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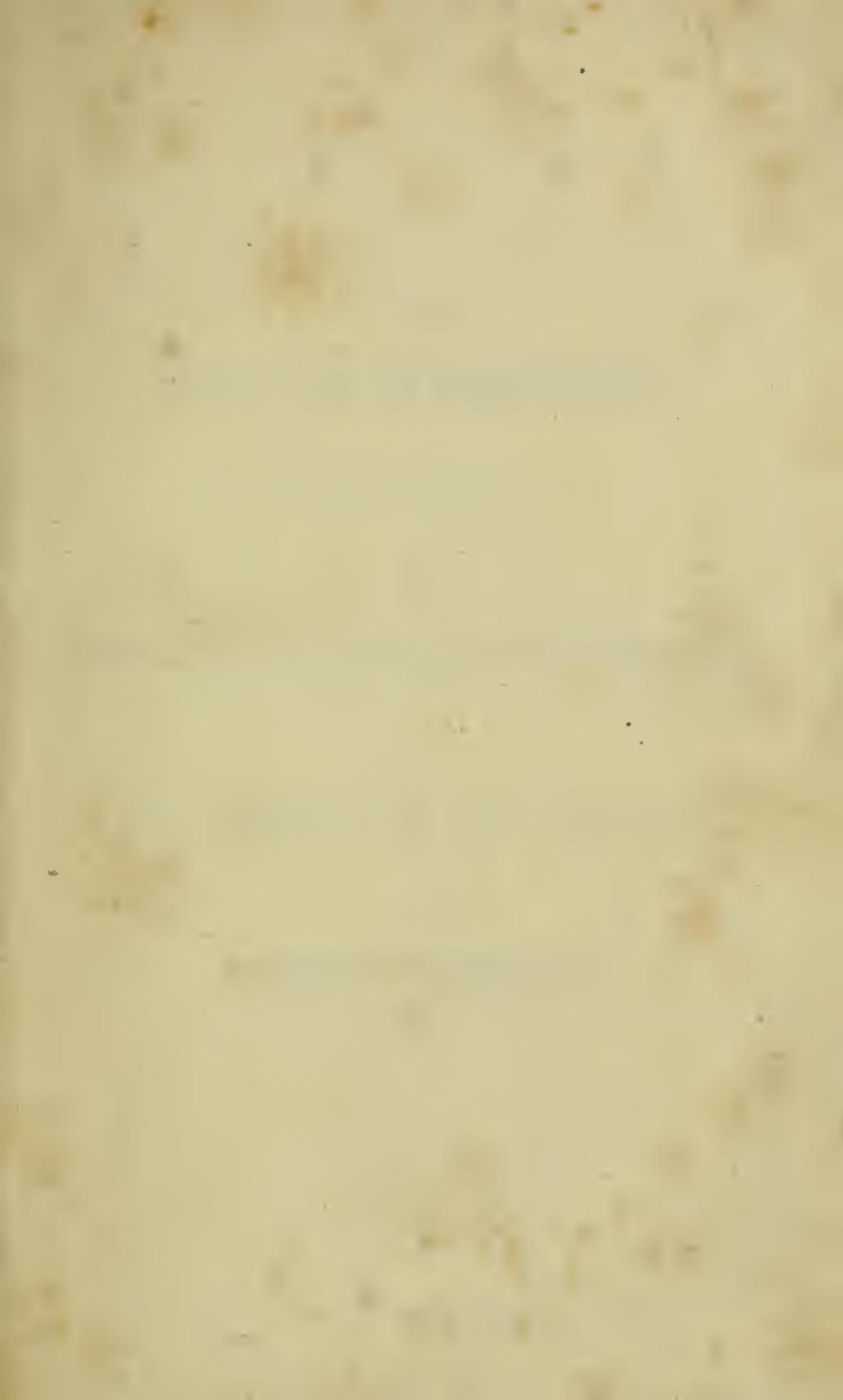
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Divine law of beneficence.







THE
DIVINE LAW OF BENEFICENCE ;
ZACCHEUS,
OR
THE SCRIPTURAL PLAN OF BENEVOLENCE ;
AND
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH,
OR
SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

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THE
MISSION OF THE CHURCH;

OR,

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

BY REV. EDWARD A. LAWRENCE,

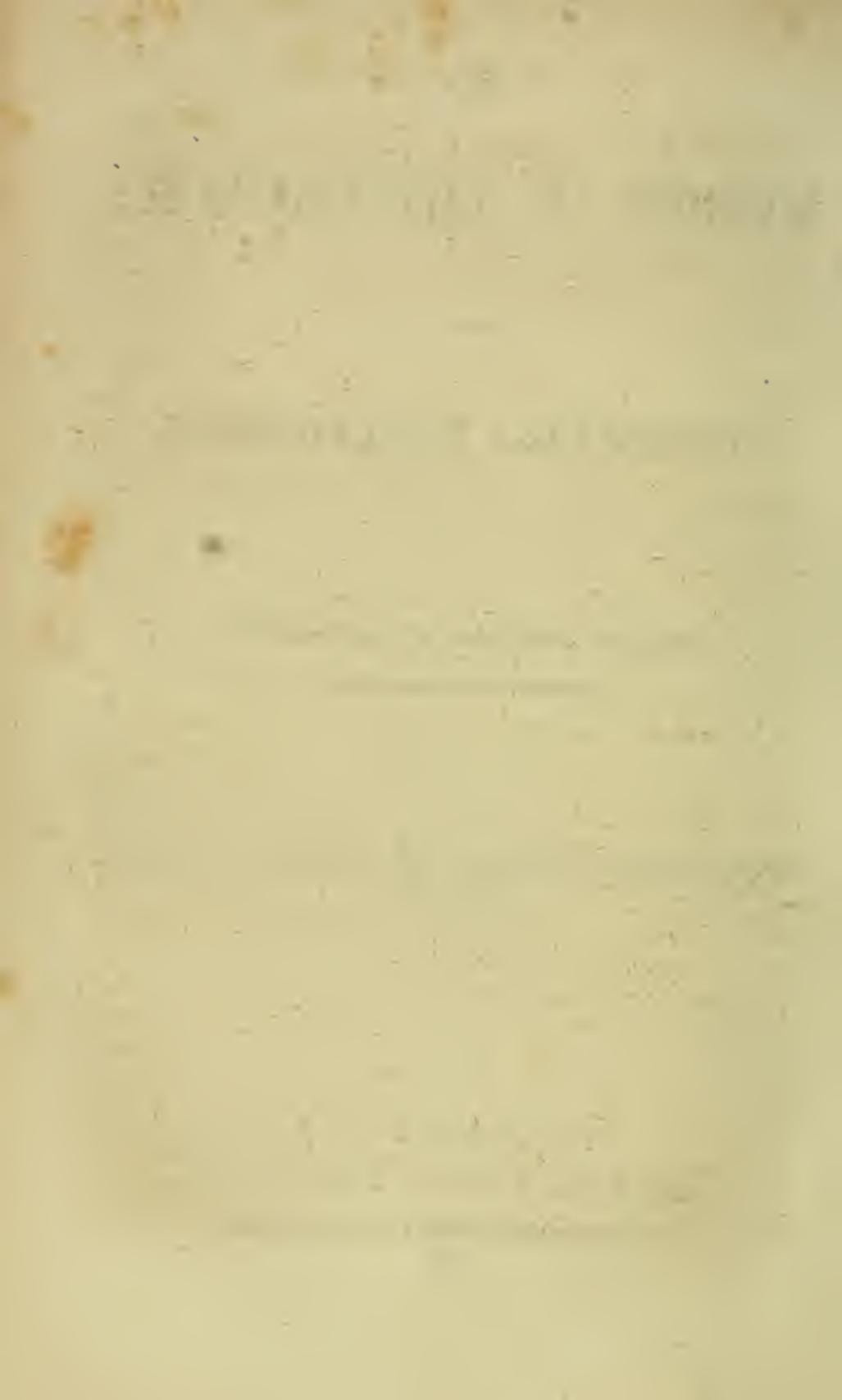
MARBLEHEAD, MASS.

Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

ISAIAH 27:6.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRIT OR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF BENEFICENCE.

The elements of Christian beneficence are,

1. An intelligent spirit,	7
2. A diffusive spirit,	10
3. An equitable spirit,	14
4. A benevolent spirit,	15
5. A self-denying spirit,	17
6. A spirit of grateful love,	18
7. A spirit of prayer,	22

CHAPTER II.

PROPORTION IN BENEFICENCE.

<i>First general proposition.</i> —Every man's charitable contributions should be proportionate to the vastness and importance of the objects sought in beneficence,	25
A brief survey of the field—Statement of the objects,	25
<i>Second general proposition.</i> —Every man's charitable contributions should be proportionate to the adequacy of the instrumentality to be applied,	37
The insufficiency of certain alleged remedial agencies—The gospel the only adequate instrumentality—Harmony of the instrumentality with the objects of beneficence,	38
<i>Third general proposition.</i> —Every man's charitable contributions should be proportionate to his pecuniary means and facilities for applying the instrumentality,	55
1. The beneficence of the Jewish church,	56
2. The beneficent spirit of the early Christian church,	63
3. The scripture declarations concerning property, and the duty of liberality,	68
<i>Particular propositions.</i> —Every man's beneficence should be proportionate,	

1. To the sum total of his property,	76
2. To his annual income,	83
3. To what he can earn by industry,	90
4. To what he can save by economy,	96
5. To what he can spare by self-denial,	102
<i>Motives.</i> —Beneficence gives to wealth its greatest value, secures our own highest interests, and promotes the glory of God,	107

CHAPTER III.

SYSTEM IN BENEFICENCE.

I. *Provisions of system.*

1. Instruction concerning the use of property, and communicating information respecting the condition and wants of the world, .	116
2. The appropriation by every one, at stated times, of a due proportion of his property to charitable purposes: 1. The <i>weekly</i> period. 2. The <i>monthly</i> period. 3. The <i>annual</i> period. 4. Setting apart a portion of each gain in every enterprise,	121
3. Some plan by every church for collecting its contributions, and for applying them to their objects,	130

II. *Tendencies and advantages of system.*

1 To diminish the expenditure of benevolent societies,	134
2. To secure a larger number of contributors,	135
3. To secure from each contributor an amount more proportionate to his ability,	136
4. To give to charitable contributions the more scriptural form of free-will offerings,	139
5. To make these free-will offerings the fruit of a more cheerful spirit,	142
6. To give consistency and efficiency to the character of Christians, by bringing their life into harmony with their doctrines and professions,	145
7. To raise the church in its charitable contributions to a more elevated Christian devotion,	149
8. To promote union among Christians of different denominations, and thus increase the power of the whole church for the good of the world,	153
CONCLUSION,	159

THE
MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRIT, OR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES
OF BENEFICENCE.

THE mind that was in Christ, the spirit that moved him through the whole period of his earthly life, was a deep, ever-flowing spirit of *love*. It was an illimitable and inexhaustible benevolence. Every stage of his history, from the manger to the cross, is a peculiar expression of "good will towards men." By his life he became an example, and in his death he made atonement for sin; thus illustrating the spirit of Christianity, and opening a way whereby it might be infused into the hearts of his disciples. In its impulses and operations, both in the Head of the church and in its members, it is the *spirit of beneficence*. To be Christian, therefore, beneficence must be *prompted by the Christian spirit, and be in harmony with the great design of Christ in his redeeming work*. This gives it the fullest scope in the objects of the gospel, and the highest character in the spirit of the gospel. By the development of

this spirit in the church, through the perfecting of the Christian life of its members, it finds its true mission in seeking the salvation of the race. It thus answers its fittest description—"the salt of the earth," "the light of the *world*."

The spirit of Christian beneficence is distinguished from mere human *kindness*, which is neither universal in its extent, uniform in its operations, nor Christian in its principle. It is distinguished from natural *pity*, in that this arises from spontaneous sympathy, and does not take into account the praise or blameworthiness of its objects. It differs from *generosity*, which is not scrupulous to abide by the rules of justice, and has no end in the honor of God, or the highest welfare of man. It is unlike that desire of *applause*, which in the spirit of Phariseeism often prompts to liberal donations, but only "to be seen of men." Its bestowments are dissimilar to the *grudging remittances* made to purchase relief from the wearying importunity of persevering applicants. It is distinguished from the *reluctant yielding* of the crumbs which fall from the table of abundance, in order to pacify a clamorous conscience, and procure exemption from its upbraidings. It is the antagonist of that alms-giving which is *relied on as the ground of justification* before God, thus making salvation by grace superfluous and impossible.

Between all these and that beneficence which is truly Christian, there is a wide difference. Chris-

tian beneficence neither disowns the constitutional principles or emotions, nor takes its character from them. Incorporating into itself all the elements of joy and sorrow, pity and sympathy, honor and generosity, it constitutes a complex principle, above and beyond any one or all of them. Jesus was kind, and sympathizing, and compassionate, and generous. But he was something more than these. Purer motives urged him—a higher impulse moved him—a nobler spirit inspired him. It was the impulse of *love*, whose spontaneous outgushings made his life an example of the most sublime beneficence.

Among the peculiar and positive elements of beneficence, distinguishing it as Christian, is,

1. An *intelligent* spirit. Whosoever would discharge the duties of life, must first know what they are. In nothing is this more manifest than in efforts to do good. As all alms-giving is not from benevolence, so neither is it all beneficent. It is as essential to the latter, that it should be directed to a right end, as to the former that it should spring from a right principle. Nor does even a good motive in the donor necessarily secure to his deed the character of beneficence, unless it is well directed; the action may be praiseworthy in its purpose, while, from want of knowledge, it may be disastrous in its effects. Under the incubus of ignorance, well-meaning men may multiply the ills which they would remove. Through unacquaintance with the condition of those

whom they wish to benefit, or through ignorance of the proper remedial agencies or modes of applying them, they may diffuse the bane instead of the antidote, propagate darkness instead of disseminating light, and carry havoc and dismay where they intended only healing and consolation. And the more munificent is such ill-directed charity, the greater the waste—the more wide-spread the ruin.

Christian beneficence walks not forth blindfold amidst the world's mendicity and its mendacity, scattering alike to both. She wields not her full hands, as the Cyclops his huge limbs, at random. Her zeal is an enlightened ardor, never roaming in the dark, and never impatient of results that come only through the gradual operation of appropriate causes.

In this age of busy reform, all kinds of objects have their solicitors. Men who aspire to philanthropy even, must discriminate: much more does Christian beneficence demand a wise and careful circumspection. She wishes to know what the work is, and where it is, and how it is to be done. She sends out her pioneers to survey the ground and gauge the difficulties. She takes the altitude of mountains to be brought low, and the depth of valleys to be filled. She examines the crooked places to be made straight, and the rough places to be made smooth, and traverses "the wilderness and solitary place," which, by her culture, are to "bud and blossom as the rose."

By this pioneer service, in which such men as Howard and Buchanan and Martyn and Marshman have been most successful explorers, benevolent men are better enabled to adapt means to their ends. They obtain a quicker discernment of the various phases of wickedness and want, and of the avenues of access to them. The delusive fancies of sentimental philosophers concerning the virtues and happiness of the savage state, have been thus dispelled. The glowing eulogies pronounced upon the mythology of modern paganism, have, by the testimony of honest and indefatigable examiners, been thrown into entire discredit. The principles of evil, inherent in fallen humanity, are found to hold their woful empire over the comparatively mild inhabitants of Southern Asia, "with such an absoluteness of possessive power, and displaying this disposition in such wantonly versatile, extravagant, and monstrous effects, as to surpass all our previous imaginations and measures of possibility."

For those who desire information concerning these things, the means are at hand. Let them study the character and operations and claims of the various humane and benevolent associations, as exhibited in their lucid and condensed reports and other publications. Let them study the providences and prophecies and promises of God, in his works and word. His providence is casting clearer light upon the prophecies, and his Spirit is fulfilling the promises,

to a degree that illumines the whole Christian world. The spirit of Christian beneficence, in her reformatory power, is entering the convict's cell, and is applying her benign and recovering agencies to the condition of the poor, the orphan, the sick, the insane, the deaf, the dumb, and the blind. She is penetrating the darkest nooks of heathenism, inspecting its habitations of cruelty, and scattering light concerning the wants and woes of the race. A goodly cluster of eleemosynary institutions—of almshouses, hospitals, and asylums, is diffusing an ameliorating and remedial influence throughout Christendom. A bright constellation of Bible, Missionary, Tract, and other kindred and affiliated societies, is pouring a flood of light upon the world, demolishing the temples of paganism, hastening the wane of the crescent, dissipating the delusions of Judaism, and discovering the hoary abominations of the man of sin. The Sun of righteousness begins to gild the hill-tops of India, Southern Africa, Syria, Persia, and Turkey, and has generated moral greenness and beauty in many of the islands of the sea. These things, all who wish to know, can know, and all who can know, should know.

2. The spirit of Christian beneficence is a *diffusive* spirit. The distinctions of home and foreign, far off and near, it knows only as different spheres for the occupancy of the same general agency, and for the achievement of the same lofty ends. Remoter guilt

and misery affect the heart of the benevolent, if not as sensibly, yet with as really a moving power, as do those more near. Moral wretchedness makes its appeal as urgently from India as from Ireland, from the Celestial empire as from Wisconsin. And yet, in his beneficent mission to the far distant, the benevolent man averts not his eye from sin and suffering at his own door. No one is more eagle-eyed to espy the mute signs of contiguous want, or more ready to respond to the calls of charity at home, than he who, overstepping such narrow limits, carries the blessings of his bounty to the farthest verge of sin and woe.

The plea of "charity at home" has passed into a proverb, the significance of which seems often to be, hoarding all one gets, and getting all he can. It is sometimes only the sanctimonious garb of parsimony, put on to cover the shame of its nakedness—the formulary by which covetousness seeks baptism at the hands of the Christian priesthood—a broad phylactery worn by one who "devours widows' houses." "Charity begins at home." True. And where else should she begin? She is born at home, and she begins to act where and when she receives her birth. This is the order of nature. All vital principles work from the centre outwards. It is the order of Providence also. But it is contrary both to nature and to Providence, for charity to seek only "her own," and allow her cultivated and fertile fields

to do no more than "supply their own wants and replenish their own wastes."

He, therefore, who in Christian beneficence ends with the beginning, cannot be said to have begun at all. And he who bestows nothing to relieve the misery of which he only hears the description, will be likely to turn away from that of which his eye gives him the living picture. Or if perchance, by some sudden antagonistical impulse, his iron-nerved grasp be tremulously relaxed, it is but to let slip a pittance much nearer the mockery of woe than its mitigation. He who thus contravenes the order of nature, of Providence, and of the word of God, gives no equivocal proof of being tight bound in the chains of icy selfishness. Covetousness has cast him into her iron-cage, and crushing out of him all humane and generous feelings, has contracted his aims to the narrow circle of his own selfish involutions. Doing good to his fellow-men is not his mission. He has lost the primal dignity of man. He has set himself aside from the human brotherhood, and his ear is bored in servitude to mammon. He no less needs a mission of mercy from the abode of angels, to reassert in him the power of conscience, and restore him to his lost human fellowship, than does the poor idolater who makes to himself a god of one piece of his wood, and warms himself at the fire kindled by the other. The one worships a god of wood—the other, a god of gold.

The spirit of Christian beneficence neither halts nor hesitates at geographical boundaries. Contiguity of guilt and misery has the advantage only as affording opportunity for speedier relief. Hence, the faintest sigh of want, and the softest wail of sorrow, from whatever source they come, touch a responsive chord in the soul of the benevolent man, and vibrate there as the voice of God.

Thus diffusive is the spirit of Christian beneficence. Her "field is the world." Her own nature allows her no narrower limits as the sphere of her action, and the circle of the globe no wider one. With "onward" for her motto, she shrinks from no region however rigorous, and from no clime however sultry or remote. No barbarism is too rude, and no forms of error too venerable, for her assailment. No human condition is so degraded and no misery so woful, no wretchedness is so appalling and no terror so intimidating, as to check her flowing sympathy or daunt her adventurous courage. The arm of power may be raised to protect or to repel her, yet, with her eye upturned to the throne of the Eternal, and her hand fast hold of the cross, she goes forth to her work. See the illustration of her diffusive energy in the propagation of primitive Christianity, which, in less than three centuries, she made the sole accredited religion of the civilized world. See her too, in this age, planting her standard amid the snows of Greenland, and on the burning sands of India. She

is unfurling the banner of the cross in every quarter of the globe. She is climbing the snow-clad sides of the Himmaleh and the Andes, crossing the Rocky Mountains and ranging the coasts of the Pacific, bearing in one hand the torch of truth, and pointing with the other to the Lamb of God. Nor will she rest, till every son and daughter of Adam is blessed by the gospel, and the whole earth smiles with the beauty and verdure of heaven.

“Breathe all thy minstrelsy, immortal harp,
Breathe numbers warm with love, while I rehearse
Thy praise, O *Charity*; thy labors most
Divine, thy sympathy with sighs, and tears,
And groans; thy great, thy godlike wish to heal
All misery, all fortune’s wounds, and make
The soul of every living thing rejoice.”

3. The spirit of Christian beneficence is an *equitable* spirit, recognizing the principles of *stewardship*. From just views of man’s relations to his Maker arises the idea of right; and from the idea of right, comes the sense of moral obligation or duty. It is indeed essential to true beneficence, that it should be voluntary. “God loveth a cheerful giver.” But it is also essential that respect should be had to a higher than human will, as the rule of duty. Thus then stands the case. Man is free to give, and free in giving. But he is also bound to give, and to give equitably.

Every man is a *steward* of God. All that he

possesses is committed to him in trust, with the injunction, "Occupy till I come." At a future day it will be said, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Of every one who hides his Lord's money by hoarding, or embezzles it by squandering, it shall be said, "Bind the unprofitable servant, and cast him into outer darkness." He, on the other hand, who employs it for the glory of his Master and the good of mankind, shall receive the faithful servant's approval, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Give to this idea of stewardship a practical prevalence in the church, and it bars out covetousness, and raises multitudes of nominal professors from guilty worshippers of mammon, into honored coworkers with Christ in the world's redemption.

4. The spirit of Christian beneficence is a *benevolent* spirit. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is the great philanthropic principle of the gospel. It annihilates selfishness, and brings men into the sweet bonds of one common brotherhood. It plucks from the heart the "root of all evil," and plants in its stead the seeds of a universal charity.

We love our children, in some sense, as we love ourselves; but this is not benevolence: our instincts prompt it. We make common cause upon some subjects, and on some occasions, with our kindred or friends; but this is not benevolence: self-interest dictates it. We join in civil compact, and pledge "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor," and some-

times pour out our blood like water for the common weal; but this is not benevolence: call it patriotism, or what we will, it has no Christian element, and oftentimes conflicts with every gospel principle, and charitable feeling. Benevolence makes a man the denizen of the world. By its inherent tendency to "do good unto *all* men," it annihilates distance, and by sympathy brings remote evils near. It knows no demarcation lines of sect, or tribe, or color. Its boundaries are the limits of humanity. In its expansive schemes, it regards men as under one common condition of guilt and suffering; subjects of one common righteous government; liable to one common woe; and for whom there is provided one common divine dispensary—one Gilead of the world. The African is our "neighbor," and has fallen "among thieves;" benevolence calls for the appliance of our "oil and wine." The Hindoo is our brother, and is "sick;" it bids us bear to him the "balm" from "Gilead," and tell him of the "Physician there."

To what enlarged schemes of beneficence would the prevalence of this spirit prompt the church. What masses of wealth would it consecrate to the cause of humanity. What thousands of devoted men, glowing with the spirit of Mills and Martyn and Brainerd, panting to carry the light of truth to lands darkened by sin, would it bring into the educational processes, preparatory to such a work. What fleets would it give to the winds, taking their course towards the

heathen world, laden with the printed word, and the living preacher. How sublime the spectacle—the whole Christian church moved by such a spirit of beneficence.

5. The spirit of Christian beneficence is a *self-denying* spirit. It is the nature of sin to exalt self to preëminence. This disorders our relations both to God and to our fellow-men. It subverts the law of love. It discards the divine will as the rule of action, and substitutes each man's own will. Its tendency is to convert the world into an arena of ceaseless and sanguinary conflict, for as many separate interests as there are individual combatants.

Now, the tendency of Christianity is directly the reverse of this. It casts down self and enthrones the Creator in the soul. It meets the selfish spirit in all its vicious cravings, with an imperative denial. The foundation of the Christian faith was laid in a *sacrifice*, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." And as each disciple is built on this foundation, he receives from it a subduing power, which imparts to him this self-denying spirit. The beneficent career of Jesus on earth was marked in every period by humiliation and suffering and sacrifice. And shall his followers have no fellowship with him in these? Is the vital sap of the branches unlike that which flows in the vine? Shall there be self-sacrifice in the head, and self-indulgence in the members? Self-denial is the condition of spiritual

progress. "A despicable indulgence," says Henry Martyn, "gave me such a view of my character, that on my knees, I resolved to live a life of greater self-denial. The love and vigor of my mind rose rapidly, and all those duties from which I usually shrank, seemed recreations." Self-denial is the very condition of discipleship. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

See this spirit burning in the bosom of the apostle to the Gentiles. With unsurpassed devotion, he lays his ease and learning and cherished hopes joyfully at the feet of his Saviour. He is "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And does he complain that his labors and sacrifices are too wearisome, or too costly? Rather does he glory that to him is "this grace given," that he may "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The same flame glowed in the breasts of the martyrs, and the same holy fire should be kindled in the bosoms of the whole company of the disciples, consuming selfishness, and converting their hearts into censers, whence should perpetually ascend sweet incense unto God.

6. The spirit of Christian beneficence is a spirit of

grateful love. The most concise definition of the Christian religion is *love*. "God is love," and "love is the fulfilling of the law." "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." The love of Christ takes the deepest hold of all the principles of our being. It allows no rival. It admits no equal. It must reign supreme in the soul, controlling all its emotions, and directing all its energies. Under the influence of this love, benevolent impulses become permanent affections. Our strongest desires for the welfare of man and the glory of God, assume the character of *fixed principles*. Beholding the world as the scene of moral achievement, surveying its desolations, its poverty and misery, its hatreds and strifes, its malice and murders, how sublime appears the enterprise of its recovery. Ascending the mount of vision fast by the cross, and witnessing the vast funeral processions bearing annually on their biers to the world of woe, twenty-five millions of lost souls, how moving the spectacle, how imploring the scene! Yea, Christian, mounting up to the throne of the Eternal, see Him whom your soul loveth casting down his cross upon the golden pavements of the celestial city, and by all his agonies upon it, by the accumulated worth of six hundred millions of guilty human spirits, to whom the church has not these eighteen hundred years carried his saving gospel, see him interceding for that church, that it may

be filled with his own spirit, that it may become more *self-denying*, that it may cease its strifes at home, and go on its mission abroad: see this, and if love does not burn like a fire in your bones, if apathy does not seem madness, and the consecration of all fit means to such an end but a poor return, the very least you can offer, thou hast not known the love of Christ.

When Dr. Doddridge, having procured a pardon for a condemned criminal, entered the prisoner's cell, the grateful man threw himself at his feet, exclaiming, "Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had mercy on every drop of it. Wherever you go, *I will be yours.*" So entire is the devotion prompted by grateful love. But redeeming love! Oh, it is this which awakens all that is tender in affection, all that is generous and self-sacrificing in devotion, and which gives direction to all that is executive in energy for high moral achievement. It imparts to the meanest sacrifice a divine fragrance. It gives to "a cup of cold water" a preëminence on the catalogue of beneficent acts, not reached by the pharisaic donor of millions. It clothes the simplest prayer of the poorest disciple with a power for the world's conversion, to which the most skilfully adjusted moral machinery can make no approach. It is the divine alchemy, which transmutes in its crucible the baser metals into gold, and sets the smallest gift as a priceless jewel in the diadem of Him on whose head are "many crowns."

As Christ's mission was to the poor, these, whom we "have always" with us, should be regarded as his representatives. To each of his disciples, he says, "In these I am 'an hungered;' feed me: 'thirsty;' give me drink: I am 'sick' in the islands of the sea; minister to me there: I am a prisoner in Asia; procure my release: I am bound in Africa; seek my deliverance. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.'" And when you have laid all your possessions and yourself with them, at the foot of the cross, and viewed him suspended upon it, how insufficient seem all human energies and offerings as a requital of his love. You wish that gold had a million times more value, and you a million times more gold to devote to him; that your energies were augmented into superangelic powers, that in the consecration of them all, your grateful love might find more fit expression.

"Oh thou who keep'st the key of love,
Open thy fount, eternal Dove,
And overflow this heart of mine;
Enlarging, as it fills with thee,
Till, in one blaze of *charity*,
Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light divine.

"Till, as each moment wafts us higher,
By every gush of pure desire,
And high-breathed hope of joys above,
By every sacred sigh we heave,
Whole years of folly we outlive,
In His unerring sight who measures life by *love*."

7. The spirit of Christian beneficence is a spirit of *prayer*. It is this which distinguishes the enterprises of the church from all other schemes for ameliorating the condition, and relieving the wants and woes of the race. While it does not impair the feeling of responsibility, it impresses the sense of dependence. It impels the heart to look upward for wisdom to direct its efforts, and for power to render them efficacious. Plans of moral achievement which, on any other principle than that of the divine efficiency, would be Utopian, by this are rendered rational and hopeful. It clothes the most gigantic and daring moral heroism with the garments of humility, and elevates the simplest efforts of faith and love to the most honorable position of successful instrumentality. Recognizing the divine agency as the sole efficient cause of all beneficent human agency, his people lay their gifts upon the earthly altar, and in answer to prayer, the angel presents them as an accepted offering upon the golden altar before the throne. Without prayer, alms fall like lead to the ground. On the wings of prayer they seek the skies, and come up as an acceptable "memorial before God."

Even Jesus the Son of the Most High labored not to do good without prayer. His life was one fervent intercession, the ardor of which abated not when it had consumed him on the cross. It mounted up to heaven. It still breathes and burns in the ear of

God, with a prevalence that gives birth, in the mission of the Spirit, to all human prayer, and efficacy to all human instrumentality for the good of the world.

See too how the apostles prayed when entering upon their beneficent work. Returning from the mount from which they had seen their Master ascend, they retire to "an upper room," and continue with one accord in prayer and supplication, until their baptism by the Holy Ghost. They then go forth to their labors praying with the conviction that they can do nothing without prayer, and laboring as if they could accomplish all things without it. Behold the martyrs, kindling their ardor at the altar of prayer, and pouring out their blood on the altar of sacrifice. The period of the Reformation was a period of intense, concentrated prayer. And the efficient power of all beneficent enterprise is a power answering to the voice of prayer, going up from the heart of the church. Here is a field into which all may enter as reapers. The pathway to the throne of grace is barred to none, and none are more accepted laborers than those who, having nothing else to bestow, pour out their strongest desires and their richest affections upon the angel's "golden censer."

Here is the divine philosophy of Christian beneficence. The church lays down her offerings at the cross, and sends up her prayer to him who died upon it, and one angel descends into the Bethesda around

which earth's "impotent" are gathered, and another "angel having the everlasting gospel," is seen flying through the earth, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," and "great voices are heard, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Such are the leading elements which give character to beneficence as a *Christian* work.

CHAPTER II.

PROPORTION IN BENEFICENCE.

EVERY man's charitable contributions should evidently be proportionate *to the vastness and importance of the objects sought; to the adequacy of the instrumentality; and to his pecuniary means and facilities for applying that instrumentality.*

FIRST GENERAL PROPOSITION.

EVERY MAN'S CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE PROPORTIONATE TO THE VASTNESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE OBJECTS SOUGHT IN BENEFICENCE.

What, then, is *the object or end* which Christian Beneficence proposes to secure? Comprehensively, and in a word, it is, THE RECOVERY OF THE HUMAN RACE FROM SIN TO HOLINESS. "*The field is the world.*" Ascend some mount of vision and behold the spectacle—a world in ruins. Sin has entered and strode across it, and death follows, mercilessly sweeping its guilty generations into the unfathomable abyss.

1. Look at *Protestant Christendom*, and what do you see? In the most favored lands, where the governments are popular and the people free, where science is cherished and the arts flourish, where civilization smiles and the word of God has free course, how do ignorance of the divine law and defiance of

right join in unhallowed compact, and generate a race of giants in wickedness! How are such lands covered over with houses of correction, and jails, and dungeons, and filled with the insignia of depravity—the proofs as well as preventives of dishonesty, treachery, and crime. How are all remedial and sanative agencies despised or disregarded by multitudes of the people; while cupidity gloats on gain, and ambition strives to supplant and trample on a rival, and lust reeks in her dens of infamy, or saunters forth in the guise of innocence to capture and destroy.

2. Inspect those portions of the earth's surface, designated as *Roman-catholic* Christendom. They are left to the occupancy of a religious system that incarcerates in dead languages the prophets and apostles, and dispenses its dry dogmas and uncommanded ordinances where the Saviour has appointed the nutritious bread of heaven and the healing waters of life—a system, in whose fiscal arrangements sin is set down as a marketable commodity, by traffic in which, the guilty may purchase indulgence to any amount, and with no penalty except the prescribed pecuniary one, may escape from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom—wherein prayers and pardons, births and burials, suspensions of the divine law and its satisfaction, every thing, in short, is paid for in gold, except the liberty to believe and to teach the pure gospel—wherein the living are laid

under tribute for the benefit of the dead, whom, not content with assessing while in the flesh, it consigns to purgatorial torments, release from which can be procured only by purchased Pater-nosters and Ave Marias : a system in which freedom is fettered, and conscience is bound, and the right of private judgment has fallen among thieves, and the priest passes by on the other side—in which the Redeemer of the world is displaced from his mediatorial office by the elevation of his virgin mother ; and the holiness of the poor canonized saint, is made transferable for the benefit of the rich repenting sinner—in which “ science and ignorance, refinement and barbarism, wisdom and stupidity, taste and animalism, mistaken zeal and malignant enmity, may sanctimoniously pour out their virulence against the gospel, and cry, ‘ Hosanna,’ while they go forth to shed the blood, and wear out the patience of the saints of the Most High.”

And if in any thing the workings of this matchless machinery for deceiving the people and destroying its opponents, is less wasteful than formerly of human blood, as the means of giving prevalence to its dead but gigantic formalism, it is because its former plenary *power* has departed, and it is hemmed in by moral and political influences which render such means both impolitic and impracticable. It is not, we believe, from any essential improvement in the system. That is unchanged and unchangeable.

Reform in the spirit and principles of the church of Rome, would be its ruin. Let it but give an open Bible to the people, with liberty to read and think for themselves, and it bites the dust. Yet, to the baleful nurture of this "mother of harlots," more than one hundred millions of the dwellers on the globe are subject, displaying the full "effects of knowledge denied"—of "a famine of the words of the Lord."

3. Next, turn your eye to the followers of the *false Prophet*, of whom there are over one hundred millions more. Here, instead of the Bible, you find the Koran—instead of the cross, the crescent. If the tutelary genius of Mohammed complimented the patriarchs, it was to "beguile the Jew." If the Saviour of the world was admitted as among the prophets, it was as a lure to nominal Christians. And by holding out to the faithful the certainty of sensual gratification, it was seen that a more easy conquest would be secured over papists, pagans, and infidels. The moral maxims from the Bible incorporated into the system, were only sufficient to give plausibility to its claims, and durability to the compact. Strong and resolute in the ignorance which it inculcates, its darkness has "strangled the travelling lamp" of truth, and its pride beaten back even the precursors of knowledge. To make disciples was its first object. Its second, was to make them iron-nerved and ferocious. The third, was to *crush* all whom it could not lure or compel to the faith. Occupying

for centuries the fairest portions of the earth, it has converted them into a wilderness, and covered them with moral desolation. Thanks to an overruling Providence, Islamism is in its dotage. "The keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves. The daughters of music are brought low; fears are in the way, and the grasshopper is a burden."

4. To complete the view of the field which beneficence seeks to occupy, cast the eye over lands shrouded in *Paganism*. Bereft of the idea of one all-perfect and controlling divinity; with no standard of truth and right—no guiding demonstration, leading to a comparison of the false with the true, the malignant with the good—the appetites and passions rising into supremacy and converting the enfeebled remains of moral sense into auxiliaries of debasement, what can Paganism be but one "mighty labor of human depravity to confirm its dominion?" Vedas and shasters, filled with interminable genealogies, and transmigrations of the human soul, and of male and female divinities, are its holy books, containing neither precept nor example of moral excellence. Brahma, Vishnoo, and Siva, the consecrated patrons of the vices, are its chief deities. Vain theorists, skilful impostors, and lascivious sorcerers are its only guides and intercessors. Parricide, infanticide, sutteeism, self-torture, laborious pilgrimages, and obscene rites are its most approved forms of religious service.

Caste, with its impassable walls, fixing unalterably the station of each individual, annihilates all motive to improvement in the lower classes, and gives to the higher free course in vice and crime, by securing them against deposition or disgrace. "The entire empire of polytheism," says Harris, "is a realm of diabolical dominion. It assembles its votaries only to blaspheme the name of God; erects its temples only to attract the lightning of the impending cloud on their devoted heads; calls them around its altars, only that, in the very act of supposed atonement, they may complete their guilt; and gives them a pretended revelation only that 'they should believe a lie.'"

And the worst feature of all is, that in the systems of Paganism, there is no element of *improvement*, no principle of progress, except in the road from bad to worse. Time only deepens the gloom, and legitimizes among them the processes of ruin. Even the moral sentiments that here and there shone out of ancient heathenism, like stars in deep night, and the skill and taste apparent in the temples and divinities of Greece and Rome, find no place in modern Paganism. It has no recuperative, but only a degrading and destructive power.

And does no Macedonian cry, coming up from such an Aceldama, make its appeal to Christian hearts for some more vigorous and sustained beneficent effort? Behold poor, abused, bleeding Africa, pillaged

and plundered by lawless and inhuman marauders, yielding up her tawny, barbarous sons to still more barbarous strangers from Christian lands. See Asia, "wholly given to idolatry," her miserable poor crushed under the heel of an oppressive and polluted priesthood—Asia, the cradle of the race, torn by intestine feuds and foreign aggressions, pouring her dense population of wretched and guilty spirits into the abyss of woe—Asia, with no Bible and no Sabbath; with no Saviour but the Ganges and her countless idols; with no worship but that of demons, or reptiles, or monsters of vice; and with no morality except what hastens the desolating work, and hurries human souls to perdition—how does she lift up her imploring voice, and call on us for a deliverer.

"Oh, could I picture out the *full* effect
Of that soul-withering power, idolatry,
I'd write a page which, whoso dared to read,
His eye, instead of tears, in crimson drops should bleed."

Now, it is the *object* of Christian beneficence to recover this guilty and lost world to the service and enjoyment of God. It is to purify the earth from all its vile abominations, and clothe it in the loveliness of moral beauty. It is not her work to admire the proportions of ancient architecture, or the stateliness of modern palaces; to imitate the great masters in statuary and painting, or to gather the results of modern science; it is not to adorn the galleries of art, or enrich the collections of antique curiosities;

not to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics, or muse on the remains of ancient grandeur, laudable as all this may be; but it is her work to found hospitals, open dispensaries, and establish asylums, wherein the poor may be cared for, the sick visited, the blind be made to see, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. For such beneficent institutions, there was no place among all the public edifices, or structures, or organizations of ancient heathenism, as for them there was no name in all their languages. We might say, it is the MISSION OF THE CHURCH to raise up debased and brutalized mind, oppressed and degraded almost to extinguishment, and impart to it vigor and fertility; to give exercise to the kindlier sympathies and more elevated sentiments of the heart, and to restore liberty and supremacy to conscience. She aims to bury every tomahawk, to "beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks," to bear the olive-branch into all climes, plant the tree of peace in every soil, and bring wandering, warlike tribes into a social, civil, and religious position, surpassing that of the happiest and most prosperous community on the globe. What objects of temporal good are comparable with these? What career more like the earthly mission of Him who went about doing good?

But beneficence has a still *higher* object than to bless men in this life. She carries her projects for consummation, across the boundary of time, into the

vast and indescribable eternity beyond. In the accomplishment of her design, she seeks to open a moral Bethesda in every land, and to make the Bible, God's directory to heaven, the book of the world; to "preach the gospel to every creature," and to make it "the power of God unto salvation" in every heart. She aims to break the frightful coalition of ignorance and crime, formed by "the prince of the power of the air," and to transfer the wretched captives from the power of Satan unto God. She seeks to tear down the funeral pile of the miserably devoted widow, and to give her, in her affliction, to the benign influences of the heavenly Comforter; to detach from the blood-stained car of Juggernaut its murderous human propellers, to raise up from before its ponderous wheels the deluded human victims, and to send them to the shrine of a pure worship, and to the altar of the living God. She enters the precincts of the demon-temples, surveys the abominable, soul-destroying rites, weeps over the appalling spectacle, and wrests from "the ruler of the darkness of this world" the prostrate human spirits there trampled into the dust. She points them to the cross of Christ, and tells them that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." She stands by the Ganges, and assures the suicidal worshippers that the path to heaven is not through its turbid stream, opens to them Jesus

as "the way," and bathes them in the pure waters of the river of life. Like a visitant from the bosom of love, she sits by the shrines of Brahma, Vishnoo, and Siva, and proclaims to the millions of eager votaries, that these "cannot answer, and save them out of trouble." She would bear the cross into the very heart of Mohammedan imposture, and plant it within the grand mosque at Mecca, sprinkling the multitudinous mass of deluded pilgrims with the blood which "cleanseth from all sin." She would pour the light of a pure Christianity upon the darkened domains of Romanism, and introduce "the power of godliness" to a region wherein is found little save its gorgeous but lifeless forms. She would dispel the dark and inveterate disbelief of the Jews, scattered and peeled and oppressed, and lead them, through their own prophets, to the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, and unite all the dwellers on the earth under his tranquil and happy reign.

And is it nothing to you, that a mission is proposed for the accomplishment of such an object? Are there found in such forms and fruits of sin any sufficient remedial agencies to justify apathy and inaction? And is it thus you would shield yourself from the urgency of appeal which the case presents, and baffle the beneficent design of Immanuel in giving his life a ransom for the world? Can you think that pollution is as good as purity; that idolatry is as likely to lead to heaven as the service of God; that

blasphemy and defiance of divine command are as efficacious for salvation as faith in Jesus? Will the eternal law of truth and rectitude be repealed, in consideration of the prevalence of error, imposture, and crime? Will ablutions in the Ganges, or the declaration of pardon by a darkened and ambitious priesthood, make their robes white, as if washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will the flames of sutteeism purify the guilty soul like the sprinkling of the clear waters of the gospel? Do the rumblings of Juggernaut's bloody car make sweet music in the ear of God, like the prayer and praise of redeemed spirits, uttering their thanksgiving and love? Oh, speak it not—think it not. “Without *faith* it is impossible to please God.” “But how shall they *believe* on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” Such is the resistless logic of the apostle, which divinely demonstrates the necessity of a mission to the ignorant and guilty in every land; and which proclaims the gospel as the sovereign balm for all wounded spirits—the grand panacea for all human ills—the “pharos of a benighted world.”

To carry this gospel to the guilty and miserable of earth's teeming population, is the appropriate MISSION OF THE CHURCH. It is to tell them of the amplitude of God's love to man, and raise them to him by the efficacy of that love. It is to efface the

foul blot of sin from the polluted soul of man, to restore primeval paradise to earth's outcast inhabitants, to people heaven with redeemed and blissful dwellers, and to give back to God his revolted, dismembered kingdom, in sweet and peaceful subjection.

How lofty is this aim! How sublime the end! It is in agreement with the end of Jehovah in creating the race. It is promotive of the object for which Christ died. It is included in the grand sweep of God's providential plan for the government of the world. It is identical with the main design of Heaven in the constitution of the church, and the continuance of redeemed ones for a time, as pilgrims on the earth. All holy motives converge to this one point, the glory of God in the salvation of men. All moral arguments, in their loftiest bearings, strengthen and confirm this. All spiritual appliances, in their ultimate reference and highest utility, minister to this one comprehensive and sublime end, the healing of the nations by the gospel of Christ, "to the praise and glory of God's grace." Nor will the period arrive when it can be said of the work, "it is finished," till

"The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy—
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round."

Now, if we have succeeded in impressing the reader with the vastness and importance of the *objects*

of Christian beneficence, he has probably been led to the following conclusion : if there is an adequate instrumentality for the accomplishment of this object, the question of expense is worthy to be considered only so far as to ascertain whether it is within the limits of possibility to meet that expense. He will say, the cost is nothing in comparison with the end to be gained. If the work is practicable, it *cannot* cost too much. He feels that it is paltry meanness, with such an object in view, to haggle about dollars and cents ; that it is treason against humanity to withhold giving, where such motives urge to liberality. He sees that he may never have taken a just view of his own duty and responsibility in this matter, and he resolves that his rate of benevolent contribution, in time to come, shall be more proportionate to the value and importance of the end sought in beneficence. And he also determines that what is done, should be done *quickly*. “Roma deliberat, Saguntum perit”—While the church deliberates, the heathen perish.

SECOND GENERAL PROPOSITION.

EVERY MAN'S CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE PROPORTIONATE TO THE ADEQUACY OF THE INSTRUMENTALITY TO BE APPLIED.

The fallen world—what can raise it up from its revolted and degenerate state, and give it back to God redeemed, and clothed in its primeval loveliness

and beauty? What can make atonement for sin, and give satisfaction to the dishonored law of God, and repair the ruin wrought? What can penetrate the obdurate heart of man, and turn its selfishness into benevolence, and impel the tide of its sympathies, ever tending inward to the contracted centre, to flow outward to the circumference and upward towards its Maker? Is there an adequate redeeming power? Are there sufficient remedial agencies for a work so vast, so momentous? These are questions which press upon the spirit of every earnest inquirer concerning the means of man's redemption, and of the mission of the church to the world.

The great desideratum with Archimedes, for moving the world, was a place whereon to stand. This was his necessity. A similar necessity meets the Christian philanthropist in the scheme for bringing back the revolted world into the sunlight and favor of heaven. The philosopher could obtain no such stand-point. The Christian can. The one could find no place outside of, or above the world which he wished to move. The other takes his stand on the Gospel of Christ, which is "from heaven" and not "of men." This gives him a position and a power fully adequate to his most enlarged and comprehensive benevolence. *All other expedients for the conversion of the world* are cumbered by the same unremovable difficulty which met the Syracusan philosopher.

Within the most costly temples of *Paganism*, no divine light illumines the benighted worshippers, and no celestial fire warms their devotion into life. In the very act of giving "the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul," they but enhance the evil which they would remove. Notwithstanding the smoke of their ten thousand sacrifices, ascending to blacken the heavens they would appease, the sting of conscience rankles in their guilty bosoms still. In all these things, "they feed on ashes." "Pass over the isles of Chittim and see, send unto Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are no gods?"

Nor is there more hope in the alleged recuperative power of *reason*, and the progress of *science*. For nearly six thousand years, there have been promulgators of the doctrine of human perfectibility, and dreamers of such a result through the devices of reason and the advance of science. And successive generations have been working out demonstrations of the futility of the doctrine, as decisive as they are humiliating. Human reason has no such recovering moral energy. It can never relieve itself from the dominancy of the passions, or rise from its subjection to the perverse will. It may *intimate*, in some things, the right, the true, and the good; but it cannot compel to their observance. Reason and science may polish the exterior into a degree of comeliness and decency, but they cannot successfully resist the

on-workings of the law of sin. They cannot remove from the soul its appalling sense of guilt. They cannot lead man to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." See their boasted triumphs in the reign of terror which swept across France at the close of the last century, deluging the land with blood, and leaving it in a state which forced from the republic the humbling confession, that their "children are without any idea of divinity, without any notion of what is just or unjust."

And what are the claims alleged in favor of *civilization* as a remedial agency? It should be a sufficient answer to say, that civilization contemplates man only as an inhabitant of this terrestrial globe, and provides not for his weal beyond. And its most beneficent instrumentality is composed of the implements of agriculture, and of the mechanic arts. It sends to the savage tribes of the earth, as its best boon, the plough, the spindle, and the loom, whereby they may clothe themselves "in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day;" but it leaves the soul a prey to remorse, and under the frown of heaven. It excites no hope of future good; awakens no gratitude to the Father of mercies; points to no divine, atoning work; tells of no redeeming love, through which is seen,

"Up earth's dark glade,
The gate of heaven uncloses."

The Bible, the Sabbath, and the cross constitute no elements of beneficent power, in all its boasted instrumentality. In its happiest influences, it leaves man as it finds him, guilty and miserable, in darkness and distress, where he most needs light and relief.

Nor can there be more reliance upon the enactment of *civil law*. This is only a defensive expedient, adopted by communities to prevent such overt crimes as are injurious to the social compact. But in preventing the criminal *act*, can it dictate to the *heart*, and sway a resistless sceptre over its stormy passions, and hush its wild discord into harmony and peace? Can it carry the force of truth into the dark caverns of the soul, combating and conquering iniquity, dethroning selfishness, purging away lust, casting out revenge, and turning the plottings of villany into plans of benevolence? Can it restore to the conscience its legitimate supremacy, and cast down pride, and introduce love and mercy and meekness? Can it break up "the fallow ground," and "scatter the good seed," and fructify the barren soil, and cause it to bring forth a rich harvest unto God? "Canst thou draw out leviathan with a *hook*; or bore his jaw through with a *thorn*?" Law is a *rule*, not a remedy. Its language to the guilty is of *punishment*, and not of pardon. "The letter killeth." It is the Spirit that giveth life. It is not the twelve tables and the Justinian code that man needs, but the four gospels and the twenty-one epistles.

Literature and its refinements are no more adequate to the ends of Christian beneficence, than is civilization or law. If we look to the periods of antiquity in which the arts were carried to the highest degree of refinement, and the muses were most successfully wooed; if we take our stand at Athens, the eye of ancient Greece, and muse on the banks of the Illyssus with Socrates, or sit in the academy with Plato, or walk in the grove with the Stagyrite; or if we ascend Parnassus to Apollo and the muses, or sit by the Castalian fount, what do we see and hear? Poetry, the enchanting priestess of Nature, by her creative genius originating a popular, pantheistic mythology, breathing an ideal divinity into inanimate objects; singing of Elysian fields, and delighting and deluding the people by allegory, fable, and fiction—Sculpture, setting forth her matchless skill in the works of a Phidias and Praxiteles, to maintain, amid the perfection of physical development by gymnastic exercises, the endangered preëminence of the gods—Eloquence, with ease, with grace, with action, “pouring the persuasive strain,” and stirring the soul to deeds of daring and of blood—and “Philosophy, flitting across the night of Paganism like the lantern-fly of the tropics, a light unto herself, but alas, no more than an ornament of the surrounding darkness.”

In surveying the wide field of ancient literature, the Christian eye scarcely rests upon one spot of

moral greenness and beauty. Rich in intellectual productions, abounding in the fruits of taste, acute in metaphysical discrimination, and sparkling sometimes with admirable moral precepts, the mass of ancient literature is nevertheless, in its moral influences, corrupt and corrupting.

Nor has the literature of modern times, when divorced from Christianity, accomplished any thing more beneficent for the world. The offspring of scepticism and sensuality, baptized by the priests of mammon, it has sold itself as the servile minister of selfishness, the base pander to lust, to pride and power. It is the arsenal of evil, rather than an auxiliary of good to mankind. The unsanctified literature, the prostituted press of the nineteenth century opposes one of the greatest obstructive forces to the progress of Christianity.

Almost equally imbecile has *a corrupted Christianity* been found, in the work of repairing the ruin of sin. When its doctrines are adulterated by the subtleties of the schoolmen, and its morality is displaced by the refinements of Jesuitical expediency; when the church, instead of transporting the word of God to the benighted abroad, locks it up in cloisters at home, practically teaching salvation through the efficacy of sacraments, rather than by the power of the cross; when priestcraft joins unholy alliance with kingcraft to pervert the pure gospel into an engine of state, fettering freedom and forging chains for

conscience; when pride and power put on the sacerdotal garb, and ambition strides into the metropolitan chair, and wicked men lord it over God's heritage, and shut up the fountains of living waters from the thirsty people, and give the hungry children's bread to dogs—then Christianity is shorn of its mighty power, and grinds in the prison-house of its enemies. Such dreadful perversion blots out the sunlight of heaven, and leaves men to walk in darkness. It intercepts them in their approach to the inner court and the mercy-seat, and leaves them to wander around their heavenly Father's house as orphans or criminals. It bolts the windows of heaven, pushes back the hand reached down for human deliverance, and turns out of its appointed channels the current of divine life gushing forth for the cleansing of human souls. Oh, how has such corruption made the church, instead of light and life and salvation, a kind of pestilence and plague, the occasion of a more malignant development of the general disease, rather than of its cure! "If the light that is in" her "be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

From all such instrumentality, Christian beneficence studiously withholds herself. Instead of relying upon such means, it is her appropriate work to assail them, and by rectifying reason, sanctifying genius and taste, and leading men to the pure fountains of divine science, to transfer them from the heathen to the Christian side of the conflict. For

this she levies no armies, except those bearing the weapons of a spiritual warfare. She sends out no fleets, save those under commission from the great King. She lays no siege but for the bombardment of the strongholds of principalities and powers, and to pour forth the "junipers of hot conviction" into the ancient battlements of spiritual wickedness in high places. She has no gaudy trappings, no glittering pageantry, no bewitching mysticism for the vain-glorious and imaginative. She comes to us with the Gospel of Jesus. The hopes of the race are suspended on the simple but powerful *doctrine of the cross, rendered effectual by the Holy Spirit.*

See now its *operation*. It lays its account directly with the *heart*, and in the attire of simple truth, seizes the conscience, piercing the innermost soul with the conviction of sin, and pointing the guilt-stricken sinner to the cross of Christ. Subduing the heart, its first conquest gives the pledge of victory in all its subsequent encounters. It unites the believer through a living faith to a divine Redeemer, by whom he is borne up into the dazzling visions of the spiritual world, and permitted to look upon glories that eclipse the brightness of all earthly splendor. It presents to him the great overmastering truth, that "God is love," and illustrates it to him by the cross. "Herein is love."

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should

not perish, but have everlasting life." "What words are those you read? What sounds are those I heard? Let me hear those words again," exclaims a poor South Sea islander, as the missionary Nott is reading this passage from the gospel of John. "Is that true? Can that be true? God loved the world when the world did not love him! *Can* that be true?" And when assured that it is true, with a heart too full for utterance, he retires to meditate on the amazing love of God, which has reached and subdued his soul. A wretched pilgrim on the coast of Malabar inquires of his priests how he can make atonement for his sins, and is directed to drive iron spikes through his sandals, and walk four hundred and eighty miles. While he reposes under a shady tree, and waits for healing and strength, as from the loss of blood he is often compelled to do, the herald of the gospel comes forth, and preaches to him from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The victim of Pagan delusion rises from the ground, throws off his torturing sandals, and crying out, "This is what I want," becomes a living witness of the power of the truth to which he listened. "That is what I want, that is what I *want*," exclaimed a poor Hindoo, on hearing that "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." And this *is* what the heathen want—what all men want. It is light in darkness, hope in despair, life in death.

And this is just the instrumentality which heaven has provided. To the polluted, the gospel opens a fountain of cleansing waters. To the condemned, it presents a forgiving God. To the thirsty, it is a river of life. To the hungry, it is the bread of heaven. The weary it lays in sweet repose on the bosom of a loving Saviour. The fallen heir of glory it makes a king and a priest unto God. It illumines the darkened understanding. It rouses the slumbering conscience. It subdues the rebellious will. It descends into the affections, and like the angel-visitant at Bethesda, imparts a purifying and healing power, and recovers the whole man.

See, too, the *harmony* in the operations of this instrumentality, by principles seemingly paradoxical. The doctrine of man's apostasy is most impressively taught by the means appointed for his recovery. The soul is impressed with a sense of its ruin by that which takes from it the deep gloom of despair. Provision is made for the pardon of sin in a way which demonstrates that it cannot be palliated. The gospel provides for moral purity by a transaction which deepens the sense of moral pollution, and dispels the terrors of guilt by a fact that proclaims the turpitude of transgression. It awakens the keenest sensibility to the claims of duty by that which makes propitiation for the sin of neglected duty. It rectifies reason and subdues the will by a process which elevates the moral sentiments. It nurtures zeal

without making zealots, and leads to the contemplation of mysteries, yet has no tendency to make mystics. It fosters alike reflection and action, joins faith and charity, teaches dependence and responsibility, harmonizes the discordant elements of our nature, and turns all our energies into the channel of sweet obedience and love. It unites sublimity with simplicity, gives high moral dignity to the smallest act of obedience, and chronicles for the admiration of the world the donation of "two mites" as the testimonial of love. Prudent, it is neither temporizing nor timid; cautious, it is nevertheless decisive and energetic; "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." Thus radically and thoroughly, and almost paradoxically, does the gospel work in the heart of *the individual*, preparing its way to permeate and pervade society.

Going forth into the *world*, the gospel knows no truce with error, no compromise with sin, no compact with artifice, no resort to stratagem. Openly and boldly it lays the axe at the root of every evil tree, and destroys its fruit, not by clipping off the twigs, but by hewing down the trunk. It dries up the streams of human woe, not by artificial processes of heating the air, but by closing up the fountains. And it gives good guarantee of its effectual working by the class among whom it begins. "To the poor the gospel is preached;" and from this class it works

upward through all the intermediate strata of society to the highest.

The gospel comes to man as a benefactor in his *social* relations. Prescribing his duties, it utters its severest anathemas against those who rudely trench upon the rights and privileges, or overleap the boundaries of the social state. It raises woman from servile, almost soulless barbarism, to civilized and Christian refinement, and leads her, as among the Caffres, to regard the missionary as "the shield of woman," and to consider his approach, as the female savages of New England did that of Eliot, the "advent of an angel." It nurses feeble infancy, and trains the opening mind to virtue and happiness. It extends its protecting arm to infirm old age, and administers rebuke to the "child" that demeaneth himself "proudly against the ancients." All "the lesser charities that soothe, and cheer, and bless," the domestic virtues, the sacred endearments which constitute the bliss and charm of social life, all find their source in the gospel of Christ.

With equal efficiency and success, does the Christian religion operate upon the *civil* condition of man. By creating a sense of individual responsibility, it awakens a desire for personal freedom; and through the restraint which it imposes, by motives drawn from higher than human enactments, it makes that freedom safe and salutary. It presents the Bible as the great statute-book of heaven for men, and creates

loyal subjects, by securing just rulers and the enactment of just laws. It maintains incessant warfare with pride and ambition and false honor, the three grand procurers of barbarism, brutality, and bloodshed. It sets forth the law of equity, humility, and love as the rule of international commerce, and binds kings as well as subjects by the principles of individual responsibility and honesty. Under the influence of the gospel, oppression shall cease from the earth. The clarion of war shall no more call hostile armies to the field of sanguinary conflict. The hero shall be stripped of the guise of false glory, in which men

“Smile assent at giant crime,
And call the darkest deeds sublime;”

and he only whose works of love and mercy procure for him the approval of heaven, shall receive the applause of men. A new standard of glory will Christianity present to the nations of the earth, and challenge kings and potentates to a new style of achievement. To do good and not evil, to *save* man and not destroy him, will characterize that day when love shall smile in every eye, and peace shall dwell in every bosom, and earth shall become a type and foretaste of heaven.

The auspicious dawn of such a day already gilds the eastern horizon. What has swept idolatry with its diabolical abominations from the Tahitian, Sandwich, and Society Islands, and from nearly a hun-

dred adjacent and other islands of the sea, and is leading to its downfall in India? The Gospel. What has brought nearly half a million of the worshippers of stocks and stones to the knowledge of the true God, and gathered half as many more youthful and adult pupils into schools in the process of intellectual and moral improvement? The Gospel. Behold a New Zealand chieftain, the veteran warrior of many battles, rising in the midst of a group of New Zealand children assembled by their native teachers for examination in the presence of their parents. Hear him exclaim with irrepressible emotion, "Let me speak; I *must* speak. O that I had known that the gospel was coming! O that I had known that these blessings were in store for us! Then I should have saved my children, and they would have been among this happy group, repeating these precious truths; but alas, I destroyed them all, and now I have not one left." Then bursting into tears, and cursing the gods which they had formerly worshipped, he continues, "It was you that infused this savage disposition into us; and now I shall die childless, although I have been the father of nineteen children. O that some one had seized my murderous hand, and told me the Gospel is coming to our shores." What has wrought this change? The Gospel. What has enabled the missionary to exclaim of two hundred thousand converts gathered into more than a thousand Christian churches, as Paul did of the Ephesians, "Ye

were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord?" The Gospel. What has borne up before the throne that bright throng of ransomed ones, "out of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues," from South Africa, from Eastern Asia, from Greenland, from the savage tribes of North America, and from the islands of the sea; and has put a new song into their mouth, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb?" The Gospel proclaimed by the missionary. Oh, it is this precious doctrine, *Christ and him crucified*, that shall be the instrument of bringing down out of heaven the new Jerusalem from God, "which shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof." It is by this only, that guilt is cancelled and sin taken away, the polluted cleansed, the outcast called home, and the miserable filled with "the peace of God" and "the comfort of love." Who can compute the results of such an instrumentality? They are measureless as the bliss of heaven, endless as the duration of God. Who can estimate the importance of such instrumentality? It is wise as the councils of heaven, "precious as the blood of Christ," necessary as the salvation of the soul, and commensurate with the most widespread and disastrous consequences of sin.

But can this instrumental agency prevail over all the mighty and malignant foes which set themselves

against it? The trial has been met, the experiment made. Benevolence has prevailed over selfishness, love over hate, God over man. The church has survived, and not only so, but she has flourished in her bitterest persecutions. Fire cannot burn her, water cannot drown her, nor the "wild beasts out of the wood" devour her. Two converts are born, for every one that is burnt. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." The fires burnish her, and the waters purify her. Dangers enlarge her, and the rack emancipates her. Her opposers help her on, and her foes build her up. The fulminations of kings and cardinals against her hasten the accomplishment of the purposes of the King of kings in her favor. From temporary defeat, she rises with renewed energy for permanent triumph. Every external pressure she throws off by the operation of an internal divine power. Decrees and bolts and bars and fire and faggots hinder not her progress. Bonds and tortures and terrors and death prevent not her increase. Yea, in all these, and by means of these, she triumphs. What would destroy other things, develops the mighty power of the gospel. What would put back other causes, advances this. Under those circumstances in which other organizations would perish, the church prevails.

Do you ask how these wonders are to be accounted for? By the inherent divine power, by the elements of increase and of immortality residing in the Gospel

of Jesus. The covenant of the church, in carrying out its grand beneficent work of converting the world, is with her almighty Head, who sits above the storms, and infuses his own insuppressible and indestructible spirit of energy into the hearts of all his followers. "The Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty." "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations," therefore, "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Is not this an instrumentality *adequate* to the most sublime and comprehensive benevolence of the church? Is it not adapted to every want of man, in every clime and every condition? It is the "power of God." What can resist it? It is "the wisdom of God." What can counterwork it? It involves the highest moral energies, the purest moral influences, and the wisest adaptation of moral means to their ends. It is heaven's matchless instrumentality for accomplishing heaven's own most gigantic purposes of love.

See now, how this instrumentality harmonizes with the *ends* sought in beneficence. Are they vast? It is commensurate in its achieving power with their mightiest and most far-reaching aspirations. Are they important? It is equal in efficiency to the accomplishment of their weightiest results. The immortal soul, with its expanding capacities for happiness or misery, may be safely trusted to its redeeming efficacy. It has borne millions of such souls from the pollutions and miseries of earth, to bask in the sun-

light and bliss of heaven, clothing them in robes of spotless purity, and placing on their heads crowns of fadeless glory. Millions more, now on the earth, it is bearing on to the same glorious consummation. And of the countless spirits yet to pass through this world of sin and sorrow, not one, to whom its mighty power may be applied, shall fail to reach that "better land," where faith passes into bright fruition, and hope melts away into the fulness of inexpressible bliss, and love achieves her seraphic heights and burns with more than seraphic fire.

"Rise, kindling with the orient beam;
 Let Calvary's hill inspire the theme!
 Unfold the garments rolled in blood.
 O touch the soul, touch all her chords
 With all the omnipotence of words,
 And point the way to heaven—to God."

THIRD GENERAL PROPOSITION.

EVERY MAN'S CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE PROPORTIONATE TO HIS PECUNIARY MEANS AND FACILITIES FOR APPLYING THE INSTRUMENTALITY.

This is the divinely established rule of proportion. "According to the *ability* that God giveth." "As God hath prospered you." "Every man according to his several ability." In these and similar passages of the word of God, it is implied that every one is able to do something, and it is affirmed that each one should do according to that ability. The only question on which there can be doubt or difficulty is,

What is each man's ability? In determining this question, we shall be assisted by the three following references.

1. By reference to *the beneficence of the Jewish church*. There is a tendency to make the beneficent economy of the former dispensation a directory in the Christian dispensation; and most men feel that by employing a *tenth* of their income for charitable purposes, they are meeting the requirement of the Mosaic law, and consequently fully discharging their duty. But there are two errors in such an hypothesis. One is in supposing the proportion required by the Jewish system to be only a tenth; and the other in assuming that the measure of liberality which answered the law of Moses, equally harmonizes with the law of Christ.

After their deliverance from Egypt, the first-born of every creature was required to be consecrated to the Lord, in memory of that signal event. The first-born child belonged to the Lord, and was to be redeemed at the age of one month, by a price paid to the priest. Such beasts as it was not lawful to offer in sacrifice, as horses and camels, might be redeemed or exchanged for such as were lawful to be offered, as sheep or oxen. The first-born of all clean beasts were to be sacrificed, and their flesh given to the priest. At the harvest and vintage, the first-fruits of the fields, the corn and wine and oil, were to be brought to the priest, and the gleanings and the

corners of the fields were to be left for the poor. Also the first-fruits of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the wheat when threshed, of the dough when kneaded, and of the bread when baked, were to be offered before the Lord. Of fruit-trees, they were allowed to gather nothing for themselves, until after the fourth bearing year. All fruit till this period was considered sacred to the Lord, and was given to the poor, as was also the spontaneous fruit of the fields every seventh year. In addition to these, one tenth was paid to the Levites, as a remuneration for their services to the church and nation; and after this, what remained was again assessed, and another tenth was expended in the feasts and sacrifices of the temple, and for the poor. At their feasts, besides the Levites, widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor of every description, were to be invited. And at the close of every third year, that there might be no evasion of the law, all were required to make solemn asseveration before the Lord, that the whole of this second tithe had been applied to the prescribed objects. Lev. 27 : 30-34; Deut. 12 : 17, 18; 14 : 22-29; 26 : 12-15.

And what was the chief point of instruction which Jehovah designed to impress upon his people by such an admirably arranged system of beneficence? That he was the proprietor of their fields, their flocks, and their herds, and that they were dependent on him for sunshine and rain, for seed-time and harvest.

How expressively, then, does the patriarchal and Mosaic doctrine of *tithes* carry along with it the Christian idea of *stewardship*. How suited to meet and to counteract the tendencies of the human heart to covetousness. It should also be remembered, that this proportion, large as it is, was the minimum measure of Jewish liberality, the *least* which their system allowed; while the attractive and exciting circumstances under which they presented their tithes and offerings, and the influence of the temple service, especially of their public festivals, led them often greatly to exceed the rule.

But there were peculiar exigencies in the history of the Jewish church, which illustrate the spirit of their beneficence even better than the annual imposts levied upon them by the law of Moses. The liberality of the Jews in the construction of the tabernacle, and the erection of the temple, has seldom been equalled in the Christian church, and perhaps never surpassed. Just emerging from the oppressive bondage in Egypt, and destined to be wanderers for forty years in the wilderness, we should hardly have expected them to be called on to make large offerings for any purpose. Yet scarcely were they free from their pursuers, ere the word of the Lord came to Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering that ye shall take of

them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittimwood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate." Out of these, the tabernacle and its utensils and appurtenances were to be constructed, the ark of testimony, the mercy-seat, the altar, and laver and candlesticks, all wrought of the most precious materials, and overlaid with pure gold. See now this people, just from their degrading servitude, with comparatively small possessions, and little means of adding to them. When religion is to be promoted at the call of God, they withhold nothing, until the end is accomplished. All give with a willing mind, not a certain portion of their income, but a large part of their possessions. They devote it freely and joyfully to the service of the church. And they thus give an example of liberality which it has pleased the Almighty to transmit to all following generations, as an incentive to the same devotion, and a proof that inauspicious circumstances are not always an excuse for refusing the calls of benevolence.

Pass now to the reign of David. It was not for him to build the temple, although it was in his heart so to do. Yet, before the affairs of his kingdom were settled, and he was quietly seated on the throne, he began the work of gathering materials for the mag-

nificent structure. "Behold," says he to his son, "in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto." "Of the gold, and the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number." With these immense and other additional materials, the vast and splendid edifice was reared, at an expenditure estimated by some at *three thousand millions of dollars*. How did they respond to this extraordinary call? Reluctantly? No. Did they allege pleas of poverty, or of concurrent claims for other objects? Not one. The people rejoiced, for they offered willingly, and more than was needed. And David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and said, "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?"

Now, what is the principle upon which is made this voluntary consecration of treasure unto the Lord? This happy monarch's eucharistical prayer contains its announcement: "O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own;" "for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." It is the Christian principle of stewardship, which inheres as an essential element of every dispensation from Gene-

sis to Revelation. It is the doctrine, that "the silver and the gold are the Lord's;" that he has an indisputable right to all that his creatures possess; that there are higher uses to which it may be applied, yielding purer and more elevated and permanent enjoyment than personal aggrandizement or selfish gratification; and that when God calls, whatever may be the proportion or amount, man's cheerful response always secures the divine favor.

When Christians refer to the tithing system of the Jews, as a guide in adjusting the proportion of their income which should be devoted to objects of beneficence, it is important to take into account the *free-will offerings* which accompanied the working of the system, as well as the regular imposts laid upon the people. The deep, underflowing *spirit* of the economy should be understood, as well as the simple letter of its statutory enactments. Yet, the careful collation of these laws will be sufficient to explode the popular idea, that the devotement of a tenth of our income brings our beneficence into agreement with the divine rule given to the Jews. The Old Testament doctrine upon the subject of beneficence cannot be fully exemplified by a less proportion, as we have said, than one fourth of a man's income.

And this proportion was required of the Jews, under circumstances, in some respects, widely different from those under which Christians are called to live. It was simply for charity, and the mainte-

nance of religion at home. The Jewish church had received no commission to diffuse her religion abroad. The difference in this particular, between the dispensations of Moses and of Christ, is great. The former was simply conservative and defensive. The latter is essentially reformatory and aggressive. The one was a system of special rules and of a cumbersome ritual service. The other is a system of religious principles, and of spiritual worship. One was for the twelve tribes; the other is for the world. In the one, THE TRUTH dwelt in gorgeous symbols and attractive ceremonies; in the other, He manifested himself in "the fulness of the Godhead, bodily," and still is present by his spiritual and subduing power.

Can those living under dispensations so diverse, with blessings so unequal, have devolved upon them only an equal measure of duty and effort? Can we make the rule of Jewish beneficence in a conservative system, the measure of our own in a diffusive and an aggressive one? Can the Christian conscience be satisfied with a scale of liberality, for both domestic and foreign beneficence, less than half as large as that which the claims of one of these objects made upon the Jewish conscience?

An opulent man deducts one tenth from his income for charity. Half of the remainder may be required for his necessary family expenditures. After this he adds four times as much to his stock in trade, or capital at interest, as he allows for charity. He

reserves for himself nine parts of all that with which he has been blessed, and allows one part to God for the salvation of the world. Is he benevolent?

There are circumstances, it is true, in which a tenth of a man's income, would be a large proportion. But there are other circumstances, in which it would be a small proportion. In some, it would cost self-denial. In others, it would not be felt. Three fourths of a large income might be a less proportion than one tenth, or even one fiftieth of a small one. So that he who gave least would, in an important sense, give most, for he would do it at the greatest sacrifice. Such is the inequality which would result from adopting any fixed proportion as applicable in all cases.

2. A reference to *the beneficent spirit of the early Christian church*. It will be admitted, that the early Christians were in a condition, as favorable at least, for forming a correct judgment in the matter of beneficence, as any who have come after them. Some of them were called by the Saviour himself. They received instructions from his own lips. The sweet and elevating influence of his personal presence and conversation, embalmed in their memory the recollection of all that he did and said and suffered. Under this influence, they went forth to the world, bright examples of Christian beneficence. They "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need." They

felt that they were made the executors of their Saviour's last will and testament to a lost world, and that whatsoever of their possessions could subserve the accomplishment of the sacred trust, should be freely laid upon the altar of sacrifice. Nothing short of the dedication of their entire substance and lives to the cause of such a Master, in the execution of such a testament, met their ideas of duty, or expressed their sense of gratitude and love. Their renunciation of the world in its pride and pomp and power, was actual and entire. They lived in it only to do good. The glad tidings which they had received, it was their great object to communicate. They had contemplated the infinite riches of the grace of God, and had lost the desire for all other riches. Honor, power, wealth, learning, eloquence, were valued by them only as they contributed to diffuse the blessings of the cross, or constituted the means of a more costly sacrifice to Him who died upon it. The cross! For this, they could relinquish all, and endure all. In this, they gloried. And in the ardor of love, inspired by this, they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and the crown of martyrdom. Selfishness was nearly annihilated by the antagonist power of the cross. Covetousness was quite dead, from the withholding of all that whereby it lives. A parsimonious Christian would speedily have obtained among them the unenviable notoriety of an Achan, or a Judas. In giving them

selves to Christ, they gave all, and were made rich by what they gave. More than this they could not do; less, their love would not allow. And to make more sure to themselves the blessings of such liberality, and as a safeguard against the growth of a penurious spirit, "On the first day of the week, they laid by in store as God had prospered them." Of the Macedonian churches the apostle says, "In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

The test and the fruit of discipleship among these early Christians, was a spirit of *entire devotion*. But were their obligations more imperative than ours? Was the command "to do good and to communicate," more binding then, than now? Were the blessings promised to the liberal soul, more rich or full, or the danger and evils of covetousness less, or the calls of sorrow and of want more urgent? Were souls in greater peril then than now, or was the Gospel more effectual? No; the difference is not in the gospel, but in the spirit of the men receiving it. They understood Christianity; they felt its beneficent power, and they exemplified it. Taking their divine Master as their model, they "pressed

towards the mark for the prize of their high calling." "Our blessed Lord," says one of the early fathers of the Christian church, "ate his food from a common dish. He sat upon the ground, and washed his disciples' feet without a silver basin. Nay, he quenched his thirst from the earthen pitcher of a poor Samaritan woman. And are we better than he? Will not a table contain our food, unless its legs be ivory? Certain it is, that a lamp made by a potter will give light as well as if it were the work of a silversmith."

The spirit of beneficence among these primitive Christians, led them to make no provision for the flesh. They counted self-denial better for themselves, as well as more honorable to their Master, than self-indulgence. They were Christians, and they gloried in maintaining their consistency, despite the sword and the stake. Says another of them, "We say we are Christians, and we say it to the whole world, under the hand of the executioner. In the midst of all the tortures you can heap upon us to make us recant, torn and mangled and covered with our own blood, we still cry out as loud as we are able, we are Christians. Call us by what names you please. Fill our flesh with fagots to set us on fire, yet let me tell you that when we are thus begirt and dressed about with fire, we are in our most illustrious apparel. These are our victorious palms and robes of glory; and, mounted on our funeral pile, we feel our-

selves as in a triumphal chariot. We conquer when we die, and the spoils of that victory is eternal life." "What you reproach us with as stubbornness, is the best means of proselyting the world. For who has not been struck with the sight of such fortitude, and from thence pushed on to look into the reason of it? And who ever looked well into our religion, but embraced it? And who ever embraced it, but was willing to die for it?"

Does any one now ask what proportion of their possessions such men devoted to beneficence? They gave the *whole*, and themselves with it. Does he ask how much they were *able* to do for the diffusion of Christianity? They were able to live for it—to *die* for it. Their ability was measured only by the extent of their possessions, the length of their lives, and their capacity to labor and to suffer. They stopped not a whit short of this. But was their lot cast in a different dispensation from ours? No, it was the same dispensation. What then constitutes the difference? Ah, we repeat, it is in the spirit of the men. The early Christians were wholly devoted to their Master. The hearts of later ones are divided between him and the world. Covetousness has crept into the church, and like the strong man armed, has bound its members and spoiled their goods. This is the difference. We of the nineteenth century sow sparingly and reap also sparingly. The early Christians sowed plentifully, and they reaped also plenti-

fully. We say, charity costs too much, and yield only a pittance. They said, it *cannot* cost too much, and laid down their lives.

3. A reference to *the Scripture declarations* relating to *property*, and to the duty of *liberality*. "To the law, and to the testimony; if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us." What then saith the Scripture? Does it prescribe the exact proportion of his income which should be devoted to charitable purposes? No. It is a book of facts, of doctrines, of principles and precepts. It proceeds on the assumption that inquiry, reflection, and prayer are essential to the development of the Christian character. It leaves men to a sense of responsibility in employing the facts, and applying the principles to the question of individual duty. Does a man wish to know what proportion of his property should be consecrated to beneficence? He will not find it stated in so many words, whether one tenth, or one fourth, or more, or less, ought to be thus employed. But by a careful consideration of the scripture doctrine contained in the following passages concerning property and the duty of liberality, he may be led to conclusions as safe and as certain, as if the amount were determined in every case by specific divine command.

(1.) Riches are *from the Lord, and belong to him*. "Both riches and honor come of thee." "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of

hosts." "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." "The Lord maketh rich." "The Lord thy God, it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

(2.) Riches are in themselves *a transient, unsatisfying, and disquieting* possession. "Nor trust in uncertain riches." "Riches are not for ever." "Riches make themselves wings and fly away." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." "He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; neither he that loveth abundance, with increase." "There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet there is no end of his labor, neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labor and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail." "He that is greedy of gain, troubleth his own house." "In the revenues of the wicked is trouble." "The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun." "For what hath man of all his labor, and of the vexation of his spirit wherein he hath labored? For all

his days are sorrows, and his travail, grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night."

(3.) They bring *no relief in man's greatest distress*. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." "Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord." "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Will he esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength." "There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

(4.) It is *unlawful and dangerous to trust in and to hoard them*. "If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; I should have denied the God that is above." "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." "Labor not to be rich." "Beware, lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and when thy herds and thy flocks are multiplied, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, and thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of mine hand, hath gotten me this wealth." "Covetousness, let it not be once named

among you, as becometh saints.” “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall.” “How hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God.” “The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” “He that hideth his eyes from the poor shall have many a curse.” “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field.” “They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.” “I have seen riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.” “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.” “No covetous man hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity.” “Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty

shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones." To Gehazi, for coveting the Syrian's silver and the garments, the prophet said, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." "Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself."

(5.) *Liberality is characteristic of the righteous, and is expressly commanded.* "The righteous showeth mercy and giveth." "He that honoreth his Maker, hath mercy on the poor." "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor." "Withhold not good from him to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." "Say not to thy neighbor, Go, and come again; when thou hast it by thee." "Give to him that asketh thee." "Give to him that needeth." "Give alms of such things as you have." "Honor the Lord with thy substance." "To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a

good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" "Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him." "As ye abound in every thing, see that ye abound in this grace also." "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

(6.) *The highest and best use of riches is in beneficence, which secures exemption from want and the blessing of heaven.* "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." "The angel of God said unto Cornelius, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God." "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." "And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man

hath, and not according to that he hath not." "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack." "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed." "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest." "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide thee continu-

ally, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Now, if the word of God is admitted as an infallible guide, will it not aid an inquirer in determining his ability, to reflect upon these passages until his mind is imbued with their spirit? Will it not give the claims of benevolence a firmer hold on his conscience, and check the tendency to covetousness, to read that God regardeth it as idolatry, that the love of money is the root of all evil, leading the soul into foolish and hurtful lusts, piercing it through with many sorrows, and drowning it in perdition? Who would not feel his ability to give in charity increasing under the growing conviction that he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully? Does a wise man grudge the seed grain, when the increase depends on the amount that he scattereth? Will he garner up what he gathers, when he feels that much as he may have been blessed in receiving, he would be more blessed in giving? But alas, unbelief is the vampire that consumes the ability of the church. Men do not believe, when the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, else they would not be so slow to lend to him. Let them study these passages in their full significancy, and imbibe their heavenly spirit, until all doubt vanishes, and the soul is raised up in liberality to the high ground of the Bible doctrine. Stand by the cross and study

them there, invoking the divine Spirit to guide you into the truth. Cast yourself forward to the soul's transit into eternity, and study them there. Place yourself at the tribunal of God, amidst the throng of ransomed spirits in the heavenly glory, and study them *there*. Behold those shining ones casting their crowns at the feet of Jesus, and sweeping their harp-strings in full chorus to his praise, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing:" do this, and it will be easy to understand the scripture doctrine of beneficence, and to determine the *proportion* of your property which it is your duty and privilege to employ for Him on earth, who has all riches ascribed to him in heaven.

PARTICULAR PROPOSITIONS RESPECTING PROPORTION.

If the reader has gone along with us in our reference to the liberality of the Jewish church, to the beneficent spirit of the early Christians, and to the scripture declarations relating to property and the duty of liberality, he will be prepared to consider the subject of proportion in beneficence, in the following particular propositions.

1. Every man's beneficence should be proportionate to the *sum total* of his property. It will be apparent in the outset, that we have to do with something

more than the single question of *income*. For although with a man who, from the commencement of his business life, has regulated his charities by the scripture rule, it might be only a question of income, yet as there are few who have done this, in determining each man's ability it is obvious that any inquiry would be partial, and any result defective, which should not involve a consideration of the sum total of a man's property. It may be, that, lured out of the pilgrim's path by the winning voice of Demas, you have been digging at the mine in "the little hill called lucre," and hoarding more than is meet. It may be, that overpowered by the spirit of worldliness which steals away the vigor of piety, you have been adding income to capital, that you might retire from business and live in ease and luxury and splendor, until a rate of liberality adjusted to your present ability would trench on your vested capital, or break in upon your accumulated stores. It may be, that the influence of fashion, or of increasing wealth, or of a plan of early retirement, like a subtle poison, has benumbed the moral sensibilities, and rendered you reluctant to draw, for benevolent purposes, upon your vested funds. All this is very natural and very probable. Early in life, John Wesley said that he had known but four men, whose piety had not suffered from their becoming rich. Longer observation led him to make no exception. His own case, however, may be alleged as an exam-

ple of the power of grace to withstand the withering influence of increasing wealth. His income at first was thirty pounds a year. Of this, he reserved two pounds for charity. The next year, it was sixty pounds. Still using but twenty-eight for himself, he employed thirty-two pounds in charity. And when his income amounted to a hundred and twenty pounds, he lent ninety-two pounds to the Lord, and lived himself on twenty-eight as at first. At his decease, his whole property was found to consist of his clothes, his books, and a carriage, although he had probably given away more than a hundred thousand dollars. Did the root of all evil find no more congenial soil in the hearts of other men, than it did in that of John Wesley, how different would be the state of the world! But alas, it strikes deep, and entwines its threads about every fibre of the soul, and "chokes the word, that it becometh unfruitful."

Are you sure that a course of constant accumulation is right? Are you never troubled with doubts in withholding your tens of thousands, and it may be hundreds of thousands, from the cause of God, merely as security for your own future ease, or for the gratification or aggrandizement of your children? Are you certain, in view of the pressing calls in our own land and from the heathen world, that such a course is consistent with your public vows as a disciple of Christ? Is it plain, that a portion of your interest money and other income, is all that you are called

upon to consecrate to Christ, for the salvation of a world for which he *died*? Did you begin right? And if so, have you continued as you began? Have you, in past time, laid by in store for yourself, no more than you should have done—no more than you would have done, if your piety had been as elevated as was that of Brainerd or Martyn, or your love as glowing as that of John? Has avarice, or covetousness, or selfishness had no voice in determining the amount laid up for yourself? And if you have been influenced by such a motive in amassing more than was meet, is it from any better motive that you now withhold what has been thus accumulated? Might not a portion of your property, invested in charity for the poor, in missionary labor and in Bibles for the conversion of the world, yield you a larger revenue of happiness and enrich you more than the whole now does? By the accredited maxims of the world, and even of the church, we readily admit, that the man who devotes all his income to charity is justly reputed liberal. But are you sure, that under your circumstances, this is a rate of liberality proportionate to the “ability which God giveth?” Is it opening thy hand wide unto thy poor brother? Is it sowing plentifully—abounding in the grace of giving? Is it acting on the principle, that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Is it fulfilling the injunction, *Freely ye have received, freely give?*

We would not be understood as implying, that

there are no circumstances in which men may lawfully accumulate property. They may have large schemes of benevolence, in reference to which they are every day prosecuting their labors. There are also departments of business, extensive manufacturing and commercial interests, the successful conduct of which requires large capital. Under the influence of a benevolent spirit, and on the principle of doing all to the glory of God, this employment of funds need not conflict with the claims of charity. But to retain large fortunes with no such projects in view, devoting only the income to beneficence, places a disciple of Christ in a false position. His wealth is out of proportion to his necessities, and to the claims of benevolence. And nothing but the bestowment of a portion of his accumulated treasure, will restore him to his true position.

We are not unapprised of the plan whereby some endeavor to recover their consistency. They have made a testamentary bequest, a plan truly benevolent in circumstances which render an earlier disposal of property impracticable. But in many cases, a will is only an expedient of covetousness, to satisfy conscience, and atone for the sin of sending the needy away empty in our lifetime, by allowing the claims of charity to take effect when we are dead. God has made *you* his steward, and has nowhere authorized you to leave to others, that which he has required you yourself to do. The calls of benevolence

will never be more urgent than now. Your property will never do so much good as now. Every day that you postpone its devotement, you by so much lessen the time in which it might be bearing fruit unto Christ. Therefore, God would have you the executor of your own will. No one can administer your charities so advantageously as yourself. By so doing, you make the most profitable investment of your money, and avoid the danger of losing, by reverse of fortune, what you had intended to bequeath to benevolent objects. God would also that your death be deplored as a loss to the church, rather than welcomed as a gain to its beneficent operations; that the world be blessed with the influence of your beneficent example while living, rather than be left in doubt concerning the motives of your testamentary charity when you are dead. He would not have you deprived of the blessedness of giving, by the intervention of a *will*, rendering it necessary for you to be cast out of your stewardship, before your Lord's money can be put to "the exchangers."

We have read of "a faithful steward," whose whole property at the commencement of his business life, besides the wilderness land on which he settled, valued at forty dollars, consisted of a horse and an axe. With this God gave him "power to get wealth." He began on the principle of honoring the Lord with his substance, and with the first-fruits of all his increase, and his barns were filled with plenty

2. Every man's beneficence should be proportionate to his *annual income*. As there are some with whom the adjustment of their proportion might trench on vested capital, so there are others from whom it would require only a portion of their income. We now refer to the latter class. Your income, then, is to be divided between your own personal and family necessities, and the claims of benevolence. On what principle should the division be made? You are a young man just entering on business, wishing to arrange your plans of benevolence according to the principles of the gospel. You will thence seek to be governed, in your expenditures, by Christian simplicity. In this, you will find the more difficulty, because the prevalent customs and fashions of society are so adverse to it. Yet be not conformed to the world. You can no more be a devotee of fashion, than a worshipper at the shrine of mammon.

If you would make the duty of beneficence easy and delightful, you will commence your charitable donations where your income commences, and give as the Lord prospers you. Let your maxims and motives of liberality be drawn from the word of God, and not from the practices and opinions of those around you. Let your plans and principles be fixed in the *outset*, subject only to such revision as increase of light and love may suggest. Before the love of money shall be strengthened by increase of gains, you will be more likely to judge correctly in the

matter of proportion. Your liberality will then readily grow into habit, and habit will make it a delight, and both will perfect and confirm your principles of benevolence, and give symmetry and beauty and energy to your whole Christian character.

Your danger is not of a too rigid economy, but that you may practise it from wrong motives—with a desire of hoarding rather than of giving. Beware of covetousness, which is idolatry. Here will be your chief temptation, despite your firmest benevolent resolves. The present low standard of liberality among older and more experienced Christians, and the fact that covetousness scarcely militates against a reputable profession of Christianity, will enhance this danger. Necessary contact with business men, with whom a distinction between the morality of trade and the morality of the Bible involves no solecism, will add to it. The unhallowed estimate placed upon money, by which “worth means wealth, and the only wisdom, the art of acquiring it,” will increase your danger. The world is not atheistic, but the god it serves is gold. “I do confess I am an atheist,” says Sir Thomas Brown. “I cannot persuade myself to honor that the world adores.” Fortify yourself against all such peril in the beginning, by putting on the whole armor of God. Resist the devil of cupidity, when he proposes to give you all the kingdoms of the world, and he will flee from you.

When you are deciding on the proportion of your

income to be added to your capital, or invested for future contingencies, two questions deserve particular attention: What are the *objects* for which you make this reservation; and what are the *motives* that prompt you to do it?

In reply to the first question you will probably say, "My object is to make provision for the *education and settlement and usefulness of my children.*" We admit the legitimacy of the object, and only ask your attention to the amount necessary for its accomplishment. You wish to employ your property, in respect to your children, in such a way as shall prepare them for the greatest usefulness here, and the highest happiness hereafter.

Now it is essential to this, that you should make provision for the development of their physical, intellectual, and moral powers; that they should be instructed in relation to their social, civil, and religious duties; that they should be subject to the influence of pure examples, and brought under the power of the gospel of Christ. You wish for them, under the combined influence of culture and Christianity, that mental expansion, that refinement of taste, that elevation of sentiment, and that firmness of moral principle, which will harmonize with their sphere of action, and with the highest ends of their existence. Is not this the sum total of what they require at your hands, the substance of your parental duty? But is it necessary for this, that you should lay up for them

large stores of wealth? Would not these ends be better secured by such a degree of liberality on your part, as would leave them, when entering upon the responsibilities of life, dependent, under God, chiefly on their own exertions? Yea, do not facts abundantly demonstrate, that by exemption from the necessity of effort, through reliance on inherited, or expected wealth, their prospects of success in business or in professional life would be greatly darkened? On whom have the Indies bestowed their richest treasures, and to whom have the mines of Peru yielded most abundantly their shining dust? Who are the master-spirits of the age, that in the senate, at the bar, or in the pulpit, hold in their hands the secret of power, and wield most resistlessly the sceptre of influence, and sway as by a spell the councils of nations, and the destinies of men? Are they those whose paternal ancestry spent their lives in toil and parsimony that they might leave their children rich? Are they those who commenced their career cumbered by the cares of wealth, and subject to influences which prevent personal exertion, and paralyze the power of noble achievement? No; they are generally those, for whom their parents could do little except in the way of thorough mental and moral training, and the formation of industrious habits; whose chief inheritance was a healthful influence and a bright parental example; and who came forth to meet the trials of life, and to discharge its

duties, trusting in Providence, and dependent on their own industry and skill.

But if you can overlook such well-attested facts, and jeopard the temporal interests of your children, by amassing for them the almost certain means of their failure, turn to another aspect of the subject. You desire above all things their usefulness, and their religious welfare. What can you do better to render them useful, than to be so yourself? You wish them to form habits of benevolence. How can your desire for them be more effectually accomplished than by the influence of your own example of benevolence? Withholding your property from objects of charity will not teach them to be charitable. Hoarding yourself large stores of wealth, will not dispose them to consecrate it to Christ. If you would teach them that the value of money consists primarily in the good which may be accomplished by it, in what way can you do it so successfully, as by showing them that this is the great end for which you are acquiring it? And if you would secure to them the blessing of heaven, how can you do it more certainly, than by demising to them your own bright example—the illustration of your full conviction that the love of money is the root of all evil? In this way, a check will be early given to the tendencies of selfishness, and their habits be formed on the principles of Christian benevolence. You will thus bring your children to the altar, not like Hannibal, to swear eternal enmity to

a hostile nation, but to encourage in them, by the most sacred domestic influences, a desire to "do good unto all men, as they have opportunity."

Recur now to the second question, the *motives* which determine the proportion to be reserved for future contingencies. Write down the various objects of benevolence which solicit your attention: the claims of the poor, the ignorant, and the oppressed; the calls of Home and of Foreign missions, of the Bible, the Tract, Educational, and Seamen's associations, and other kindred humane and reformatory agencies. Against these, set down the amount which you have appropriated to them. Consider this amount as the measure of your regard for the poor, your interpretation of the law of benevolence, and the exponent of your love to Christ. Then write down on the opposite page the items of your personal and family expenditure, with the several sums applied to them. Look upon these as the index of your sense of personal and family necessities, as what you have considered due to your station in life. Then compare the balance-sheets. Carry them with you to your closet, and when you pray "after this manner," "Thy kingdom come," see how much you are in earnest, by the portion of your income appropriated to the advancement of that kingdom. And when continuing, you repeat the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," inquire if you may not have been taking much more than you have asked

from God. And when you further say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," ask yourself if some of your expenditures may not have had a direct tendency to lead you into that from which you pray to be kept, and to confirm in you that from which you seek to be delivered. Write over one side of the equation, "The claims of the poor, the blind, the naked, of ignorance, misery, and sin;" and over the other, "The claims of myself and family soon to pass to our final account." Then decide whether you have consecrated of your income to charity, according to the ability that God giveth. Do this, and the result will assist you in determining the motives by which you have been governed in your current expenditures, and in your reservations for future use. Is this asking too much? Does it seem unnecessarily exacting? But why should you shrink from such a test? Is it that you are fearful of the results? If your scale of liberality is such as your own interests and the claims of beneficence require, an examination like this would only confirm your convictions of duty, and render its discharge more easy and delightful. But if it is otherwise, and you fear the necessity of retrenchment on the side of personal ease and gratification,

"Think heaven a better bargain, than to give
Only thy single market-money for it.
Join hands with God, in making men to live."

Oh, it is sweet to know that we are doing the will

of God, and nowhere more so, than in dealing our bread to the hungry, lighting up the abode of sorrow with the smile of gladness, recalling the wandering prodigal, and guiding the weary pilgrim to his heavenly home.

3. Every man's beneficence should be proportionate to what he can *earn by industry*. Labor, although connected with the curse pronounced upon man in consequence of his sin, must yet be considered as a blessing. His physical, mental, and moral condition renders it necessary to his own welfare. The general law of equity also requires it. "If any man work not, neither should he eat." "Not slothful in business," holds an important place among the apostolic injunctions. Idleness is therefore an evil and a sin. It is burying our talent, and exposing ourselves to the condemnation of the slothful servant. No one, however opulent, is at liberty to be indolent. Self-interest forbids it, and the law of benevolence forbids it. To how many reputable disciples might the Saviour now say, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" What are they accomplishing by their personal exertions, for the honor of God or the welfare of men? Nothing, absolutely *nothing*. Yet health, and time, and power of productive enterprise are talents intrusted to us, even more directly than is wealth, acquired by means of these. "It is God that giveth power to get wealth." Well-directed labor, either manual or mental, in some of the vari-

ous forms of human effort, is therefore a means of doing good, which cannot be left out of account in estimating proportion in beneficence.

By this means, many a poor man might obtain the blessing of giving, who now contents himself with that of receiving. By toiling a little longer, or a little harder, or by turning their labor into more productive channels, not a few, from being themselves objects of charity, might become its happy distributors. Instead of drawing upon the resources of the benevolent, they might help to swell their amount by the addition of their own "farthing." And if they could do this, should they not do it? Would not their temporal condition be improved by the effort, and they find by sweet experience that it is more blessed to give than to receive? We have read of a woman in very needy circumstances, who offered to subscribe a penny a week to the missionary fund. "Surely," said one, "you are too poor to afford this." She replied, "I spin so many skeins of yarn a week, for a maintenance: I will spin *one more*, and that will be a penny for the Society." How beautiful in its simplicity is this illustration! Let each poor man so employ the fragments of time, that it may be said of him as of Henry Martyn, "He is the man that never lost an hour," and he shall eat the labor of his own hands, and "have to give to him that needeth."

The rich, too, who in their ease can give of their

abundance, by diligence would be able to abound in this grace. Where is the warrant for a Christian to retire from active life while in the full enjoyment of his business powers? It is obvious, however, that men may sometimes be called to leave the sphere of labor in which they have accumulated their property, in order to superintend its beneficent expenditure. Public interests may require such a portion of their time and attention as shall be incompatible with the continuance of their more private business schemes.

But how different is this from the case of those who bring to a period their active business career at a time of life when they are most capable of continuing it with success. In the course of twenty or thirty years of prosperous enterprise, a man finds himself in possession of a competency, that is, he has become affluent. Now he is content. He will retire and give place to others. He has enough. But why does he retire? That he may enjoy the luxury of dealing his bread to the hungry, and of endowing institutions for the promotion of science and religion, or for the mitigation of human woe and the reclamation of man from the power of Satan unto God? No; but because he has *enough*. Enough for what? Enough for himself, for his idol, self—enough for his own enjoyment, for ease and elegance—enough to vie with the devotees of fashion, and to revel in splendor. So, these are the motives which have

impelled him forward in his eager haste to be rich—ease, elegance, splendor. No thoughts of God enter into his purposes. No pity for the poor influences his plans. Poor man, thou art dead while thou livest. Thou hast “denied the God that is above,” and disowned thy brother. No beam of heavenly light guides thee in thy dark career. No genial fire of love melts thy icy selfishness. “Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches.” “The righteous shall see, and shall laugh at him.” “Men shall clap their hands at him, and hiss him out of his place.”

But it may be, that amid the smiles of Providence and your increasing stores, you have not been altogether unmindful of the fatherless and the widow. Yet you propose to retire from business. You are a professed disciple of Christ and have sympathy with suffering and sorrow, and have not forgotten “to do good and to communicate,” and yet you have enough. And can you then do all that you desire for the cause of God, and of humanity? Are there no poor that will remain destitute; no benighted that will be left sitting in darkness, when you have done what you can? Is the Bible translated into every tongue? Has the missionary visited every land, and carried the gospel to every tribe, and made it the power of God in every heart? Oh, no. And yet *you have enough*. You are retiring from business, it may be,

at the very maturity of your powers of business. Has Providence then smiled on your efforts and poured into your lap the fruits of the earth, or the products of commerce, that you might take your discharge from his service? "What, know you not that you are not your own," and that "none of us liveth to himself?" Have you forgotten the price with which you were bought? Does gratitude call for no more self-denial? Does the cross oppose no obstruction to your plan of ease and indulgence?

You may indeed be giving according to what you have. But are you giving according to what you *might* have? Your powers of business are no inconsiderable part of the ability that God giveth. His command is, "Go work in my vineyard." And it is also, "Work while the day lasts."

Besides, if you would give more if you had it, why cease acquiring? Is your beneficence on a large scale now? By adding to it the products of your continued labor, you would make it still larger, and would enjoy a richer blessing, both in what you bestow in charity and what you expend for yourself. And this blessing might come in the form of a better physical and mental, as well as of an improved spiritual condition. You would be preserved from wasting indolence and enervating ennui. By continued efforts to acquire, that you might abound still more in giving, you would be kept from the danger of covetousness attending undue concern respecting what

you now possess. By observing the command, "Occupy till I come," you would be protected from the ensnarements accompanying a life of leisure, and procure at last that highest approval of your Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

What if Christ had retired from his work, ere he had arrived at that period when he could say, "It is finished." What if he had ceased from his wearying toil, and ascended to his throne of glory, before he had come to that labor of soul in the garden, and that conflict of spirit on the cross—where would then have been the hope of the world? And why did he not thus retire? Ah, he was joined to his work by the invincibility of his love, and his devotion to his Father's will. Thence he toiled up to the very hour of his death, and expended the last of his human powers in completing his redeeming work. And shall his example have no influence to retain his followers in the field? O thou Son of Mary and of God, didst thou spend thy life in poverty and in toil for the miserable and the guilty, and in a world all thine own, have not where to lay thy head? And shall we who reap the fruits of thy godlike labor, seek exemption from service, and weary out our lives in ignoble sloth? Didst thou bear thy heavy cross, and wear thy thorny crown, and drink thy bitter cup that we, clothed in purple and fine linen, might recline upon our couch of ease?

“Woe worth these barren hearts of ours,
Where thou hast set celestial flowers,
And watered with the balmiest showers,
Yet naught we yield.”

4. Every man's beneficence should be proportionate to what he can *save by economy*. In any adequate view of this subject, it is apparent that some limits are to be placed to the scale of expenditure. The gospel is no more explicit against covetousness, than against prodigality. Nor is the sin of the one greater than of the other, or the evil of it more afflictive to the church. These seemingly contradictory vices are sometimes found in the same person. He covets another's wealth and squanders his own. So intense sometimes is the sense of want occasioned by wasteful expenditure, that the prodigal, as the miser, not only “stoppeth his ear against the cry of the poor,” but rapaciously devours widows' houses, as the means of continuing his riotous living. Thus prodigality leads to covetousness, and covetousness to rapacity. Unholy desire clamors for gratification, and gratification only increases the intensity of insatiable desire, until, in the midst of abundance, the soul finds itself in famine, flooded with waters, yet pining in thirst.

The economy induced by the spirit of beneficence, is equally remote from covetousness and from prodigality. It neither wastes nor buries the intrusted talent, but *uses* it. And the expenditure which is

consistent with the claims of charity, is also in harmony with what is due to our station in life. True dignity is never found in conflict with benevolence. When the calls of the latter are responded to by an appropriation of the just proportion of our property, the residue will be found to impart the highest dignity to rank and station, and the most benign and salutary influences to character. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," are in happiest agreement with its claims. But it dissuades from enervating indulgences, from effeminate voluptuousness, from factitious and extravagant conventionalism, as being as incongruous with the spirit of the gospel, as the former virtues are becoming and accordant with it.

Nor can prodigal expenditures, coming as they do into the class of unproductive consumptions, be more easily justified by the principles of *political economy*, than by the spirit of benevolence. Consumed as they are in needless, if not hurtful self-indulgence, the use of luxuries adds less to the national wealth than do beneficent appropriations. Rightly directed, Charity touches the deep springs of the mental and moral energies, and instead of wasting them in profitless excitement, arouses them to the most healthful and productive effort. She feeds the poor and clothes the naked; she enlightens the ignorant, assists the

feeble, and raises up the fallen. She discourages vice, that waster of time and money, that weakener of physical, intellectual, and moral vigor. She encourages Virtue, and leads her into the field as the most productive laborer for the weal of the race. She excites industry and rewards it, and stanches earth's flowing miseries by healing its deep wounds of sin. She turns the current of human desire from war to peace, from oppression to freedom, from idolatry, bigotry, and imposture, to the pure worship of the true God.

Such is the productive mission of charity to which we would divert the streams of wealth, now flowing in the spendthrift channels of wasteful superfluity. And for one who admits her claims as obligatory, it would not seem difficult to arbitrate between them and those of prodigality. Perceiving the difference in their nature from their different results, he will be sweetly *impelled* to economy, feeling that the nobleness of the end raises it above the suspicion of meanness, to the rank of the most generous and honorable virtues. He will reflect that what he expends in luxury and self-aggrandizement, is so much withheld from the poor, so much refused as a loan to the Lord, leaving a corresponding amount of grief unassuaged, of vice unchecked, and of eternal misery unprevented. He will reflect that such expenditures not only diminish his power, but lessen his desire to do good; that they are not only a robbery of others, but an

injury to himself. He will remember that such superfluities, by placing him in the rank of eager competitors in the circle of fashion, take him out from the simplicity of the gospel, and setting him in practical contradiction to its precepts, present him as a tempter to others by his evil example.

Are you anxious to do good on a larger scale than you have felt your means would allow? Inspect your wardrobe, and see if something may not be saved by economy from the imposts which it has laid upon your resources, and your condition be as comfortable and your attire as comely. Survey your table, and see if something may not be spared from its viands and dainties, and enough remain for rich contentment and hospitable cheer. Make Conscience the steward of thy house, holding his lamp, like that in the urn of Olybius, "alive and light, although close and invisible." Let him report of all your appropriations, how much is for the gratification of the appetites, how much ministers to pride, to vanity, to ambitious rivalry with lovers of themselves. Let his inspection be minute, and deem him not an intermeddler. Accept his report, and from all upon which he writes "extravagance," turn the current of your expenditures into the channels of beneficence. Are you reluctant to do this? Reluctant to part with your superfluities, your luxuries—ministers to pride and fashion and voluptuousness—in order to obtain the means of a more enlarged beneficence!

But "my station in life is fixed, and I must conform to the circle in which I move." If you belong to a circle, the customs of which require you to waste your Lord's money, may it not be your duty to "come out from among them, and be separate?" Would not this, besides enabling you to give more, exempt you from many temptations and evils from which your character and influence are now suffering.

Are you unable to give more in charity than you now do? How can this be, when you are able to spend so much in superfluous and costly attire, in ornaments, "the chains and the bracelets, the rings and changeable suits of apparel, and mantles, and wimples, and crissing pins?" If you are too poor to appropriate more in beneficence, are you not too poor to wear such exponents of wealth, too poor to feast on such costly dainties, too poor to dwell in habitations which are the index of princely fortunes?

You can afford to give no more! Yes, if you will *economize*, you can. If you will "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," you will feel that you are too poor to give *so little*. Has not your economy, if you have practised it, been rather in the department of beneficence, than in that of superfluous expenditures? Transfer retrenchment from the giving to the expending side, and you will be able to give more. Wear less of your wealth, and you will

be able. Consume less in the Epicurean delicacies of your table, and you will be able. Dispose of that part of your plate and jewelry which subserves no higher purpose than ostentatious display, and you will be able to give more for the mitigation of human woe, and the salvation of the world. The very decision to commence such retrenchment from benevolent motives, would bring your Christian character, under God, to the period of a new development, and the recollection of such economy, for such a purpose, would be a sweet reflection mingling in your dying thoughts.

Happy was that distinguished example of Christian simplicity, economy, and beneficence, John Wesley, in the generous devotion with which he consecrated his substance to the cause of humanity and of God. Suspecting that he had more wealth than was apparent, the Accountant-general sent him the following note, with a copy of the "Excise order for the return of plate." "Reverend sir—As the commissioners cannot doubt but you have plate, for which you have hitherto neglected to make an entry," etc. To this, the following answer was returned: "Sir, I have two silver spoons at London, and two at Bristol, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread."

If all Christians would devote to beneficence the fruits of a reasonable economy, from what practical inconsistency would the church be reclaimed. From

what reproach would she be saved, among those who now see her bowing with the eagerness of a devotee at the shrine of Fashion, that "Juggernaut of Christian lands." Oh, how would it contribute to make her "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

We do not assume to prescribe any certain degree of economy or scale of retrenchment, or to interfere with the refinements and proprieties of a pure Christianity; but only to assert, that no one can be sure that he is doing what he ought in works of charity, unless he has introduced the principle of *saving by economy*. No rank or station or amount of wealth can exempt him from the obligation involved in it. And no one, from love to God, can thus bring his beneficence into harmony with his ability, without great benefit to himself. Subjected to the influence of His example who never wasted a single moment, nor squandered a single feeling, but turned every thing to the beneficent account of saving the world, his life would be more happy, his death more peaceful, and a brighter crown would wreath his brow in the heavenly glory.

5. Every man's beneficence should be proportionate to what he can *spare by self-denial*. What is self-denial? Is it to give liberally of our income, yet withholding for ourselves the whole of the vested wealth from which it is derived? Is it to make large donations to the destitute and miserable, retain-

ing enough to live according to the fashion of this world, in luxury and splendor? Is it to cut off the extravagances and superfluities of life, reserving for ourselves all its conveniences and comforts? Is it not something more than this? Look at the spirit of devotion signalizing the conduct of some Christian philanthropists, of Mrs. Fry, of Sarah Martin, and of Howard, "the habitual passion of whose mind was a measure of feeling almost equal to the temporary extremes and paroxysms of common minds." Look at the self-sacrificing spirit of not a few modern missionaries—of a Harriet Newell, a Mrs. Judson—of a Swartz, a Cary, and a Morrison—of a Dober and a Leopold, who, that they might tell the poor negroes of a Saviour's love, offered to sell themselves into slavery, if no other means could be found of access to them. Look at the patriarchs—Abraham offering up his son, his only son, at the command of the Lord; Moses "refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Look at the apostles, counting not their own lives dear unto them, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame" in their Master's cause. Look at the life of Jesus, at his humiliation, his ignominy, his agony, and learn what self-denial is. Are you poor? So was he, yet it was for your sake. Are you rich? So was he, yet "he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." He "redeemed

us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It is in Christ crucified as a sacrifice for sin, that we are to learn the *full* significance of the term self-denial. It was not simply in his leaving the bosom of the Father, in his enduring the contradiction of sinners, that Christ's sacrifice consisted, nor yet in the infamy of being pronounced guilty, and sentenced as a malefactor at a human tribunal; but it was in the burden of sin which he assumed, and on account of which he was forsaken of his Father. It was in the agony of soul—the anguish of a spirit which "knew no sin, yet was made sin for us." Here is suffering—sacrifice—here is *self-denial* in its divinest form. The subjection of our personal ease and tastes and conveniences, our comforts and time and possessions, to the will of Christ, for his glory and human good, is in us, its highest realization. It leads to the performance of whatever may contribute to Christ's glory, and to the relinquishment to his disposal of whatsoever of our possessions may subserve the advancement of his kingdom.

Self-denial is the great law of our religion. It began in Christ, our Head. It must pervade all the members. It led him to give up all for us. It should lead us to give up all for him. Whosoever therefore would become a benefactor of the race, must share the wants and woes of his fellow-men by personal sacrifice, in his efforts to relieve them. This is self-denial, the subjection of self to the principle of love, the annihili-

lation of selfishness, and the enthronement of Christ in the soul. Away, then, with the idea of ease, of luxury, when that work of mercy, commenced with such a sacrifice, is pressing upon the church with all the urgency of the Saviour's last command. Away with the idea of convenience, of comfort, when such a motive calls us to sacrifice and self-denial. Oh, it is a shame that a work like this should be retarded by the self-indulgence of the disciples of so self-denying a Master. It is a sin that devoted co-laborers with him should be allowed to feel the necessity of retrenchment in their heaven-commissioned work, to stop their presses, disband their schools, and give back half-reclaimed territory to the barrenness and blight of Paganism; and this, because those who sent them to the work, are unwilling to deny themselves. We blush to remember, that in the progress of modern missions, laborers have been kept back from the whitening fields, and the reaper's sickle has been hung upon the bough, and the harvest has wasted because there were none to gather it, and this for want of nothing but *self-denial*. And we pray the Lord of the vineyard to forgive our apathy and self-indulgence, to blot out the record of the past, and to save his people from causing it again to be traced. Under the most pressing pecuniary embarrassments, imbued with the beneficent spirit of the gospel, and influenced by the example of Jesus and the worth of souls, the church could have doubled her contribu-

tions from what she might have spared by self-denial. Constrained by the influence of such motives, self-denial becomes a kind of self-gratification, and it is tenfold harder to *retain* what can be spared by self-denial, than to lay it at the feet of Christ. Before the cross, the sanctified soul repels the idea of restricting its offerings to that which costs it nothing. Gratitude casts all her living into the treasury of the Lord, and Love pours her most precious ointment upon the Saviour's dying head. The one feels that her *all* is too little, and the other, that her most costly tribute is too poor to express the fervor of her affection, and the entireness of her devotion.

Go, then, walk with Christ in the garden. Stand by him upon Calvary, and witness his ignominy and his agony. Remember, that "He was wounded for your transgressions," that "He was bruised for your iniquities." By the crown which he left in heaven, by the cross which he endured on earth, by the love which he bears for you, by the worth of the soul for which he died, he calls you to deny yourself. By the superior moral value of the gleanings of self-denial over the surplusage of abundance, and by the heavenly glory, the way to which is through his own sacrifice, he calls you to deny yourself. He calls you to this, as the only proof that "the same mind is in you which was also in him." He asks for your choicest treasures, your best services. Whom wilt thou deny? Him, or thyself? When, as from

the cross, ye hear him say, "Freely ye have received, freely give," will ye not freely give? When, as ascending up on high, ye see him pointing to the whitening fields, will ye not deny yourselves, that the wasting harvest may be gathered in?

"Commit to Christ thine *all*, so shall thy treasure be
Secure from moth and rust, from theft, and fire, and sea;
And in the final day, transmuted to pure gold,
Thy safe investment then shall yield thee wealth untold."

We have now submitted the main principles relating to proportion in beneficence. We have endeavored to show that each man's charitable contributions should be proportionate to the *ends* sought, to the *instrumentality* to be applied, and to his pecuniary *ability*. We have examined the question of ability in the light cast upon it by the beneficence of *the Jewish church*, by the beneficent spirit of *the early Christians*, and by *the Bible doctrine*, as deduced from the express declarations of Scripture. We have also viewed the question of each man's ability, according to which his proportion should be adjusted, in its relation to the *sum total* of his property, to the amount of his *income*, to what he can *earn by industry*, to what he can *save by economy*, and to what he can *spare by self-denial*.

In concluding this part of our subject, we wish comprehensively to re-state and to enforce the leading MOTIVES which should secure the practical adoption of the principles.

1. The devotement to beneficence of a just portion of our property gives to it *its highest value*. Nothing is more obvious than that the value of money is wholly relative, and that it is determined by its use. We concede the legitimate value and use of property for sustenance and comfort, for intellectual and moral improvement. And the amount thus applied should be all that the circumstances require. What is not necessary for these purposes, finds its highest value when devoted to beneficence. Compare its value, when thus consecrated, with that which it possesses when expended for selfish purposes. One man accumulates and *hoards*. His gains answer no higher an end than to inflame a sordid desire for wealth, and to feed a hidden fire that consumes all humane and generous affections. He makes "gold his hope, and says unto the fine gold, thou art my confidence." He toils for wealth, but when obtained, he will not use it. And the more he acquires, the less he is satisfied with what he has. His wants increase faster than his possessions, so that the richer he becomes, the poorer he feels. To such madness has this abuse of wealth been permitted, in judicial visitation, to carry men, that the possessor of thousands has clung to his hoarded treasures with such an insane tenacity, and been in such an agony of want for more, that he has died of actual starvation. Truly, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." Well does the

Scripture say of such an one, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass." "His riches are corrupted, his garments are moth-eaten, his silver and gold are cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against him, and shall eat his flesh as it were fire."

Another accumulates and *squanders*. Appetite and pleasure absorb his substance. Disease is engendered, time wasted, vice nurtured, and mind imbruted. And the more he squanders in sensual gratification, the more imperious is the demand for still farther gratification, until "the floor of the wine-press shall not feed" him, and "he shall eat, but not have enough." Thus, whether wealth be hoarded or squandered, it loses its value. It is an abuse of the divine bounty—an abuse which deranges the mental and moral, as well as the physical powers, and dooms the soul to eternal penury—an abuse which has made the world an abode of paupers and prodigals, of misers and maniacs.

See, now, the value of wealth when appropriated to *charity*. It feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, is eyes to the blind, and feet is it to the lame. It "visits the fatherless and the widow," reclaims the vicious, and leads wandering, guilty man back to the fatherly mansions, and to a forgiving God. Such a use gratifies the benevolent desires, and this gratification adds to their strength and intensity, and every such increase of force imparts a greater

excellence to the character, by bringing it into agreement with the character of God. In this way wealth attains its highest value. Thus applied, it harmonizes with the benevolence of the Creator, and with the compassions of the Redeemer. It is promotive of the end for which God created man, and of the objects for which Christ died. Its use is based upon the recognition of a higher than sensual principle in man, and a loftier than earthly destiny. It sets forth the cross as the grand central attraction, and proceeds on the conviction that the noblest of all influences, and the sublimest of all agencies, are those which combine to draw men unto it. It is, we repeat, precisely *here* that wealth attains its highest value—in subserving the interests of humanity, and the glory of God. This end, from its intrinsic dignity, imparts to whatsoever means it employs their greatest worth. Apart from this, nothing is truly noble or exalted. This makes *giving* the art of *gaining*—the true philosopher's stone. It turns the hoarded gold into lead, and the given mite into gold. When one sees that beneficence thus embalms his wealth in the form of its highest possible value, and gives it to him as a perpetually increasing fund, as an instrument of good, as a means of grace, and as an auxiliary of heaven, will he not labor to acquire, and acquire that he may *give*?

2. The devotement to beneficence of a just portion of our property, secures *our own highest inter-*

ests. It is a satisfaction to know that the proportion of our substance devoted to beneficence is in agreement with the divine will. It is an additional satisfaction to feel that our wealth is thus attaining its highest value. It is a happiness to witness the blessed influence thus exerted, in the alleviation of human woe, and the removal of human sin; in kindling immortal hopes, and adding star after star to Immanuel's diadem. To know and feel this, is to enjoy the *luxury* of doing good. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Such a use of our property brings us into harmony with the attributes of God, and with the highest interests of man. It identifies our interests with the interests of Jehovah. Placing them under the protection of infinite power and the guidance of infinite wisdom, by the operation of all moral principles and the immutability of the divine purposes it secures them beyond the possibility of invasion.

The great secret, then, of advancing our own interests, is in the annihilation of selfishness, and in assimilation to God. His peculiar blessedness consists in doing good. He "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Air and sunlight, rain and dew, are

ceaselessly flowing from his hand. Our happiness will be like his, as, in beneficence, our lives resemble his. Hence, it is more blessed to give than to receive; for giving brings us into more perfect sympathy with Christ in his redeeming work, and pours into the soul the blessedness which he contemplated, when, "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross." What we give is given back to us again, good measure, pressed down, and running over. It is this that scattereth, and yet increaseth. This maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith. We honor the Lord with our substance and our barns are filled with plenty, and our presses burst out with the new wine of joy. We sow bountifully, and we reap also bountifully of all the fruits of the Spirit. All that we thus give in charge to Providence, shall return in the elements of a greater good. All that we thus employ for Christ, will be treasure laid up in heaven to await our arrival. For all that we thus give to the poor, we "shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Thus is solved that old, paradoxical epitaph, "What I kept, I *lost*; what I *gave*, I have." Truly, "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." When we see that it is only what we give that enriches us, shall we not give? When we see that, in respect to property, we are worth just the amount of good which we do with it, shall we not do good? When we see that beneficence is

the chief work of God, that we live in a world of which the fittest description is, it "is full of his goodness;" when we see that our happiness can be like his, only as our character and conduct resemble his, shall we not be beneficent?

3. The devotement to beneficence of a just portion of our property, promotes *the glory of God*. This is the highest motive which can influence holy beings, the noblest end to which they can devote their lives. This overwhelms all conflicting influences, and, going beyond all considerations of self-interest, leads to entire consecration. It is this—its direction to the noblest end—that gives to Christian beneficence in the simplest act, its intrinsic worth and dignity. This joins the "farthing" of a grateful love to the ends for which Jehovah created and is governing the world. It brings it within that system of means, by which is to be wrought out, in the recovery of a lost world, the demonstration that "God is love." Every beneficent act ascends up high as the throne of God, and, incorporated among the redeeming agencies of the cross, stretches wide as the curse is found. It is in this connection of beneficence with the means and influences by which the Almighty is accomplishing the redemption of the world, "to the praise and glory of his grace," that we find the most urgent calls to it. Here motive reaches its highest power, and argument its most persuasive appeal. In this is the realization of man's highest

interests, by the attainment of the highest ends of his being—the ceaseless oblation of his substance and himself to God, as a living protestation against the selfishness which dishonors and would dethrone him.

Is the divine glory promoted by human obedience? Beneficence is obedience. Is God honored by the expression of a grateful sense of his goodness? Beneficence is such an expression. Does he delight in the testimonials of a fervent love? Beneficence is such a testimonial. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, ye have done it unto me.” Do the opposites of these *dishonor* God? Covetousness is the concentration of them all. It closes the ear to his claims in the cries of his poor, and withholds from him the heart. It denies him his crown, and places a stigma upon Christ’s voluntary assumption of poverty for the redemption of the world. “Take heed, and beware of covetousness.” It is among the most humiliating forms of sin—among the greatest triumphs of Satan. Shall we dishonor him whom all the angels in heaven adore? Shall we withhold from him what it should be our chief joy to lay at his feet, our wealth, our influence, our all? By the highest value of riches, by your own best interests, by the honor of the Saviour, by the glory of God, “trust not in uncertain riches.” By the goodness of the Lord, by the love of Christ, by the bliss of heaven, be “rich in good works, ready to distribute,

willing to communicate, laying up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life."

"Thy gold's true worth, thy weal, God's glory, are agreed
Then scatter wide and free thy heaven-intrusted seed;
So shalt thou reap a golden harvest most divine,
And like the brightness of the firmament shalt shine."

CHAPTER III.

SYSTEM IN BENEFICENCE.

I. PROVISIONS OF SYSTEM.

No system can be considered as complete, as suited to develop in the church the beneficent spirit of the gospel, and secure from each of its members a just proportion of his substance in charitable contributions, which does not make provision for *proper instruction concerning the use of property, and for communicating information respecting the condition and wants of the world*; for the appropriation, at stated times, by each one, of a due proportion of his substance to beneficence; and for some *plan* on the part of every church for *collecting* the contributions of its members, and for *applying* them to the objects for which they are designed.

1. System in beneficence provides for *instruction concerning the use of property, and for communicating information respecting the condition and wants of the world*. Too much may have been presumed on the knowledge of Christians respecting the use which God requires them to make of their property, and consequently, in the prosecution of their business, they have, through ignorance, been exposed to the growth of a covetous spirit, with the increase of their possessions. From motives of delicacy, religious teachers who receive their support from the vol-

untary subscriptions of their people, may have shrunk from the same degree of explicitness upon this subject which they have felt to be necessary in respect to other Christian duties. And the difficulty which some pastors have experienced in securing the full amount of their support, or the consciousness that when received it was inadequate for this purpose, has increased the embarrassment.

And many hearers, who have been ready to applaud the clearest and fullest exposition of dogmatic truth, have sometimes evinced a remarkable sensitiveness to any direct application of the duty of beneficence. They are sound on all points of accredited orthodoxy, and lend their approval to the rebukes of all heresy, except that of believing that their money is their own, and that they may expend it as they please, without let or hinderance. That such has been the feeling of not a few hearers, and such the condition of some pastors, is quite certain; and as a natural consequence, many churches, that have been thoroughly taught in respect to other Christian doctrines and duties, have failed to receive due instruction upon the subject of Christian beneficence.

If a people feel that they are too poor to contribute to charitable objects, let the pastor ascertain whether it may not be merely a matter of feeling, occasioned by the want of more scriptural views, or by the absence of information respecting the wants of the world, for which they may justly have looked to

him. Are they poorer than the widow who cast into the treasury of the Lord all her living? If not, instruct them in the doctrine, and duty, and blessedness of Christian liberality, and they will give. Spread out before them the wastes and wants of the world, and they will give. Let them give a little once, and they will wish to give again, and a little more. And what they give to other objects will not be taken from the support of him who is leading them to the luxury of doing good. The specific for a pastor to *starve* himself away from his people, is *to decline instructing them in the duty of beneficence, and to withhold from them a knowledge of the wants of a perishing world.* By such a course, he injures both them and himself, and dishonors his Master. His people are entitled to instruction. It is his duty to give it to them. This should enter, as an important element, into his plans of ministerial labor among them. If they will be covetous, let them know that no "covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." If they refuse to deny themselves, they should understand that self-denial is the condition of discipleship, and that they have turned away from the cross, "sorrowful," it may be—yet they HAVE turned away.

But no; those who love our Lord Jesus Christ will no more disobey him here than elsewhere, if they are rightly instructed in their duty. The

church will respond to his calls, if she understands them. She did do it in the days of the apostles and primitive Christians, and she is beginning to do it in our own days. Let the spirit of beneficence, as the antidote to selfishness, be developed in the hearts of Christians, by instruction from the pulpit, in the concert of prayer, or convention. Let the claims of benevolence be freely canvassed. They are founded in principles of the most genuine philanthropy and the purest religion. They are enforced by the power of the cross. They are urged by the woes of countless millions, and by the bliss of which these millions are capable. Oh, let them be *known*, let them be *seen* by the church, and she will open her arms to receive them as the representatives of her divine Redeemer, and honor them with her most precious treasures. If we would displace covetousness from the hearts of Christians, and introduce benevolence in its stead, we must apply the power of Christian doctrine, and open before them the channels of Christian beneficence, and lure them by the attraction of Christian motives. This is God's remedy, and, if applied, it *will* be made effectual.

If the world is to be recovered by the propagation of Christianity, nothing is more evident than that the *rising generation* is to be prepared, by thorough instruction, for a more martyr-like devotedness, and a higher style of achievement than has marked the present generation. The hope of the

church, in respect merely to its own perpetuity, is, under God, in the young. For any reasonable plans of successful propagation, the main preparatory work must be with them. The present generation has accomplished more in this respect than did the last. The next must go far beyond the present. But, for this, the spirit of beneficence must be *earlier* infused into it, that, through its deeper root in a richer soil, it may yield a riper and more abundant fruit. "Tell your children of this, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." But who shall give this instruction? We answer, first, an important duty devolves on *parents*. They should teach their children, by precept and example, to give liberally and systematically. The *shepherd* of the flock has also a responsible agency. It is his work, made incumbent by his relations to his people, and by the terms of his commission. The main reliance, under God, for the cultivation of a beneficent spirit in the church, and for making her charity a work of intelligence, of principle, and of habit, *must be upon her ministers*. And auxiliary to the ministry in securing this important result, is *the Christian press*. By religious journals, and reports of benevolent societies, by tracts and treatises upon missions and beneficence, much may be done to diffuse information, cultivate a sense of stewardship, and awaken the elevated sentiments of Christian philanthropy. In this view, the religious press is

as the right arm of the Christian ministry, the circulation of a good book like a perpetually self-repeating sermon, and all beneficent organizations are as dutiful handmaids to the Christian church.

2. System in beneficence provides for the appropriation by every one, *at stated times*, of a *due proportion* of his property to charitable purposes. This provision of the system is essential in order to secure the full benefits of the former provision. Without something of this, the principles inculcated might be left inoperative, and the impressions made be soon effaced, to be revived perhaps, from the pulpit, and lost again by inaction, or the resumed reign of covetousness. There are three stated periods, the *weekly*, the *monthly*, and the *annual*, which deserve particular consideration.

(1.) The *weekly* period. "UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "LET EVERY ONE OF YOU LAY BY HIM IN STORE, AS GOD HATH PROSPERED HIM." The same direction he also gives to the Galatians. Here is a simple but comprehensive *system*. Each one is required to give something. This is *beneficence*. His charity is to be "as God hath prospered him." This is *proportion* in beneficence. It is to be laid by "*upon the first day of the week*." This is *system* in beneficence.

The chief characteristics of this apostolic plan PROPORTION AND SYSTEM, are precisely those in re-

spect to which the beneficence of the church is most defective. And it is a little singular, that this divine type should have been left on record for the express benefit of the church, and yet should have been so little regarded. It is simple, easy of application, and effective. That some such plan should not have obtained general adoption, may perhaps be best accounted for by the absence of that beneficent spirit which prevailed in the primitive church.

The advantages of this plan are obvious. It is the occasion of very frequent recurrence to the providence of God as the source of our prosperity, and of a recognition of our dependence upon him, and of our obligation to him for all that we receive. It is suited to mingle thoughts of him with the pursuit of all our worldly affairs, so that our religion, instead of being secularized by our business, is made to elevate and sanctify it, by leading to its prosecution upon the highest principles. By bringing us to so frequent a review of our stewardship, it deepens the feeling of responsibility, and quickens the sensibilities to the condition of our fellow-men, and to our final account. The mind being kept thus constantly familiar with the ennobling principles and constraining motives of Christian beneficence, selfishness is restrained, and covetousness meets with constant and almost impassible barriers. Thus a more correct judgment will be formed of the proportion which duty requires, and the devotement of that proportion

will be prompted by more elevated religious affections.

The most indigent can probably lay aside a cent a week for an object to which they may feel unable, at any one time, to contribute fifty-two cents. Many more can invest in this way five, ten, or twenty cents a week, who would think it impossible to subscribe two dollars and a half, or five dollars, or ten dollars at any one time in the year, and who perhaps may not, at any one time, be in possession of an amount so large. And yet, by giving it in small weekly instalments, they will defraud no one; but, doing it from gratitude to God and love to man, they will become better neighbors, better citizens, better men, and better Christians.

Some forty years ago, a worthy deacon of an infant church in Vermont adopted this plan, from a simple desire to obey the injunction of the apostle. While under the elevating influence of the Sabbath services, he consecrated to beneficence such a portion of his income as would meet the measure of his prosperity. From this deposit the various calls of charity were answered, and the poor and needy were never allowed to go empty away, unless it had been previously much overdrawn. In this practice he continued until his death, greatly to his own temporal and spiritual advantage; for "his root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night on his branch." There are those who still remember the

small tin trunk to which he committed these weekly instalments, and who, receiving the rich legacy of his example, bear testimony to its happy influence upon themselves, the prosperity of the little church, and the destitute around.

The only plausible objection to this plan may arise from the difficulty which some might experience in estimating the profits of their business, so as to adjust their weekly proportion. With day-laborers, and multitudes of others, this objection could have little weight. With not a few it might be removed by a different mode of conducting their affairs, and the change might make them safer and more prosperous business men. But those whose vocations are of such a nature that this plan could not be fully carried out, might still lay by something, and refer the full adjustment of their proportion to the monthly or annual estimate, as the Jews were allowed to close the appropriation of their tithes for feasts and sacrifices at the expiration of every third year, if not done before.

(2.) *The monthly period.* Those who cannot decide on their degree of prosperity week by week, may be able to do it once a month, and to "lay by in store" accordingly. But for those who adopt the monthly system, the temptation to withhold may be increased by their being under the necessity of consecrating a sum four times as large as the weekly adjustment would require. And there may be less

tendency to create a sense of *constant* dependence upon God, and to form as perfectly the habit of associating his glory with the prosecution of all their worldly affairs. Still, as a substitute, in the case of those who cannot do it oftener, let them adopt the *spirit* of the apostolic direction, and "lay by in store" every month, "as God hath prospered them." This has been found to possess important financial as well as religious advantages. Says a prosperous merchant who has adopted this plan, "This system has saved me from commercial dangers, by leading me to simplify business and avoid extensive credits. It has made me a better merchant; for the monthly pecuniary observations which I have been wont to take, though often quite laborious, have brought me to a better knowledge of the state of my affairs, and led me to be more cautious and prudent than I otherwise should have been. Since adopting this plan, I have been no longer perplexed with doubts about giving, and there is no one I meet with more cheerfulness than a servant of Christ calling for aid."

(3.) *The annual period.* To an *annual* survey of one's business affairs, and an apportionment of profits to beneficence, there can be no objection from its impracticability. It accords with the principles and habits of the best business men, to take an annual account of stock, and estimate profits and losses. The reputation and success of any one as a

business man require this. Men who do nothing of it evince so little practical wisdom, that not much can be expected from them on the score of systematic beneficence. If they give largely at one time, their generosity may be at the expense of their justice, and they cannot be counted upon as having any thing to give when the call is repeated. But he who annually casts up his accounts will know what are his profits, and what the whole amount of his property. Then let him apply the rule of proportion, and set apart for the cause of his Master, the amount which that rule requires, and let the consecrated sum be considered as sacred to charity. Only let him be sure that the amount does not fall *below* the claims of duty, and of well regulated self-interest. And if he should act upon his *right* to go a little *beyond* mere duty, transcending the stern mandates of conscience, and borne on by the higher sentiments of gratitude and love, he would neither do himself wrong, nor his neighbor harm.

We cannot withhold a joint letter, written in 1822, to the treasurer of one of our foreign missionary societies, by two individuals who had adopted a plan similar to that which it has been our object to recommend.

“When, a few years since, we commenced house-keeping, God in his providence saw fit to commit to our care a small farm in a country town, for which we owed about one-quarter of its value. We had

read the various accounts of the benevolent exertions of the day, and were anxious to join with our fellow-Christians in their acts of charity. But how could we obtain the means? Our family must be supported, and we must pay our debts, or we should wrong one man while giving to another.

“After deliberating upon the subject, and reflecting that what we owed would not probably all be wanted for several years, we concluded, in the first place, to attend diligently to business, as God should give us health and strength, and to expend nothing for the support of ourselves and family but what was absolutely necessary for our health and comfort. We then fixed upon a certain proportion of our debts, which we would endeavor to pay annually, and so much only, unless more was wanted; but if wanted, we would pay to the last of our ability. After paying the proportion of our debts agreed upon, the remainder of our income, whether more or less, was to be expended, according to the best of our judgment, in doing good.

“When we adopted this plan, we concluded that it was best to review it at stated periods, and if we conscientiously thought it our duty, to alter it; but not otherwise. After several years' experiment, we are more and more convinced that it is our duty strictly to adhere to it. God has blessed our labors in a remarkable degree. We can almost say that he has fulfilled to us his promise to Israel, that he

would bless them in all that which they should put their hands unto."

How striking is this illustration of the ease with which systematic arrangements may be introduced into our beneficent operations, even in difficult circumstances. Let every disciple of Jesus go and do likewise, and the days of retrenchment and penury and mourning to the cause of benevolence would be ended, and "Israel would blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

(4.) There is yet one other plan, which has been adopted by some with advantage. It is that of setting apart *a certain portion of each gain in every enterprise*, and devoting it to beneficence. This perhaps approaches nearer to the Jewish system than either of the others. Of all their several gains, the Jews were required to give a portion to the Lord, in the form of first-fruits and tithes. This brought them almost constantly under the influence of some sacred claim upon their substance. Everywhere they were reminded of their dependence upon their Maker, and of their obligations to him. Everywhere they were taught that they were constant receivers, by being called to be constant givers. And why was this but to prevent and destroy covetousness, and to induce habits of beneficence? And what could be more admirably adjusted as means to the end, everywhere meeting a divine claim, or the most animating motives to liberality? How must such a system bring

one into an all-surrounding atmosphere of beneficence.

Its advantages are nearly allied to those of the first-named plan. And the near resemblance of the system proposed by the Jewish lawgiver to that presented by the Christian apostle, is easily accounted for by the fact, that both the lawgiver and the apostle were under divine guidance. It was in both cases the all-creative Mind propounding to man principles of beneficence most suited to his character and condition, and most conducive to his highest interests and the glory of God.

The operation of these principles is beautifully illustrated in the following epistle, written in 1823, and addressed to the secretary of one of our benevolent societies.

“I have long been desirous of rendering some aid to your society. My circumstances, however, have been such that I knew not how to contribute money. But having recently commenced business, with very moderate prospects, it occurred to me that I had a *right*, if it were not clearly my *duty*, to set apart a certain portion of the Lord's gifts, for his cause in the earth. I have therefore taken a certain part of every gain, small or great, and devoted it to the service of God. I would not trouble you with this communication, were it not to tell you of the *satisfaction* I have derived from this plan. The money laid aside is not considered mine. The only inquiry,

when an application is made, is, 'Have I any thing in the treasury, and how can I dispose of it to the best advantage?' I feel as though I were putting my hand into the Lord's treasury and acting for him. I have no doubt, sir, *that the deductions made on every gain have been saved in carefulness and economy.*"

Who can resist the conviction of the superior excellence of such principles as this letter and the preceding illustrations exhibit? Who can doubt the utility of reducing them, as these Christians did, to systematic operation? Were they not better for their beneficence; richer in all that which constitutes true worth—richer in the means and the desire of doing good—richer in all the elements of rational enjoyment here, and in the immortal hopes of blessedness hereafter?

3. System in beneficence provides for *some plan in every church for collecting its charitable contributions, and for applying them to the objects for which they are designed.* It is obvious that this is essential to the completion of a perfect system.

There are some objects to which the donors themselves should be the distributors of their own bounty, as the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, within the sphere of their immediate action. The benign and salutary influence of bestowing private charities is too precious to be lost by making another the almoner of our bounties, when we are in circumstances to apply them ourselves.

It is mainly with respect to the prominent and accredited institutions of benevolence, whether relating to the claims of our own or of other countries, that this part of our system is to be arranged. For these various objects, collections are sometimes taken at the close of public service, at the time when the objects are presented. It is an objection to this method, that it leaves out of account those who may on such occasions be absent, and secures a smaller sum from those who are present, than a different plan might elicit. Cards are sometimes placed in the slips of the church, upon which each one is requested to write his name, with the sum which he wishes to give. In addition to the above-named objection, which is equally applicable to this mode, many who would otherwise contribute a little, disliking to place their names to a small sum, subscribe nothing. We believe that by some wise system, a larger amount may be secured, and with greater advantage to the donor. The minutiae of a plan for charitable collections must be determined by the peculiar circumstances of the case. Little more can here be done than to draw the outline of one, which can be filled up by those who may carry it into operation.

Let provision be made by the church, at the opening of the year, for *the presentation of the claims* of the various benevolent objects *at stated times*, and let one or more suitable persons be appointed for

each different object, to *solicit donations* in its behalf.

When these stated periods arrive, it will be in harmony with the provision for systematic instruction, for the pastor, either himself or by an agent, to present such *facts* and *principles* as will increase the religious intelligence of the people, elevate in their minds the great work of Christian beneficence, and bring them more under the influence of appropriate motives to liberality, in behalf of the particular object presented.

Let the solicitors appointed follow the presentation of these claims by *calling from house to house*, giving an opportunity to each individual, children as well as parents, to contribute what they may have appropriated for the object, answering any inquiries, and imparting such additional information as they may be able to give.

Let each one of these solicitors make *a list of the names* of those upon whom he calls, with the several sums contributed by each, to be given to the pastor when the collection is completed. Of the sum total of his collections let him also make a return to a treasurer chosen for the purpose, or to the pastor, by whom the money will be transmitted as soon as practicable to the treasurer of the society for which it is designed.

From the lists returned for the several objects during the year, let the pastor *make an annual*

report to the church and congregation, with such instructions and remarks as the facts in the case may suggest.

Such are the provisions which seem essential to a complete system in beneficence, whether viewed in relation to the wants of the church, or the condition of the world. A system like this imposes a duty upon pastors, upon individual Christians, and upon the church. It secures *instruction and religious information*, thus touching most effectively the springs of beneficent action. It provides for *a stated time*, at which each one shall *apply the rule of proportion*, and lay by in store according to the ability that God giveth. It includes a simple but comprehensive plan for charitable *collections*, and for applying funds to the objects for which they are designed. It is in harmony with the means appointed by the Redeemer for the sanctification of his people, and through them for the salvation of the world. And it may be regarded as a recommendation to this plan, that while it recognizes the instrumentality of the general benevolent organizations, as the applying agents of the church, their influence comes in to confirm, rather than disturb the relations of the pastor to his people, and to impress upon the church its responsibility in regard to its beneficent mission as the great divinely instituted body for the world's conversion.

II. TENDENCIES AND ADVANTAGES OF SYSTEM.

1. System in beneficence *diminishes the expenditure* of benevolent societies for agencies. It is one of the evils resulting from the present unsystematized beneficence of the church, that so much expenditure is necessary for the support of agents for collecting funds. There can be no doubt, that in regard to the principal benevolent organizations, some expenditure of this kind in the past state of things has been necessary. But any considerable appropriation for this purpose has come to be felt by all to be a serious drawback, not only in respect to the funds thus expended, but also from its tendency to occasion distrust in the minds of the less informed and less interested. And it is also felt that the time has come when, by means of system, nearly the whole of this expenditure might be saved. The secretaries and officers could communicate intelligence to the pastors and churches through reports and periodicals. The pastors could diffuse information by the circulation of these publications, and by their own preaching impart such instruction as might secure systematic contributions, and regular remittances to the treasurers of the several societies. This plan *carried out* would be found effective, and would save to the cause of beneficence thousands of dollars.

But would it be *safe* to discontinue all agencies for the collection of funds? This question will find

an answer in the reply to another question. Will the pastors and churches adopt the plan? Will they reduce their beneficence to system, and *carry out* the system? If they will do this, it will be safe. Indeed, there seems scarcely an alternative. The business of raising funds belongs to the churches. The tendency, in the progress of benevolent operations, especially for the last few years, has been to devolve it upon them. It should not be a matter of expense to those organizations whose appropriate work is to apply these charities. This expense is not allowed in other corporate institutions. The stockholders pay in their assessments at their own expense. And thus it should be in furnishing supplies for our benevolent associations; and thus it might be, if Christians would conduct their beneficence as other men do their business, on principles of economy and by system, not allowing "the children of this world" to be "wiser than the children of light."

2. System in beneficence tends to secure a *larger number of contributors*. It has been ascertained, that of the professed Christians who regard one of our oldest and most efficient boards as the organ of their appropriations for foreign missions, but little more than one half contribute any thing to promote the object. Can it be that they feel no interest in a work so plainly enjoined by the Head of the church? Is not the reason rather to be found in the want of instruction respecting their duty, of information con-

cerning the condition of the world, and of a systematic *plan* for securing their coöperation?

The churches which include the largest number of regular contributors, are those on which most preparatory labor has been expended. Let the same labor be bestowed upon other churches, and according to their ability will their members become interested and uniform coworkers with other laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Let them have arrangement, system, *plan* in beneficence, and they will bring forth fruit in this department of duty as certainly, as by similar means they do in other departments. He who performs one religious duty from the right principle, may be led by proper influences to perform any other.

Thus does system in beneficence tend to secure to charitable enterprises a larger number of contributors, and to make their coöperation more regular and effective. It opens fountains of benevolence "in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," and turns intermittent springs into the sources of perennial streams, which shall fertilize the barren wastes, and "make glad the city of our God."

3. System in beneficence tends to secure from each contributor an amount *more proportionate to his ability*. Men sometimes do less than duty requires, for no other reason than that they do not know how *little* they are doing. System would tend to remove this difficulty, and to raise the standard of

their liberality. Those who give at random, and from impulse, frequently imagine that the amount of their charities is greater than it really is. This misapprehension leads them to withhold more than they would otherwise feel at liberty to withhold. System would correct this mistake, and enlarge their donations. Many, also, give little, because they have no plan for giving any thing. The thing wanting is a *purpose*. There may be the elements of beneficence, but they are chaotic. What is needed is development and direction. Temporary ebullitions are not sufficient. Fitful, meteoric bursts of feeling are followed by a darker day of apathy and inaction. Extraordinary, spasmodic exertion, occasioned by the galvanism of large assemblies and exciting speeches, is not the kind of effort which the objects of beneficence demand. There may be excitement awakened—enthusiasm. No vast and noble achievements are secured without this. But how unlike to an elevated moral state are those flashes of benevolent feeling, which for a moment astonish the beholders by their glare, and in a moment more leave them in equal amazement at the darkness which follows.

The excitement which the church needs to bring its beneficence into agreement with its ability, is occasioned by deeply pondering the principles of the gospel, and considering the miseries and the guilt of mankind; by constant contemplation of the character of Jesus, and communion and sympathy with

him. It is enthusiasm generated by the spirit of God in the deep well-springs of the soul, which bears the whole man right on, over all obstacles, in the steady prosecution of the great work of beneficence. It is excitement and enthusiasm which come from the union of the heart and the head, the blending of feeling and intellect in a uniform, growing desire to do good. Where this is, there is little danger that a man's charities will be disproportionate to his means. Every one in whose heart this healthful excitement has been produced, will give "to his power," and be willing even "beyond his power." Yet this is no hot-bed process of forcing unnaturally the benevolent sympathies. Nothing is done that, in seasons of serenest reflection, could occasion a moment's regret. All is calm, quiet, Christian deliberation. Reason approves it, conscience approves it, and the word of God approves it.

But alas, for want of this, how comparatively lean is the charity of the church. She grazes in barren fields. Caprice, accident, self-indulgence, or apathy, often determines the objects and time and amount of charitable contributions. Multitudes of the poor remain still unrelieved, of the ignorant unenlightened, and of the vicious unreclaimed. The field ripens faster than the reapers are ready to gather in the harvest. To millions who need the gospel, and to many who *ask* for it, the church does not give it. The demand vastly outruns the supply. And so it

will be, until the church comes to act, in her beneficence, upon principle and by system. Till then, in her means of fulfilling her high mission, and executing the last charge of her Lord and Master, she will be poor, while her individual members, for all other purposes, may be rich.

4. System in beneficence tends to give to charitable contributions the more scriptural form of *free-will offerings*, and thus to render them more acceptable to the Lord, and a means of greater good to men. The scriptural idea of charity is love, good-will; and when donations to the poor are called charity, it is by metaphor, wherein the action or the gift receives the name of the feeling supposed to have prompted it. But it is often a misnomer to apply such a word to the donations of those esteemed charitable. It is true, that funds which are *relinquished* to the cause of beneficence may be attended with good to the recipients. God may employ them for such a result on the ground of his own right in them. But his ordinary mode of procedure leads to the conviction, that less good can be expected from such donations than from the free-will offerings of affection, while to such reluctant releasers of their property we find no promised reward. And although, in respect to the condition of the poor and the wants of the world, this is a better disposition of their wealth than to hoard or squander it, still they lose the blessing which follows the free-will offering, because, in what they

do, "they sacrifice to their own net, and burn in cense to their own drag."

There are others who have principle and feeling, which are called into action in other departments of duty, but not here. They pray from principle, but *give* grudgingly or of necessity; or they contribute to sustain the gospel at home from love to that gospel, but have made its *diffusion* a subject of so little inquiry and prayer, that the same feeling hardly prompts them to do any thing for extending its blessings. So that often what they are constrained to yield to this object approaches, in their mind, to a kind of religious extortion. Such a man gives as little as he can, consistently with the generally received opinion that all professing Christians should give something. When he can plead inability without incurring the odium of penuriousness, he does it; and when he gives, it is reluctantly, and without faith or charity.

Now, what such a man needs, in order to change his views and his habits of giving, is, together with a larger measure of the divine Spirit, *system*, instruction respecting his duty, and a plan for doing it. Let him be taught whose is the silver and the gold, and why it is intrusted to him; that the great business of a disciple, so far as his property is concerned, is to *give as freely* as he has received. Let his thoughts dwell on the import of that petition which he so often repeats, "Thy kingdom come," until he feels that by

his agency its advent may be hastened. Let him go to the cross and view his possessions *there*, and he will attain a moral elevation unreached before; his eye will catch visions new and strange to him, and he will begin to feel that wealth is power, and that it is a blessed thing to wield that power for the good of his fellow-men. He is now predisposed to look with favor on some *plan* for beneficence which may be submitted to his inspection. He has a new object to live for. New enlargement is given to his mind. New thoughts take possession of him. A new spirit inspires him. His donations, now prompted by love, are set apart as sacred to charity, and this gives to them the form and spirit of free-will offerings. And what is thus offered is accepted; for,

“Where love is, the offering evermore is blest.”

This is the spirit of true beneficence, which leads to the voluntary consecration of one's *entire self*, body, soul, and spirit, “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto the Lord.” It puts charitable donations into the most acceptable and pleasing form. It writes “holiness to the Lord” upon every thing, and converts human instrumentality into divine appliances for the recovery of lost man. How great would be the addition of moral power to the beneficent agencies of the church, if all her bounty came regularly and systematically as *free-will offerings* to the Lord.

5. System in beneficence tends to make free-will offerings the fruit of a more *cheerful* spirit, and renders beneficence a *delight*, as it is a duty. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and he who gives cheerfully finds delight in giving. But seldom does one experience much pleasure in beneficence, who has left it to the contingencies of accident or circumstance. The call may come when he is "unprepared," because his bounty has not been "made up beforehand;" or he may have some sense of duty, but not be sufficiently influenced by the motives for doing good to make it a pleasure.

In order that doing good may be a cheerful and happy work, it should be, in principle at least, a *business*. And in this, as in other things, practice leads to perfection. Exercise gives strength to the benevolent as well as to the social affections. Giving once is seed sown, of which the fruit is a disposition to give still more. Scattering to the poor increases both the desire and joy of scattering. And these will be still more increased by the adoption of a regular, systematic plan for doing it.

By system, preliminaries are arranged, resources provided, and the proportion adjusted and consecrated to the Lord. Nothing remains but to make the appropriation. Such a man has no conflict with covetousness. The battle has been fought, and the victory won. He is impeded by no doubts respecting the worthiness and importance of the object.

He is hindered by no pleas of human imperfection in the workings of accredited disbursing agencies. Nothing causes hesitancy or misgiving. He lays his offering upon the altar with a cheerfulness and delight which he has experienced in no other mode of employing his property, and his only regret is, that it is no larger. This is the pleasure of beneficence, the luxury of doing good—to see joy lighted up in the abodes of poverty and distress, to hear of blessings conferred through Bibles and books distributed, and the gospel proclaimed. It is a pure and permanent delight. When it has passed away as a present consciousness, it continues as a joyful reflection, and a sweetly impelling force to still more enlarged plans of beneficence.

One who thus regulates his charities by plan, is always ready to give when he is called upon, and always cheerful in giving, because he is ready. Far from looking upon the solicitors for benevolent objects as religious mendicants, whom he sends from his door with only a covetous “Be ye warmed and filled,” yet “giveth not those things which are needful,” he deals to them liberally of what he has “laid by him in store,” and to this adds his grateful God-speed to them in so noble a mission. Yea, his benevolence waits not to be asked, but impelling him by a spirit which “seeketh not her own,” he goes forth unurged, unsolicited, to minister to the objects of want and of woe. He cannot keep his Lord’s money long hid in

a napkin. He puts it speedily to the exchangers, that it may gain more for his Master's use. To do good with his property has become his habit. It is his business, his pleasure, his *life*. He has experienced the blessedness of doing good, and now nothing can prevent him from continuing his enjoyment of it. He has discovered the true value of wealth in discovering the right way of using it. He is happiest himself when he does most to make others happy.

Here is the great secret of happiness, the panacea for half of earth's afflictive ills—"to do good, and to communicate." It is the intenseness of desires concentrated upon self which makes the soul a prey to itself, and multiplies its artificial wants and its corroding cares, and deprives it of the joys of life. Let men do good, and they will find happiness. To many of a constitutionally morbid temperament, who are almost strangers to the sweet sunlight of life, or to those over whose spirits the blight of hope has cast a cloud, let it be said,

"Whoso would sun himself in peace, may be seen of her in
deeds of mercy,
When the pale, lean cheek of the destitute is wet with
grateful tears."

Where can the afflicted find consolation so readily as in assuaging the griefs of others? In their missions of mercy, they shall find a blessed ministration made to themselves by the great Comforter.

“Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
 Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold?
 Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief?
 Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold.

* * * * *

The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
 Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
 Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
 And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers.”

6. System in beneficence tends to give *consistency and efficiency* to the character of Christians, by bringing *their life into harmony with their doctrines and professions*. The piety of the church needs consistency and symmetry. And this because it needs system to bring its practice into harmony with its doctrines and professions. There is a glaring contrariety between the standards of the church and its beneficent action. This is observed by the infidel, and is used as a reproach. It is perceived by the pagan as soon as he understands our professed belief and our practical disbelief. “If you Christians have known all these things,” said an inquisitive heathen to the first missionary at Bombay, “and really thought that we heathens must perish unless we believe in your Jesus Christ, how could you leave so great a part of the world for so many generations to go down to perdition, without coming sooner to tell us of this only way in which we can be saved?” How can such most natural questions be answered, except by the admission of great *inconsistency*?

We recognize the justness of the comparison in our Saviour's declaration, that it shall profit a man nothing to "gain the whole world and lose his own soul," and yet we seem almost to have reversed the comparison in our systematic exertions, seeking the world as the infinite good, and passing by the soul as of little worth. We admit that "the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and render it unfruitful," and yet we cultivate these cares and riches, as if they would make our hearts a more fertile soil for the good seed. We profess to give up all for Christ, and yet live much as if we admitted his claim to nothing. We admire the spirit of the martyrs, but have little idea of witnessing for the cause in which they died by the surrender of any considerable amount of our property for its advancement. We profess to have laid up our treasure in heaven, but from all visible appearances, far the greater portion of it is still on the earth. In our creeds, we renounce "the world, the flesh, and the devil;" and in our lives practically renounce our creeds, which contain such a renunciation. We pledge ourselves, in our profession, to entire consecration, and seal our vows in "the cup of blessing," and yet evince by our practical reservations that we do not feel obligated by these vows. Doctrinally, the church admits self-denial as the condition of discipleship; practically, as a body, she construes the condition as consistent with the denial of almost

every thing rather than self. The practical significance of the golden rule with many, is the surfeiting of self from the table of abundance, and the bestowment upon our poor neighbor of the crumbs that fall therefrom. Our great Exemplar was self-denying, and we admit ourselves bound to be like him, yet our course of life is eminently self-indulgent. The church is organized for aggressive movement, but as a body remains stationary. As she strives for more extended empire, she strengthens, and yet she strives not. Inaction enfeebles her, and yet she is comparatively inactive. It is by scattering that she increases, and yet she scatters little. Exporting her treasures enriches her, and yet, for the greater part, she consumes them at home. Keeping her goods is her bane, and yet she keeps them. Hiding her Lord's money, it shall be taken away, and yet she hides it.

Is this consistency? Is there not a sea of apathy lying between our creeds and our conduct, between our doctrines and our deeds? The Saviour and the perishing world are on one side; the body of the church, with its wealth, is on the other. The voice says, "Come over and help us;" but there is no answering movement. There is indeed some stir in the camp of the Lord's hosts, some feeble attempts at crossing—a few bold leaders have seized the ark, and borne it over. But what are these from so many? And these are left to fight almost alone.

What are two or three thousand missionaries for six hundred millions of benighted souls ?

What, now, is needed ? We answer, *consistency*. Nothing but consistency in the life of the church. The fault is not in her creeds. Her organization is in harmony with the letter and spirit of her commission. Her professions and admissions are explicit and full. The fault is in her *practice*—the *life of her members*. In this, she virtually disowns her creeds, repudiates her organization, and contradicts her admissions and professions. Without plan in beneficence, *this contrariety is reduced to system*. Men pursue their various schemes for self-indulgence or self-aggrandizement most systematically. When we contemplate the grandeur of the objects proposed to her, and the comparative pittance which she relinquishes for their accomplishment, we are constrained to say, that she is systematic in *the diversion* of her energies and her possessions from the great end to which her doctrines and her professions direct them—*systematic in self-contradiction*.

Now, let this order of things be reversed—let the system be extended from schemes of selfishness to those of benevolence—let plans be formed for harmonizing the practice of the church with its doctrines and professions—let her charitable contributions be made from an elevated Christian devotion, and be proportionate to the legitimate objects of beneficence, and regularly applied ; and how changed will be the

whole aspect and condition of the church. As she joins with Christ in his great work, he will join with her in a visible success, that will animate her hopes and strengthen her courage for renewed effort and fresh victories. What symmetry and beauty would such a change impart to her—to cease planning for self-indulgence, and to begin to plan for the glory of God. How would she put on her beautiful garments, the fragrance whereof is like the smell of “myrrh and of cassia.” “No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment, she shall condemn.” “She shall break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and her seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

7. System in beneficence tends to raise the church, in her charitable contributions, to a more *elevated Christian devotion*. Whatever shall lead the church to a greater simplicity of purpose, and give her a more single eye to the glory of Christ—whatever shall kindle in her the spirit of entire consecration—whatever shall train her to a higher standard of faith and a more ardent love, and a purer and more constant zeal—whatever shall give an elevated Christian basis to her benevolent efforts, and excite a more intense longing after the coming of Christ’s kingdom, will directly augment her moral power, and give increased efficiency even to the present rate of charitable contributions. God requires the pecuniary resources

of the church, not because he cannot accomplish his plans of redemption without them, but because he sees that it will be for her advantage to do it by means of those resources. His object is to perfect in his people their estrangement from the world and their devotion to him, while he employs this devotion as the means of accomplishing his scheme of redeeming love towards the race.

And in proportion as this spirit of obedience and self-denial and love is increased, however small the amount of charitable donations which it yields, the work of beneficence will be found advancing. If the resources of the church are only as a "handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise," with the devotement of these in the spirit of entire consecration, "the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail," until the whole work be accomplished. He who could feed five thousand with "five loaves and two fishes," can convert the world through the generous, self-denying sacrifices of his people, be they ever so small. On the other hand, the absence of this spirit leaves the church to declension, and the world to perish, although the richest mines in the bosom of the earth be dug up and cast into her treasury. Though we "bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth nothing." Who have accomplished so much for modern missions, in proportion to their means, as the Moravians? When their whole number did not ex-

ceed six hundred persons, a large part of whom were exiles, they began the beneficent work of Christian missions. At the expiration of ten years, they had carried the light of truth to Lapland, Greenland, St. Croix, Surinam, and to the Indians of North America; to Algiers, the cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and Tartary. Whatsoever they possessed which could subserve so sublime an end, they laid upon the altar with a noble and self-denying devotion to Christ; and their success was according to their faith and love. So it was in the first propagation of Christianity. It was not their numbers, nor was it their wealth which gave such signal triumphs to the primitive followers of Christ, but it was their invincible moral courage, their ardent love, their untiring zeal, their pure Christian devotion.

It is the spirit of *entire* consecration which makes the soul rich in all the elements of liberality. It is a simple, confiding trust in Providence, a warm and glowing love to Christ, which, withholding all sacrifices to pride and fashion, and pervading the whole business and arrangements of life with the spirit of supreme devotion to God, produces a degree of beneficence which men who live unto themselves deem extravagant and ruinous. This entire subjection of the soul to Christ forms a style of philanthropists who, in the esteem of many even in the church, are so far beyond the requirements of reason and Scripture, that their influence is lost as examples, and

they are considered as fit only for ridicule or admiration. And this, because the spirit of the world has crept into and corrupted the church. Her beneficence is meagre, and upon low and earthly principles. Her light is dim. Her strength is weakness. Her enemies exult over her. Feebly does she fulfil her mission to the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious at home. Still more feebly does she execute her commission to the Pagan, the Mohammedan, and the Jew abroad. Nothing but supreme devotion to Christ will restore her beneficent power, and open fountains of benevolence, and send forth streams, "to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth."

Urgent as are the calls for funds from the wastepieces of our own country and from heathen lands, there is a greater urgency that the whole subject of beneficence be canvassed and systematized, and placed on a higher and broader ground of Christian principle and Christian devotion. This done, the requisite amount of contributions will be made sure, and the condition of their greatest efficacy will be complied with.

The very attempt to form a system will give a new impulse and elevation to all the beneficent movements of the church. And the incorporating in a *plan*, of such influences as led to its formation, will give them permanency as causes, of which still other advantages will be the legitimate effects. The plan

has given these influences prominence, as elements of a man's daily life. They interweave themselves in all his thoughts and business. What was low in the church would thus be raised up; what was weak, would be made strong; what was wavering, would be confirmed, and her beneficent career become like the rising light, "shining more and more unto the perfect day."

"Oh, then, let her scatter broadcast of her seed,
Rich in prayer, and in alms, and in every good deed,
Till her seed-grain is garnered in ripe golden sheaves,
And her guerdon of glory from Christ she receives."

8. System in beneficence tends to promote *union among Christians of different denominations*, and thus to increase the moral power of the whole church for the good of the world. The ground of hope that the adoption of system in beneficence would increase the spirit of union among the several denominations is, that it presents a common *object* to be accomplished, and a common *plan* for accomplishing it. How might all distinctions of name and sect be blended in the great work of blessing the world, like the primary colors in the beams of light, that gladden the earth and make it fruitful. Or, at least, how might they be so harmonized, like these same colors set in the resplendent arch of glory which spans the darkened heaven, as to betoken that the wrathful storms are past, and to give promise of perpetual peace. And this hope is the greater, in-

asmuch as the main object is, not to unite the church, but by new conquests to *enlarge* it—not to form a new association, but to perpetuate and make universal an old one. It is not so much to harmonize creeds, as to give system and consistency and efficiency to *practice*. However much may be gained in the work of uniting the church by discussions and conferences and alliances, it will readily be admitted that much more may be done by leading the followers of Christ to a self-denying, systematic effort for the conversion of the world.

It is to *action*, rather than discussion, that we look with most sanguine expectations for the union of the church. By the former, good men will work themselves, in a common cause, into greater doctrinal or ecclesiastical proximity, while, by the latter, they may reason and resolve themselves into a wider separation. The one places them upon their points of difference. Passion and self-interest, always irrelevant in the search after truth, creep in and blind the eye, and inflame the zeal for fortifying and defending those points. The other sets them upon their points of agreement, and all their ardor of engagement deepens their sense of the absolute and relative importance of these points. Each will rejoice in the fruits of the labor of all, as ripened by the same divine influence, and gathered from the same common field. “Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly

upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together." A common cause gives them common sympathies and bonds of attachment. By engaging in earnest, and upon system, in the great work of doing good, the whole church is pervaded by one spirit, the spirit of Christian beneficence, influenced by one motive, elevated by one sentiment, the tendency of all which is to overpower sectarian peculiarities, and melt the whole company of disciples into one mass, and mould them after one divine likeness. Instead of repelling the world by her frowning battlements reared for intestine warfare, the church, united in her separate sections, like the several tribes of Israel in one common phalanx, and moving at the sound of the same "silver trumpet," towards the same land of promise, would attract and subdue the world.

By what name soever you may call yourself, if you are a child of God, the points on which you differ from your brethren are probably fewer, and certainly less important, than those in which you agree with them. The views and feelings which characterize both you and them, as the friends of God and of man, are the *catholic* views and feelings—the only bond of a common fellowship among all the regenerate and holy on earth and in heaven. These constitute precisely that character which qualifies all Christians to engage in the work of beneficence with the highest degree of success, and which, the more earnestly and

systematically that work be prosecuted, assumes more and more the ascendancy over all dividing lines and enfeebling agencies. This would give to the church a union, and a power and stability from union, to which she is now a stranger. The preponderating force would be a *centripetal* force. The attraction would be to a common centre, by a common law of affinity. With what deep grief did the devoted Martyn, an attached member of the church of England, hear, while at Aldeen, of an order of the British government, to prevent his Baptist brethren from preaching and distributing tracts. "So perplexed and excited was he by the intelligence," says his biographer, "that it even deprived him of sleep. And he spoke afterwards with so much vehemence against the measures of government, as upon reflection, to afford him matter of self-condemnation." "How small and unimportant," exclaims this heroic servant of God, in view of the combined powers of evil that oppose the progress of the church in heathen lands—" *how small and unimportant are the hair-splitting disputes of the blessed people at home, compared with the formidable agents of the devil, with whom we have to combat here.*"

We would not affirm, that all differences of opinion and denominational distinctions would necessarily disappear, even in the most systematic and successful prosecution of the work of beneficence. We only say, that the elements of system are the ele-

ments of success, and that these, combining a rule that is safe with motives that are sufficient, are common to all the followers of Christ. We say, "the field is the world," the harvest is already ripe, the command is, "Go, work in my vineyard." The world is to be saved by the inculcation of those essential doctrines on which the disciples of Christ are *agreed*. Christianity is, therefore, incomparably better than the peculiarities of any *sect* of Christians. Let it be remembered, that our Saviour's last command to the church is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and let her begin this work in earnest and upon system, and strifes will cease. Discordant tempers and conflicting interests will be harmonized in hearts fused into one common constraining love, by the ardor of their zeal in the accomplishment of one common, sublime end. Let the church task herself to minister to the poor and distressed, to give the word of God free course in every language and dialect under heaven, to place Bunyan's Dream in the hand of every pilgrim to the "celestial city," and to make Doddridge and Baxter as living preachers in the tent of the Arab, the hovel of the Hindoo, the hut of the Hottentot, the wigwam of the Indian—in every human habitation setting forth the simple power of the cross—grace, in its beginning and continuance in the soul, the same in every age and every clime, and its consummation in "the saints' everlasting

rest." Let the church begin and continue this work systematically till it is completed, and in the symmetry and consistency and beauty and power acquired in such a work, let those who together have achieved such victories, return and strive and dispute with and malign each other, *if they can*. Their differences would all disappear in their love and labor for the common cause, or, by general consent, would be allowed to cause no unhallowed division among brethren on earth, and would be left to be lost in the harmonies of heaven.

We have now contemplated beneficence in its most prominent aspects, as Christian, proportionate, and systematic. We have analyzed it in relation to its *distinguishing spirit*, in the elements or *motives* which give to it its moral character. We have considered it in the *degree of effort* which each one is called upon to make, as indicated by the *wants of the world*, the *instrumentality* for supplying those wants, and the *ability* of each one to aid in applying that instrumentality. We have surveyed it in respect to the *presentation* of its appropriate motives, and the *plan* for carrying its principles into most *effective* operation. We have seen the tendency of system in beneficence to *diminish the expenditures* of benevolent societies, and enable them to prosecute their work on more *effective plans*; to *enlarge the number* of contributors to benevolent objects; to give to their

contributions greater *regularity*; to make them more *proportionate* to each man's ability; to impart to them the more acceptable form of *free-will offerings*, thus increasing their moral value; to render beneficence a *delight*, by causing it to flow from a more *cheerful spirit*; to give increased *consistency* to Christian character; to raise the benevolent action of the church to a more *elevated Christian devotion*; and to promote *union among Christian denominations*, thus bringing the *whole united church* into active coöperation with Jehovah in the redemption of the world.

CONCLUSION.

We hardly need say, that in the work of reducing beneficence to system in the church, and prosecuting it vigorously, more, under God, depends upon *pastors*, than upon any other class. They are the regularly constituted leaders of the flock. Their ordination is to this end. Their calling is to explain and enforce the doctrines of the gospel, and to develope and illustrate the spirit of that gospel, in its beneficent bearings upon the church and the world. Christianity is a mine of the richest ore. Who shall enter it as explorers, bring out its precious treasures, and apply them for the enriching of the church, for the good of the world, and for the glory of God, if

they do not? "It depends upon us," says a distinguished pastor to his brethren, with respect to the great work of beneficence—"it depends upon us mainly, under God, whether the blessing shall ooze and trickle upon the world in scanty or occasional drops, or whether it shall flow in mighty streams. We are icebergs to the cause, or central fires in the midst of our population."

All things conspire at the present period to call out the beneficent power of the gospel, and to awaken its benevolent spirit in the hearts of God's people, for the salvation of the world. The prophecies and promises and providence of God bear directly and powerfully on the church, to arouse it to its appropriate work of doing good. Who shall interpret these to her, if her ministers do not? Who stand on such vantage ground as they, for bringing her to feel her obligations, and discern her privileges? The benevolent habits of her members need to be formed upon higher principles, and their beneficent action to be called forth by purer and more elevated motives. Who can be instrumental in accomplishing this, if they cannot? Who will lead the disciples to walk in the garden with their divine Master, and teach them to view their possessions there; or take them to the sacred mount, where all selfish considerations are lost in the love of the cross: who will do this, if they do not?

And if it is the duty of the shepherd to lead, is it

not the duty of the *flock* to follow? If he must inculcate the doctrine of beneficence, should they not cherish and exemplify its spirit? It is the spirit of Christ, and it flows out from him to the hearts of all his followers. And from them it should go forth, in ministries of love to the ignorant and suffering and guilty of earth's teeming population. For the diffusion of this spirit, the extension of Christ's kingdom, the church was constituted, and in this it is "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth." But it is only as ye Christians who compose this church, are like your divine Exemplar—only as the mind that was in him is also in you—only as ye commune with him in the garden, and have sympathy with him on the cross, that these his declarations can be verified. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, *ye have done it unto me.*"

"A poor wayfaring man of grief
 Hath often met me on my way,
 Who sued so humbly for relief,
 That I could never say him nay:
 I had not power to ask his name,
 Whither he went, or whence he came;
 Yet there was something in his eye
 That won my love—I know not why.

“Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered—not a word he spake—
Just perishing for want of bread.

I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,
And ate, but gave me part again :
Mine was an angel’s portion then,
And while I fed with eager haste,
The crust was manna to my taste.

“I spied him where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone :
The heedless water mocked his thirst;
He heard it, saw it hurrying on.

I ran and raised the sufferer up—
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,
Dipt and returned it running o’er;
I drank, and never thirsted more.

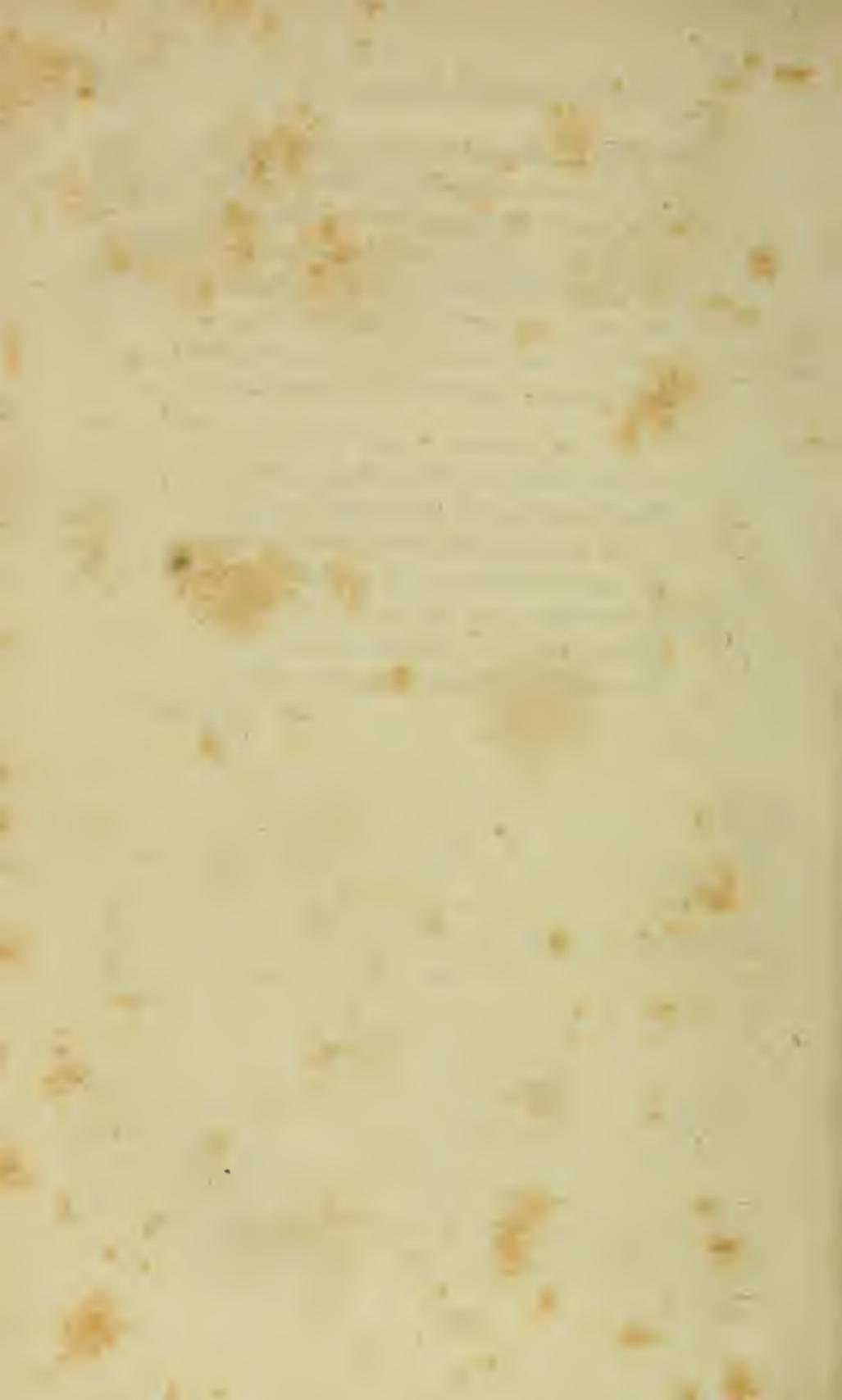
“’Twas night, the floods were out, it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof :
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
I laid him on my couch to rest,
Then made the earth my bed, and seemed
In Eden’s garden, while I dreamed.

“Stript, wounded, beaten nigh to death,
I found him by the highway side;
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment : he was healed.
I had myself a wound concealed,
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

“In prison I saw him next; condemned
To meet a traitor’s doom at morn:
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him ’midst shame and scorn.
My friendship’s utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, ‘I will’—

“Then in a moment to my view,
The stranger darted from disguise,
The tokens in his hands I knew—
My *Saviour* stood before mine eyes.
He spoke, and my poor name he named:
‘Of me thou hast not been ashamed,
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou didst them unto me.’”

MONTGOMERY.



ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE;

OR,

THE ADVANTAGES OF DETERMINING BEFOREHAND ON A PROPORTION OF INCOME TO BE STATEDLY SET APART, "AS GOD SHALL PROSPER US."

MR. NATHANAEL RIPLEY COBB, an exemplary young merchant connected with the Baptist church in Boston, at the age of twenty-three drew up and subscribed the following covenant:

"By the grace of God, I will never be worth more than \$50,000.

"By the grace of God, I will give one fourth of the net profits of my business to charitable and religious uses.

"If I am ever worth \$20,000, I will give one half of my net profits; and if I am ever worth \$30,000, I will give three fourths; and the whole, after \$50,000. So help me God, or give to a more faithful steward, and set me aside.

"N. R. COBB."

"November, 1821."

To this covenant Mr. Cobb adhered with conscientious fidelity till he had acquired \$50,000, after which he gave all his profits. On his death-bed he said to a friend, "By the grace of God—nothing else—by the grace of God, I have been enabled, under the influence of these resolutions, to give away more than \$40,000. How good the Lord has been to me."

SABBATH APPROPRIATIONS.—An intelligent friend finds satisfaction and benefit in a literal compliance with the divine injunction, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." At the time of his private devotion every Sabbath evening, he sets apart from the receipts of the week a portion for his charity fund; or if at any time he has not the money, he

credits the sum on a benevolent account. As calls are presented, he draws from this fund; and if an urgent call at any time requires more than he has thus set apart, he charges the balance on his benevolent account, to be replaced from future incomes. Thus, his contributions are identified with his own enjoyment of religion and growth in grace; he gives "not grudgingly," but of "a willing mind;" applications for charity are met with pleasure; and he feels that in all he receives and expends, he is acting as a steward of God.

A SHOEMAKER is mentioned in an Episcopal periodical at Burlington, New Jersey, whose benevolence was known to be large for one in his circumstances. Being asked how he contrived to give so much, he replied, that it was easily done by obeying St. Paul's precept in 1 Cor. 16 : 2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." "I earn," said he, "one day with another, about a dollar a day, and I can without inconvenience to myself or family lay by five cents of this sum for charitable purposes; the amount is thirty cents a week. My wife takes in sewing and washing, and earns something like two dollars a week, and she lays by ten cents of that. My children each of them earn a shilling or two, and are glad to contribute their penny; so that altogether we *lay by us in store* forty cents a week. And if we have been unusually prospered, we contribute something more. The weekly amount is deposited every Sunday morning in a box kept for that purpose, and reserved for future use. Thus, by these small earnings, we have learned, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The yearly amount saved in this way is about *twenty-five dollars*; and I distribute this among the various benevolent societies, according to the best of my judgment."

The Rev. JOHN WESLEY, "when his income was £30 a year, lived on £28 and gave away £2. The next year his income was £60, and still living on £28, he had £32 to give. The fourth year raised his income to £120, and steadfast to his plan, the poor got £92."

A MERCHANT, in answer to inquiries, gave the following statement: "After my conversion my gifts were much from impulse, and I was often troubled to know my duty. A few

years more of untiring activity, and I found myself without property or capital. It was at this time, that in consecrating my life anew to God, aware of the ensnaring influence of riches and the necessity of deciding on a plan of charity before wealth should bias my judgment, I adopted the following system.

"I decided to balance my accounts, as nearly as I could, every month; and reserving such portion of profits as might appear adequate to cover probable losses, to lay aside, by entry on a benevolent account, *one tenth* of the remaining profits, great or small, as a fund for benevolent expenditure. I further determined, that if at any time my net profits, that is, profits from which clerk hire and store expenses had been deducted, should exceed \$500 in a month, I would give twelve and a half per cent.; if over \$700, fifteen per cent.; if over \$900, seventeen and a half per cent.; if over \$1,100, twenty per cent.; if over \$1,300, twenty-two and a half per cent.; thus increasing the proportion on the whole, as God should prosper, until, at \$1,500, I should give twenty-five per cent., or \$375 a month. As capital was of the utmost importance to insure my success in business, I decided not to increase the foregoing scale until I had acquired a certain capital, after which I would give *one quarter* of all net profits, great or small; and on the acquisition of another certain amount of capital I decided to give *half*, and on acquiring what I determined would be a full sufficiency of capital, then to give *the whole* of my net profits.

"Since adopting this plan, I have been no longer perplexed with doubts about giving; and there is no one I meet with more cheerfulness than the servant of Christ calling for aid. It is now several years since I adopted this plan, and under it I have acquired a handsome capital, and have been prospered beyond my most sanguine expectations. Although constantly giving, I have never yet touched the bottom of my fund, and have repeatedly been surprised to find what large drafts it would bear.

"This system has been of vast advantage to me, enabling me to feel that my life is directly employed for God. It has tended to increase my faith, and led me to look forward with greater joy towards my heavenly home. It has afforded me great happiness in enabling me to portion out the Lord's money, and has enlisted my mind more in the progress of

Christ's cause. Happy privilege, which the humblest may enjoy, of thus associating the common labors of life with the grateful service of the Saviour, and of making that which naturally leads the heart *from* God, subserve the highest spiritual good.

"This system has saved me from commercial dangers, by leading me to simplify business and avoid extensive credits. It has made me a better merchant; for the monthly pecuniary observations which I have been wont to take, though often quite laborious, have brought me to a better knowledge of the state of my affairs, and led me to be more cautious and prudent than I otherwise should have been. I believe this system tends to enlarge the Christian's views, increase his disinterestedness, and lead him to shun the tricks of trade. My own observation also confirms the belief, that even warm-hearted Christians *must determine beforehand* on the system they will adopt, if they would secure the benefits of the gospel plan, 1 Cor. 16 : 1, 2, to themselves or the cause of Christ.

"Whether I succeed as well in future, I leave entirely to God, knowing that he often blesses by adversity; but I am fully determined to maintain a system which thus far has been a great blessing to me."

This merchant believes that a plan like the following, *of determining beforehand to give stately in proportion to income*, might be adopted by every Christian with great benefit to himself and the cause of Christ.

PLEDGE, OR COVENANT.

Believing that system in alms-giving is needed by the church; that it accords with the teachings of Scripture, tends to growth in grace, and is pleasing to God; I engage that I will, either in writing or otherwise, determine on some proportion or percentage of the income God in his providence shall give me, which I will, on the first day of every week or month, or at such other stated periods as I shall designate, sacredly set apart as a fund for charity, either in money or other materials, or by entering it on a benevolent account, to be disbursed by me from time to time, according as the various objects of benevolence shall seem to require.



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