature, there is not an institution in society, in which man's co-operation is not necessary; and why should that co-operation be dispensed with in grace? The universe was created without man, for that work was beyond his power. The great laws on which its continuance depends are equally independent of man, and for the same reason. His will could neither increase nor diminish the force of gravity. The stars roll on, the sun shines, and the tides flow, without his intervention. The *vitalities* of the universe are of God, but not so its instrumentalities: man must guide the living forces of nature to their end. The earth will not of its own accord bring forth harvests: man must plough and sow it, that it may feed him. God has implanted in its bosom the powers of vegetation. He has created "the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind;" but the labour of man must co-operate with the powers of the earth. Even Paradise had to be dressed; and though the earth were all to become as fair and fertile as the primeval abode, the neglect of a single generation would suffice to throw it back into the inhospitable waste.

And so, too, in social life. God has sown in the bosom of society the seeds of government, of science, and of art, but man must develop and apply them. Law and government come not of themselves, though God has clearly shewn that He intended that man should live under them, by planting in his bosom those ideas of right and of order in which they have their origin: they are the hard-won fruits of the statesman's wisdom and the legislator's toil. Not a single machine, not even the simplest, has God constructed. But he has bequeathed to man the six elementary mechanic powers, and left him to discover for himself the

method of constructing machines. And that method man *has* discovered. He takes the simple powers, the lever, the screw, the pulley; he skilfully combines them, and evolves such accumulations of mechanic power as give him the complete sovereignty of matter. The laws of taste, too, God has ordained; but it is the chisel of the architect and the pencil of the artist that give embodiment to these laws in the noble temple and the magnificent picture. And what man educes by his genius and achieves by his labour, he must retain by his diligence; otherwise, the force of anarchy will soon overwhelm the rule of law, and the night of barbarism will speedily extinguish the day of knowledge and art. Thus, in every department, God says to man, "Come and work along with me. I ordain that you shall enjoy only by shewing that you are able to appreciate, and willing to preserve, the blessings which I have placed within your reach."

Following the settled order of His working, God has communicated His gospel to man, but has left to man himself the preservation and transmission of it from one age to another, and from one country of the world to another. By human feet must it be carried over the earth; by human tongues must it be preached unto the nations. And "there is no discharge in that war." Every man is bound to be a minister and missionary himself, or to assist, in his sphere, and according to his ability, those who are. The one supreme end of man the individual, the one supreme end of man the race, is to spread abroad God's message of love, implying thereby the erection and support of the whole of that machinery by which alone it is possible to do this, namely, churches, ministers, colleges, schools, books, at home; and missionaries and mission-buildings, Bibles, tracts, abroad. The highest form of dedication here is *personal* dedication. "I give myself," says the man whose heart God has moved, and to whom, in token of having

called him, He has given the requisite gifts. God needs men to tell sinners that He "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but might have everlasting life." I will be a carrier of the tidings. The world is perishing, and shall I sit still when this message would save it? No; I consecrate myself; I empty my hands of worldly labours, my heart of worldly cares, my mind of worldly aspirations, that so, being emptied of these, I may be the more completely filled with the gifts and graces of my great office as God's ambassador. Labour comes and says, I must enlist myself in this great service. I cannot speak; but these roughened hands can plough, can dig, can teach the earth to bring forth, and God's minister shall be fed. Honest Handicraft comes and says, There is room for me, too, here. The eloquence of the tongue I cannot give, but the sweat of the brow and the cunning of the hand I can. I shall ply the loom, and the forge, and the house of God shall be built. Commerce comes and says, I, too, must have a share in this work. I will visit the remotest shores; I will traffic with the rudest tribes; I will pioneer the missionary's way; and gathering the riches of all the earth, I will bring them and consecrate them as holiness unto the Lord. If I rob the nations, it is that I may enrich them. The wool of Thibet, the spices of India, the cereals of Russia and of Canada, the ivory of Ethiopia, the gold of Australia shall all return in a form that will enrich these nations a hundred times more than they ever could have done in any other. Science comes and says, I cannot stand aloof; I am needed here. It is not mine to enter the sacred desk; but I can do much towards certifying the truth of the message delivered from that desk. I can travel backwards, lamp in hand, into the past, or downwards into the bowels of the earth, and bring up from the darkness, where they have long lain hidden

from man's eye, and even unsuspected by him, those majestic proofs of the Bible's truth, which shew with what profound attention the ear ought to listen to its message, and with what profound repose the heart ought to rest upon it. I, too, says Learning, must bear my part in this great work. I will search the chronicles of the olden time, and extract from their dim characters and their moth-eaten pages a light which shall irradiate the Word of God. The graven column, which rises amid the sands of Lybia, with the hoar of four thousand years upon it, shall be taught to speak in attestation of the Scriptures. Voices from the mounds of Assyria and from the tombs of Egypt shall cry, "All flesh is grass, ... but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." I will take the rude sounds of barbarous tribes; I will frame alphabets from them; I will mould them into grammars, and make them fitting vehicles for God's message of love; and the Indian under his banana, the Red Man in his wigwam, the Kaffir in his kloof, and the Esquimaux in his hut shall read, each in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God. There is need of me, too, here, says Art. I have skill for the minutest, strength for the greatest labours required in connexion with this work. I can mould types, I can set a thousand printing presses in motion, and multiply in millions of copies the Word of God. I will throw open its page to every eye under heaven. I will go to the quarry and hew great stones, and build sanctuaries in which that Word may be preached. I will go to the mountain, and the monarchs of the forest shall fall beneath the axe, the earth shall be spanned with railroads, the ocean whitened with ships, and the tidings of redeeming love shall be borne afar, even to the very ends of the earth. Even War proffers its services—and there are many things that war only can do —here is work which a more gentle and refined instrumentality would be totally unable to accomplish in connexion

with the spread of the gospel. War can break up the torpor which may sit for ages, in times of peace, upon the energies of a people. It can mingle races and ideas. It can sweep away with its rude blast, like so many cobwebs, the immemorial usages, the stereotyped opinions, the national antipathies which gather and thicken in the course of ages till they darken the light, and seal up whole races and empires in ignorance and barbarism. In a word, though not its province to carry the gospel itself, war can make wide gaps in the walls of despotism and superstition by which the truth may enter.

Such is the holy concert that ought to prevail amongst all creatures. They ought to know no other end of existence as a supreme and ultimate one, and no other object of labour as a last and highest one, save this. Towards this end God worketh hitherto, and so ought man. Not that men are to leave their posts. Their callings are the appointment of God, and they must therein abide. Were all to become preachers of the gospel, how could Bibles be printed? how could churches be built? how could missionaries be carried over the earth? and how could they be supported in their several spheres of labour? It is the will of God that humanity should continue as it is, in the unremitting use of all its faculties and functions, yet so directing them as that all shall bear now on one supreme end, and all issue at last in one supreme result, even the subjugation of the whole earth to the sway of the Messiah. All, like the faces of the cherubim, are to be turned towards this glorious object. The minister ought to preach that the world may be converted, and the peasant ought to plough that the world may be converted. The world's conversion ought to animate the merchant in his counting-room and the artisan in his workshop, the statesman in the senate and the student in his closet, the artist in his studio and the soldier in the camp.

To this crowning object all the aims and aspirations of men, all the labours and purposes of earth, ought continually and unitedly to tend. And tending towards this object, they tend unerringly and infallibly towards success. It is not possible that they should miss of their aim. Nations go to their grave, empires flourish and fade, puissant kings and renowned conquerors pass from off the stage, leaving but evanescent traces behind; but the labours and the aspirations of the Church in one age and country, mingling with those of other ages and countries, grow continually in strength, and, allying themselves with the purposes of the Eternal Mind, are borne onward, in the current of the Divine plans, towards their final goal in the world's evangelisation. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Blessed be God, who has called man to be a fellow-worker with himself in this great matter. He admitted him to no partnership in creating the world, but in the yet more blessed and glorious work of regenerating it, He invites him to take part. How illustrious the honour! As God sent the gospel to the race, so man is called to send it to his fellow-man. In doing so he is blessed—he tastes the very blessedness of God. In extending the gospel, he exhibits himself as animated by the same beneficent and compassionate nature with that in which the gospel originated. He shews what the gospel is, and what it can make man; and before he has adduced a single proof of its divinity, he has presented the heathen with the strongest of all evidences of its excellence in the self-sacrificing and loving spirit under which he acts when he comes to preach it to them.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S PLAN, AND MAN'S DUTY TO CO-OPERATE, THE SAME UNDER BOTH ECONOMIES.

In paradise were laid the foundations of both Church and State. In that holy clime, and for the benefit of a yet unfallen race, were the seeds of both ecclesiastical and civil society deposited. In the institution of the Sabbath we behold the germ of the Church, and in the institution of marriage we behold the germ of the State; for out of that relation grow all those other relations that subsist amongst men, from the parental up to the patriarchal and kingly. These two mighty streams, which have descended through all the ages of the world, and have borne on their bosom so many blessings to the race, we can thus trace to their primal sources in the territory of Eden. They had gone forth, even in that blessed age, to water the earth, which without them would have been as a wilderness. August and venerable in their origin, and yet more so in their issue, to the eye of faith, which, looking back, can see them flowing forth from one paradise, and, looking forward, can see them ending in another—even a millennium of holy rest on earth, and an eternity of perfect purity and felicity in heaven.

It is of the *first* only that we are to speak. In the Sabbath we have, as we have said, the Church in embryo, as in marriage we have the State in embryo. The Sabbath was the first positive revelation of the duty of worship: it was a

revelation, not in the form of precept, but in the form of institution.

The Sabbath taught man that his time was not all his own: a seventh of it belonged to his Maker, and was to be spent in His special and formal service. Labour was to cease: not a tree was to be pruned, not a flower was to be dressed, that day in paradise; and, relieved from his wonted toil, light or heavy as might be, man was to pass the time in spiritual communings with his Maker, and in such works of beneficence or acts of devotion as God might appoint.

The Sabbath taught man that his substance was not all his own. A part of it (it does not appear that he was as yet taught what part) was due to God, and was to be formally offered to him. This was necessarily implied in the appointment of visible worship; for to outward and visible worship two things are required—first, time in which to perform it, and, second, an outward act or material offering. For the first of these, provision was made in the special appointment of the seventh day; and, for the second, instructions were given, we know for certain, immediately after the fall, and most probably even in paradise; for it is not easy to account for Cain's obstinate adherence to his offering of fruits, unless on the supposition that he knew and clung to it as the paradisaical form of worship. Worship, it is true, is a spiritual thing; in vain the victim dies if the homage of the heart is withheld; still, a mere spiritual and invisible worship could not serve as a public token of man's submission and of God's supremacy. The individual worshipper might be benefitted by a worship purely and exclusively spiritual; his homage would be expressed, and the feelings of his soul exercised, though not a word should be spoken or an act done; but worship is not meant for the profit of only the man who offers it—it is meant for that of others also. Their devotion will be inflamed by his. And, even as regards the

individual worshipper, he will not derive all the benefit he is capable of deriving from worship, unless there is conjoined with it some visible sign. We are creatures of sense; we naturally seek to express our feelings through sensible signs, and these signs again react upon our feelings, and help to intensify and elevate them. Worship, therefore, like the worshipper, must have a body. Love is the soul of worship, but it must be enshrined in material acts and offerings. Such, doubtless, there were in paradise, where not only from the heart pure love, from the lips holy songs, but from the hands of unfallen man, in token of homage, were presented the choicest fruits which the earth yielded.

Outside the walls of Eden the worship continued, but its form was changed. Sin had entered, and the worshipper stood differently related to God. Formerly man needed only to offer thanks for mercies received, and to do so it was enough to present to God part of what God had given him—his time and his substance, which last consisted as yet solely of the flowers and fruits of paradise. But now his offering fulfilled not its end—was not worship at all—unless it expressed, either as a fact accomplished, or a fact to be accomplished, expiation for sin done. Fruits which the earth pours forth and the sun ripens, adequate and becoming in the hands of unfallen man, were no longer adequate and becoming in the hands of fallen and guilty man. The only offering that became him now was *blood*, wherein is the life. Life had been forfeited, and with life only could the forfeiture be redeemed.

Not that an altar blazing with fire, and streaming in blood, is in itself a more acceptable sight to God than one breathing the fragrance of the field. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" said God, when He would rebuke this notion. It was not *His* pleasure, but the *worshipper's* profit that was sought hereby. God meant the

worship, even the sacrificial and ceremonial worship of the age, to be a channel of instruction; and He so framed the worship as to convey, in the clearest, fullest, and most impressive manner then possible, those truths which it was necessary man should know in order to salvation. The institution of sacrifice was a revelation in hieroglyph of the atonement; it was a sermon in symbol on "Christ crucified"—an announcement from the beginning of the cardinal doctrine of salvation through *vicarious* suffering, and therefore of *free* salvation.

This institution—sacrifice, namely—was the life of the world. It was the one door of hope that opened to man's eye after the catastrophe of the fall. In the first sacrifice was seen the whole of the gospel in embryo, the germ out of which was to grow that great system of spiritual truth, and that great organisation of spiritual and moral agencies, which, like a mighty lever, were destined to lift the world up to the position from which it had fallen, and ultimately to a position greatly higher. All depended on this institution; and hence the pains God was at to plant, to nurture, and to expand it; and hence the numerous and stringent injunctions He laid on man with reference to his duty in this matter. God's great work of manifesting himself had now, in fact, resolved itself into this one channel; and by it did God advance, with majestic steps, towards the final and glorious unfolding of himself in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Out of the various countries of the world He selected one whole country in which He might place this institute; and out of the various nations of the earth He selected one whole nation who might be its guardians; and in that nation he appointed temples, altars, offerings, priests, Levites, for its service, and inwove it, so to speak, with the whole political and social arrangements, the national and domestic observances and manners of that nation, so that it could not

perish but with the nation itself. And further, seeing men then could but feebly perceive the great truths wrapt up in this institute, and but feebly feel the essential connexion of that institute with the world's future and final welfare, and were apt to form a correspondingly low estimate of the duty of supporting it, God was pleased to interpose, and by law prescribe the portion of his substance which each man was to give for its maintenance, that thus not only an ample but a sure provision might be made, and there might be no risk of what would have been a tremendous evil to the world, even the fire going out upon His altars, or priests and Levites wanting to minister thereat.

The coming of Christ has changed the form, not the essentials, of worship once more. The important end proposed in the appointment of the sacrificial worship of the Old Testament, even the conveyance to man of those truths by which alone he can be saved, is one of the grand objects of worship still. The revealing medium—the priest, the altar, the sacrifice—has been changed; but the revelation—the same in its subjective matter as before—is still going on. It is by this revelation of truth that God's glory in man's redemption progresses, and there is as much room as ever here for man's co-operation. Under the old economy, man's co-operation was directed chiefly to the *conservation* of truth: under the new, man's co-operation is directed chiefly to the *diffusion* of truth. But if the substance of the Jew was demanded for the one object, how much more that of the Christian for the other! If man's labour and wealth were needed to *conserve*, how much more to *diffuse!*

Let us think of the vastly wider space which the light is now required to fill! It is not enough that it should irradiate a country, it is a world that waits to be illuminated. Let us think of the new, the more flexible, and more powerful instrumentalities that are now placed at the service of

truth, and of which it is our duty to avail ourselves to the very uttermost: let us think also how much more clearly we can now see, than could the Old Testament saint, the intimate connexion betwixt the diffusion of the truth and the world's present welfare and eternal salvation, and we shall feel that we have no excuse for a feeble zeal or a stinted liberality: our exertions ought to expand as our opportunities increase. The measure of past ages is wholly inapplicable to the present. What would have been a princely gift for a country would be but a beggarly donation for a world. Every day new doors are opening, every year the cry, "Come over and help us," is coming from some hitherto unvisited region; and as our sphere widens, so ought the scale of our givings and our sacrifices. We see, as we never saw it before, the greatness of the work. It is not to be wondered at if God's people, in the first dawn of their responsibilities, when the true mission of the gospel was but dimly perceived, and their own duties and privileges connected therewith but indistinctly and confusedly felt, kept themselves within the prescribed measure of liberality. But to keep within that narrow circle now—to keep doling out the same measured liberality when all is altered—would argue a heart wofully dead to the noblest stirrings of the gospel, and a mind but ill fitted to take the high measure of its claims. The Jew even would rise in judgment to condemn such. His offering was sufficient for the object, as that object was then understood. The boundary of Judea was his horizon; and, to his eye, all beyond was shut out by the middle wall of partition. But the Christian's horizon is the world. No middle wall of partition hides from his eye the perishing heathen, or intercepts their cry for help. He has no material temple, no carnal priesthood to transport, at great labour and cost, into heathen lands; the Bible and the missionary form the whole machinery requisite for the con-

version of the world. When the means are so simple, and the necessities so great, his only inquiry should be, not what was the measure of past givings, but what ought to be the measure of mine? It is not my own country only, though that first, but all the countries of the globe; it is not my own age only, but all the ages of time, that prefer demands upon me. In the midst of exigencies and claims like these, what is my duty? What ought to be my scale of effort and giving? This brings us full in front of our subject.

CHAPTER V.

THE PATRIARCHAL SCALE OF GIVING.

FROM patriarchal times there falls a great light on this Christian duty. Let us cast a glance back on these times, and, by the example of the patriarchs, have our zeal stimulated and our liberality enlarged in giving to the cause of God.

It is not necessary that we should go largely into this subject. Our space does not permit that we should indulge in any disquisition upon the origin of tithes, or upon the question of their continued obligation; nor does our purpose require this. We shall content ourselves, at this stage of our subject, with adducing the acknowledged facts and examples, and availing ourselves of the aid they give us in pressing upon the conscience the great duty of supporting the gospel ministry.

The great fact here is, that in those ages a *tenth* was given for the worship of God. The origin of this custom has been variously stated. Some have traced it to a Divine injunction, which, though not recorded, must, they believe, have been given. No one doubts, say such, that the method of worship by sacrifice had its origin in a Divine appointment, and yet nowhere have the terms of that appointment been recorded. Might it not have been so with tithes? And how otherwise can we account, they ask, for the universality of the practice? Others have seen no necessity for suppos-

ing a Divine revelation on the point. There is, they feel, something like a natural fitness in the tenth being given for such a purpose. It would recommend itself, they say, to the pious men of these early times, and grow at last into a practice. Whichever of these be the true account of the case, it matters not to our argument. The main point here is, that to give the tenth was felt then to be a solemn duty; that it was conscientiously discharged by the godly men of those days; and that it comes down to us stamped with the sanction of their example, and the yet higher sanction of God's authority, who afterwards adopted it, if He did not originally appoint it, and erected it into the standard of giving for all Israel.

Abraham is the first who is seen paying tithes. The scene is interesting on that account, as well as from the more than usual amount of meaning with which it is charged. Let us pause a moment over it. The patriarch stands in "the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." The dust and sweat of battle are upon him, for he has just returned from his conflict with the kings. He rests here with his company, and gathered into one vast heap on the sward of the dale are the goods of the citizens of Sodom, and of Lot, his brother, which Abraham has recovered from the marauding chiefs. Forth from the neighbouring town comes Melchizedeck, the priest-king of Salem, bearing in his hands bread and wine. Slowly descending into the dale, he stands in the midst of the company, and congratulating them on their victory over the confederate kings, he distributes to Abraham and his followers the bread and wine he had brought with him, and closes the scene by blessing them in the name of the Most High God. Abraham goes to the heap of spoil which his sword had recovered, and which, according to the usages of those times, was now his own, and, taking the tithe of it, he lays it at the feet of Melchizedeck.

As the earliest revelations were the widest, so the earliest types were ofttimes the clearest and most comprehensive. In this mirror we can see the image of a glorious, though then far distant future. A greater than Melchizedeck is here. Behind the priest-king of Salem rises the priest-king of Zion; and behind Abraham is seen the Church, which was then in his loins. Here then the Church, in a figure, pays tithes to Him who is at once *her* priest and the world's king. The action in the valley of Shaveh becomes prophecy. It speaks of a time when the Church shall rise to the full measure of her duty and privilege in this matter; when going forth to conquer the world with the gospel of peace, not the sword of war, and gathering the spoils of its riches, of its power, of its learning, and of its arts, she shall lay them all at the feet of her King. Let us hasten to fulfil the prophecy. Let us be the first to lead in a path which shall yet be trodden by all the nations and monarchs of the earth. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him."

The next example has less of prophecy but more of precept in it. It has respect, we apprehend, not so much to the Church collective and to the spirit of enlarged liberality that will actuate her in the latter days, as to the individual Christian and to what is his duty in the matter. Let us look at it. Unattended and solitary, with nothing but his pilgrim-staff and his father's blessing, Jacob goes forth on his way to Padan-aram. Night overtakes him amid the mountains of Ephraim, and resting his head on a pillow of stone, he sinks in slumber on the plain of Luz. That was the sweetest slumber he ever enjoyed; for as he slept he dreamed, and in his dream he saw the God of his fathers, who entered into covenant with him, sealing it with many gracious assurances and promises. When the morning broke, Jacob took the

stone which had served him as a pillow, and having set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, he solemnly vowed to give the *tenth* of all his substance to God.

This instance is to the full more satisfactory than the former, inasmuch as it bears more explicitly upon the every-day life and practice of the patriarchs. The occasion of Abraham in the king's dale was scarce an ordinary one. Though one might surrender the tenth of the spoils which the chances of battle had thrown into his possession, it did not follow that his ordinary possessions and the fruits of his daily industry were dealt with in the same way. But the instance of Jacob is valuable, as shewing that the godly men of those times recognised the duty of giving of their substance to God; and that the regular and ordinary practice was to give the *tenth*—a large proportion, when we take into account that the worship of God consisted then of but a few simple rites, and that the facilities for diffusing the knowledge of the true God, which may now so largely occupy the efforts and the contributions of Christians, were in that age unknown. No sooner does Jacob contract saving relations with God than he says, "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

So far these patriarchal examples. They are decisive on the question of the patriarchal usages. They teach us several great lessons in connexion with the duty under discussion, to which we shall advert before proceeding further. They shew us that the piety of those early times was of a more practical cast than it is sometimes believed to have been. The men who then lived very distinctly recognised this duty even, that if it was their privilege to *get*, it was not less their duty to *give*. Largely they had received in point of blessing; and as they had largely received, so they freely give. They did not hold themselves acquitted of what they owed to religion, when they made profession of

the true God before idolaters; they held even then what an apostle wrote long afterwards, that "faith without works is dead"—that a religion that yields nothing in return, that gives nothing to God and does nothing for man, is a vain religion. God would have been ashamed to be called their God, had he not prepared for them a city; and they, in return, would have been ashamed to be called His people, had they offered Him a worship which cost them nothing. They would have blushed before the heathen, had the altar of the true God been worse served than those of the pagan deities. This would have drawn reproach upon the name of Jehovah; for it might have been said that they served Him, not because they loved Him, but because His service was less costly than that of the gods around them; that they had adopted their creed, not because it was true, but because it was cheap—not because it approved itself to their consciences, but because it was convenient for their purses. To these taunts might their religion, we say, have been exposed; but to these taunts they took care not to expose it. They saw to it that the altar of Jehovah should not be an empty one. Cheerfully they laid upon it the tenth of all their substance.

Another lesson taught by the patriarchal examples under this head is, that the Christian's consecration is an entire and universal consecration. When he gives himself to God, he gives, not a part, but the whole of himself. The act of consecration covers the entire range of his faculties, of his opportunities, and of his possessions. How can it possibly be otherwise? Shall he give himself, and withhold his substance? This did not the patriarchs. They gave their possessions to Him to whom they had given their persons. No sooner was Jacob converted, than lo, "of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." So with the Christian still: when he comes into covenant with

God, he comes, as Noah into the ark, "he and all his house." He cannot divide himself—his soul to God, his goods to the world. Is he a man of genius? he lays upon the altar of God all the gifts of his mind, all the ripe fruits of his learning, and all the costly acquisitions of his study. Is he a man of social position? he consecrates to God's cause all the influence he is able to wield in society. Is he a man of wealth? that wealth he unsparingly devotes to the support of the ordinances of the gospel, and the general extension of the cause of Christ. Of all that God gives him he gives a tenth unto God. Not that he confines himself within the limits of a literal tenth, but that he meets every call of duty with a liberality of gift and a willingness of heart which fulfil the spirit of the injunction, even when it does not exactly meet its letter—falling below, it may be, or rising high above it. He would blush to confess himself a believer in the doctrine of the gospel, and an expectant of its hopes, were he not prepared to sacrifice on its altar the rank, the genius, the riches, which thousands daily offer at the shrine of fame, of pleasure, and of ambition.

In fine, the patriarchal measure of giving was a large one. It was large compared with the claims of religion in those days upon the liberality of its professors. Religion then needed no rich exchequer. Her wants were few: her operations were on a scale of but limited extent. The time was not come for her to launch out into those great enterprises which now task all her energies, and would more than exhaust all her available resources. Abraham and Jacob had but the necessities of their own family and tribe to provide for. The daily provision of the altar was by no means a costly charge: and we read of no attempts to proselytise the communities that lived in their neighbourhood. Anything like evangelistic enterprises were then unthought of: there was no opportunity given for them, nor was it the

design of God that the patriarchs should engage in them, beyond the influence exerted by their holy lives. The world lay locked in darkness around the Church: her great duty was to keep her ground, and cultivate her own territory; and to wait for the coming of an age when, her own principles being better developed, and her instrumentalities multiplied, she might go forth on the high enterprise of converting a world.

And yet with these comparatively slender claims, how large their liberality! Their scale of giving is one that astonishes us. A tenth! and when we take into account the ample possessions of these men, their numerous flocks and herds, and the much silver and gold which they possessed, we cannot but feel that the tenth of all this wealth must have amounted to a large yearly sum; so large a sum, in short, that we have some difficulty in conceiving of its being all expended within the strict limits of the special object for which it was given. And yet this sum was given. What a high place did these men assign to the duty of giving for the worship of God!

Let New Testament Christianity, then, come and do obeisance before Patriarchal Christianity. We boast of the greatness of our enterprises, and speak of our liberality as if the virtue of giving to the cause of God had been unknown in the world till our times, and was peculiarly a virtue of our own age. We must abate somewhat of these boastings. Look at the patriarchs, and consider the scale of their givings. Let us take into account the narrow horizon around them: Christendom was simply the valley in which their encampment was placed: the great duty of evangelising the world was unknown: they had only the family altar, including the religious instruction of their servants and dependents, to provide for; they could not feel the excitements of those powerful motives which spring from the wider

views of Christianity, and its blessed functions to the world, which have opened upon us; and yet when we compare their givings with our own, we find, despite the much that tended to lower theirs, and that tends to elevate ours, that there are few among us who have been able to attain to even the *letter* of their liberality, and still fewer to its *spirit*. The great body of professing Christians still fall below the *tenth*. Let then, we say, the liberality of the nineteenth century, all boastful as it is, draw near and humble itself, and confess its shortcomings, in the presence of the liberality of the patriarchal ages.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEVITICAL TITHES.

THE patriarchs had now grown into a nation. The little encampment, with its altar in the midst, beside which, morning and night, the smoke of sacrifice was seen and the voice of prayer heard, was now changed into an orderly state, with its laws and institutions, civil and religious. This change brought with it wider openings, more numerous claims, and a correspondingly enlarged scale of giving. Religious ordinances had now to be organised, not for a family only, but for a nation. First a tabernacle and next a temple had to be reared, whose magnificence might be such as would add to the impressiveness and solemnity of the worship celebrated in it. A hierarchy had to be appointed and sustained in circumstances befitting the importance of their functions and the dignity of their office. Ceremonies and rites had to be instituted, the symbols of great truths to be afterwards plainly revealed. The object of God in all this was first the instruction and discipline of His own chosen people—their initiation into the mysteries of supernatural religion; and, in the second place, the instruction, to some extent, of surrounding nations. The Levitical institute was a prophet of redemption: it was a preacher of that righteousness by which God was to justify the heathen. It was a home mission for the world set up in Judea, and the Jews were taught that *they* were there because *it* was there: that they

had been selected, redeemed from Egypt, and planted in Canaan that they might be the conservators of the holy oracles. The ONE object which, as a nation, they were to cultivate and pursue was, not merchandise, like the Tyrians, not art, like the Greeks, not war, like the Romans, but truth, even that truth which God's Spirit had brought down from heaven, and which was to grow and unfold itself in this land till it should become ripe for being transplanted into all the countries of the world. Such was the provision which God made in those ages for the support of religious ordinances. He set apart a whole country and a whole nation, and in so doing bore a testimony that speaks with unequivocal voice to all time.

The whole nation in a general way, and one tribe in a special, the tribe of Levi to wit, was set apart to the service of religion. What provision was made for Levi and his sons —the ministers of that dispensation? This brings us to the subject of tithes. Now, it is not in the least necessary that we should go at large into the question, or determine with great accuracy the precise amount paid yearly in the land of Israel in the shape of tithes. It is enough for our purpose that we present the reader with a fair general idea of the position of the priests and Levites in respect of temporal sustenance. It was a matter of Divine arrangement, and this makes it the more worthy of our study. God himself was the financier of the Old Testament Church, and we are to regard the scheme of finance devised and enacted by Him as an "ensample" for all ages, not indeed to be followed in the letter, but undoubtedly to be followed in the spirit. It shews us that the right position of His ministers in point of emolument is far from a matter of indifference in His eye—that it nearly concerns the prosperity of the Church, and ought to receive the earnest and conscientious attention of her members. And we can scarce avoid the conclusion

that that on the whole is the best position for the ministers of the gospel, in respect of social status and pecuniary emolument, which most nearly approximates the position which God himself assigned to His ministers under the law, all reasonable regard, of course, being had to the difference betwixt the two economies.

"All the tithe of the land is the Lord's." This clause briefly enunciates the *law* of the matter; it expounds at the same time the *theory* of tithes. They belonged primarily to God. He was the sovereign of the nation; the Israelites were His tenants; and the tithe formed the rent of the land which was the Lord's. This God was pleased to make over to the priests and Levites as pay for the services rendered by them to the state. This, then, was their stated provision, even the tenth of the whole produce of the country —of the increase of the trees, of the field, and of the flock. Over and above, they had forty-eight ready built cities assigned to them as residences, with a belt of land, of about three-fourths of a mile in breadth, running round each city. This they held immediately of God. It was the wages which their Master, not only just but generous, gave them as the servants of His household.

Now, we regard this as an ample provision, and such as placed those for whom it was made not only on a level with the other classes of society, in point of temporal emolument, but considerably above them. The tribe of Levi was a small one—not amounting, it is supposed, to more than a third or a fourth of the average of the other tribes; and yet, though only a thirtieth or so of the nation, they enjoyed the tenth of its wealth. The most comfortable homes in all the land of Israel must have been those of the priests and Levites. Nor was this all; over and above their legal and stated revenue they enjoyed what in our times would be called a large "supplement," which flowed in upon

them from the numerous offerings, free or appointed, of the people.

To the *first* tithe, which we have just explained, was added a *second.* This was not wholly the property of the priests and Levites, as the other was, yet they were permitted largely to share in it. The *second* tithe, which the Israelite was to set apart after the first had been paid, he was commanded to carry, either in kind or in its pecuniary equivalent, to Jerusalem, and expend it in the courts of the temple in entertainments to the Levites, to which also he was at liberty to invite his family and friends. There was, too, what is called the *third* tithe; but we incline to the opinion which is held by many that this was but another name for the *second* tithe, which was expended every third year, not in Jerusalem, but in the Israelite's own house, in feasting the Levites, the fatherless, the widow, and the poor. This was an important addition to the regular income of the Levites; and by effectually securing them against all anxiety as regarded the provision of their families, left them free to give the whole strength of their mind to the performance of their duties as religious ministers, judges, and teachers.

Nor did the provision appointed by God for the support of His worship and the maintenance of His priests end here. Additional and oft-recurring demands were made on the Israelite by the numerous offerings appointed in the law, and the great festivals of the nation. There were sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and thank-offerings. There were the first-fruits of the field and of the vineyard; there were the firstlings of man and of beast. Let us sum up all, and see how *honourable* and *ample* the provision for the ministry then was. There was, first of all, the *tithe,* which was wholly Levi's; there was next the second tithe, which, to the extent of a half at least, was his also; there were forty-eight cities, with lands adjoining, to the extent, we shall

say, of a hundred thousand acres; then there were the first-fruits from every field, every vineyard, and every oliveyard in Palestine; then, and last of all, there were the firstlings, and the trespass and thank-offerings, &c., from half a million of families. Here was no stinted maintenance verily: a princely provision in sooth, and consisting of every kind of property and produce in the land—of cities, houses, and lands—of cattle and sheep—of corn, oil, and wine. We do not err when we say that every Israelite gave a fourth of his property to the service of religion. A fourth forms a higher average of religious giving than has ever perhaps been attained to by any Christian nation since; and yet it was far from being oppressive to the Israelite. It was a lighter burden than that which the idolatries, whether ancient or modern, imposed upon their votaries. Half the wealth of Europe (in some countries three-fourths) was, in Popish times, given to the Church of Rome. Compared with this, God's yoke was easy—easy in itself; and made yet easier by the rich returns which it secured. The barns and presses of the Israelites overflowed; and the corn and wine carried to the temple came back multiplied tenfold in the plenty which every field, and rock, and tree rained upon them.

The whole arrangement, contemplated intelligently, sets in a striking light the value of religious ordinances, and by consequence the paramount obligation of giving for their support. The maintenance of these was the one object and end of the Jewish state. In fact, that nation may be viewed as one great religious community. Every member of it was engaged, more or less immediately, in the temple service. And the land of Palestine may be looked upon but as one large glebe. Every foot-breadth of it, with everything that grew thereon, was dedicated, more or less directly, to the worship of God. The priests and Levites existed for the temple, and the rest of the nation existed for the priests and Levites.

That the Levitical tribe might be free to give their whole time and strength to their duties, the other tribes were commanded to take the lands of Levi, and cultivate them for him, rendering to him the produce: and that the other tribes might be able to do so, the rest of the land, with all that grew thereon—a tenth excepted—was assigned to them as their portion. Thus Levi served in the temple; and the other tribes served Levi, as he God. Everything in that land had respect to God's altar; it was the keystone of the state—the grand centre around which all else revolved. All labour, whether in the temple or in the field, was for God; and every man, from the high priest down to the tiller and the vine-dresser, bore a sacred character. They were a "kingdom of priests"—"a holy nation." Here we have the divinely-sketched programme of what Christian nations ought to exhibit, not indeed in the letter, but in the spirit. Undoubtedly it is God's intention that they should occupy, *morally* not *legally*, the very same position in relation to the gospel and its ordinances which the Jewish nation did in relation to the temple and its services.

CHAPTER VII.

A FORTIORI ARGUMENT FROM THE LAW TO THE GOSPEL.

LET us pause here to contemplate the uses and lessons of this arrangement. The grand and final end of the institution of the Levitical economy was not simply the enlightenment of the land of Judea, but the evangelisation of the world. The Jew lived not for himself, but for the race; but in handing down to posterity the mighty blessing intrusted to his keeping, he was permitted largely to share in it himself. He derived from it prodigious benefits of a personal and national kind, which recompensed him a thousand times over for the office he performed to the world. His individual character was ennobled, and the national mind was toned to lofty aims and heroic deeds. The temple became the powerful promoter of the country's industry, the divine nurse of its patriotism, and the impregnable bulwark of its independence. The like uses does the gospel serve, only in a way more direct, and in measure yet larger, inasmuch as truth is now better understood and more directly operative, being surrounded no longer by the symbols and shadows which somewhat hid its splendour and abated its energy in other ages.

First of all, then, the temple cost the Jew much. It cost him the *fifth* of all his increase, directly; and it cost him offerings and first-fruits, which swelled the amount to at least a *fourth*. It cost him, moreover, a good deal of his time. But if it cost him much, it was worth a great deal—

it was worth *all* to him. From the temple flowed all the blessings that enriched his land—the fertility and beauty of its fields, the happiness of its homes, the sobriety, industry, and contentment of its people, the patriotism of its judges, and the heroism of its soldiers—all flowed from the temple. There, there dwelt a power, and thence there emanated an influence, silent and unseen, but not unfelt, which, finding its way to every hearth, and penetrating into every heart, made the Jewish people the brave, wise, wealthy, and prosperous people which they were.

A mere utilitarian, who can see value only in what is material, when he thought of the tithes which supported the priesthood, and the rich offerings that were daily carried up to the temple, would have cried out, with him who saw the box of spikenard poured upon the head of Jesus, "To what purpose is this waste?" He would have predicted the impoverishment of the people, and demanded the abatement, if not the suppression, of an institution that was devouring the land. But what did experience testify on the point? It testified that, so far from being the canker of the nation's wealth, the temple was the fountainhead of its prosperity; and that the more numerous the gifts which the people carried into its courts, the greater the plenty which flowed into their barns. It was not till the temple had become but a name, and the tithes and offerings were withheld, that beggary and barrenness began to afflict the land of Israel, and that a brave and independent people bowed their neck to a foreign yoke, and emptied their treasures into the lap of foreign tax-gatherers.

The temple, in this respect, was but a feeble type of the gospel. Richer and larger blessings still does the gospel shower on those nations that are so happy as to enjoy it. Wherever the gospel comes, there the earth is green; smiling fields and happy homes deck its surface. Wherever the

gospel comes, there science kindles her lamp, and murky ignorance, with her horrid train of attendants, takes her departure. Wherever the gospel comes, there art finds a home, the savage becomes the civilised man, and happy and gainful industry plies the loom and the forge, or, spreading the sail of commerce, visits, on golden ventures, distant shores. Wherever the gospel comes, there despotism dare not build a dungeon or forge a chain. What the temple made the Jew—a fearless, because a God-fearing man, who, as he sat beneath the fig-tree that shaded his dwelling, looking forth on his beauteous land which he knew how to defend, bade defiance to the world—the gospel has made the Anglo-Saxon—a man of erect front, of unquailing eye, of skilful hand, and of venturous foot. It is the gospel, not nature, that has made the Anglo-Saxon's dwelling in the greenest parts of the earth—in the midst of flourishing fields, of seas whitened with ships, and cities into which are gathered the riches of the earth—while surrounding countries lie scathed and burned up by the baleful breath of superstition. Can living man calculate the worth of the gospel, in its character merely of a temporal benefactor? We say in its character of a temporal benefactor, the figures are not yet invented which can express its value. All the gold ever dug from the bowels of the earth were but as dust in the balance, if weighed against the blessings with which the gospel is freighted. But if the temple was worth all that it cost, and a great deal more, to the Jew, *à fortiori* the gospel is worth all that it costs, and a great deal more, to Christian nations. Of the gospel, as of the law, we may say that its great mission has regard to the future—the future of time in the world's millennial rest, and the future of eternity, in which the mighty amplitude of its infinite beneficence will be unfolding for ever; but in passing down to that future it scatters rich blessings, such as those we have spoken of, on

its path. Now, if the security and peace of our homes be of any value, if our commerce, our independence, and all our other national blessings be of any value, of how much greater value is the gospel? They are but *effects;* it is the *cause,* the great parent cause. And yet what have we been doing? Begrudging the gospel its support! throwing to it the most miserable pittance, and looking on even that pittance as too much—as lost! The little we have given has had to be wrung from us! as if the gospel was a beggar—a devourer of our substance—an institution to be merely tolerated in the world, and one from which society had never reaped a single benefit, nor ever would. Well may we stand astonished at our own shortsightedness and infatuated penuriousness. How much richer are we of the money which we ought to have given, but have not given? Richer! are we not poorer, greatly poorer, temporally and spiritually? Ours has truly been a spendthrift economy. The money we have denied to the gospel and its ordinances we have been compelled to pay ten times over to vice and its institutions.

There is another point in which the temple, with its ritual, teaches a lesson to us as regards the support of the gospel ministry. Why was the temple so gorgeous and the ritual so burdensome? Did the polished stones of the building, the golden vessels of the altar, and the rich robes of the high priest, minister pleasure to the Most High? How poor and beggarly a show to Him that sitteth on the seraph-encircled throne in the temple above! Not for Him, but for the worshipper, was the temple with its ritual made thus gorgeous. Jehovah judged it meet, for the most important ends, to maintain the Jewish institute, in point of external magnificence, on a level with the rival religions of the heathen world. Our estimate of the intrinsic worth of a thing is often founded on a comparative standard, and is always affected, more or less, by outward show. It was

especially so in the early ages. Egypt and other countries could boast of their sumptuous temples, of their numerous and wealthy hierarchy, of their attractive and dazzling ceremonies, supported by costly offerings. Had the worship of Jehovah been placed on a much inferior footing as regards these particulars—had it been performed in a mean sanctuary, and by a pauperised priesthood—not only the Gentile who chanced to visit Palestine, but the Jew himself even, would have been in danger of despising it. Therefore Jehovah planted in the midst of the land a temple which it required the treasures of two kings, with all the artistic taste and science of the time, to rear, and which was renowned for its beauty through all the countries. He permitted none but the flower of the population—the finest in respect of personal comeliness, and the first in respect of social position—to minister in its courts; and He would allow only the choice of the country's produce—the firstlings of its flocks, and the best of its fruits—to be offered on its altars. And did not God's service merit all this? Did it not deserve to have, in these points, *equality* at least, if not precedence, with the rival pagan systems, while it had this vast superiority to them all, that beneath its golden splendour there lay hid, not fatal errors, but eternal verities?

Now we demand, for similar reasons, a similar equality for the gospel ministry. We have not yet advanced so far as to be able wholly to disconnect the things of sense from the things of the Spirit, or to form an estimate of the latter wholly unbiassed by the external guise in which they are presented. If our churches are very much inferior to our factories—if, while we build palaces for our commerce, and temples for our art, we content ourselves with worshipping God in a house little better than a hovel, religion, it is true, will be none the worse, but the estimate formed of her by the world will be decidedly lower; nay, she will, to some

extent, unavoidably suffer in the eyes even of those who are not of the world. And if to this be added the yet greater evil of an ill-furnished pulpit—a minister of meagre gifts, of slender acquirements, of no information, unread in the literature and science of his time, and, as usually happens, despising what he cannot value; and if, instead of solid and deep-thoughted expositions of God's Word, strongly entrenched in the theological and scientific literature of the day, he present his hearers with frothy harangues, slovenly in style, pointless in argument, and vapid in thought—then we have a picture, and an affecting one truly, of religion wounded in the house of her friends.

We shall have other opportunities of speaking of the social status which a minister ought to occupy; but it is proper, in connexion with the present stage of our subject, to remark, that the world has at its service the best gifts that are to be found. Foremost, and in its highest posts, it places the men of largest intellect, of profoundest scientific, mechanical, or political attainments. These are the men whom it summons to do its work. If their cost is great, it says, that matters not, they are worth their cost. And the world is wise in its generation. "Be conformed to the world," we would say here. Let the Church summon to her service something like the same intellectual gifts, the same mental training, the same acquired knowledge and familiarity with the facts of science, of history, and of travel, which the world finds when it needs them, because willing to pay their price. Not that the minister, instead of being a preacher of the gospel, is to be a lecturer on science, or, instead of an ambassador of Christ, a mere *litterateur;* but that he ought to possess, in some measure, all these qualifications, and know how to use them in the exposition, the defence, and the application of God's Word. In short, the hierarchy of the house of God ought to be as learned, as accomplished,

and as well found as the hierarchy of science, or the hierarchy of letters, or the hierarchy of politics.

But this cannot be done by merely saying to the man, Read, study—science and literature are making prodigious strides, you must keep abreast of them. You but mock him while you bid him grow in knowledge, and withhold from him the means of access to it. This is like saying to the hungry, Be fed; to the naked, Be clothed; while you give them not wherewithal to feed and clothe them. How can the minister read without books? and books—good books especially—cost dear. How can he acquaint himself with the facts of science while debarred access to the records of scientific discovery? Is his knowledge to come by inspiration, as in the primitive age? Let church members reflect on their own duty here. You expect your pastor to be a labourer, an efficient labourer, a labourer "not needing to be ashamed;" why then do you deny him the tools of his labour? And you do deny him these when you give him such a salary as puts beyond his reach the best systems, the ablest commentaries; in short, the learning, the wisdom, the deep and rich thoughts which successive generations of studious and prayerful men have accumulated in elucidation of the sacred oracles. When the library is full of knowledge, then may we expect the pulpit to be full of light. If the shelves of the former are empty, or, what is just as bad, laden with rubbish, what can proceed from the latter but vapid and empty harangues, expositions that leave all in hopeless obscurity, and defences and answers that only provoke a curl on the lip of the sceptic. Your pastor must have food; clothing is equally indispensable; and if you give him only what is barely sufficient to provide the necessaries which himself and his family *must* have, how *can* he or *dare* he purchase other things? The erudite tome, the magazine, and journal, which record the discoveries of science,

the march of invention, or the painfully gathered fruits of foreign travel, are beyond his reach. Could he have access to these, they would help to replenish the fountains of thought and feeling in his own mind; and coming thus equipped by subsidiary knowledge to the prayerful study of the Word of God, when he entered the pulpit the sanctuary would be filled with the perfume of his gifts and graces as was the temple of old by the scent of the precious ointment poured on the head of the high-priest. But this, too often, alas! is denied the minister, because, forsooth, it would cost a little more money to his flock. Oh, what a wrong they do their pastor! what an injury they inflict upon themselves! for it is themselves they defraud and impoverish, not reflecting that what they gave would be paid back, and paid with usury, in the deeper veins of thought, and the wider views of Divine truth, mantling with the warm flush of novel illustration, which would attract and delight them in the ministry of their pastor. Instead of this, they condemn themselves to listen, Sabbath after Sabbath, to the same subjects and thoughts, wearisomely restated in almost the same dead and withered words. Their minister is smitten with intellectual paralysis. A conscious sense of inferiority enfeebles and benumbs him. It is this that makes the gospel too often blush before science, and hang down its head and remain speechless in the presence of infidelity.

Again, we observe that the gospel is worth so much more than the law by how much it is more excellent in its own nature. In the one we have that in its perfected form, which in the other we had but in its rudiments. The law was carnal, the gospel is spiritual; the law was the shadow, the gospel is the substance. And by how much its nature is more spiritual, by so much is its operation more powerful. The one was a sword in its scabbard, the other is a sword

unsheathed. The one was the fire in the voltaic pile, the other is the living fire set free, and pervading with quickening energy the whole mass of society. The gospel has produced a new and higher type of both individual and national life. Virtues grow and flourish freely in the sunshine of Christianity, which the obscure light and feeble warmth of the former economy could not nourish, save in rare cases only. It blesses the Church; it blesses the commonwealth in measure far larger. There is a higher piety in the one; there is a purer justice, a loftier patriotism in the other. But in proportion to the gospel's power to bless, so is our duty to support it.

In fine, the Mosaic institute was placed in Judea for Judea alone. Not, indeed, exclusively so. Its ultimate reference was to the world; and even then it conferred indirect and partial benefits upon contemporary nations. Like a lofty Pharos, set up in the midst of the earth, the Mosaic institute threw out its rays beyond the limits of the land in which it existed, and voyagers there were on the dark ocean of paganism who saw its light, and found the port. But this was an incidental result; its main purpose respected the land of Palestine and the seed of Abraham; and yet, though thus limited in its immediate end and object, what ample revenues, what a secure and princely provision did it enjoy —the fourth even of what was then, perhaps, the richest country in the world. But if, as we have shewn, the Mosaic ritual was worth its cost, *à fortiori* the gospel is worth *its* cost. It is worth its cost because of the higher and wider uses it is destined to serve. A world now leans upon the Church. In patriarchal times, when a family or a tribe simply were dependent upon it, a *tenth* was given; in later times, when a nation only had to be provided for, a *fourth* was given; and now, when the necessities of a world have to be met, there is given—a fourth? a tenth? a hundredth

part of the wealth of Britain? Alas! our practical answer is, that less is required for a world than for a nation. As the gospel widens its sphere, we contract our liberality; and as its work increases, we curtail the means at its disposal. Is it wonderful, however melancholy it may be, that the gospel lingers on its way, and that, instead of hastening to gladden all the ends of the earth, which "shall remember, and turn unto the Lord," generations pass away, and its mission is not sped?

Though the Christianity of Britain existed for Britain alone, our scale of giving would be pronounced inadequate and stinted; so very stinted that, as lamentable facts shew, it does not even suffice to preserve our own population from lapsing into heathenism. But the Christianity of Britain does not exist for Britain alone; it has been set in its high place that it may shed the light of the evangelical day over all the earth; and, therefore, our scale of giving ought as far to transcend that of the Jew as the world-wide aims of Christianity transcend the limited and national range of the Mosaic dispensation. This we ought to do, provided we are worthily to meet the claims of the gospel, and the exigencies of a perishing world. What numerous demands for Bibles and missionaries come daily to us from every hemisphere of earth! To Christian Britain the millions of India turn their eyes; to Christian Britain the sable sons of Africa stretch out their hands; to Christian Britain the tribes of the Pacific cry across the ocean for the bread of life. Even China, which has kept her hieroglyphic-inscribed gates closed against the world, is now content to open them, and to sit at the feet of a nation which she has long despised. Such is the multitude of suppliants that crowd to our gates. Shall we send them away empty? Shall we say to them, "There is not bread in our Father's house for us and for you"? Shall we spare to take of those

treasures which our commerce and our skill have amassed and expend them on Bibles and missionaries? Shall we say to these outcasts, We will help you, but not now; first let us provide for our own wants—luxurious furniture, gay clothing, dainty viands, fine equipages, and, when our own comforts are complete, we shall attend to your spiritual necessities? This were enough to bring heaven's curse down upon our commerce, and on all the sources of our wealth, and to make this our isle a spectacle of loathing and detestation to all the earth. We trust we shall act a part better befitting the rank we hold as a nation, and the crisis of the world's history in which it is our lot to live. But if we would do so, we must be prepared to give in measure far exceeding that in which the men of former ages gave. What were a tenth, though every Christian in Britain should give to that extent, to such a destitution as this? It were but a drop to the ocean; it were but trifling with an enormous exigency. No; let us meet world-wide necessities with world-wide beneficence. We have the means of doing so,—have we the heart? the piety? the faith? The Christians of the first century heroically faced the lions; the Christians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries braved the fulminations and crusades of Rome; have the Christians of the nineteenth century the self-denial to part with their wealth—gathered from every field on earth—for the evangelisation of the world? Let us not fear that we shall starve our commerce and cripple our other great enterprises. The nation that will save its wealth in this cause shall lose it; and the nation that loses its wealth in this cause shall find it, and find it a thousandfold even in this life. We shall root our power in every quarter of the globe, and open markets for our products amongst every people; and in return for our gifts, a stream of blessing, larger a thousand times than any that ever flowed outwards from our shores, shall

flow inward upon us, breaking around our isle in a multitudinous symphony of fervent thanksgivings and reciprocal kindnesses.

But we shall reap a yet higher recompense. We shall hasten the coming—perhaps we may see the dawn—of that blessed era, when the sun, as he rises on a Sabbath morning, and looks down on the earth, not, as now, mantled in the shadows of superstition and foul with the stains of crime, but bathed in light and beautified on mountain and vale with Christian sanctuaries, shall be followed in his course westward by the voice of prayer and the melody of praise.

Let us regale ourselves by anticipation of the scene. The first light breaks over the islands of Japan, and the song begins. A low harmony, breathed forth in deep melodious numbers, like the fabled music which flowed of old from the stony throat of Memnon, when struck by the first ray, is heard rising to heaven. Onward it comes. Hark! the nations of China swell the song, and the peal is solemn and grand, like the voice of many waters. Westward still comes that mighty voice; over slumbering ocean, over spicy isle, over tall cliff and bold rocky headland—the sentinels of continents. Now it sweeps along over reedy jungle and green savannah; now it breaks in thunder around the proud domes of magnificent cities; and now it rolls upwards to where the white crest of the Himalaya girdles the sky. The nations of India, bound in caste no longer, awake, and shout, "Alleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." From nation to nation that triumphant anthem is borne onwards. Old Elam now takes up the notes and passes them on to the Affghan amid his hills on the one hand, and the far-off tents of Kedar on the other. The peasant of the Russian steppes, the herdsman of the Alps, and the wandering tribes of sable Africa hear it, and with bended knee and uplifted hands join in the hymn. Nature listens entranced, and bursts into a

song; the wilderness and the solitary place is glad at the hearing of that voice; the sea roars, the floods clap their hands; the mountains and the hills break forth into singing; the trees of the wood rejoice, the valleys laugh, they also sing. Now Europe takes up the anthem, and joins in it with all her nations, from where Minerva's ruins crown the marble steep of Sunium to where Kamskatcha's ice spreads out beneath the star of the pole. How loud and triumphant is the shout! It is as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Song like this has not been heard beneath heaven's vault since that day when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Wafted across the Atlantic, the millions on its seaboard resume and prolong the anthem. The thousands and tens of thousands inhabiting the plain of the Mississippi and the valley of the St Lawrence peal forth the song, and pass it onwards, over pathless meadow and brown forest, over rocky mountain and crystal river, over the white man's dwelling and the red man's wigwam, in ever-growing magnificence of volume, to the shores of the Pacific. It has circled the earth, and its last cadences are heard rising to heaven as evening descends over the solitude of the western prairies.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES—ORDINANCE OF CHRIST.

WHEN Christianity passed into the new dispensation, it carried with it all its doctrines, all its institutions, and, by consequence, all its claims. Christianity carried with it all its *doctrines;* not one of them was changed in a single iota as regarded its true meaning and essence. The altar of stone was taken down; the bodies of slain beasts ceased to be presented as sacrifices; but the doctrine hid beneath these shadows remained, and the veil being withdrawn, the doctrine came the more fully forward into the light. The altar, with its material sacrifice, had disappeared, and in its room the Atonement stood forth fully unveiled to the Church.

Christianity carried with it all its *institutions.* It had still its seventh day's rest; it had still its seals of the covenant of grace; only, instead of the Pascal lamb came the Supper; and instead of circumcision came now the baptismal water; it had still its public assemblies for the worship of God, and its instrumentalities and organisations for the diffusion of that truth by which man is sanctified and saved. And as Christianity carried over to the new dispensation all its doctrines and all its institutions, it followed that it carried over also all its *claims.* Being in truth the same gospel, its claims on the heart of man, on the life of man, and on the

substance of man, must necessarily be the very same as before. It says not less authoritatively, "Honour the Lord with thy substance."

In accordance with this, we do not know of a single new commandment contained in the gospel. It appears to take for granted, that whatever was obligatory then is obligatory now, and that Christians should feel it to be so; *that* alone excepted that had its foundation obviously in the ceremonial form of the dispensation. The former was the legislative age of the Church; this is the expository, it is the grand unfolding, the withdrawing of type and symbol, and the open manifestation of the body of truth; and if the Church sometimes feels as if she were face to face with principles unseen by her before, it is not because these principles did not previously exist, but because they were wrapt up in a symbolic covering. Christianity, we think, honours itself by not re-enacting its old statutes. It takes higher ground than if it re-enacted them. It sustains itself as the religion that was from the beginning—the religion that came from Eden—that in which the patriarchs Enoch, and Abraham, and David lived, and which therefore needed not to re-enact its old laws. It thus retains fast hold on both our affections and our services.

Taking this principle with us, let us go to the study of the Duty, as seen in the light of the New Testament. God himself appointed the Levite his portion of old; it was a fundamental law in the Jewish state, and one of the very first arrangements made, that the tenth should be paid to him. So again, Christ, the King and Lord of His Church, has appointed to the minister of the gospel his portion; and He shewed His sense of the importance of the matter by making it one of the very earliest arrangements of his kingdom. In deed and in truth, it is the old arrangement revived; it is the act of Jehovah, King of Israel, adopted and sanc-

tioned by Jesus, the King of Zion, with the necessary modifications to adapt it to the new economy.

It is instructive to observe here, first of all, that the institution of the order of gospel ministers, and the law of their support, came together. They were announced together and bound up together. "Go, preach," said Christ, giving to his apostles their great commission, and added He, with reference to their support, without which their commission could not be fulfilled, "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7). Here, in point of fact, was a new Levitical order appointed; and as the ancient Levites were to be neither tillers of the soil nor dressers of the vine, and yet were to receive, along with the rest of the nation, a fair share of what the land of Palestine produced, so again, this order of spiritual Levites were bound to separate themselves from the avocations of other men, from the labours of agriculture, from the cares of government, from the gains of commerce, from the perils of war, and to give themselves wholly to sacred employments; but they were, nevertheless, to share and share alike with their brethren in the general wealth and comfort of the community in which their functions were discharged. This, certainly, is the spirit of Christ's injunction. The ancient arrangement for the priesthood, divested of the nomenclature and the stringencies of the ceremonial economy, was hereby transferred substantially into the gospel dispensation. Levi was again bound to the altar; his lot was again parted among his brethren; they were bound to cultivate it for him, and bring him the increase; that is, he was entitled to an equal share with them in the good things of this life.

That this is the right interpretation of the matter is evident from the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians ix. 13, 14. In vindicating the right of ministers to be supported by those among whom they labour, Paul ex-

pressly compares the appointment for their temporal support under the gospel with that made for the priesthood under the law. "Do ye not know," says he, "that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." There are certain great principles implied in this passage, which go a great way to settle every question that may arise in connexion with this duty. The passage does not determine the amount the minister is to receive; it does not determine the mode in which it is to be paid him: there were obvious reasons for leaving a certain latitude of application to an injunction referring to all time and to every country. But the passage determines this principle, even that the minister's right to his temporal support is as valid and strong as that of Levi to the tithes, and that, correspondingly, the *giving* of that support is as obligatory on the part of the people as was the payment of the tithes on the ancient Israelites: and further, we think it is fair to infer from this passage that it is the will of God that the support of the gospel ministry should be not *less liberal* than was that of the priesthood formerly, and that His ministers now, in point of social status, and of all that appertains to temporal emolument, should occupy a relative position with that of His priests of old.

This, then, is the light in which this matter is presented in the New Testament. It is an ORDINANCE of Christ. Here lies the foundation of the duty, "So hath the Lord ordained." Not, so doth the principle of equity demand: not, so do considerations of self-interest and gratitude prompt; but, "so hath the Lord ordained." We place this argument in the forefront as the highest and strongest. We make our appeal *first* to the conscience. We might argue this duty from a host of other considerations: we might urge its performance

from the consideration of equity to the minister: we might urge it from the consideration of a blessed recompense and return to the giver: we might urge it from the consideration of the temporal blessings which spring up around the gospel's path, as flowers around a fountain. All these we shall speak of in due time—they are valuable subsidiary arguments. But we must let the master-motive have precedence. We must move the conscience if we wish any real after-help from the feelings; and that only a Divine command can do. And happily here the command is plain: so plain that the simplest cannot misunderstand it, nor the most sophistical set it aside. It is, first of all, briefly and emphatically enunciated by the Lord: "The labourer is worthy of his hire;" and it is next proclaimed by His servant and apostle as the great and fundamental law of His kingdom: "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Equity says it is JUST: gratitude says it is MEET: wisdom says it is EXPEDIENT: but God says, "I ORDAIN."

From the summit of the gospel Zion, then, and spoken by the voice of the Church's King, comes this precept. Let us hear and obey. It is an old commandment repromulgated; for of this it may well be said, it is no new commandment, but one that was from the beginning. It existed in patriarchal times; Jacob recognised it when he said, "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." It was more formally defined and more stringently enjoined under the law; and now it comes forth once more under the gospel, having all the heavenly sanctions and gracious motives of this new dispensation to recommend and enforce it.

But let us not, amid the freedom and sweetness of the gospel, lose sight of the fact that this *is* a *command;* and let not its authority as a *law* be the less felt that it comes from

One who puts on so little of the majesty and authority of the lawgiver. On that very account it ought to be the more cheerfully complied with. If it is not terror that urges, but love that draws, how easy is it to obey? and the more easy our obedience, the more complete and entire it ought to be. Christ is a King; this truth we ought never to forget; but we do forget it practically when we refuse to give what is fair and just to His ministers. It is easy to make the confession, to bow the knee, and say Hail! but that confession is worthless, it is a mockery, when we defraud Him in the person of his ambassador of the homage to which, as a king, He is entitled, even the offering of our substance for His service. The Israelite of old who withheld his tithes virtually denied Jehovah as the head of the Jewish state, by refusing the tribute to which God, as sovereign, was entitled, and which the Israelite, as subject, was bound to pay. The wrong was done not so much to the Levite as to Him whose servant the Levite was. It was God who was affronted, because His command it was that was violated; it was God who was robbed, because it was to Him the tithes were primarily due. "Ye have robbed ME."

The crime is equally heinous still. Christ is as really king of the Evangelical theocracy as God was of the Jewish theocracy; the support of His ministers by the offerings of the people is as really the ordination of Christ, as the support of the priests by the tithes of the Israelites was the appointment of Jehovah; and the church member who fails to implement that appointment, who refuses to the minister what is just and right, virtually denies that Christ is Head of the Church. He refuses the tribute to which, as King of Zion, Christ is entitled, and robs Him in the person of his ambassador. The minister is wronged and defrauded, no doubt, but Christ much more. It is *His* command that is

violated, it is *His* ordinance that is profaned; against *Him*, then, eminently is the sin committed. It is not the ambassador, it is the Master that is rejected. We will not have this man to reign over us. Not only is the sin equally heinous, it is much more heinous than under the law. It is a sin clothed with aggravations that did not and could not attach to it then. The claims of the gospel are now better understood; the motives that enforce them are a hundred times more powerful; and the guilt of resisting these claims is proportionally great. The tendency of our conduct is to extinguish the gospel, to cut off all its blessings from the world, and to perpetuate the horrors and cruelties of heathenism; this were a crime of enormous magnitude, exceeding the crime of extinguishing Judaism in the same proportion in which the dimensions of the world exceed those of Palestine. And were every one to act in the way we have supposed—in the way that too many professing Christians act—where were Christ's kingdom? would not His gospel speedily disappear, and the grand end of His coming into the world be frustrated?

But, farther, the man who neglects this duty ought to reflect on the position in which he places himself. The Israelite who paid no tithes, and who thereby disowned God's government over the nation, put himself by that act beyond the protection of that government. He pronounced a sentence of virtual outlawry upon himself. In the blessings promised to Israel—the dew of heaven above, and the fatness of the earth beneath—he could claim no share rightfully. Living amongst others on whom these blessings were bestowed, he shared *per force* in them, it is true. The sun shone and the rains fell on *his* field, as well as on that of his neighbour; and the earth filled his barns with her harvests not less plenteously, it may be, than the barns of the pious Israelite. But in the sight of God and of his nation, he was

a robber. He occupied lands for which he paid no rent; and every penny of wealth, and every morsel of bread which he called his, he had possessed himself of, as it were, by violence. Right he had none. Or if he pleaded that he was no rebel, he was compelled to put forward the plea of the pauper—he was too poor to pay anything, and had to be fed and clothed at God's and the nation's expense.

So with the member of the Christian commonwealth who refuses the tribute of its Head, defrauds the ambassador of his right, and appropriates to his own use what is the gospel's due: he, too, forfeits the privileges and blessings of that kingdom. He enjoys, or attempts to enjoy, immunities and honours to which he has no right. He makes a violent seizure, as it were, on the blessings of the gospel; forgetting that the fiat of retribution, if less palpable, is now more direct and speedy than under the law, and that God has but to speak, and the heavens over him will be as brass, and the earth under him as iron. Or if not a rebel, he is a pauper: he claims admission into God's house, that he may be fed, as a matter of charity. We put it to the reader, are you willing to accept the privileges of the gospel on this plea? The widow gave her two mites—Mary emptied her box of spikenard—the first Christians sold all they had, and laid down the price at the apostles' feet; and yet you say that you have nothing to give! How manifest is it that your spirit is not theirs, nor is it the spirit of the gospel. We would think meanly of the gospel did it not nourish a far nobler and more generous spirit than this, and we would be ashamed to appear in its train were it not followed by men who think more highly of it and of themselves than to be content to live on alms. No; Christ's kingdom is not a kingdom of paupers, but a kingdom of priests: it is not their profession to beg, but their function to offer: they assemble in His courts not only

to receive blessings, but to present their gifts. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" Such is ever the language of the true disciple. Not that he hopes ever to repay, but because it is a necessity of his nature so to act, because he wishes to mark his immense sense of the blessings conferred, and because his Lord has so "*ordained*," and ordained so, he feels, quite as much for his profit as for His own glory.

But though we have, first of all, held forth the COMMAND, and appealed to the conscience, that every one who is either guilty of the total neglect or of but the partial discharge of this duty may know that he is living in violation of a law of Christ's house, and in contempt of the authority of the King of Zion; yet, to the genuine disciple, how soon does the *command* pass into the *privilege*, and how easily and naturally does the sense of *duty* rise into the higher feeling of *love!* But of this we shall have ampler opportunity of speaking at a future stage.

CHAPTER IX.

ARGUMENT FROM EQUITY.

We have established the minister's right to his support. His claim is the strongest imaginable, for he holds immediately of Heaven. He who clothed him with his office gave him a right to be supported in it. What is given to the gospel minister, then, is not given in the character of a *beneficence;* it is not a payment which may be withheld, and no injustice committed. It is a payment due, on the ground, first, that God has appointed it; and second, as we now come to shew, on the ground that the minister has fairly earned it. Just as Levi's lot was his, though ploughed, and sown, and reaped by other hands, so, on the principles already enunciated, the minister's fair temporal support is his: nay, not so much his as his Father's. It belongs, first of all, to God, who has formally and solemnly set it apart for the support of the gospel, and commanded it to be paid to His ministers; and who shall dare alienate it from its proper purpose, or call that unclean which God has made holy? It is His own that is kept from the minister, if he be not supported in his office. He is not a suppliant denied, he is a labourer defrauded, or rather despoiled of his inheritance.

The second great argument here is that from EQUITY. It is worthy of notice that Christ has so worded the original appointment as to include this great argument, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." The minister is a "labourer,"

—the gospel ministry is a "work;" not a post of dignity merely, filled that the pension may be drawn, but a real and onerous work, yielding great and valuable results to those to whom it is performed. "He that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work." The appointment, then, that remunerates the workman for his work has *justice* written upon the front of it. It is not an arbitrary ordination of Christ, but one, like all God's ordinations, embodying the eternal principles of equity. They "minister at the altar," and it is just that "they should live of the altar."

That men may the more powerfully feel the force of the plea from equity, God has put himself, as it were, under it. He is the *Master;* the minister is His *servant;* and, by speaking of the relation of master and servant in that connexion, He plainly intimates that He holds himself bound to provide a fair and equitable recompense for those who are doing His work. He took care that Levi, who served at His altar of old, should have his full share with the other tribes in the ancient Palestine. And one of the first arrangements, as we have shewn, in the gospel kingdom was to make an analogous provision for the successors of Levi in the spiritual temple. God will take no man's services, and deny him his reward. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal," is His own command, and He has gone before man in the observance of His own maxim. He will not take the services of an enemy, He will not take the services of the men of the world, without amply repaying them. Does He call them to endure toil, or encounter danger for society's sake? they shall have wages—such wages as they most desire—fame, wealth, dignities. Just to enemies, God can never be unjust to His own ministers. It shall never be said of Him that He clothed the one in purple, it may be, and gave but rags to the other—that he fed the one with the finest of the wheat,

and left the other to be famished. If this has happened at times, it has not been the Master's fault, who has amply provided for His servants, by ordaining that they should be rewarded *for* their work, and *according* to their work; but it has proceeded from the neglect and injustice of man, who has set at nought the express will and ordination of Christ herein.

After God's example, how ought the force of this claim to be recognised by man? and there is great wisdom in placing the support of a gospel ministry, as one of its subordinate grounds, on a principle universally recognised and habitually acted upon. The very ox that ploughs our fields, and by his strength opens to us the riches of the earth, we permit to share in the blessings he creates. We would account that we had defrauded the dumb animal of his right if we compelled him ever to earn but never enjoy. No: we make him welcome to eat to the full of the grass that waves on our valleys and the grain that covers our fields. "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." We would account ourselves something worse than mean if we did not promptly and cheerfully recognise the claim of the humblest menial in our service. No: he has done his work, and shall have his wages. Surely we cannot do less with regard to the labourer in word and doctrine.

But *equity* has respect to the *amount* of support, as well as to the *fact* of support. This principle is taught by our Lord, certainly, when He terms the support of His ministers the "hire" of the workman. In all ages there has been a relation betwixt the work and the hire. The value of the one has determined the magnitude of the other. Why not here? *Any* support will not do. It must be a *just* support; that is, such a support as bears some fair proportion to the value of the work done. We don't mean its spiritual and eternal value; there can be no proportion here, unless

in that reward which the Master only can bestow. We speak of that reward which comes from society, and which, to be just and equal, must bear a proportion to the value of the work to society, to the qualifications demanded on the part of him who performs it, and to the efforts it costs him. But what ought that proportion to be? We answer unhesitatingly the same, or something like the same, with that observed in remunerating other public functionaries. A certain amount of skill and labour in other departments of duty bring a certain return; why should they not bring the same return in this? No good reason can be pleaded why they should not. We know there is an idea abroad that ministers ought to be content with less than the average income of other professional men, and that they betray something like a worldly and avaricious spirit provided they aim at equality with lawyers, merchants, physicians, &c. Now, provided it can be shewn that ministers need fewer qualifications for their office, that the discharge of that office costs them less labour, and that its worth to society is less, then, by all means, let their scale of remuneration be lower. But if, on the other hand, it can be shewn, as we contend it can, that on all these points they are at least equal to the classes mentioned, that their qualifications are as numerous, the labours of their office as great, and its worth as high, then, on every principle of equity and justice, their remuneration ought to be the same. The only way in which this reasoning can be set aside is by attempting to shew that it is the will of God that ministers should lead lives of obscurity and poverty, or at least that they should occupy a position considerably below that of men who are not more than their equals in point of intellectual and official accomplishments, or that there is something in the possession of a competency—such competency as the middle classes enjoy—that would unfit them for the discharge of their duties. We do not think

that any of these propositions will be maintained. The very opposite propositions would express the truth. As regards God's will in the matter, that has been sufficiently indicated in the high social position and ample emoluments assigned to the priesthood of old; and as regards the question of compatability, we do think that a fair competency is the position most compatible with the spirituality of the minister and the sacredness of his duties, inasmuch as it is the position which places him at an equal distance from the temptations and harassments which wait alike on wealth and on poverty. Provided the mind be engrossed with the matter of one's daily bread, it really matters very little whether it is the want of it or the too great abundance of it. Either way the mind is distracted, weakened, secularised.

But let us look a little more nearly at the matter, and see how the argument from equity bears on the support of the gospel ministry. The ministry, we have said, is a work; and it is a work for which a long and costly preparation must be made. Any of our handicrafts from which, in a flourishing state of the country, our workmen may earn incomes not more than a third below the average stipends of our ministers can be learned in a season or two; and when once learned can be practised through life without further study or effort, save, of course, the physical exertion. The more skilled avocations, and the various branches of trade and commerce, which yield average incomes considerably higher than those of our ministers, may be thoroughly mastered in three or four years. Even the learned professions, which conduct to high social position and large incomes, are acquired at a smaller expenditure of time and money. The pulpit is reached only after a training of twelve years; four at the grammar school, four at college, and four at the Divinity Hall; to which two years may be added during which the

future minister is undergoing a sort of novitiate as a probationer. Here is a preparatory course at least a third longer than that required in almost any other profession. We do not say that this training should be abbreviated. Considering the dignity of the function, the varied gifts and experience essential to its right discharge, and the mighty issues dependent upon it, it is all short enough. It is the noblest office—"we are ambassadors for Christ"—and the best men, with the best training, should fill it. But we say it is surely *just* that the temporal maintenance of the office should bear some proportion to the time and cost expended in preparing for it. We do not say, place the ministers of the gospel above other professional men; convert their manses into palaces, and their glebes into princely estates; this we do not ask; though perhaps something might be urged for superiority of status on the ground of the longer and severer course that conducts to the pulpit. But though we do not plead for *superiority*, we certainly plead for *equality*—equality in pecuniary remuneration and social position with their compeers; and certainly the lawyer, the physician, the man of literature, of art, or of commerce, is not more than the compeer of the minister in point either of natural talent, of acquired gifts, or of the real value of his services. With less than equality justice cannot be satisfied; and we plead for this not so much for the minister's sake, as for his office's sake, and his Master's sake.

Let us look at the minister after he has reached his office, and see how the argument from justice will apply. Bidding adieu to days and nights of severe study, as things which he once knew, but now is to know no more, is he to sit down and enjoy himself? Quenching the lamp which he lit so oft at midnight, and putting away the ponderous tome over which he pored when soft sleep fell upon the eyelids of others, is he to repose upon the fruits of past labours? Alas,

no! It is no elegant, dignified, or luxurious retreat which he has reached; it is a post of hard and life-long labour which has been assigned him. His work is but beginning. And what a work! "Who is sufficient for these things?" was the exclamation which a feeling of its difficulty extorted from perhaps the most gifted human intellect that has ever arisen. Let us cast a glance at the variety of labours for which the minister must gird himself, and see how his work must tax his resources, strain his energies, and occupy his time to the very uttermost. First of all comes his pulpit-work. To wield the pulpit with effect—to unlock the sacred volume, and scatter around, with a skilful and liberal hand, its heavenly treasures, demands no ordinary range of accomplishment. To acquaintance with the original tongues of the Bible the minister must add the mastery of his own. He must be much at home in the history, the opinions, and the customs of the nations among whom the Bible was written; he must have some tolerable acquaintance with the many learned commentaries and dissertations which the theological mind of Christendom has produced in elucidation of Holy Scripture since the Reformation; he must know the present aspects of the controversies waged against revelation, and the sources of their solution; he must be familiar with the more important facts of modern science, and the leading discoveries of modern travel, bearing as these do most intimately upon the historical truth of Holy Writ. Unless fully armed, he can never be safe on a field so beset by enemies. This is a formidable array of requisites; and to obtain possession of all these requisites two things are obviously indispensable—means to purchase the proper books, and an undistracted mind to study them; we much question whether almost any other profession demands so many: but the list is not yet complete. When the minister has acquired all this, he has but half mastered his subject. He

must know thoroughly the human heart; for if he does not, his other knowledge will be but of little use to him in the pulpit—he will appear before his hearers like a man borne down by the weight of his armour, or like a man beating the air; he must know the workings of the heart, its disguises, and its self-deceptions, its secret fears and its cherished hopes. These, without appearing to see, he must know how to move. He must make himself acquainted with the condition of his flock, their peculiar temptations, their tempers, their family circumstances, their sorrows and joys. His discourses must not be written for any given number of human beings who may chance to assemble, and to whom he is to deal out instructions, reproofs, and counsels, at haphazard, not knowing whether they are the instructions and reproofs that are needed or not, but pleasing himself with the thought that though most of the arrows shot by him at a venture may miss the mark, all will not. He is to have in his eye not a chance assembly, but a definite and stated flock, whose circumstances are known to him, whose hearts too are known to him, and to whom, therefore, the Spirit helping him, he may be able to speak "a word in season," and to "reprove, rebuke, exhort," with all affection, skill, and fidelity. "Now I am ready for my work," says the minister, "open the pulpit door and let me enter." Stop! You are not ready yet. "All these things have I attained to, what lack I?" Much study of the Word of God, much inward digesting of it in the way of applying it to your own heart, and much prayer for the "fire" from above to come down and enkindle your discourse. The prayer has ascended, the fire has fallen: now you are ready; go, preach: now your words will be as "a sharp two-edged sword, dividing between the joints and the marrow, proving a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart."

To this prime and cardinal labour the minister of the

gospel must add a host of subsidiary, but certainly not unimportant duties. His humanity will find ample scope among the poor of his flock, and his affection and counsel among the young. Numbers will seek to him for advice, and numbers for sympathy and assistance; some will come to unburden their sorrows, and some to give vent to their joys. He must weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. He must be by every sick-bed and by every death-bed, dropping, with the pathos of genuine sympathy and compassion, into the ear of the dying and the heart of the mourner, the words of heavenly consolation. We do not hesitate to say, that what with the offices of friendship which he must cultivate with some, and the offices of a pastor which he must discharge to all, what with the daily reading and study in view of the pulpit, there is work here involving a strain both on mind and body greater than is demanded by any other profession, the highest departments of law and government excepted. And there is this difference to be borne in mind as a not immaterial one, that whereas these last are discharged amid the powerful excitements of conspicuous position and golden rewards, the labours of the pastor are prosecuted in a sphere remote ordinarily from the notice of the world, and where his zeal can neither be awakened nor sustained by the glitter of rank or the gifts of fortune. No journal records his visit to the home of the widow, or proclaims his deeds of kindness to the orphan; his labours for the dying are entombed with them till the last day; and his studies in the closet are not lightened or stimulated by the thought that a listening senate will applaud the ingenuity of his arguments, or an admiring nation hang upon the eloquence of his periods. Uncheered and unrewarded, so far as regards the rewards which man can bestow, the pastor must prolong his labours far beyond the period when other hard-worked functionaries

retire—past the bloom of youth, past the strength of manhood, far into the eve, till the deepening furrows on the brow, and the gathering snows on the temples, and the bending frame, which stoops lower and lower to meet the grave, give warning that the time is nigh when the weary labourer must quit his task, and go to his Master to receive his reward—the welcome, even, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Is not this work enough to engross the whole time and the whole heart of any man? It matters not how powerful his intellect, or how large his gifts; more than commensurate they cannot be with the demands of his great office. "Give thyself wholly to these things," wrote the great apostle to his son Timothy. "Give thyself wholly to these things," says Christ to every one who enters into the office of the ministry. "*I give myself wholly to these things,*" is the solemn declaration and vow of every minister at ordination. But if the minister is solemnly bound to give himself *wholly* to his work, the people are just as solemnly bound to support him *wholly* in it. The one obligation is but the correlative of the other. Most obviously there is a strong plea in equity here. The right of the people to the whole time and the whole strength of their pastor is undoubted, and is often pleaded: but that right is not a whit more undoubted than is the pastor's right to his full temporal maintenance from his flock. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel:" not *partly* by it, and *partly* by some other profession or avocation, but *wholly* by it. And, as we have already remarked, this Divine ordination embodies the principles of equity, for the apostle observes, at the same time, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Is the minister your debtor? as if the apostle had said. Is he a pensioner on your bounty? Is it a marvellous generosity

on your part that you have given him food and clothing in return for time and talents which, if devoted to some other profession, would have brought, it may be, high position and great wealth? Is this a great matter? Is it not, after all, only what is fair, and equal, and just? It is but the payment of a debt most righteously due, and which you could not have refused without at once defrauding him and contemning his Master.

It is, indeed, a fearful crime for the pastor to forget his ordination vow, to trifle with the dread responsibilities of his office, and to combine other avocations with his work as Christ's ambassador. The crime is the greater when the office assumed into partnership with the other is a secular one. The sacred and the profane, the holy and the unholy, are in this case joined, and a most unseemly and incongruous union it is. But this may not be the minister's fault—it may be quite as much the fault of his people. And when they deny him a *just support*, when they give what is not sufficient to maintain him in decency and respectability, what is he to do? He has before him but the alternative of running in debt, or of betaking himself to other labours to supply what is lacking on the part of his people. To run in debt he ought not: for no man is at liberty to do evil that good may come; or to retain his office in the way of disgracing it. He is shut up, therefore, to supplement his necessities in the way that will trench least upon his time, and most consort with the sacredness of his office. But if it is fearful guilt in the minister to permit himself to be drawn away from his office by the love of lucre, it is not less fearful guilt in the people to drive him from it by their penuriousness. The compact at the altar did not bind one party only, but both. If the pastor vowed to give his whole time and strength to his flock, the flock vowed to give a whole support to their pastor. While they remember *his* obligations, let them not

forget *their own;* and neither party can neglect his duty herein without provoking consequences most injurious to both. If the minister's strength is withdrawn from his work: if the pulpit and the soul's salvation have their rivals in his thoughts—it matters not whether from his own worldliness or his people's niggardliness: if, we say, the soul's salvation be not his one cardinal object, how soon will he feel that his locks are shorn, and that virtue as aforetime does not go out of him. The change may not be instantly apparent: he may continue, for a little space, to draw upon his former stores, but soon these will be spent, and then the evil can no longer be concealed—the spiritual bankruptcy will proclaim itself. The pulpit will appear to have undergone some malign transformation: and as the people wonder at the change, where, they will ask, are the prayers that were wont to ascend from this pulpit, so vehement, so instinct with celestial ardour, that they carried our souls aloft into the very presence of the King Eternal? Why is it that the chariot of fire comes not now every Sabbath morning to carry our souls upwards from the earth? And where are now those words of power that were wont to come from this pulpit, which pricked the conscience, revealed the thoughts of many hearts, and while they fed and comforted the humble Christian, smote the sinner like the bolt of heaven? Why are our souls not shaken and thrilled by such words now? The minister is there; the audience is there; in these respects all is unchanged: but the POWER that was wont to rest on both is not there. Alas the change! On our pulpit we may write "Ichabod," on our pews we may write "Ichabod," the glory is departed. But while the people see and bemoan the change, how often do they forget that its originating cause is with themselves?—that the chilling, deadening influence that descends from the pulpit upon the pew, first rose from the pew to

the pulpit. It is a poisonous malaria from the fens of worldliness.

Let us look next at the value received from a gospel ministry, and see how in this, too, the argument from equity applies. Value for value is a universally recognised principle of equity. Take the plainest and commonest article in our market, we willingly give its price—its fair and full price. We do not expect it on any other terms. Why not apply the same principle in this case? Why not value for value here? And who can tell the value of a faithful gospel ministry? But we talk of an impossibility when we talk of giving value for value here. Nothing we can give can ever repay our debt to the gospel; the riches of the globe, though emptied at the feet of Christianity, would not form an equivalent for its blessings. But wherein lies the value of the gospel? Alas! that we should need to answer this question. The gospel can neither spin nor plough; it can neither weave those curious fabrics, nor forge those wondrous machines in which consists our wealth. Is not, then, the gospel an unproductive labourer? Alas! there are thousands who reason thus—at least who think thus. There are thousands who can see value only in what can be weighed, or measured, or counted—in short, in what puts money into their pockets. In the spiritual power that works unseen behind these material agencies they can see no value whatever, and yet in this power lies all the value. Without that influence, our morality, industry, and skill, could not exist; and without our morality and industry our wealth could not exist. Whether it be individual virtue, social order, national riches, or other possession that is of real value to mankind, the gospel is the first great creator of it.

We do not at present speak of the blessings which the gospel confers on nations; we restrict our view to households. Who can tell how innumerable are the precious

benefits which a gospel ministry creates within even the narrow circle of a family? Enter the dwelling where religion reigns, and you feel at once its power to make happy. It is a new clime into which you have entered; the breath of love, like a gale from heaven, meets you on the threshold. There is a secret joy filling every heart in that dwelling, beaming in every face, making itself audible in every tone. No wealth could buy that happiness. Here is value received; value which costs the family little, and yet in worth transcends all price.

The gospel sets up an altar in every house; it makes the father a priest. In that arrangement we find the bond of domestic union and the fountainhead of domestic virtue. By baptism all the members of the family are taken into the same covenant of life; they grow up together heirs of the same hope. Thus, the family grows rich apace. Rich in what? It may not be in gold, but in something better than gold: rich in love, rich in domestic order and virtue. Their fare is simple, their garb is homely, their speech is plain; but their manners breathe the odour of a politeness that can spring only from purity of heart and conscious dignity of character. Their humble home is pervaded and embalmed by an air of happiness which is wanting often in the palaces of the great. This is great wealth. Multiply such families —families whose wealth (of which it may be permitted them to be proud) lies in the industry and intelligence of their sons, the modesty, virtue, and beauty of their daughters —cover the land with such families, and what a land you will have! how rich! how happy! how powerful! Such a people no power on earth could subdue; and however stern the clime in which their dwelling may be cast, their indomitable energy and creative skill will teach the very rock to blossom, and the bleakest deserts of earth to bloom with beauty and sing for joy. Such is the wealth the gospel creates; and such is

the measure in which it blesses its supporters. For every penny expended in its support, it yields a return of a thousandfold.

It thus appears that the minister is no unproductive labourer; on the contrary, there is no functionary that contributes more largely to the wealth and happiness of society; and it appears, too, that the gospel is no pensioner on the general bounty. When it craves to be supported, it but asks to live upon its own. The plea from justice, then, is irresistible. But how soon does the genuine disciple, who reflects on the value of a gospel ministry, especially to his own soul, reach the line where, as we have already said, justice merges into generosity, the *command* to give into the *privilege* of giving, and the sense of duty into the feeling of love. When shall I be able to repay my gracious Lord for all He has done for me? asks the Christian. All the long way from heaven to my prison, where I sat in darkness, the chain upon my arm, and the sentence of death upon my soul, He came seeking me, and having found me, He bought my liberty with His own blood. Since that day how numberless have His mercies been; "how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." Every day he has fed me with the bread of life, and every Sabbath he has feasted me at the banquet-table of the gospel. He has counselled me amid all the straits, defended me amid all the dangers, and comforted me amid all the sorrows of my pilgrimage. "He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." How can I but love, and what can love do but ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" "I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble; I will offer unto thee burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats."

CHAPTER X.

AMOUNT OF GIVING—TITHES.

We have set forth so far the claims of the gospel ministry. These claims are founded in its nature and ends; they are sanctioned by the authority of God, who has ordained that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" and embodying as they do the principles of equity, they are in themselves strictly just and righteous. The gospel is no claimant for eleemosynary aid: it is no pensioner on public bounty, much less is it a hard master, gathering where it has not strewed, and reaping where it has not sown. It seeks only to eat of the fruit of its own labours, and that for the purpose of enriching man with yet more abundant blessings. Let us now turn to the other side—the duty of the Church's members.

All duty is founded in God's authority. The authority of God in the matter in hand has been very explicitly made known. Now, in express conformity with the ordination of God in this matter is the nature which has been given to the Christian. Conversion brings the old life of the man to an end, and gives him a new life, with new principles, motives, and aims. He is dead: he has passed through a resurrection: he is risen *with* Christ and *for* Christ: he lives together with Him in heavenly places. So far as he is a Christian, he is *wholly consecrated* to the objects of this new life—he has consecrated himself in soul and body, he has con-

secrated himself throughout the entire range of his faculties, of his actions, and of his possessions. By a necessity of his nature, himself and all that is his exist only for God. If the Christian is able to realise his real position, as a man wholly devoted to God and bound to use every gift he possesses for God, as a man, in short, who is the denizen of a new world, for which alone he lives, he will find it no very difficult matter to regulate himself both as to the mode and as to the amount of giving for the ordinances of the gospel.

As to the amount, in the high sense just referred to, the Christian is bound to give *all*. But to prevent misapprehensions here, we must make one or two brief explanatory statements. Anxious as we are to press upon the conscience the duty of giving, we do not wish to go a hair's breadth farther than reason and Scripture will carry us. Every inch beyond is only so much loss of power to our cause. Those on whom we most depend for filling steadily the Church's exchequer are precisely those over whom Scripture and reason have the greatest power, and who, in consequence, will be the least moved by what is exaggerated in statement or overstrained in argument.

We remark, generally, that though the gospel is the highest object, and its universal diffusion, therefore, the ultimate end of man, yet this ultimate end is to be prosecuted through a variety of subordinate and intermediate ends. The worship of God is the highest employment of man, and yet it is not the will of God that all man's time should be spent in acts of praise and prayer. He must work that he may eat; and in the performance of his daily task, however humble, he is serving God. So here; the maintenance and diffusion of the gospel is the first and highest duty of man. To that duty he is to be wholly devoted. But it is evidently the will of God that the earth should be tilled, that trade should be carried on, that know-

ledge and art should be prosecuted; and, therefore, it is the will of God that the time and the money of man should be given, in due proportion, to these objects. These are not only lawful but necessary, and to neglect them, even for the holier end of concentrating exclusively our energies and resources on the diffusion of the gospel, would be not only eminently foolish, but highly criminal; it would arrest the progress of the world, dissolve society, and, instead of furthering, would completely defeat the very end we desire to attain. It is manifestly the will of God that the machinery of life should go on much as at present, only that it should be sanctified by being made subservient to man's highest good. We say, then, to all, "Be diligent in business." Let the labourer go to his field, the artisan to his workshop, the merchant to his counting-house, the philosopher to his study; let the earth be cultivated till it bring forth in handfuls; let our manufactures be improved to the utmost stretch of our ingenuity, and the utmost extent of our necessities; let our commerce be extended till it has opened highways and created markets in the now remotest wildernesses of the world; let our science be prosecuted till every secret has been brought within our ken, and every element has been reduced under our dominion: but let no one of these labourers, as he strives to excel in his own special department, ever forget that he is Christ's; that he is labouring for a worthier object than gain; that he is a fellow-worker with God; and that, whether he is digging the field or ploughing the seas, whether he is deciphering the ancient tablets of history, probing the deep secrets of nature, or constructing machines of new and marvellous powers, he is doing all with an ultimate view to the promotion of one paramount and eternal cause, even the erection of Christ's kingdom in the earth. In this way man will gain that high end sooner than if he prosecuted IT alone, because in this

way he enlists in the service of the world's evangelisation a vast variety of powers and forces. He opens his way to the very ends of the earth by his mechanical skill; he conciliates and knits together all its tribes by the benefits of commerce. By the printing-press he multiplies copies of the Word of God, and by steam he scatters them over the earth. Much time may be spent—to some it may appear lost—in preparing all these forces, and in bringing them upon the scene of action, but in the end our progress will be much more rapid, and the conquest achieved far more complete, than if we had gone forward without waiting for these auxiliaries.

We observe, in the second place, that it is lawful in every one to live according to his station in life. As God, by giving different tastes to men, evidently designed that there should be a variety of employments, so by giving different talents to men, He evidently meant that there should be a variety of ranks in society. It is agreeable, therefore, to God's will that every man should live in manner befitting his rank. His house, his furniture, his table, may all be according to his means. The education of his family not only *may*, but *ought* to be such as shall fit them for the duties of their station. He may even indulge without sin in such things as tend to gratify taste and embellish life; God has made these tastes part of our nature; to these tastes in man He has largely conformed his works of creation, and He cannot frown, therefore, on the gratification of them when kept within legitimate bounds. We would not forbid to the man of wealth and rank the pictures and statuary that adorn his mansion within, or the parks and parterres that embellish it without. This he may do, provided he does not leave the other and greater duty undone. The gospel inculcates simplicity of life, but it does not demand, and would not be benefited by a return to barbarism.

We may also remark here that we see nothing incom-

patible betwixt the paramount claims of the gospel and the due accumulation of capital. Some have doubted, in connexion with this subject, whether capital be lawful; but not wisely, we think. Capital is a power. It is one of the great powers of the world, and though, like other great powers, it may sometimes be guilty of abuse, yet that is no argument against its use, much less against its existence. Capital is not only itself a power, it is the creator of other powers. It is the creator of commercial enterprise, of mechanical skill, and scientific discovery. In short, our modern civilisation rests to a large extent on capital, and to adopt practically the conclusion that it is unlawful, would just be to divest Christianity of all the help which modern civilisation can give it. Besides, it is certain the men of the world would not act on this principle; they would still continue to accumulate capital, and would retain in their hands all the influence which capital gives its possessor. Civilisation would change sides. From the cause of the gospel it would go over to that of the world, and Christianity would have to fight a second battle to recover it. The objection arises, we think, from an exaggerated idea of the value of mere money-giving. There are a thousand other ways in which a man can minister to the gospel besides this. There are times when his personal or official influence, his learning, his eloquence, may be more useful than his money. It ought also to be borne in mind that by extinguishing capital, and giving all at once, we denude ourselves of the power of repeating the gift. Our sudden liberality would create a deluge. In grace, as in nature, it is the gentle shower and the nightly dews that are most to be desired.

Having made these statements, for the purpose of obviating misapprehensions, we come now to speak of the duty itself. The nature of this duty, and the sources of its obligation, we have sufficiently expounded in the foregoing part

of this treatise. It remains that we speak of the *amount* and the *mode* of giving. The master principle here is that which we have already stated, even that the Christian is a man dead to the world and alive to God. His vow of consecration includes his substance as well as himself. All is holy. Let him carry this principle into all his expenditure, and we are assured that, whether he give little or much, he will give what God requires him to give. "But," demands the Christian, "how much does God require me to give? What proportion of my substance is due to the gospel?" If you ask us to lay down a rule which will guide you, without any trouble or consideration on your part, to the amount you are to give, we answer that we cannot. The New Testament has stated no fixed rule, nor shall we. Each man must determine for himself, in the presence of God, what he is to give. But though we cannot state the amount, there is, nevertheless, a certain proportional amount below which you ought not to fall; and though we can devise no formula by which, as in a question of arithmetic or of algebra, you can make the sum appear, we can yet lay down principles which will guide you infallibly, by the help of God's Spirit, and a mind honestly set on the performance of the duty, to what is right in this matter.

We begin, then, by saying, that the lowest limit of giving to the gospel is a *tenth* of one's income. No one ought to fall below this, unless in very extraordinary circumstances indeed, as in the case of all but entire destitution; in which case something is still to be given, though perhaps not a tenth. It is, we say, our firm belief, after much consideration, that a tenth is the least which a professing Christian can offer. This belief we rest on a variety of considerations. It was the proportion fixed by God himself for the Israelites; and, surely, if the Jew gave a tenth for a worship that had respect only to a nation, the Christian ought not to give less

for a worship that has respect to a world. We are further confirmed in our belief from the fact, that this was the measure of giving practised by godly men before the Levitical economy. The patriarchs gave a tenth; and this would seem to warrant the inference, that the duty has a deeper foundation than a mere positive enactment, and that it did not grow out of the peculiar and temporary arrangements respecting the priesthood and nation of Israel. There was, too, a sort of general consent among heathen nations, that this was a fair and fitting proportion to be given for religion, or what they accounted as such. And looking at the matter in these broad lights, there is nothing Jewish about it; it becomes a great moral duty, obligatory through all time. But it must be remembered that we make the tenth not the point to stop at, but the point to start from. We begin here, and we go upward as far as a large heart and a strong faith can carry us.

But when we say the *tenth*, we do not mean the tenth of one's *gross* income, but the tenth of one's *clear* and *available* income. We desire to place the Christian on equal footing, as respects this matter, with the Israelite in ancient times. Now, the tithes of the Israelite were paid on his *available* income only; for the whole of his income was available. He paid no rent for his house—he paid no rent for his lands; they were his inheritance: taxes to government were unknown to him, at least as distinct payments from the tithes. The first tithe may be regarded, in some sort, as in lieu of government taxes; it was given to Levi as payment for both the *civil* and religious services he rendered to the nation, and, till the times of the monarchy, it sufficed to defray all expenses connected with the public administration. We do feel, then, that the Christian is warranted, when estimating the tenth which is God's, to deduct those burdens which the artificial state of society imposes upon

him. This wealth is strictly no part of his income; he is merely the medium of conveying it to its real owner. We are also disposed to allow some latitude as regards those expenses which are inseparable to one's station in life, such as one's dwelling, and especially the education of one's family. It is better for Christianity that her friends should retain in their hands the important offices and influences of society, than that by becoming disqualified for holding these, Christianity should be compelled to descend to a lower platform, and so lose more in the end than all she can gain meanwhile by a more liberal supply of money-gifts.*

It is well to be reminded here, however, that it is mainly owing to a neglect of the duty of giving to God that our other burdens have become so heavy. It is the neglect of the gospel, and the consequent prevalence of vice, that render police, prisons, tribunals, and armies necessary. Were the gospel supported as it ought to be, government would be cheap, the machinery for the punishment of injustice would cost us little, and society would return to its primitive state, when the tenth of one's substance sufficed to defray both the

* Take a minister, for example, or a professor, with £400 of salary. From this one *must* pay, in order to secure a mere *locus standi*, or be in a position to live and act in one's proper station, £60, at the least, of house rent, £25 of general and local taxes, £36 of insurances—in all fully £120; which is no more his, for any matter of choice or personal appropriation, than a farmer's rent for his land is his. The farmer has a free house, while the other must pay for one; the farmer has, or ought to have, his stock, as capital for his family, in case of his being taken from them, for which the other must adopt the substitute of insurances; and his local and general taxes the farmer naturally includes in his rent. The proprietor now, or the Israelite with his inheritance in ancient times, might fairly be regarded as, in these respects, still more advantageously situated, in comparison with that of the person supposed. It is only, therefore, on what remains after those necessary deductions that the tenth properly falls to be deducted. And, in truth, otherwise it might be absolutely impossible for any one, with the income and in the situation supposed, to give a tenth of his gross income to religious purposes, and still clothe, educate, decently maintain his family, and provide for contingencies—that is, supposing the family to consist of five or six. We are in an artificial state of society, and this brings with it certain demands which must be set down as a sort of taxation or ground-rent.

civil and the religious expenses of the state. We may be assured that God would not enact what would be oppressive, or what would be found unworkable in a sound state of society; and if any incompatibility should appear betwixt the two, we may be certain that it is not the institution, but society, that is wrong; and no time should be lost in bringing society into harmony with the institution.

Our conclusion that the tenth of his available substance is the very least which a Christian ought to give for religious purposes, is strengthened by the reflection, that what the Israelite gave was not a tenth but a fifth, and that various superadded gifts raised that amount to a fourth. It will not be maintained, surely, that less than the half of what the Jew gave is enough for the Christian; or that it is too high as a starting point. The duty must ever be in proportion to the motive. What were the motives presented to the Jew compared with those that are presented to us? They were as nothing! No longer circumscribed by territorial limits, or fettered by ceremonial observances, the gospel has risen up and gone forth on its sublime mission of enlightening a world. It calls Jew and Gentile into the fellowship of the same faith now, and the same glory hereafter. Pointing to the most distant regions of the earth, and to the triumphs to be won there, it solicits our help in the name of benighted and perishing nations. "Give me," it says to us, "your prayers and your contributions, and I will plant the standard of the cross on the ramparts of Romanism and Hinduism. I will overthrow those mighty systems of spiritual and secular despotism that have so long burdened the world. I will recover the lapsed masses of your own country. I will cure the rankling ills of distempered humanity, and convert this enthralled and wretched world into a very paradise of holy and happy nations. I will silence the hoarse trump of war, dispel the

black cloud of superstition, break the fetter of the slave, and still the cry of oppression and suffering." But in proportion as its objects are vast, so the claims of the gospel are high. What cause is like this? What cause can have claims upon our liberality like this? Where can our money be so well bestowed? If the Jew could give a fifth of his income for objects that were local, and comparatively narrow and insignificant, how vast and wide ought our liberality to be! A tenth! why we may well blush to offer such a sum to such a cause! We cannot but feel that we are treating its paramount claims with a sort of decent contempt, and that we are pouring a kind of refined mockery upon its transcendently glorious objects.

Brought thus to the subject of tithes, we must be permitted to remark that we have not been able, with all our attention to the subject, to see our way to maintain that tithes are binding in their character of a special institution. The sum of the argument in their favour is, that as they were undoubtedly binding under the law, and have not been expressly repealed under the gospel, therefore they are binding still; in short, that, being moral and not typical, they passed over into the new dispensation, along with the Sabbath and other institutions. But it is material to observe that these institutions have been modified, although preserved. The Sabbath, baptism, and the supper have reappeared under the gospel in a new form; and this would lead us to expect some change in the institution of tithes, consistent with its preservation as a duty, and in harmony with the spirit of the new dispensation. As the seals of the covenant of grace remain, but freed from whatever was national and ceremonial in their outward form, so the great duty of giving of our substance to God remains, but freed from whatever about it had peculiar reference to the Jews. The *principle* of tithes, then, we think, remains; the *institution*

of tithes is at an end. It is better to cherish liberality and benevolence by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object meanwhile, than to attempt to reach a higher ratio of giving by coercing the wills and regulating the gifts of men by the authority of law. The Church, on the whole, will gain by a liberty without which true liberality cannot exist.

We may further remark, that we desiderate any instance among the primitive Christians of the payment of tithes. Many of them gave much more, but some of them also gave less; and the proof of this we have in the fact that the apostle Paul found it necessary at times to support himself by the labour of his own hands. And it is further noticeable, that though his epistles abound with exhortations to liberality, and though he vindicates his own and his fellow-labourers' right to their support, he never once reminds those whom he addressed that the institution of tithes was still obligatory. He alludes, indeed, to that institution, but only as an illustration, and to enforce his exhortation to liberality. The whole course of his reasoning from the Levitical tithes goes to shew that he did not wish the primitive believers to limit their givings to a tenth, or to any fixed sum, but to conform their liberality to the claims of the gospel and their own ability.

The great rule, then, that should guide Christians in this important matter is, what does the gospel demand, and what am I able to give? The artisan can give so much; with a little wise economy and a little elevating self-denial, he can give a tenth; with a strong faith, he may be able to give more. He will ply his daily task with none the less courage of heart and skill of hand that he does so. The man in easy, though, perhaps, not affluent circumstances, may rise, perhaps, to a seventh, or even to a fifth; the merchant prince to a third, or even to a half; and the nobleman, emulous of

standing foremost in Christian liberality as in social rank, may take precedence of all other classes and dedicate three-fourths of his income to the cause of God. Why should not this large scale of giving be exemplified? It will be reached, we feel assured, when the gospel comes to be more felt as a power. It is but a small part of one's income that one can spend on personal necessities. Louis Philippe of France is said not to have expended more than £400 annually on himself. The vast incomes of British noblemen are spent on party politics, and in other less justifiable ways. The day will come when what is now given to politics, to pleasure, to folly, and too often, alas! to vice, shall be given to the gospel.

The New Testament arrangements for giving provide for this. They set free the duty from the rigidity of a formal precept, and leave to the obligation scope to develop itself. The obligation acquires a flexibility, a self-regulating power, which enables it the more completely to gain its end. It can expand as the wealth and ability of the rich expand, and it can contract to the narrower limits of the poor man. It can accept of his two mites, and yet not oppress his conscience with the feeling that he is violating a formal institution. It presents the matter of giving less as a duty and more as a privilege; and such is the manner of the gospel, even to replace the power of precept by the power of principle, and for the compulsion of law to substitute the sweeter compulsion of motive. True liberality cannot flourish under a law. Its hope is in the creation of a free, liberal, enlarged spirit—a soul "that deviseth liberal things." When there is a law, the person feels, when he has reached its limit, that he has done enough, and he asks, "Why should I go beyond?" But from the *precept* turn his eye upon the *object;* let its greatness and grandeur fill his soul; he thinks not now how much he *must* give, but how much he *can* give; his liberality is

evoked, and pours itself forth in a constant and ever-enlarging stream of giving. It is by opening this free fountain of liberality in the heart of all the Church's members, that we shall ever be able to fill the Church's treasury in such measure as it needs to be filled, in order that the Church may be able to accomplish her great ends. Thus the claim of the gospel rises high above a tenth; whatever the Christian is *able* to give, that, the gospel tells him, it is his *duty* to give.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MODE OF GIVING.

So much for the *amount* of giving; let us briefly indicate the *mode*, which is scarcely of less importance. We portray our own character, and we enhance or diminish the value of the gift by the manner of giving it. First, we ought to give on principle; that is, we ought to recognise the duty of giving for the support of the gospel as one of the grand Christian duties. "Do this in obedience to me," says Christ. It is an act of homage to our King. We may give from custom, and so do the deed mechanically, as it were. We may give from impulse. Or we may pay away money for the gospel, as we pay away money in the market-place, with the cold, commercial spirit of men who give value for value. We may buy the ordinances of grace as we buy the coat we are to wear or the loaf we are to eat. This is not the spirit in which we ought to give. This is to pay a debt, not perform a religious duty. Now, God will not bless the gift, if given as an equivalent, for equivalent it is not; it can be accepted only as a token of love and thankfulness. Therefore, let whatever we give be given with the reverent and devout spirit with which the Israelite carried up his offering to the temple. Since the Reformation this duty has scarce had its place among the other great duties of the Christian life. It is time to restore it to its proper rank. Let it be deemed nearly as essential to the Christian character to give, where

the means exist, as it is to pray or to offer praise; and let prayer always accompany giving, that with the gift there may go forth a Divine though invisible power, that so it may avail to the conversion of souls.

In the second place, we are to give as God has prospered us. If there be a rule in the New Testament fixing the amount which each is to give, this is it—"Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). How just and equitable the rule! How infallibly does it provide against everything like oppression. It asks nothing from the man till first God has given to him. "As God hath prospered him." Nor does it ask back all, but only a part—a part bearing a certain relation to the increase bestowed. How reasonable is it that part of what God has given us should be devoted to His service! What is the ratio here? Is it a simple arithmetical ratio, doubling our givings when our gains have been doubled? We are disposed to think that a higher than an arithmetical ratio is here meant; and is not this, too, reasonable? for it is clear that if the man with £100 of yearly income is able to give a tenth, the man with £500 a-year is just as able, other things being equal, to give a fifth. Or, to state the case more correctly, if our income is doubled, our obligations remaining much as they were before, we are now able to give, not merely double what we gave aforetime, but quadruple, or, it may be, according to a higher ratio still.

"As God hath prospered" you. This lightens the burden to the poor, and lays it upon the rich. This exacts from all what is just and equal; and being not a tax, but a thank-offering, it invests all with the aroma of beneficence.

"As God hath prospered" you. How sweet the motive to obedience! How well fitted to open the heart in gratitude, and to fill the hand with offerings! Hath God prospered us? Have our ventures sped? Has plenty filled our

barns? Has the skill of our hand or the strength of our intellect been continued to us? Has our family been protected from danger, or recovered from sickness? Let us hasten to acknowledge God's goodness by ministering to His cause in measure corresponding to the prosperity He has bestowed upon us. It would not only be unchristian, it would be unnatural to refuse to do so. Who has so good a claim as God? and what so likely to secure a continuance of these blessings in time to come as a thankful acknowledgment of those already received? And let not the rich trust "in uncertain riches," but "in the living God," without whose providence their possessions are altogether without defence, and may, how ample soever, be dissipated in a moment. Between the extreme of opulence and the extreme of poverty is often but a single step. A single gale may engulph the ships of the merchant; a single cloud may drown the harvests of the husbandman; a single spark may reduce to ashes the palace of the noble. A panic or a failure on 'Change may annihilate in an hour all the hoards of the millionaire. We read of such revolutions every day; the keenest foresight, the wariest prudence, the largest sagacity are ineffectual to guard against them: the best security is to make a good use of riches while we have them; and then should they be taken from us, we can better submit to the dispensation by the thought that while our wealth was with us, we used it for the advancement of God's cause, and the best interest of our fellow-men. It will put a terrible sting into a fall from riches that we have been defrauders of God, and refused Him all share in the blessings He bestowed. On the other hand, every pound we give to the gospel we put beyond the reach of accident; we place it where we shall find it at a future day; the rest of our fortune may be lost or torn from us—this we cannot lose. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not

high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come."

But, *thirdly*, it appears to be the will of God that this giving should be regular, and should take place, so far as is practicable or convenient, in connexion with some act of worship. So much is intimated by the apostle, if we mistake not—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." Of the two modes of giving, namely, to give in small sums and to repeat the act oft, or to give in large sums and only at long intervals, the first is by much the one to be preferred. It is better for the giver. It tends to create the habit of giving; it brings his mind more frequently under the hallowing influence of the act, and it enables him more continually to realise the truth, that the great end of both life and property is to serve God. It is better, too, for the person who receives. The same sum is more valuable when paid at short intervals than when paid at long; what comes oft and regularly inspires a feeling of greater confidence than that which comes round less seldom. It is, moreover, an index of a better state of feeling among the members of the Church. It is more satisfactory, surely, to find that men give from the steady uniform working of principle within the heart, than from the stimulus of eloquence or the stimulus of a crisis upon the feelings. The latter, though productive of more imposing results at the time, is necessarily transient; the oration is forgotten, the crisis has passed away, and with it, in too many instances, has passed away the liberality it evoked; but principle abides, and the liberality that springs from it flows forth in a continuous, daily, and refreshing stream. Not that we do not delight to see large and princely offerings;

not that we cannot admire the strength of Christian principle and the heroism of Christian faith displayed in the great sacrifices and herculean efforts by which great crises can alone be met; but, in an ordinary state of things, we prefer the quiet, unostentatious, steady liberality of Christian principle. The thunder shower and the winter torrent have their uses; the crystal waters of the deep, still fountain, stealing noiselessly but continuously forth, are, for ordinary purposes, much to be preferred.

The primitive Christians were enjoined to lay by them in store on the first day of the week. This points to both regularity and the connexion of the act with public worship. It were well that Christians still should act on this rule. Those of the humbler classes would find great advantage in doing so. The store of the rich is already gathered, and, to make it available, he needs only the willing mind; but if the poor man would meet the call as it arises, he must lay by him beforehand. He should do so in small sums, that the duty may be the easier; and oft, that the gracious feeling inseparable from the act may be deepened, and the habit of giving strengthened. And what day so appropriate for the consecration of part of our substance to God as the Sabbath? Amid the Sabbath rest and blessings, the heart is more open. When enjoying the privileges of the gospel, the duty of giving for its support is likely to be the more felt. And what happier and more sacred rite than the offering of this first sheaf can inaugurate the week?—a rite that is at once a thank-offering for the mercies of the week past, and a prayer for their continuance throughout that now come.

"Let *every one*," says the apostle, the poor as well as the rich. As no one is exempt from the duty, so no one is excluded from the privilege; and giving for the gospel is both. The very poorest, then, ought to give something.

The gospel is no respecter of persons: it does not mortify the poor man by telling him, I do not need your offering, it is too insignificant; or flatter the wealthy by courting his gift because it is large. It welcomes the penny of the poor not less than it does the pound of the rich man. "However small," it says, "though but two mites, bring it hither: it will dignify your own character, and you shall taste the happiness of giving equally with your wealthier brother, whom, though you cannot rival in the munificence of the sum, you may rival in the faith and love with which you present it, and in the recompense that follows it." The poor themselves almost never plead exemption from this duty, and certainly they are not their best friends who would persuade them that they are too poor to give for the gospel. This is not the way to better their circumstances: in truth, it tends but to stereotype them in pauperism. "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Giving for the cause of God is ordinarily the first indications of that self-denial, energy, and faith which are sure ultimately to raise one from indigence to competency.

Finally, as regards the mode of giving: we must give willingly. "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." Even under the former economy, the gift wanted its savour if not given with a willing heart. "Take ye from among you," said God to Moses (Exod. xxxv. 5), "an offering unto the Lord; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord: gold, and silver, and brass." "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." What is it that gives a gift its value in the eyes of man? Is it not the love it expresses? If given with a grudge, or

given in the secret and selfish hope of drawing forth a return, the person to whom it is offered accounts that he has been but mocked, the gift is odious in his eyes, and every time he sees it the feeling of indignation at the meanness it embodies and the deceit it expresses rises afresh in his bosom. But in religion, above all things, spontaneity is essential. Every act and every offering must come from a heart penetrated with a sense of the greatness of God's blessings and the littleness of its own deserts, and filled to overflow with love, which finds no greater happiness than to pour itself out in gifts, and having given all it can give, bemoans itself that it cannot give more. If we give from ostentation, or in the hope of getting in return, or unwillingly and of compulsion, we spoil the gift; it wants the rich flavour of love, and going forth into the world with the frown of God upon it, it can be expected to accomplish but little good. It matters not how princely in amount the gift may be, the widow's two mites will outweigh it in solid value, and very probably surpass it in real efficacy. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." Let the Christian, then, give to the very uttermost of his ability; but whether he give much or whether he give little, let him give it ungrudgingly and with perfect willingness. Let the heart ratify the act of the hand. He that gives thus gives twice; he gives his money, and he gives an influence mightier than money, even "the blessing" that accompanies the willing gift. And to dispose the Christian to give ungrudgingly and with all his heart, let him ponder the many obligations that lie upon him. Is he not infinitely God's debtor? Was not the blood of Christ shed to redeem him? Is it not of God's mercy that he has not been all his life a worshipper of idols, and a sharer in all the superstition and misery of those who never heard of a Saviour's name? Was it not God that made the day-spring of the gospel to rise upon

him—that gospel from which has come all that imparts dignity to his own character, all that gives value to the friendships that surround him, and all that gives stability to the hopes that fill his breast? Is it not God who has given him all his life bread to eat and raiment to wear, and assured him that to life's end nothing shall be wanting that is really for his good? But the Christian, duly under the influence of the gospel, needs no formal argument. He has that within him which pleads more powerfully than anything else can—even love. Love will ever be giving, and after it has given all, it will still ask, as if it had given nothing, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

CHAPTER XII.

SIN OF INADEQUATE GIVING.

We come now still further to illustrate and enforce the duty of giving for the support of the gospel, by shewing how *blessed a thing it is to give.* Like every other subject, this has two sides, a negative and a positive. Evils of great magnitude follow the neglect of this duty. Of these we shall speak first; and then we shall, last of all, attempt some estimate of those numerous and incalculable blessings which flow from giving to the gospel, when done in the right spirit and in the required measure.

The evils that follow the neglect of this duty are manifold. First of all, we disobey God and contract guilt. There is no more binding command in all the Bible than this, that they who enjoy the gospel should support the gospel. This is a duty not left to be inferred; it is not incidentally brought in among the other rules and arrangements of Christ. It has been posted in the most conspicuous place, where every eye may see it. It stands on the most public pillar of the gospel kingdom, graven in letters brief and emphatic, "I ORDAIN," so that no one may plead ignorance. If, then, we are not supporting the gospel according as Providence calls upon us, and as our means enable us, we are living in violation of Christ's will in this most important matter. We are acting a *disloyal* part, for we are refusing the tribute due to Christ our King; we are acting a *fraudulent* part, for we are

violating the tacit compact made with our brethren, to take an equal share in the common burdens, and especially are we violating the compact made with the minister whom we defraud of his "hire." We are acting a *selfish* and *cruel* part, for we are doing nothing to extend the gospel to the heathen, who, we know, without it must perish; and we are acting a most *disorganising* part, for we are striking at a fundamental arrangement of Christ's kingdom, and doing what, were it to be universally followed, would result in the overthrow of that kingdom altogether. Such are the evils that enter into our conduct—disloyalty to Christ, unfairness to our brethren, dishonesty to our pastor, and cruelty to the heathen; conduct, in short, altogether opposed to the self-denied, honourable, promise-keeping, loving, and liberal spirit that ought to characterise the Christian. The citizen who should act thus would place himself beyond the pale of the state, and would be compelled, with the duties, to cast off the privileges also, of society.

"No man liveth unto himself," is the noble motto under which the followers of Christ associate themselves. Christ their Captain has gone before them in this. He did not live unto himself; and all they have been baptized into His spirit. The Christian Church is a brotherhood, into which whosoever enters strikes hands with all the others, to the effect that he will share equally their perils, burdens, and enjoyments. He who shirks these burdens violates the vow of brotherhood. He reverses his motto, and instead of living *for* others lives *upon* others. He declines the duty, yet grasps, or attempts to grasp, the privilege. Even a heathen could feel the inspiration of the principle that "no man liveth unto himself," so far at least as his country was concerned. When the state was menaced, he did not hesitate to give goods, and life, and all to save it. In repairing to the battle-field he accounted that he but fulfilled his first

duty to his country, and had neither earned special distinction nor deserved special reward. And shall it be said that the Christian is less self-denied, less noble in spirit, and less generous in his sympathies than were the heathen? or that the love of Christ cannot enable him to do for the Church and for mankind what the love of country or of fame could enable the Roman to do for the state? This, indeed, were to bring up an evil report of the gospel, as if it gathered to its standard only cowards and self-seekers—men who are put to shame by the self-denial and the generosity of the world's heroes.

This sin becomes its own punishment. We contract guilt, and a sense of that guilt we carry with us into every duty in which we engage. Whether we go to the closet or to the sanctuary, there comes the recollection of our undutiful conduct, like an invisible accuser whispering his charges into the ear of our conscience. Whether it is praise or prayer we engage in, we are alike unfit for the duty. To offer praise we feel to be but a mockery so long as we withhold more substantial tokens of our gratitude; and to pray is but a mockery, too, while doing nothing to help on the accomplishment of our prayers in the extension of Christ's kingdom on the earth. We have sowed sparingly, and we are reaping sparingly. Once the light of God's countenance shone upon us, and our hearts beat with a joy far transcending that which the men of the world feel when their corn and their wine are increased. Whither has that sun gone now? It has set behind a cold, dark cloud. Once we had in heaven a better and more enduring substance, the thought of which made all the possessions of earth seem but very dross. What has become of it now? We have not lost our title to it, it may be; but we have lost the sense of our interest in it: and what have we to shew in its room? poor, miserable riches, which the fire may burn, the moth corrupt,

or the thief steal! This is all! Verily we have dearly purchased the miserable portion of earth's goods, which we have withheld from God.

But have we really increased our goods, or added to our riches thereby? Has the portion withheld been an actual gain or a real addition to our substance? We never yet heard or read of any one who brought himself to beggary by giving to the gospel, and we doubt whether any one ever yet permanently enriched himself by withholding. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." There is all the difference betwixt giving to the gospel and not giving, which there is betwixt the blessing of God and his curse. With that curse on our substance all our labour and pains will avail but little. We may rise early and sit up late, but instead of increasing our stores, our wealth will melt and disappear before our very eyes. We send our ships on long voyages, we seek out the best markets, but our ventures do not speed. Our sagacity and our skill are baffled. Why is this? We have defrauded the gospel and its ministers of their due, and therefore God writes disappointment and disaster upon our schemes. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands" (Haggai i. 9, 10, 11).

In addition to these temporal inflictions we expose ourselves by this sin to the spiritual judgments of God. To have leanness sent upon the soul is a yet sorer mark of the

Divine displeasure than to have our temporal comforts smitten. In Palestine anciently when the tithes were duly paid, the shower fell in its season, the fertile land yielded its harvests, and corn and wine filled the barns and presses, and gladdened every home in Israel. But when the Levite was robbed of his tithes and the temple of its offerings, what a different picture was exhibited! The firmament became rainless and dewless, the field was burnt up, the olive was smitten, and famine devoured the inhabitants of the land. The very earth groaned beneath the sin of the people. This sin is not less displeasing to God now; nay, it is far more so, inasmuch as our privileges, the motives to give, and the evil consequences of not giving, are all greatly enhanced. And as it is displeasing to Him, so He will certainly visit it with his curse. The spiritual heavens will be sealed, and then there will be seen the spectacle of a dead church, a yet sadder spectacle than that of a withered land. All life and growth will cease. In the room of love and unity will come strifes, divisions, and every evil work. The Spirit will not honour with His presence those ordinances which are so undervalued and contemned. If He does not withdraw them from so undutiful a people, He will render them profitless. He makes them "dry breasts," "wells without water." Their temple door may not be shut, but the heavens over them will be closed, and the shower will not come down in its season. The minister may appear duly every Sabbath morning in the pulpit, but the great Minister of the upper sanctuary will not honour the assembly with His presence. The Word may be preached as faithfully as before in its letter, but it will be felt to be sadly lacking in its spirit: the blessing that was wont to attend it is wanting. All externally remains as before; but the beauty, power, and attractiveness of God's house are gone. The people first dishonoured it by refusing to bring the tithes into it, and now God has

put the brand of His displeasure upon it by forsaking it. Its pulpit grows cold apace, its pews grow empty apace. The forms of religion begin to be disused and forgotten in the neighbourhood. The evening and morning psalm is less seldom heard. The oath begins to startle the ear, and the tavern and the drunkard to afflict the sight. As piety grows ashamed, iniquity grows bold; and the rapid downward career of that unhappy community in vice and crime, in dependence and beggary, fearfully avenge the sin of those who neglected to "honour God with their substance, and the first-fruits of all their increase."

CHAPTER XIII.

INADEQUATE GIVING DESECRATES THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

THE consequences of this sin fall heavy on the pastor—on his office, on his person, and on his family. This, we are aware, is not the most grateful part of the subject. Ministers themselves are not much disposed to dwell largely upon it, or to bring it frequently or very prominently into view. But they must suffer us here. We feel that we should not be doing our duty to the gospel did we pass this branch of our theme without observation.

First of all, an inadequate support of the gospel desecrates the ministerial office. That office is a power. Man did not create it; it was the gift of God. It was given for the most beneficent ends as regards mankind—the *implantation of the principles of order and happiness* in nations, and of holiness and immortal life in the individual. The integrity and vigour of that office it becomes us most sacredly to guard. Whatever desecrates the gospel ministry, tends to annihilate one of the great agencies for good which God has created in the world. Its desecration inflicts a great injury on mankind, whose benefit we destroy in the same proportion in which we weaken the influence of this institution. But the inadequate support of the minister *does* desecrate his office, sometimes to the extent of rendering it contemptible. This it is not difficult to shew. We are so constituted that we irresistibly associate dignity and respectability with the

possession of at least ordinary comforts. Where these are absent, we cannot, unless in great and exceptional cases, believe in the existence of those qualities which create power or confer authority; and all pretensions to these, when they come in this guise, we are apt to treat as offensive assumptions or impudent imposture. To this the office of the ministry is no exception. If we surround it with worldly anxieties and penury—with what is low, and mean, and grovelling—we vastly lower its standing in the eyes of worldly men; and even we, who, we shall suppose, are spiritual men, and wish to hold the office and those who fill it in all reverence, are drawn to think more lightly of it—its power over us is weakened. When situated thus, in unseemly and incongruous conjunction with what is little and worldly, it is seen that, despite our best efforts, contempt for the office is engendered. We visit our own fault, and the fault of our fellow Church members, upon the man who fills it. We are even conscious that we are doing him injustice; nevertheless, the reflection that his office is above his position, and that his worth, and learning, and spirit, are not to be estimated by his worldly wealth, goes but a little way to counteract the inward disposition to undervalue the office, arising from the trivial and contemptible matters with which it comes to be mixed up.

We should ill like ever to see a gew-gaw splendour in our churches, or anything approaching mitred dignity in our ministers. It can never be safe to place a gulf betwixt the station of a minister and the sympathies of his flock; nor even, as regards himself, is this desirable. Princely titles do not dignify, but degrade the ambassador of Christ; and princely revenues, instead of diminishing, very much enhance his worldly anxieties and cares. But in avoiding the one extreme, it is not necessary that we rush into the other. There is a decent sobriety, both in the style of our churches,

and in the station of our ministers, that never can be departed from without positive injury to religion. The members of the Church are bound to provide in both departments what is "honest" in the sight of all men. The Israelite would have blushed had the name of Jehovah been enshrined in a less glorious fabric than that which contained some poor Gentile vanity, or had the high priest appeared at the altar in less seemly robes than those of the priests of Baal. The Jew (in better times of his nation at least) would have repelled the idea with scorn, that He to whom belonged the fulness of the earth and the glory of the heavens should be served by beggarly priests and neglected altars—that God's worship should be stinted, and God's ministers starved in His own land—that the only house which the plenty of that land did not fill should be God's, and the only heart which it did not gladden should be the Levite's; he would have repelled the idea, we say, as a triumph to Paganism, and an insult to Jehovah.

And so should the Christian feel as regards all that pertains to the celebration of God's worship. He ought not to be content to dwell in his own ceiled house, while the house of God is roofless. He ought not to be content to sit down at his own table, and see it covered with luxuries, while that of his pastor is in want of necessaries. He ought not to be content to have his library stored with the best science and the choicest literature, while that of his pastor lacks the most necessary and ordinary works. He ought not to be content that his own family are educated in the first style of elegant accomplishment, while that of his pastor can with difficulty be kept at the most ordinary school, and be taught the commonest branches; nor ought he to be content that he has thousands to lay out on the prosecution of trade, while but a few pounds to give for the evangelisation of the world. This narrow, cold, selfish spirit has, we regret

to say, been the predominating one hitherto—not that of an individual here and there, but that of the vast body of professing Christians. If they have paid their miserable dues quarterly or annually, they have thought that their duty was done, and their responsibility at an end. Their whole liberality consisted in throwing from the table of their own affluence a few crumbs to the gospel and its ministers. Thus have they obeyed the Saviour's maxim, "The labourer is worthy of his hire"! The minister (so they reasoned) has chosen his profession, and must take his chances like other men. He may fail; but so do hundreds of lawyers, physicians, and other professional men; and what more have we to do with the one than with the other? How unfair this is to the minister, we need not say. The minister has chosen his profession, but not for his own special advantage. On the contrary, he has embarked with his flock in a common enterprise, the burdens of which all have tacitly bound themselves to bear, according to their several ability. The minister gives his talents, his learning, his life; this is the capital he invests in the enterprise. He has a right to expect that others will meet him on fair terms by an equally large investment of the "talents," whatever they may be, that God has intrusted them with. If the whole burden is thrown on him, where is the equity, the fairness? If he occupies the pulpit in penury, while his flock occupy the pews in affluence; if all the sacrifice shall be his, and all the enjoyment theirs—then we say, he has been most unfairly and unjustly dealt with, and the sin is all the greater that it is in violation of the people's sacred compact, and in opposition to the love, the liberality, and the brotherly-kindness of the gospel.

This, surely, is not the time to lower the credit and curtail the power of the pulpit. Every day new agencies are springing up around it of great power and amazing

flexibility. With some of these the gospel has to compete; others of them it must confront and subdue. And how can it be expected to maintain its ground and do its work if but meagrely furnished with those subsidiary helps and appliances with which the rival and antagonistic agencies are, for the most part, so liberally supplied? There is the press, there is the platform, there is science, there are a thousand schemes of moral and social reformation; and there is, too, an impudent and arrogant atheism. These will be the ministers or the masters of the pulpit according as it goes before them or lags behind them. In the character of its handmaids they are capable of rendering it great assistance in its work; but should it lose its control over them, they will trample it under foot, and mar the world's work by attempting to perform it bereft of the guidance of their natural leader. How much need, then, to preserve intact the power of the pulpit! In saying so, we, of course, do not overlook the Spirit's aid, wherein its great strength lies.

Some have said, and more have thought, why this ado about the worldly status of ministers, and the decent embellishing of edifices? Did not religion thrive better in times of persecution, when it had neither stipends nor temples to give it outward prestige? Then, some bosky gorge or green basin amid the mountains received the worshippers; and when the concluding psalm had died away on the moorland, the minister retired to his dwelling in the dank dripping cave. Was not the Spirit present then? was not the Word spoken with power? and were not souls converted? All very true. But such should extend their argument, and plead for persecution also. They should pray for edicts of fining and intercommuning, with their inevitable attendants —namely, dragoons scouring the waste, and the scaffold standing in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh. Should these things return, we doubt not that God would give strength to

confront them, and that the Holy Spirit would countenance His ordinances, though dispensed by men in "sheep's skins and goat skins," and without "certain dwelling-place." But were such a state of things to be created by the worldliness and selfishness of professing Christians, we have no right to expect that our neglect of duty would be supplemented by a double portion of the influences of the Spirit. When persecution on the one hand, and conscience on the other, compel men to go to the mountain and the scaffold, religion is honoured. She becomes sublime and venerable in even the world's eyes. But when it is the niggardliness of her professed friends that thrusts her into circumstances of poverty and want, religion is as much vilified as in the other case she was honoured. Her wrongs come not from enemies, but friends: she is robbed and oppressed by the very hands that ought to nourish her. The Spirit avenges the affront by withdrawing —indeed, it is but too evident that He has already withdrawn; and instead of appealing to former times in proof that the evils we have specified are not the legitimate consequences of our neglect to support the gospel "as God hath prospered us," we ought to feel that these times are the strongest possible proof of this, for the men of those days were liberal, not of their goods only, the spoiling of which they took joyfully, but of their blood also, which they freely shed for the gospel. Their devotion is the strongest condemnation of our selfish and sinful parsimony. *We* are sparing of our substance, where *they* were not sparing of their lives. Hence the homage which religion extorted amid circumstances of deepest poverty and suffering. The bonnet of the outed minister became her better in those days than the mitre of the enthroned prelate; and the rock beneath which her worship was offered was a temple more sublime than aisled and vaulted cathedral.

CHAPTER XIV.

INADEQUATE GIVING DEGRADES THE MINISTER—MINISTERIAL INCOMES.

If the inadequate support of the gospel desecrates the office, it not less degrades the man.

It weakens the tone and spirit of the minister. The inferiority of his circumstances, as compared with his position, oppresses him. The artisan and the day labourer feel no such depression, because there is no such disparity betwixt their means and their position. The mechanic dons his dress of moleskin, goes forth to his daily task, which is cheerfully performed, and returns to a home the comforts of which are in keeping with his wages, as his wages are in keeping with his station. It is his rank that is humble, and not his circumstances that are poor. In sober fact, he is a wealthier man than the majority of ministers. His dwelling, his food, his clothing, the whole condition and enjoyments of his family, are relatively better than those of the minister. The real comforts of life are more accessible to him, because less of his income is required for appearances. And his position has this mighty advantage—it is *true;* there is no latent wrong under it to fret and gall him every hour. He can meet his fellow-men, whether his equals or his superiors, with the soil of labour upon him, not only without being humiliated, but with manly confidence and honest pride. He is like his work.

Not so the minister. Between his station, with the pecuniary outlay that station imposes, and his income, there is no agreement. His income is *relatively* below that of many of the skilled artisans and labourers of our country; and not only so, it is in too many cases *absolutely* below it. It is no uncommon thing for the latter to earn from three to four pounds a week. That is affluence itself compared with the income of a minister. But coming lower, and taking the average wages of our artisans at only half this rate, it is not difficult to shew that an annual income on that scale, £100 viz., expresses an amount of personal comfort and independence beyond the reach of a minister with a stipend of £150, or even £200. We do not speak of the incomes of the highest grade of our legal and medical practitioners; these are far beyond what the highest salaried of our city ministers can aspire to. Nor do we speak even of the incomes of the same classes in our provincial towns, nor of those of our merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers throughout the country. These classes—the highest of them not excepted—have not so expensive and lengthy a course of training as our ministers; they do not need a higher range of accomplishment; and the actual discharge of their profession does not demand a greater strain on their mental and physical energies; and yet there is not one of these classes—even the lowest—which would not deem the ordinary income of a minister a very inadequate remuneration. We must descend to a much humbler region, that of the skilled labourer, to wit. Even he, it can be demonstrated, occupies a position of more substantial comfort and of more real independence than the minister. Let us take the average ministerial incomes of Scotland at £150 per annum; and we think this is rather above than below the mark. Let us deduct all those expenses which a minister's position make imperative—all those expenses that *must* be paid before he

can provide either food or clothing for himself and family—and having seen what remains over as real income, we may be able to judge how he stands as compared with the labouring classes of the community. His income in the gross, then, is £150 annually. Put aside so much for property tax, so much for poors' rates, so much for the widows' fund, so much for professional journeys. He must have a larger house than the labourer—this his position makes indispensable; put aside so much for that: he must use "hospitality without grudging," put aside so much for that: he must have books and journals, as tools of trade, put aside so much for these: he must have better clothes for himself and family—fustian, however it might suit his finances, would scarce suit his character: he must have a somewhat better education for his family: he must give alms to the poor: he must have at least one servant: he cannot be in the pulpit every Sabbath of the year—absence and sickness will necessitate help for at least six or eight days. Allow the most moderate sum possible for these several items, and sum up the whole; you will find that the aggregate is something between £80 and £90. Here is the full half of the minister's income gone—gone for purely professional objects—gone before a penny can be laid aside for food and the other essentials of housekeeping. His gross income of £150 has dwindled to £70, and with this poor balance is he left to meet, as best he may, the expenses of his family. This is the most favourable view of the case. A stipend of £100 is a more common occurrence than one of £150. From £100 deduct from £70 to £80 for professional expenses (for where the stipend is smaller these will be somewhat smaller also), and what a miserable pittance remains as real income. Verily, the artisan exceeds the minister, and the day labourer equals him at least, in their command of real comfort and substantial independence.

The unwillingness or inability of the people to give for the support of the gospel is not the only evil with which we have here to contend; there is an amount of delusion and thoughtlessness in connexion with this subject which it were doing a vast service to the gospel to dissipate. Many classes of the community seem to look upon £150 in the hands of a minister as a sum quite inexhaustible. The upper classes expect the minister to be as well informed and as well dressed as themselves, to head charitable subscriptions, and generally take part with them in all movements for the good of the community, and to do all this on as many pounds as they on hundreds. The agricultural classes, too, exaggerate the capabilities of a minister's income, from the fact of forgetting that many of their own comforts come *without* money. Their tables, to a large extent, are served of their own fields, whereas every article of food or wearing apparel in the manse must come from market, and be paid for in money. Would such sit down and estimate at its ordinary market value every article they use, but for which they do not pay, because it is of their own production, they would be amazed to find that their housekeeping costs a sum far exceeding the ministerial £150. The same delusion extends to the men of handicraft. The artisan earns his £200 or his £300, and is affluent. The labourer receives his £75, and enjoys a competency; why, surely, he says, with double that sum the minister ought to be rich. He forgets that the minister must have new tools every month, in the shape of books and magazines, while his spade and mattock, which are his only tools, may last him half a lifetime. He forgets that the minister must have broadcloth, while he is equally comfortable and equally respectable in moleskin; he forgets subscriptions, and taxes, and the other professional et ceteras already enumerated, which pare down the minister's income to a point below his own. And when to inadequacy of

stipend is added irregularity of payment (an error that has its cause very commonly in thoughtlessness, too), an additional wrong is done the minister. This last drop makes the cup of his harassment and suffering to overflow. This is the real state of things. If the other classes of the community would but seriously consider it, they would find the fact to be that ministers are the hardest worked and the worst remunerated class in the community; and finding it so, they would, we believe, pronounce this state of matters intolerable, grossly unjust, and fearfully oppressive—a wrong done not to ministers only, but to the whole community, whose interest suffers through theirs; and they would with one voice demand that an end be put to this crying injustice.

To sum up: this whole matter of ministerial support is at present, and has long been, on a footing that is altogether faulty and false, and ought, without a day's delay, to be put right. Why should ministers have more hard work and less pay than other men? Why should they be denied equality in emolument with the middle classes of their flocks, seeing they are expected to shew equality with them in expenditure? And equality is all we ask for them. We do not ask style or riches, but ordinary comforts. We do not ask that they should be able to live luxuriously, but that they should be able to live without carefulness. We seek for them not palaces that may be the abode of splendour, but homes that may be the abode of comfort; not viands that may pamper the appetite, but food that may promote the health; not fine linen that may inflame the pride, but decent apparel that may become the station. This is the "hire" the Lord hath ordained. Who would be the poorer although the minister received this just and equal recompense? What class or individual would be oppressed thereby? We boldly affirm, no one. Nay, all would be gainers, even temporally. Why, then, should not the Churches of Christ

unite in measures for putting an end, once for all, to this state of matters? It is noways an unattainable object. Nothing is of easier attainment, provided only the method which the Scriptures recommend be taken. That the gospel and its ordinances may be adequately supported, it is not necessary that the estates of the noble and the capital of the merchant be taken to fill the treasury of the Church. It is enough that every man give as God hath prospered him. Our hope is not in the largesses of the rich, but in the mites of the poor. The former, from its very nature, cannot be permanent; the superfluity of one age would be the beggary of the next; but the latter may. Let all, then, give something, however little. The light that fills the firmament comes forth in atoms; the shower that waters mountain and plain comes down in drops; and millions and millions of hands must contribute that wealth by which the gospel is to be adequately supported. Let prayer be made, that the Spirit may come down and open every heart; and when all hearts have been opened, all hands will be outstretched, that of prince and peasant alike. And as millions of atoms form the sunbeam, as millions of drops form the shower, and as millions of rivulets form the river on which navies may ride; so these millions of gifts, insignificant individually, will yet, in the aggregate, grow into a magnificent tide of Christian beneficence; and when the tithes are brought thus into God's storehouse, He will remember His work and His ministers on earth, and will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing till there be not room enough to receive it.

Let every man decide this matter for himself. Let him decide it on his knees before God. How much am I able to give for the gospel? Let every man decide this question in the prospect of that hour when he must part from all he has on earth. Let him decide it in the prospect of that hour when he must stand at the bar of Christ and give account of the

use he made of every penny of his property. If we defraud the gospel in this matter, those hoards which now we gather with so much toil, and contemplate with so much delight, will then be unspeakably awful. They will rise up as our accusers; they will say Amen to our condemnation; and how much we glorified ourselves in them here, so much torment and sorrow will they give us then.

There is not a greater vanity under the sun than to toil, and to deny ourselves the comforts of our station, and especially to stint our contributions to the cause of God, that our children may be rich. Wealth gathered in this way is almost always gathered to the ruin of its heirs. Indeed, it is only sometimes that riches, however acquired, benefit those to whom they are transmitted. They take away the need of exertion, they engender self-indulgent and extravagant habits, and the wealth earned by toil and parsimony is too often dissipated by spendthriftcy and vice. On this account it is that the children of humble parents commonly succeed better in life than those who inherit fortunes. They are trained to sobriety, industry, and self-denial, both mind and character acquire a vigour unknown to others, and such *make* a fortune, while others *lose* one. Parents need deem it no misfortune that they cannot leave their children affluent; their early struggles will teach them lessons which, together with the fear of God, will be of infinitely more value to them than any conceivable amount of gold and silver. The practical lesson from this is, that those who find their wealth increasing, instead of hoarding it up, to the hurt of their children, ought to use it as the Lord's stewards in doing good. Money is valuable only as a means of enabling us to become "rich in good works." When so used, we convert perishing riches into imperishable treasures, and we come, in our own happy experience, to understand the truth of our Lord's saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

This evil of an inadequately supported gospel ministry is one of ancient standing. It hath prescription on its side, like many other evils on our fallen world. That is no reason, however, why we should suffer it to continue. On the contrary, the very fact that it has already wrought so much mischief, darkened so many homes, worn down with anxiety and grief so many noble spirits, and ruined, shall we say, so many immortal souls, is the very reason why we should strain every nerve to extinguish it now. Shall its withering shadow be stretched out upon the Church from generation to generation? Surely no. It is, too, it must be observed, a wide-spread evil. An inadequately supported ministry is at this hour the reproach, not of this Church, or of that Church, but of all Churches. There is not one that can say, "I am clear in this matter!" To begin with America. The various evangelical denominations in the United States comprise about 16,000 ministers. In 1853, the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia, a body that counts upwards of 2000 ministers, issued a pastoral address, in which they say, "We may claim for these ministers that they are, in the aggregate, men of liberal education, of intelligence, of earnest piety, and of eminent usefulness. They are the efficient friends of popular education. The great charities of the country find in them their ablest supporters. They are the zealous advocates of all judicious schemes of social progress. They are always on the side of law and order. Their whole influence goes to extinguish vice, to repress turbulence, to impregnate the public mind with virtuous and patriotic sentiments, to mould the discordant materials of our population into a homogeneous mass, and to consolidate our social and political institutions. . . . And yet this body of men *is not supported!* So far from being supported, the greater part of them are kept in a state of precarious dependence, or, as the alternative, obliged to eke out a livelihood by com-

bining some secular avocation with their appropriate work. It has been estimated that the pastors of this country are compelled to devote from one-third to one-half of their time to worldly callings. In numerous instances they are oppressed with habitual anxiety, and driven to painful expedients, in order to provide their families with the common comforts of life. Not unfrequently they have to deny their children the advantages of a suitable education. They can purchase but few books. They must forego those occasional remissions of pastoral toil, without which the best constitution will wear out prematurely. And, instead of laying by a moderate competence for the future, old age or sickness presents itself to their minds associated only with images of penury and sorrow; and in the event of death, the cheerless prospect before their families is that of the faithful wife, who now shares their burdens, driven in her widowhood to some laborious occupation for a subsistence, and their children, possibly, dispersed here and there, wherever relatives or Christian friends can be found willing to receive them."

This is anything but a bright picture; and what imparts to it its darkest shadings is the fact, that it exists in a country where there is not the excuse of straitened circumstances for the neglect of Christ's ministers. It is a cold, worldly, undutiful spirit that has created this deplorable state of things. Men are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," and therefore His ministers are in want of the ordinary comforts of life in a land of rising cities, flourishing trade, and overflowing wealth. The same description would apply to Canada and the other North American colonies of Britain, with this difference, that there matters are, or were till very recently, worse. What a contrast betwixt the home of the colonist, filled with a rude plenty, and surrounded by acres yielding richer harvests every year, and that of the minister, who, simply that he may live, is obliged to conjoin the

labours of some four or six different stations. It is the same in our Australian settlements. There, amid the full barns and groaning tables of the colonists, the gospel is left to pick up but an indifferent subsistence. A little of the young wealth of these new countries is all that the gospel craves; but the people, in too many cases, are too busy getting rich to give it that little. To come to the countries of the Old World, the Protestant pastors of France and Germany are not better supported—as a class, not so well supported as the ministers in America, though to the contributions of their flocks is added in many cases the beneficence of government. As a rule, wherever it goes ill with Christianity, there it goes ill with ministers. The low state of religion on the continent is well known, and the temporal condition of its ministers is correspondingly low; nor do we expect it to be raised till the gospel reassert its power. Perhaps in no country in the world is the average income of ministers higher than in Britain. But even Britain cannot free herself from the reproach of an inadequately supported gospel ministry. There are parsonages in the south and manses in the north over which hangs, day and night, summer and winter, the cold cloud of penury. "There is a number of the clergy," said the Rev. Hobart Seymour, on a late public occasion, "whose incomes are so very small, that, when business or health demands for them absence or rest, they have not the means of providing themselves with clerical assistance to fulfil their duties; being unable, from incomes under £150 a-year, to pay for clergymen to take their places for a few weeks of repose after years of uninterrupted service. Poor curates are frequently obliged to pay two guineas a Sunday out of their miserable salaries, varying from £50 to £100 a-year, to occasional substitutes. I do not hesitate in saying, that there is many a wife who must soon be a widow, and many a child who must soon be an orphan, owing to the

total inability of many clergymen to get their places supplied during temporary absence. I have myself, when a humble curate, stayed at the house of an aged and pious clergyman and his wife, now both gone to a happier world, whose only provision of food for themselves and their children was *potatoes and milk*. They were utterly unable to procure more. And there are many clergymen's families now living who are clothed, and thankfully clothed, in the left-off garments of other families collected for them." Is this picture a true one? We fear it is. What a reproach to the wealth of England! She lodges in palaces and clothes in purple her nobles, her bishops, and her merchants, and leaves many of the pious and laborious ministers of the Lord Jesus to be fed by the hand of charity, and clothed in the habiliments in which respectability can no longer appear. Need we wonder that the gospel does not make progress? Can we look for the Spirit to come down so long as the cry of these labourers is daily entering into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth?

Scotland, though without the rich ecclesiastical revenues of England, has a ministry better supported on the whole. Perhaps in no country in the world is the average of ministerial income higher than in Scotland; and yet the spots of heathenism that dot the country, and the suffering silently endured in many of its manses, tell that even Scotland has not come up to the mark, and that there is still room for a greatly enlarged liberality on the part of its Christian people.

So stands the case. ALL Churches have sinned and come short of their duty in this matter. We need a second Reformation—a reformation in which men shall yield fealty to the gospel, not simply by professing its doctrines, but by ministering to it of their substance. But where and how is this reformation to begin? A judicious administration of the Church's finances will do something: union among evangelical churches, followed by a more equal and economical

distribution of their labourers, will do something: schemes of mutual support, by which confidence may be strengthened and liberality increased among both ministers and congregations, will do something: but no man has yet devised a scheme, or ever will, which will act as a talisman in indefinitely multiplying the Church's income. We know of only two forces that can enlarge that income—Duty the one, Conscience the other. This great duty, in all the solemnity that invests it as an ordinance of Christ, must be pressed home on the conscience of every man. Over the length and breadth of Christendom the incomes of ministers are, on the average, a fourth below what ought to be their minimum. Well, then, it is clear that over the length and breadth of Christendom the givings of the people, on the average, are a fourth below what ought to be their minimum. Here, then, we have at once the evil and its cure. Every man, with few exceptions, may safely conclude, "To this extent am I a defaulter, and to this extent henceforward will I enlarge my givings—a fourth, to wit—for this one special object." Whenever this conviction shall have become general over Christendom, and been followed by the corresponding change of conduct, then, but not till then, will the evil of inadequate ministerial support cease to be the reproach of the Church.*

The Church, no more than the world, can be reformed in the mass. This great reformation must begin with individuals. Reader, thou art the man. Your inadequate giving it is that has brought matters to this pass. "Mine!" you exclaim; "all that I can give or withhold is so very insignificant that it cannot possibly be missed." It *is* missed. It is missed by your Master, who stands beside the treasury as of old; and when your gift is cast in, He weighs it in His balances and finds it wanting. It is missed by your pastor,

* See Appendix.

who lacks it, when he sits down at his meagre board, or sees his children without the clothing and the education which befit his station. It is missed by your fellow church members, who must either bear the burden your shortcomings impose, or suffer the Church's treasury to be deficient. Or, worse still, they imitate your example, and your little multiplies itself a thousandfold. If, then, you really wish to remove this sin from the Church, remove it from your own door. If you really wish to bring up the whole Church to her duty in this matter, bring yourself up to it. Do not look to this wealthy man, or to that numerous congregation, and breathe the profitless ejaculation, Oh! that they would increase their liberality; Oh! that they would give more: look only to yourself and to your own givings. Deal with this matter in the same earnest, conscientious, and resolute spirit, as if it depended solely upon yourself. In the presence of God, and in the light of eternity, and without the least regard to what this man gives or does not give, determine for yourself what you ought to give; and, with one eye on the command, and the other on the promise, that they that fear the Lord "shall not want any good thing," continue all life long in the performance of your duty in this matter.

It is no difficult or unattainable object we are striving after. Nothing is easier, if but the right means are taken. All that is needed is, that all the members of the Church have grace, courage, and self-denial to deal with the matter after this fashion.

CHAPTER XV.

INJURIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE GIVING.

WE have already entered on the mischiefs which grow out of inadequate giving. Under this head we took occasion, first of all, to exhibit the real position of the minister, as compared with that of other professional men. It is, we have seen, greatly below theirs; and the painful disparity betwixt his official *status* and his actual one is productive of a very injurious action upon his whole character. It insensibly *lowers his tone and weakens his spirit.* As rust eats at last through steel, so this pressure, acting continually upon his mind, wears out at last its spring. No vigour, no saliency can long withstand this silent but irresistible corrosion—this ever-gnawing viper, from whose cankerous tooth there comes no respite. The energy of the man fades apace. Though in mid-life, he already appears like one on whom old age has laid its withering touch. He is a man who lives continually in a cloud of cares: summer and winter, its cold, icy folds are about him: if it opens for a moment, it is not to let in the warm sunshine of hope, but to reveal, in the far vista, the dire spectacle of an old age of penury. It is in these circumstances that you ask the minister to be self-possessed, to be tranquil, to be concentrated, and to give his every thought and his every labour to you!

Let us think how hard a task it is which we exact of him. We place him in circumstances in which he is compelled to

think of earthly things; for if he loves his wife and children, he must think of such things, and often with intense anxiety and anguish; and yet we expect him to be spiritual—an example to his flock of calm, intrepid heavenly-mindedness. You must first take the father's heart out of him. To see poverty at the door, to tremble at every step that crosses his threshold lest it should be that of one who has a claim to prefer which he is unable to meet, and yet to live in a kind of transcendental or seraphic indifference to earthly things, verily he must be more than man, or less than man. You shew but little interest in *his* comfort, or in that of those dearer to him than himself; you stand aloof when cares thicken and straits press; and you expect him to be all alive to what touches you, to bear you and your circumstances on his heart at a throne of grace, rejoicing when you rejoice, and weeping when you weep. You expect impossibilities. You must pipe to him before he can dance; you must mourn to him before he can lament.

The inadequate giver impoverishes his pastor *intellectually*. By the anxiety to which you subject him, you occasion to him a vast expenditure of intellect, which, if applied to other objects, might achieve very splendid results. As it is, it is simply the loss of so much mental power; nay, not only the loss, it is the partial destruction of that power; for its exercise in the case supposed being an unhealthy one, the faculty itself wears out. The literary power is one that cannot in these days be safely dispensed with; yet how can it be attained or cultivated with such means as are at the command of ministers? They are denied access to the best models. First-class books they cannot purchase. It is by converse with these that the pastor is to refine his taste, strengthen his understanding, and give precision, vigour, and variety to his thinking; yet he is shut out from them. It is at the deep, pure fountains of the seventeenth

century that he may expect most readily to replenish his own mental stores. But these are to him "a fountain sealed, a spring shut up." He has heard the fame of these great minds, as the queen of Sheba did that of Solomon, but to stand before them daily, and hear their wisdom, is a happiness he dare scarce aspire to. Almost equally beyond his reach are those able theological works, the fruit of an improved exegesis, which issue at intervals from the press of Britain and Germany. For the same reason he is shut out from the records of science and discovery. Those great facts, that so fill the mind with the idea of God's power and the Bible's truth, he can hear only at second hand. In our day voices have come from the mounds of Babylon, prophets have arisen from the pagan tombs, and their testimony is of thrilling interest, but in vain they speak when there are few or none to transmit their voices to the people. What a wretched economy! In shutting out your pastor from these sources of information, you are shutting out yourself. In vain we multiply churches if our ministers lack the literary and spiritual anointing. In vain we study the splendour of our edifices if we suffer to decline the intellectual and spiritual glory of our pulpits.

Again we say to the inadequate giver, you impoverish your pastor *morally*. You close around him almost every avenue through which his moral nature can be exercised and cultivated. Charity he cannot exercise, or to but a very limited extent. In noble objects of a public kind, devised for the social amelioration or the intellectual improvement of his fellows, his means rarely permit him to take a part. He sees others around him tasting the luxury of relieving distress—of making the widow's heart to sing for joy—of furthering public schemes of beneficence, and by doing so, elevating their natures, enlarging their happiness, and strengthening their influence; but in these labours, with

all the moral and social benefit resulting from them, he can rarely share.

You impoverish him *spiritually.* His straitened circumstances act most injuriously upon him when they shut him out from converse with his fellow-men; but they act yet more fatally when they shut him out from converse with his heavenly Father. This they sometimes do. His spirit is so grieved, so burdened, that he has no heart even to talk with God. He is bowed down to the earth, and often struggles in vain to break the chain, and soar away into the free realms above, and forget, in the light and joy of God's favour, the little cares of earth. Yet will these cares intrude—intrude into his most secret retirement; distracting and weakening his energies when he would converse with his Father, or would give himself to the study of God's Word. The successful prosecution of literature even requires no small mental tranquillity; how much more the sacred office, whose responsibilities and anxieties are in themselves so weighty! If distracted every day, and every hour of every day, by the thought of how food and clothing are to be provided for his family, how is it possible that he can bring a strong, because a calm and concentrated mind, to the study of the sacred oracles? In his library he is surrounded by an atmosphere of anxiety. In the pulpit even, he is surrounded by the same atmosphere. He has carried the burden thither; how is it possible that he can speak as the lively oracles of God ought to be spoken? Congregations ought to remember that their pastors are "men of like passions" with themselves. Cares will depress and coldness will chill them just as they do others. Kindness will warm their hearts and invigorate their powers, and, as a consequence, they will do more work, and do it better. The attachment of their flocks, next to the presence of their Master, is one grand source of their strength and consolation. Were this more generally

taken into account, it would result in rich blessings to both minister and people. It is good policy in a congregation to take care of its pastor. Those that have tried it have uniformly found it to be so. Perhaps no class of men are more alive to offices of kindness than ministers; and never is kindness to them thrown away. It returns to the flock in manifold usury, in the increased power and larger success of their pastor's ministrations.

In fine, in the unhappy circumstances of which we speak, and which, unhappily, are but too common, the whole power and efficiency of the gospel ministry visibly decline. The pastor cannot bend the calm, full force of his mind to study; his subject and his work do not pervade him—are not breathed deeply forth in every word and act; the fine tonings and shadings of human sympathy, the rich mellow lights of spiritual experience, breaking like sunlight upon the landscape of his discourse, all are wanting. In delivery he lacks the self-possession and the moral courage necessary for effective preaching. He appears in the pulpit with sunken eye and clouded brow, with air and attitude constrained, and utterance irresolute and feeble. Altogether, the figure he exhibits is very unlike that which one pictures to himself as the figure of Christ's ambassador, humbly conscious of his great office, and discharging it with a calm firmness and earnestness, alike removed from fear and from pride. He looks as if he felt himself an intruder into the pulpit, and ran the risk of being detected and turned out, instead of realising it as the place where he has God's authority to stand, and where he has God's message to deliver.

How sad the change! Formerly the pulpit was a power. The glory that dwelt between the cherubim rested above it. To the sinner the voice that came from it seemed like the echoes of that awful voice that spoke on Sinai. It called up his sins in array before him, and pointed his

affrighted eye to a judgment to come. To the saint it spoke in tones of ineffable sweetness, such as those that were heard eighteen centuries ago on the mountains and by the shores of Galilee. The pulpit to him was as a well of living waters, to which he came weary of heart, and from which he returned strong in spirit. Even beyond the range of its regular attendants, the pulpit was a power, scattering over the neighbourhood the seeds of virtue, of industry, and of prosperity. But now all is changed; there are no longer beauty, strength, and glory in the sanctuary. There comes no voice of power from the pulpit now. Within the church, instead of an assemblage devout, reverent, yet all alive, turning as one man, with beating hearts and moistened eyes, to the pulpit, there is now a thin gathering of cold, irreverent forms, which have sent their bodies to make apology for their souls, which linger in their counting-houses, shops, farms, or in the haunts of pleasure, occupied with more agreeable matters. Outside the church is a disorderly, dissipated, and beggarly neighbourhood. All these evils come of inadequate giving. Verily their name is Legion.

CHAPTER XVI.

BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING—BLESSEDNESS TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

We turn now to the other side of the picture—the blessedness, to wit, of giving for the gospel. The more this subject is pondered, the more will the force of our Lord's saying be felt, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is truly a blessed thing to receive the gospel; it is the day-spring to them who sit in darkness; and whether we confine our view to one soul, with the misery from which it is rescued, or enlarge our vision to a nation, with all the complicated horrors which it brings to an end, and which it replaces with joys durable and celestial, it is impossible to estimate adequately the blessedness of receiving the gospel. But it is a yet more blessed thing to *give* the gospel. To do so is to taste over again, in fuller measure and more exquisite degree, the happiness we first felt on receiving it.

This blessedness is manifold. It is as manifold as are the relations which man fills, and as vast as is the sphere of his interests. It begins first in the soul, which it fills with peace; it descends next on the family, which it fills with love; it then diffuses itself over the neighbourhood, which it enriches with order and prosperity; and, lastly, it embraces the nation, which it crowns with wealth, glory, and dominion.

Let us speak first of the blessedness of giving to the indi-

vidual. It must have struck the reader that much of the time and a large proportion of the substance of the Israelite were devoted to the worship of God. The due maintenance of that worship was not the only thing aimed at in this. That worship might have been made less magnificent, and by consequence less costly; but would it have been equally profitable for the Israelite had less of his time and less of his substance been spent in this way? Assuredly no. It was good that he should be brought into almost daily contact with sacred persons and appointed mysteries. It counteracted the continually operating influences of idolatry and worldliness around him. The best way of preserving privileges is to use them: disuse is often the precursor of loss. Therefore all the enjoyments and occasions of daily life in the case of the Jew were linked with the temple and the priesthood. It was, moreover, a grand training to benevolence; and latter times have shewn how much the facility of this virtue depends on habit. The Israelite was taught what was the true end of life; that it is not to enjoy; a poor miserable object of living is this, devoid of dignity and barren of happiness; he was taught that the true end of existence is to do good and to communicate.

This habit of giving of all that grew upon their soil for the worship of God was a consecration of their whole land. It connected the labours of the Israelite in the field and in the vineyard with the solemn rites and songs of the temple. Whether he was called to cast his seed into the furrows of the earth, or thrust his sickle into the harvest of his land—whether he pruned his vine or gathered its grapes—the husbandman could think that he was doing all unto the Lord, and that the labour and the enjoyment alike were sanctified. To his senses, thus quickened and purified, every flower and blossom exhaled a sweeter fragrance, and a halo of beauty rested on every hill and plain of his beauteous Palestine.

Is there no need to baptize our daily labours and enjoyments in the same sanctified spirit? Is there no need, by cultivating the habit of giving, and giving oft, to bring ourselves into daily contact with Divine things? Quite as much as ever; nay more, owing to the increasing ardour with which business is pursued. If we did not recognise religion every day by pausing, amid the busy pursuits of life, to recognise her high claims, how soon should we forget her altogether! how soon would the whole bent and feeling of the mind become worldly! The mist arising from earth's engrossments would so thicken and darken, that soon we should lose sight of heaven altogether, and feel only the ground on which we trode.

There is, then, need that we should hallow our labours as the Israelite hallowed his. It is sad to think that we toil only that we may eat; there is oppression in such a thought-monotony and weariness in such a task, which at length makes the mind to lose its energy and the hand to forget its cunning. But when we think that we toil to give a portion to God, the mind acquires a fresh spring and the hand a new alacrity. Our daily labour, humble as it is, is for no passing enjoyment; it is for more than food and raiment; its results rise as high as heaven, and run onwards into eternity. Everything our hand does, contributes its modicum of influence towards the grand result of the world's conversion. Do we plough the soil to reap its harvests, or do we plow the main to gather the riches of commerce—do we dig deep in thought to bring up the hidden and precious treasures of truth—or do we sit at the helm of kingdoms, and labour to evolve the destinies of humanity—we feel that, having God's glory in eye, God's hand is assisting with us, and that His fructifying blessing rests on all we do. Do we succeed in our labours—do plenteous harvests wave on our fields—do our ships, richly freighted, return safely from their far voyages—or do

the growing concord and prosperity of nations proclaim the wisdom and patriotism with which we have laboured for their good—our pleasure is the greater that our success has come with the token of God's approval upon it.

By giving a due portion of our substance to God, we vastly heighten our enjoyment in what remains. Having honoured God's claims, we feel that we have now a right to enjoy. He that created the blessing, and poured it into our lap, bids us enjoy it. But when we refuse God's due, we cannot but feel that we are using what is not our own, and there is a sting in every morsel we swallow down. It is honest bread we eat in the one case, it is stolen dainties we devour in the other—sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. With what zest might the Israelite sit down and enjoy the bounties with which his fertile land covered his table! He had brought all the tithes into the storehouse, and he felt that he was the owner, not the robber, of the plenty and beauty which he saw around him. His substance was sanctified by being consecrated to God; and in the falling shower, the budding vine, and the golden grain, he saw the tokens of his Father's blessing. Around him, and around his land, there was, he felt, the almighty arm of the Lord of hosts. This ecstatic feeling that man never can taste who wastes his possessions upon himself, and makes his end in living the ignoble and unworthy one of self-gratification.

As a general rule it may be affirmed, that those enjoyments which are of an active kind bring with them a larger measure of happiness than those enjoyments which are of a passive kind. In receiving we are passive; we submit our minds to be acted upon by another. Our attitude is one of subordination and dependence. Our happiness centres in and terminates with ourselves. But in giving we are active. A far larger range of faculties is called into play. We originate—we create; our happiness, instead of being ab-

sorbed in ourselves, is emanative, spreads itself out, and creates joy and love wherever we look. We multiply our own happiness in proportion as we multiply around us the hearts in which we kindle the same flame. Verily it is more blessed to give than to receive.

This is true of all giving. It is pre-eminently true of giving for the gospel, for here we have the reflection of the immeasurable and eternal good which we confer on those whom we bring within the sphere of its blessings. Our happiness is still further ennobled by the thought that we are fellow-workers with God in His plans of transcendent and eternal good, and that we are workers in no mean measure. When a soul is converted, a *power* is called into existence—a power whose action will be felt far and wide, and whose influence will be lasting as eternity. Who was it that Andrew led to Jesus? His own brother. But that brother was Simon Peter, to whom was given the honour of opening the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles. A Christian woman on her way to chapel accosted JOHN WILLIAMS, and asked him to accompany her. She doubtless aimed at nothing higher than the saving of his soul; and yet that was but the least of the consequences growing out of what she did. She had brought one to Jesus who was to be the apostle of civilisation and eternal life to the savage islanders of the Pacific, and whose name is now identified with some of the brightest triumphs of the gospel in modern times. When by our instrumentality a soul is converted, who can tell how many, many thousands may by that act be rescued from eternal death!

In fine, giving for the gospel deepens and enlarges one's own piety, and with every addition to one's personal piety there is an addition to one's personal happiness. The soul has found its rest when it has returned to God. The person feels that his foot is upon a rock, and this gives stability

and strength to the whole man. His bosom is the dwelling of a love that runs upwards to God and outwards to man, linking him in sweetest ties at once to heaven and to earth; and the peace within drops in graciousness from the lips, and mantles in sunshine on the countenance. The capacity of the man for work is enlarged; he can stand the cares and harassments of life better than other men. He will live longer, for the serenity of true piety is favourable to health. His sphere of enjoyment is larger; and his horizon is extended beyond that of earth and time. Nature is fairer, for he can see through it the glory of a reconciled God. Mankind are better and nobler, for he knows now the lofty virtues and inflexible principles which will animate them when Christianised. His whole nature is elevated, refined, and enlarged in its sympathies, and fitted for receiving a larger measure of both natural and social enjoyment. Here is a happiness which would be cheap though purchased with the wealth of a world, and which the rich man, as he sits gloomy and fretful amidst his riches, might be but too glad to purchase with the half, or even the whole, of his possessions.

CHAPTER XVII.

BLESSEDNESS TO THE FAMILY.

We have touched only the beginning of this blessedness—its first dawn in the bosom. In addition to the happiness which it creates within the man, how vast the happiness which it creates around him! It fills his home, as it fills his heart, with countless pleasures. It rears and nourishes virtues and joys which no other influence under heaven could produce—virtues and joys that were unknown in the world till Christianity entered it, and which would be unknown again were Christianity to leave it. These it diffuses all over the homes of a neighbourhood, and, in giving for the gospel, we very directly foster and multiply these virtues and pleasures.

To the gospel is owing the sweetness and tenderness of the conjugal relation. It sanctifies marriage, and makes it the root of manifold blessings. To the gospel is owing the obedience and love of children, whom it enters into the same covenant of life with the parents—"I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed"—and in whose heart it awakens the love of the heavenly Father in aid of that of the earthly. To the gospel is owing the fidelity and respect of servants, whom it teaches to act not as man-pleasers, but as servants of the Lord Jesus. To what is it owing but to the gospel, that there are no homes, no happy domestic scenes, like those with which Christian Britain abounds? Such homes were

unknown in the most enlightened and civilised lands of paganism. There is no sun that can ripen such fruit but Christianity, brought home to the heart by the Sabbath-day ministrations of the pastor, and brought home to the hearth by his week-day visits. Are not blessings like these worth all the money that can be given for them? Is any luxury of which one may deny himself that he may have to give for the gospel, to be once compared with a luxury like this? True, it requires a little of his substance; but, in return, it fills his house with love, and it rears up within that house virtues—those of order, industry, frugality—by which, in the long run, it repays a thousandfold, even in temporal riches, all that the man ever gave for the support of the gospel.

In the Bible we have the promise of "the new heavens and the new earth." How and when are the new heavens and the new earth to be created? They are already come. Where? Look into that family—look at that community. You see all loving all, all praying for all, all working for all—the man of learning edifying with his knowledge his less gifted brother, the man of wealth assisting with his goods his humbler brother; each making his talent, whatever it may be, minister to the use of all. Here is the germ of "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Here is the hope of the future. Extend such a community over the world, and you have a "new creation." Every penny given for the support of the gospel brings nearer the era when it shall be said, "Behold, all things are become new."

From the household we pass to the neighbourhood; and here, in the larger circle, we meet the same beauteous fruits of order and love, which we saw, blooming so richly, quickened and nourished by the gospel, within the smaller. The gospel is the parent of order. It restrains the hand by restraining the conscience. It eradicates disorder and vio-

lence by eradicating the passions of hatred and covetousness, from which they proceed; and it plants order and peace by planting love in the human heart, and making each man his "brother's keeper." Other guardians of the public peace may slumber; *this* is always awake. When the world is sunk in sleep, this power keeps watch and ward, going its silent rounds, stifling the evil purpose in the bud, whispering into the ear of the assassin and the thief, "Thou shalt do no violence," and doing more to prevent crime, with all the pecuniary and moral loss that accompanies it, than the whole costly array of policemen and judges, of prisons and scaffolds. Were each man to tax himself to the tenth of his income for the support of the gospel, he would be a prodigious gainer in respect of his other burdens.

The gospel is the parent of intelligence. The first thing to awaken mind in childhood is Christianity; and the best thing to keep it awake in old age is Christianity. The power of the gospel to awaken mind is seen in the case of the savage. No tribe has yet been discovered so barbarous that the gospel is unable to reclaim them. To no region has it gone where it has failed to plant intelligence and civilisation. There is a native affinity betwixt the gospel and light. It founds institutions of learning, and from these, as centres, it carries down the light, and diffuses it all over the land. It enriches and enlarges the mind of the very peasant with its own great truths. The Christian peasants of Britain are not what the peasants of Greece and Rome were, and what the peasants of Italy and Spain at this day are—clowns. A purer morality than Plato ever taught has refined their minds, and loftier imagery than that of Homer's verse has elevated their tastes, and, beneath their homely manners, it is not difficult to mark a native dignity and a refined grace which belong to no other peasantry on the earth. And as regards the more choice of a country's

population, it nurtures into strength those faculties which, exerted in the walks of literature, of science, or of legislation, bring to their owner renown, and to the country large and enduring good. It is surely a blessed thing to support an influence that fills a realm with light.

The gospel is the parent of industry and wealth. What other proof of this need we adduce than the state of the world at this hour? Where is it that we find commerce and riches—in Turkey where the gospel is unknown, or in Britain where it is known? There is a closer connexion than many suspect betwixt the pulpits of a country and its looms and forges. The skill of the right hand has its source high up, even in the lessons of that Book which is weekly expounded in the sanctuary. And not the intelligence and skill only, but the truth and honesty, without which the confidence between man and man, which is essential to commerce, would not exist, is created by the gospel. Extinguish the sanctuaries of a land, and you extinguish its factories and its marts of business. To stint a gospel ministry is, then, wofully short-sighted and flagrantly unjust. It is short-sighted, because you are blighting the source of those virtues that create wealth, and it is unjust, because you are denying a gospel ministry its fair and righteous share in that very wealth which it creates.

In California, and similar communities, the industrial value of the gospel has been signally tested. Even irreligious men, who never contributed a penny at home for the support of ordinances, have contributed liberally there, being "tired of living in a land without religion." The Rev. Martin Kellog, writing from California, in the October number of the American *Home Missionary*, says, "It requires no long residence here to be convinced of the desirableness, the pressing need, of the old influences. Those who may have been indifferent, or even hostile, at home, are here willing

to purchase, at considerable cost, so essential a good. Men who there belonged to no ecclesiastical society, here become the hearty supporters—more or less efficient—of any promising religious enterprise." This is high praise, because it is praise from an enemy.

In fine, here, liberality to the cause of God stands connected with the promise of temporal abundance. As God's curse can blight, so His blessing can multiply our possessions; and that blessing has been repeatedly and most emphatically promised in connexion with that virtue. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. God loveth a cheerful giver." Such are a few of the promises scattered throughout the Bible, assuring us that we shall be no losers by our liberality; but that all we give shall be returned to us, and returned with usury.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BLESSEDNESS TO THE NATION.

Let us glance for a moment at the blessings which the gospel confers on society. It will need here no lengthened argument to shew that it is worth a thousand times more than all it costs. It is not only in the virtuous life and the happy deathbed that we see the good fruits of the gospel. Look around on these richly cultivated fields and these opulent cities, mark that growing trade and that far-extending commerce, and observe those stable political institutions under whose shield all these flourish, and you behold the good fruits of the gospel. The trunk that bears these fair blossoms—the corner-stone that sustains this goodly fabric—is Christianity. How does this appear?

In the bosom of every man is a high and mysterious power, which, when in action, governs the man. That power is termed conscience. If you can control conscience, you can control the man. There is but one influence in the world that can control conscience; that influence is the gospel. It is the true Ithuriel's spear, at the touch of which the great tribunal is seen, and the conscience of the man rises up in all its strength. In proportion as you multiply such men—men in whose breast you create a power perpetually pleading in behalf of right—in the dark night, in the solitude of the desert not less than in the open day—in the same proportion do you create a groundwork for law in the community.

Every law takes for granted that there is a conscience, more or less, in the nation. Every law is an appeal to the sense of right and wrong in the man; and every penalty leans upon the sanctions of conscience. Where there is no conscience, the penalty will not be feared; where the penalty is not feared, the law will not be obeyed; and where the law is not obeyed, rights will not exist or be enjoyed; there, there will be no security for the person, no protection for the property; and where there is no protection for property, property can have no value. There will be no motive to create it; no branch of industry or trade will be prosecuted, or, if prosecuted, it will be but feebly. Thus the gospel lies at the foundation of the whole temporal order and prosperity of a country. Should it not, then, be supported?

To the gospel we owe our stable political institutions. Why are those of other nations so shifting and so short-lived? They want the groundwork the gospel creates on which political institutions must rest. They have new theories, but the old men. The gospel is a regenerating power, working persistently and silently in the heart of the individual, leavening the mass, and, in this way, slowly and steadily building society up into a temple of order, truth, and justice. Could any sum adequately express the worth of the gospel?

The pulpit, which is but another name for the gospel, is the grand enemy of vice. There is nothing so costly as vice. In the first place, society loses the labour of the criminal. It loses, in the next place, the sums he squanders in vice and dissipation. It loses, too, the property which is stolen and destroyed. In each of our large cities the amount of property stolen amounts annually to many thousands of pounds. Nor is this all, great as it is. Society must tax itself to pay officers and executioners, to build prisons, and salary judges. The cost is prodigious. Nothing but the gospel, which foretells a judgment-day, can restrain vice and

crime; and were the nation to spend on the diffusion of the gospel but half of what it now spends on the detection and punishment of crime, what an immense gainer it would be! For every pound so spent, it would save *ten*.

Vice, too, is the great fountainhead of our pauperism. Some few there are who have been rendered paupers by the events of providence, or by original inferiority of bodily and mental powers; but these are the exceptions; the vast majority of those who are dependent and in beggary have so become in consequence of vice. The pecuniary burden entailed by that pauperism upon the honest and industrious classes is already enormous, and is every year becoming heavier. Where shall we look for a remedy for these sore evils? There is but one effectual remedy, the gospel, even, incomparably, the best and cheapest remedy. The gospel will soon cleanse a realm from idleness, vagabondism, and rags. It feeds the springs of industry, by creating in the mind that honest independence which disdains to eat the bread of idleness. It implants frugality, moderation, contentment, and teaches the man to provide "things honest in the sight of all men." Were it more widely diffused, what abundance and happiness would cover the country! Prisons, poor's-houses, and penitentiaries would disappear. In their room would come smiling cottages, and hives of busy, happy industry. Rags would be supplanted by decent raiment; and theatres and gin-palaces by schools and lecture-rooms. What a reformation, and at how small a cost! There is no agency so cheap, yet no agency so powerful, as the gospel. How much we lose, in even a temporal point of view, by our lukewarmness in its diffusion! Were we but to double our contributions to the gospel, we would diminish, in a tenfold ratio, our public burdens. There is no money that yields so good a return, even in a pecuniary view, as that which is invested in the support of a gospel ministry. We

may safely reckon that for every penny which we deny to the minister, we have to give a pound to the tax-gatherer.

The gospel produces, too, a high-toned, chivalrous, and patriotic spirit amongst a country's population. This is not the least of the benefits which a gospel ministry confers. The infusion of the noble sentiments of the Bible, and the high lessons and high standard of acting exhibited week after week in the ministrations of the sanctuary, insensibly mould the character of a nation, and fit it for worthy deeds. This alone is of inestimable value—worth a thousand times over all the money it costs; for this high-toned feeling is the best shield of even the secular and sordid interests of a nation. Care for the higher interests of a country, and you may leave the minor interests to care for themselves.

The more the gospel flourishes, the more will commerce flourish. All our mechanical operations take for granted the existence of a certain force in nature—the power of gravity, to wit. On that force are based all the works we construct and all the machines we invent. So here. All our trading and commercial operations are based on an assumed moral power in the community—conscientiousness, to wit. Confidence is as essential as capital to our commerce. Legal bonds will secure the merchant so far against dishonesty and fraud, but only so far. Many a debt is paid which never would be so, and many a calamity passes him by which would strike him with ruin, but for the high principle and conscientiousness fostered by the gospel. Is it much that the merchant should liberally support an institution which is the best patron of his own profession and the best guardian of his earnings?

It is the gospel that gives property its value. Under feeble laws and tottering institutions property loses more than half its security, and by consequence loses well-nigh all its value. And what is it that gives law its strength, and

political institutions their stability—is it not the gospel? Why is property less valuable in Spain than in Britain, and less valuable in Turkey than in either? Because in Turkey it is greatly less secure. And why less secure? Because there the pulpit does not exist—the healthful, moral, civilising spirit of a gospel ministry, making law respected and order loved, is not felt. A man may be the possessor to-day of houses and lands, but a revolution may break out to-morrow and leave him a beggar: his property is worth just what its tenure is worth, and its tenure is worth just what the law is worth. If Britain is a garden while Turkey is a wilderness, the cause of the difference lies here—it possesses what Turkey wants, the pulpit. In every other respect, the latter country has the advantage. Its sun is warmer, its soil is more fertile, and a countless variety of useful and generous fruits are native to it: and yet, while golden harvests wave on the fields of Britain, while opulent cities rise on its soil, and white sails gleam on its coasts, Turkey, by nature the paradise of the world, presents a dreary and saddening spectacle of unploughed fields, of ruinous and tenantless cities, of silent shores and untrodden highways, and a population devoured by idleness and brutalised by ignorance.

Who, then, can estimate the worth of the pulpit? We speak not now of its high spiritual and eternal value, we are talking of its temporal worth. Who can estimate even that? The gospel nourishes and sustains every manly and virtuous sentiment, every polite art, every social privilege, every political institution. It is the gospel that makes it day; extinguish it, and the thick night of barbarism would settle down over all the earth. And at how amazingly small a cost does the pulpit accomplish all this good! Is there any other agency in the world that at a hundred times the cost could accomplish even a tithe of what the pulpit effects? We unhesitatingly affirm, there is not. To the pulpit, as we

have shewn, is owing the certainty and success with which our merchants carry on their trade, and the value which attaches to the estates of our nobles. Verily, the pulpit is no burden on the nation—it is the nation's best benefactor. It comes, not gathering alms, but strewing its path with blessings. And yet, notwithstanding the demonstrable fact that the pulpit is eminently the fountainhead of the nation's prosperity, what a miserable pittance is it which is given for its support! The nation has been growing in wealth, the income and the comforts of all classes have been greatly augmented; but, like the fleece of Gideon of old, which remained unmoistened by the dew which bathed so copiously every tree and flower in its neighbourhood, the pulpit has not shared in the shower which has been falling all around it. Society in this respect has not known its best institution; it has acted unjustly towards it; and, instead of enlarging its sphere, has narrowed and circumscribed it. A more shortsighted policy men could not have pursued, though they had looked no higher than their mere temporal interests! We trust to see the day when this great error will be corrected; and when the Church, awakening throughout all her bounds to a sense of her duty, will at once do honour to her Head, and justice to herself, by decreeing an adequate and equitable support for her ministers; and then, a mighty incubus being lifted off, the pulpit will exhibit yet more signally than ever its prodigious power to elevate, to ennoble, and to bless the world.

In conclusion, let us remark, by way of pressing home this great duty, that the ONE PARAMOUNT WORK of the Christian is the self-same with that which is the ONE PARAMOUNT WORK of the Church, namely, the evangelisation of the world. To him—even the individual Christian—the great command was spoken, "Go, teach all nations." He is to teach all nations, beginning with his own. Those at home he can

evangelise with the least expenditure of means and the least loss of time, and having converted them, he can associate them with himself in the task of converting others. What a new and inconceivable impulse would the thorough evangelisation of our own country give to the work of God all over the earth! It would enlist a countless multitude of hands and minds in that great work, now occupied in the service of the world or of Satan. Many more contributions would flow into the Church's treasury, and many more prayers would ascend to the throne of her King. One thoroughly Christianised country would be a MORAL OMNIPOTENCE upon the earth. What a unity in its action! what a power in its example! what an irresistible strength in its working! and what a rich blessing would rest upon all its operations! What a glorious achievement to subdue the heathenism of Britain, to make our country a fully converted and sanctified land, and bring the full force of its combined Christianity to bear upon the world! How soon would the task of the world's conversion be accomplished! What is wanting, as respects human instrumentality, to a consummation so surpassingly grand but a little more of the wealth of which Britain is so full? We appeal to those to whom God has given wealth. See to what a noble use you may put your money, what glorious achievements you may compass by it, and what inestimable blessings you may make it the instrument of conferring on the present, and on many coming generations!

When the late war was at its height, a statesman announced the doctrine, amidst the applause of British merchants, that the first use of money earned by commerce was to carry on the war of liberty. Compared with the selfish and base uses to which money is too often put, it is truly noble to devote it to the defence of liberty. But the Christian can imagine a yet nobler use of money. He can soar as

high in devotion to *his* king and country, which are Christ and the Church, as the statesman to *his;* and he can say, the first and highest end of money is the evangelisation of the world—the bringing of all its nations to bow before the throne of the Lamb. Prophecy reveals a time when this truth shall be fully recognised, and when "the gain of the whole earth shall be holiness unto the Lord."

Britain is the great moneyed power of the world; and we would have its men of landed and commercial wealth to reflect on what a position theirs is, and how vast a responsibility attaches to it. You stand in the world's centre. Britain is the fountainhead of influences which radiate to the very extremities of the earth. Her language is spoken over a large portion of the globe; her commerce brings her into contact with every tribe of earth's population; the prestige of her name and the fame of her arts have penetrated into the very heart of the African deserts; and her political power is felt in every court and capital of the world, from Pekin in the east to Washington in the west: her spirit and influence have a terrestrial omnipresence—they are acting everywhere. Oh! is it not a matter of unspeakable and infinite moment for the wellbeing of all earth's children, that this influence, so universally pervasive, felt alike in the divans of Constantinople and the hut of the Kaffir, should be thoroughly Christian and evangelistic. To you, Christian princes and merchants of Britain, it falls to make it so. God has put you at the head of this great country. He has given you vast treasures—the gain of the whole earth is yours. And to what nobler use can you devote it—to what use that will bring at last so rich a harvest of honour to yourselves, and of blessing to the world—as that of the full and complete reclamation of all Britain to the observances and virtues of Christianity, and the planting of every part of the land with a faithful,

zealous, and well-furnished gospel ministry? When this object shall have been accomplished—when Britain shall have become a thoroughly Christianised country—a moral atmosphere will begin to envelop the globe, in which the systems of superstition, unable longer to live, will crumble and fall, and the clouds of the world's night will break up and flee before the golden light of the long wished-for day.

APPENDIX.

On page 119, the author has taken the liberty of stating his conviction that the givings of the members of the Church, all over Christendom, for the support of a gospel ministry, are a *fourth* below what ought to be their *minimum*. He believes he would have been nearer the truth had he said a *half*. He thinks it better, however, to put the matter in a form that will carry universal acquiescence. The fact, then, on the admission of all, the author takes it, is this, that the Church catholic, in the matter of the sustentation of her ministry, is a full *fourth* below what ought to be her very lowest point. It is something to have put the evil before the Church in a definite form. Let the Church look at it steadily. This is the first step towards a reformation. But how or where is that reformation to begin? In speaking to this point, the author may be permitted to state his own experience in connexion with that branch of the Church to which he belongs, fraught as that experience is with encouragement to all the Churches of Christ.

It was early in June 1854. The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland had just closed its sittings. A dividend had been declared from the Sustentation Fund slightly below that of the previous year, and the author, having occasion, from his connexion with the *Home and Foreign Record* of the Free Church, to write very often, and think occasionally, on the subject of the sustentation of the ministry, was turning over the matter of the year's deficit very anxiously in his mind. While so occupied, he had occasion to visit a friend at a short distance from town. The evening was one of the loveliest of the season, and the various vegetation which covered the fields, refreshed by the mild showers of the morning, and stimulated by the warmth of the afternoon, was giving signs of very luxuriant growth. Pulling up a stalk of wheat, his friend remarked to the author that its growth for the day might be a fourth of an inch. "This," he continued, "seems a small matter, and will go but a little way towards filling our

barns; but multiply it by the number of stalks in the whole field, and you will find that a great many waggons would scarce suffice to carry home the produce of this single field for this one day."

The remark flashed on the author as strikingly applicable to the subject on which his mind was dwelling. In fact, it suggested the true mode (furnishing at the same time its finest illustration) of raising the Sustentation Fund. Here, thought the author, is the way in which the great Creator feeds nations. Here is the way in which Nature provides that great sustentation fund by which she supports the species. She does not exact of the productive powers of the earth any spasmodic effort: she does not unduly tax this or that field by requiring of it an increase miraculously large: she teaches every blade of grass, and every stalk of corn, to grow after its own measure—to add, day by day, a little to its stature; and in this way, in due time, she prepares her harvests, and feeds every thing that lives.

So, thought the author, must the Church proceed, if she would realise a competent maintenance for her ministers. She must not lean on the gifts of the rich, or be content with the temporary success of a spasmodic effort; but, casting herself on the great principles of the question, and bringing these principles to bear on every mind, she must, by a natural, easy, and universal operation, raise the scale of giving permanently over the whole Church. She must find how much she is deficient, and call on each of her members, the humblest not excepted, to supplement that deficiency, by an increase, after his measure, upon his present givings. And turning to that part of the subject which regarded the Free Church, the author found that she *had* fixed the *minimum* stipend of her ministers at £150; that in order to realise that *minimum*, she must add about £25,000, or a fourth more, to her present annual income; and that the only way in which she could do this was, by every one of her four hundred thousand contributors making a proportional increase on his present monthly contributions. And pointing out how very small a sum from each individual, in addition to what he now gave, would suffice to extinguish the deficit and raise the stipend to its *minimum*, the author laid his suggestion before the Free Church through her *Record*, with the request that, through the Church's machinery, every member should have an opportunity afforded him of co-operating in the plan. Our laymen, who have ever evinced an enlightened and generous sense of what is due to the ministerial office in respect of temporal emolument, were the first, as was fitting, to take action on the point. Thereafter it was embraced by our ministers; and the Convener of the Sustentation Committee, the Rev. Dr Buchanan of Glasgow, adopting the proposal humbly suggested by the author, has, with that calm judgment and untiring energy for which he is distinguished, now conducted it, under the name of the One-Fourth More Movement, to all but complete success.

The author has entered thus minutely into these details, because, in recommending a similar movement throughout the Church catholic and

universal, he wishes to shew how easily the thing may be done; and that it is no untried and doubtful experiment which he recommends, but an experiment which has already been tested, and has succeeded in one section of the Church. Let each branch of the Church of Christ give its serious attention to this great subject. Especially let the laity, who share so immediately and largely in the vast and growing prosperity of the empire, do so. Let them take the whole position of a minister into account; let them fix the *minimum* on which, according to their judgment, he can with respectability fill that position, and discharge without oppression its claims; and having found the *minimum* of what he ought to receive, let them next find what he *actually* receives; and having struck a balance—a deficit in the majority of cases, a very great deficit in some cases—let them put it in the power of every man to wipe out that deficit by the small, the very small, additional contribution which will suffice, in virtue of a common effort, to extinguish it. In this way only is the remedy to be sought. Surely, in each of the evangelical Churches of Great Britain, half-a-dozen laymen will be found public-spirited enough to initiate such a movement.

The author has seen numerous proposals, emanating on both sides the Atlantic, for reaching this object by a sort of royal road. He deems it idle here even to recapitulate these projects. In one and all of them he disbelieves. Almost all of them take for their model what is deemed the very worst kind of taxation in States, and which, if introduced into Churches, would but succeed in compelling the *form* and stifling the *spirit* of liberality. While urging the utmost diligence and regularity in collecting the Church's liberality, and the utmost discretion in distributing it, he deprecates the idea of evoking that liberality itself suddenly and as if by enchantment—by some ingenious and perilous scheme, some novel expedient of ecclesiastical legislation. But while he has no faith in these, he has unbounded faith in the sure though slow operation of adequate causes.

There must be an application of the truth to the conscience in respect of this duty. Its sense must be revived on the mind of the Church, from which it has been all but entirely worn off. Let her sin be held up before her eye, and kept in her view, till she sees it in all its magnitude, repents of it, and puts it away from her. Let the great truth go forth, that the dedication of part of our substance to God is not less a duty than the dedication of part of our time; and that if the *written* law of the Sabbath exacts a seventh of the one, the *implied* law of property exacts a tenth of the other.

Though no formal law proclaims the amount the Christian is to give, great principles do. The words may not be in the New Testament; the spirit is. He cannot recall the argument of this treatise (very inadequately conducted) without feeling that the tenth of his property is, like the seventh of his time, holy to the Lord. He has first a train of examples; he has next a train of enactments, all pointing to the *tenth;* and though under the gospel the duty has been released from the fetters of law, that it may take more purely

the form of liberality, its foundations are unchanged, and its exercise is not less needed—nay, is greatly more so than before. The Christian in this, as in every virtue, ought to exceed, not fall below, the measure of those who lived in times less enlightened, and under a dispensation less spiritual. What we wish to bring all Christians throughout the world to, is to deal with their substance as they deal with their time, and regularly and on principle to sanctify the whole by the dedication of a part to God. Let the man find what his available income is, by deducting all such expenses as his position in life imposes upon him; for we do not wish to render the duty oppressive, or to convert into a burden what God has made a privilege—and we are less solicitous that the sum given by the individual should be large, than that it should be given on principle and plan, and as a stated Christian duty; having found, we say, what his available income is, let the Christian say, these nine parts are my own, they may be used for my own lawful ends; this tenth is God's. This I cannot appropriate without being a robber—a robber of holy things.

If these sentiments be in any degree in accordance with God's revealed will, then how solemn to reflect in what fearful guilt both the Church and the world have been living! By the men of the world, the claims of God on their property have been totally disregarded. As if they were sole and exclusive owners, they have disposed of all without one thought of the great Owner. From the vast revenues of the noble downwards, all, to the last penny, has been spent upon themselves. This is robbery of the worst kind. There is no human law to punish it as such: but in the grand assize of the last day, this fearful abuse of property shall not escape the righteous judgment of God. And as regards the professors of religion, they are only a few degrees less guilty than the men of the world. There are noble exceptions, but the members of the Church generally have given hitherto but the most wretched pittance towards the support of the gospel. There has been no sense of the duty: no conscience made of its performance: the most niggardly gift—niggardly in measure, and niggardly in spirit—has been thrown into the treasury of the gospel, as if the gospel was a beggar, from whose disagreeable importunity the man was glad to rid himself by suffering this wrong. This is to affront, not support the gospel. The Church must learn what the first principles of this duty are. She must herself do due fealty to her King in both branches of her homage—the dedication of her time, and the dedication of her substance—and then lift up a testimony which shall condemn and shame the world.

Already, if we mistake not, the dawn of a better day has broke. No one need be told that Christian liberality has now begun to exceed that stinted measure and those narrow limits to which it so strictly adhered in days not long gone by. And although the great body of Christians still come far short of their duty in this matter, we have now some examples of giving to the gospel on a scale truly worthy of the gospel—of men with