

THE GOSPEL SELF-SUPPORTING.

BY
REV. ALEX. L. HOGSHEAD,
ABINGDON, VIRGINIA,

WITH AN APPENDIX

BY
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PREFACE.

The views presented in this little volume, are the conclusions arrived at after much anxious and prayerful study.—The experience and observation of twenty five years in the ministerial work produced an increasing conviction in the mind of the author, that there was some serious defect in the prevailing modes of providing for the support of the Ministry, and for the spread of the gospel. For a long time he was disposed to attribute the acknowledged inefficiency of these modes, to defects in practice rather than in principle. Within the last three years, a combination of influences, not necessary here to detail, constrained the author to resort to the Inspired word, with diligent and prayerful research, to learn what provision God has made for the work and advancement of his Church. The further that research was carried, the stronger grew the conviction that the modes in common use for raising material means for religious purposes, do not accord with the mode provided and commanded by the Head of the Church. To point out briefly the chief errors into which the Church has fallen in this department of her work, and to set forth the true teachings of the scriptures on this subject, has been the honest and earnest aim in this discussion. It is committed to the public, and especially to God's ministers and people, respectfully soliciting a patient perusal and a candid comparison of the views presented, with the teachings of "Holy Writ." "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

That this humble effort may excite abler pens to a more thorough illucidation of this subject, and may effect something in leading God's people to "Honor Him with their substance," and thereby to promote their own faith, sanctification and comfort, is the prevailing desire and sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

ABINGDON, *Jan. 1873.*

P. S. Since the above was written, Rev. J. W. PRATT, D. D. has kindly consented to append to this little work his series of articles recently published in the "Central Presbyterian," on "The duty of Christians in regard to giving." Many good people will be gratified to have these valuable articles put before the christian public in a more accessible and permanent form. The vigor with which Dr. Pratt wields the pen in the defence of the truth is well known.— In a very brief space, with a masterly hand, he has unmasked and exposed long existing errors, and with unsurpassed clearness and point, has set forth the divine teachings on this important question.

Let every honest inquirer after the truth read this discussion with candor and prayerfulness; and may the Spirit of grace lead the reader to the understanding, acceptance and practice of the truth. Then will christian experience accord with and exemplify the truth of our Lord's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

A. L. H.

July, 1873.

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ERRATA.

- Page 41, *to* at the beginning of 12th line should be at the beginning of 14th line.
- Page 49, line 8 from bottom, for *obligations* read *oblations*.
- “ 53, line 11 from bottom, for *gratified* read *grateful*.
- “ 138, line 3 from top, for *treasure* read *treason*.
- “ 173, line 6 from top, for *stranger* read *stronger*.
- “ 179, last line, the word *it* should be omitted after *support*.
- “ 195, line 3 from top, for *many* read *money*.

THE GOSPEL SELF-SUPPORTING.

CHAPTER I.

GOD'S CHURCH AND WORSHIP.

"THE Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth"—a body divinely organized to disseminate the revealed will of God, and her members to be "living epistles known and read of all men;" and thereby to promote her own extension, the sanctification of her members, and the glory of Christ.

God, as the Sovereign and Redeemer of his people, claims their worship and service. The acts of worship prescribed, are not arbitrary, but appropriately grow out of the relations in which his people stand to Him. Prominent among these are prayer, praise and material offerings. Prayer is the acknowledgement of our dependence, unworthiness and wants, and the expression of our desire and thankfulness for salvation and every blessing.—Praise is the recognition and adoration of God's perfection and thankfulness for his mercies. Offerings were originally of two kinds. First, the confession of sin and the necessity of an atonement.

Second, the acknowledgement of God's ownership in us and our property, and hence of dependence and obligation, and the expression of faith, love and gratitude for material as well as spiritual blessings.

The sin offerings, bloody sacrifices, being typical, ceased when no more needed, after Christ the antitype offered himself a sacrifice for sin. The unbloody offerings, a numerous class, being purely devotional, are of perpetual obligation, because the relations that make them necessary cease not in this life. This act of worship comprehends the elements of prayer and praise, and embraces something more, viz; a distinct, substantial acknowledgement of God's ownership in us and our property. We have physical as well as spiritual natures, physical as well as spiritual blessings, and God demands physical as well as spiritual worship.

Material offerings were the first form of worship prescribed, beginning in the family of Adam and for many centuries the only act of worship mentioned. Devotional offerings have never been dispensed with, but only modified to suit the changing phases of the church. Obviously they cannot be dispensed with or neglected without irreparable damage to the best interests of God's people, both temporal and spiritual. They are the antidote of covetousness, a sin to which God's people are constantly liable. God's favor has ever attended the

faithful observance of this duty, his withering frown its neglect. "God's glory and our nature render outward and formal expression necessary and such is as distinctly required as the inward feeling. Nor are the forms optional with us. Too much depends on the character of these forms, both as to their fitness to express and cultivate heartfelt devotion, and as to their appropriateness to God's nature, to justify the leaving of such a question to our choice. With all the restrictions which God has imposed, man has continually sought to degrade and corrupt his worship. But whatever may be the grounds upon which God has done it, it is perfectly clear that he has explicitly prescribed the forms in which he is to be worshiped. These include *praise*, by which, in sacred song and otherwise, his glorious attributes, word and works, are celebrated; confession of *sin*, in acknowledgement of his authority over us as Ruler and Judge; *prayer*, by which we make known our wants to him and supplicate their supply; and also the *offering* to him of *due parts of our material substance*. Here offerings are tributes to him as Creator, Proprietor, Preserver and Benefactor, we thereby confess him as the author and owner of all we have, our entire dependence on him, and our fealty to him as our Lord. The fitness of this is apparent to all."—(Dr. C. A. Stillman, *S. Pres. Review*, Oct, 1870.)

While God requires act of worship by material offerings as growing out of the relations in which his people stand to him, and demanded by his honor and their souls interests; he also finds a place in the practical work of the church, for the consumption of the substance his worship produces. Thus in his wisdom securing from this service a two-fold benefit—after paying honor to him and securing blessing to the worshiper, the product of his worship supplies the need for material means in the work of the church. Thus exhibiting the most beautiful symmetry, harmony and completeness in the workings of the relations of God's people to him, and in the organization of his church and worship.

“Ordinances are to be observed, the object and manner of their observance unfolded. Zion's King has not left these things to chance or caprice. His was the wisdom that was fully competent to select the best means and make all necessary appointments to accomplish the object proposed.

It were a specimen of arrogance for human wisdom to imagine that it could improve on his appointments; equally reprehensible to suppose that he left out any appointments that could impart efficiency.” (*Rev. J. A. Smylie, S. Pres. Review, January, 1871.*)

A pamphlet gotten up for circulation in the Northern Presbyterian church, on the subject of “Ministerial Relief,” (Document No. 5,) conducts the whole discussion upon an unscriptural premise. This document says:

"The *need* of a more comprehensive and efficient mode of ministerial Relief than any hitherto devised, begins to be admitted by all who have intelligently considered the subject. The radical defect and utter insufficiency of existing theories and schemes, are apparent at a glance. In this advanced stage of the science of applied christianity, there is not a single branch of the church that has taken hold of this matter in a scientific way, or put in operation a system worthy of the object or worthy of the age."

This is strange and startling language to come from christian men who profess to take "the word of God as their rule of faith and practice"—confessedly abandoning the inspired teachings as an insufficient guide, and, "in this *advanced stage of the science of applied Christianity,*" undertaking to "*devise* a more comprehensive mode" than God has provided! Alas! the chief advancement of this "applied christianity" is in "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," and "opposition of science, falsely so called."

We encounter in this remarkable document the expressions, "scientific way," "all prudent business men," "the only true policy," "simple business basis," "sound business principles," "benevolent business agency," and finally "a society for promoting Life Insurance among the clergy," until the heart sickens with the contemplation of this man exalting man and God dishonoring "*business.*"

This document, however, with much erroneous

rubbish, mingles some germs of truth. It says with truth: "The priesthood as a distinct *order* was specially and permanently provided for. * * * The withholding of any part of the required provision, the Lord regarded and punished as a sin against his own person." And yet it is immediately after conceded that "there is no special legislation in regard to the form or extent or conditions for the maintenance of the christian clergy." "And what is still more remarkable, quotes as a text to sustain this position, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel." Thus using the very words of Paul and Christ to sustain the *denial* of the very fact these words distinctly *affirm*.

CHAPTER II.

MOSES ENDORSED BY PAUL AND CHRIST.

Paul gives the plan (1 Cor. 9: 7-14) which Christ ordained for the support of his ministers.

It seems that some of the Corinthians were disposed to discredit Paul's apostolic authority; and one plea urged against him was, that he did not claim his temporal support from the gospel as the other apostles. To meet this charge Paul

swered that he did not deny or relinquish his *right* to a support from the gospel, but for special reasons chose not to avail himself of that right among them; and to vindicate himself, and correct their misapprehension, he proceeded to lay before them the most complete argument and the most distinct plan for the support of the gospel ministry found in the New Testament.

The argument begins with the 7th verse.

“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?” The apostle takes as a parallel, in one particular, of the gospel minister, the case of a soldier. It was well known that the business of the soldier precluded him from providing for himself. To require him to do this would be to compel him to steal and rob. He could not “go a warfare at *his own charges*.” But the apostle carefully avoids alluding to the *way* the soldier was supported, for that did not suit his purpose. Having settled the single point, that the gospel minister, like the soldier, could not “go a warfare at *his own charges*,” he proceeds to show in what way his maintenance is provided.

“Who planteth a vinyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof?” Paul does not say the cultivator of the vinyard is paid for his labour or provided for by an employer. He excludes the idea of stipulated wages and shows a different arrangement;

"eateth of the fruit thereof," partakes of what his labor produces. This is the distinct idea in every illustration the apostle uses. "Who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk thereof?" The shepherd is not paid stipulated wages, but derives his living from the natural product of the object of his care, the flock. A reliable writer on this subject, (Rosenmüller) says, "The wages of the shepherds in the East do not consist of ready money, but they have the tenth part of the milk and the lambs, which is their whole wages."

"Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?" Paul here appeals to the law of Moses. He did not regard the law of Moses that provided for the maintenance of God's ministers as obsolete. This was not a ceremonial or typical rite that had passed away, but it was a *moral law*, founded upon permanent relations and principles.

"For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." This law does not say, 'you shall *feed* the ox in consideration of his labor,' but you shall not *muzzle* him—shall not restrain him from partaking of the product of his work. He has cultivated and trodden out the corn, he shall eat of it. Now it is manifestly implied that the *corn is there as the product of his work*. If he finds no corn to eat, his work has been unproductive. Hence if the

gospel minister lacks corn, it is because the gospel is unproductive.

Paul proceeds; "Doth God take care for oxen?" Did God establish this important regulation merely out of regard to oxen? "Or saith he is it altogether for our sakes? *For our sakes no doubt this is written.*" This arrangement in the law of Moses has not passed away. "For our sakes it is written." "That he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." a man plows that he may raise a crop, and threshes it that he may eat of it—"that he may be partaker of his hope"—that he may eat the product of his work.

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Paul here and in other epistles uses the terms "sowing and reaping," to express the relation between preaching the gospel and living of the gospel. The minister's living stands to his preaching as reaping does to sowing. The one is the legitimate result of the other. The reaping is the fruit of the sowing. Paul claims for the ministers of Christ the right to live of the fruit the gospel they preach legitimately produces.

After reiterating (in verse 12) his own right equally with, if not beyond the other apostles to claim a support, and giving a special reason in his

own case for not using this right, he resumes and concludes his argument by again appealing to the law of Moses, in confirmation of the views he had just expressed, and stating that Christ had ordained that his ministers should derive their living in the same way in which the ministers of religion in the Jewish church were supported.

“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live (feed) of the things of the temple, and they that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?” The Levites and Priests here referred to, lived of the tithes and other offerings which God required of his people and that came into his house as offerings to *him* in the regular business of his service and worship. “All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, *is the-Lord's*; it is *holy to the Lord*; and concerning the tithes of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to the Lord.” Lev. 27: 30, 32. “Behold *I* have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance for their services which they serve.” Num. 18: 21. “*I* have given it (the meat offering) unto them (the Priests) for their portion of my offerings made by fire,” Lev. 6: 17. “They shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance.” Deut. 18: 1.

The priests were “partakers with the altar.”—

They shared with the altar in the consumption of God's offerings. The altar consumes a part and the priests a part. "For the wave breast and heave shoulder, have I taken of the children of Isreal from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute forever." Lev. 7: 34.

These passages contain the law to which Paul called attention in the words, "Do ye not know &c." After thus referring the Corinthians to this law, he adds, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel shall live of the gospel." The words, "Even so hath the Lord ordained," express Christ's positive appointment, in reference to the christian ministry, of the substantial features and principles of the old divine law. God's ministers under the old dispensation were not *employed* nor *paid* by the people, but derived their living by God's appointment from the holy offerings made to him, in their regular service and worship. The people made their offerings to God, not to the minister. These offerings were "*holy to the Lord.*" Hence the Jewish ministers did not live on what belonged to the people, but what had passed out of their hands and belonged to God. "*Holy to the Lord.*" "His inheritance." This was a cardinal feature, the very core of the law, the scrupulous observance of which God rigidly enfor-

ced, and the neglect of which he charged as robbing Him.

Now when Christ referred to the old divine law and "ordained even so," he manifestly did not mean to annul the very core of that law and ordain something that was not in that law, and forbidden by it. His words can mean nothing less than that as God's ministers under the old dispensation lived of the holy offerings made to Him—the product of his service and worship; so Christ's ministers shall live of the holy offerings made to Him—the product of the gospel service and worship. Offerings are therefore an essential part of the gospel services, gospel worship. Christ did not ordain that they who preach the gospel shall be paid for their services, or supported by the people. But they "*shall live of the gospel,*" of that which the gospel legitimately produces, as the vine produces the grape, and the flock produces milk. Material offerings to God are legitimate gospel fruit, and therefore "*the gospel.*" Christ meant literally and exactly what he said, "*shall live of the gospel.*"—shall eat gospel fruit. His ministers are his servants, not the people's, and He provides for them and engages to feed them out of his own gospel store-house.

The leading point in this whole argument of the apostle is to show that the gospel, as a living vine, when rightly cultivated, produces its own fruits to

supply its own wants. The gospel is a *self-supporting* institution. It does not need any humanly devised "schemes" to supplement it, or as a substitute for it. No human machinery, or pledges, or contracts, are needed to produce this fruit, or pluck it from the vine. It ripens and falls of the gospel's inherent power. It only needs to be gathered and used.

This argument of the apostle contains the doctrine which is the corner-stone upon which the whole fabric of gospel giving is built.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S LAW IGNORED AND REVERSED BY THE CHURCH.

If we have rightly interpreted the teachings of Paul and Christ, we are forced to the conclusion that the plans now prevalent for the support of the gospel are not what Christ meant by, "shall live of the gospel," and our plans not being his, accounts for their inefficiency.

To secure the performance of any work, there must be an adequate motive. The motives in religious duties are *obligation, love and interest*. These are the motives that impel to religious giving. 1st

our obligation and love to God. 2nd, our temporal, spiritual and eternal interest. 3rd, our love to our fellow men and regard for their good.

The relative importance and strength of these motives stand in the order we have numbered them. But the custom of the Church at this day reverses the order of these motives. That which is last and weakest is put first, viz: the need of means for the work of the Church, and the more powerful motives of obligation to God, and the good of the giver, are virtually ignored in inculcating the duty of religious giving. The absence of the chief and most powerful motives necessarily causes the defective performance, if not the total failure of the duty.

In the article of Dr. Stillman, from which we have quoted, on the theme, "Giving, an essential part of true piety," the author defines his first head in the words, "Giving to God's cause is an act of divine worship." This sentence, we believe, expresses a fallacy and an error to which may be traced much of the delinquency in this duty that prevails in the church.

Giving to *God* is truly an act of divine worship. But giving to "*God's cause*," in the common acceptance, and as commonly practiced, we take leave to say, is not an act of divine worship. Any one who will carefully analyze the two acts and their respective motives will see that they are far from being

identical. The author himself says, "The worship of God, in its essence, is the rendering to him the due homage of the heart." "If it be not of the nature of a gift to God, then it forms no part of divine worship, and ought to have no place in the service of the sanctuary." "Humanity, sympathy, generosity, are not religion, unless our charities to man are dictated by piety toward God, they are not approved by God even as charities." Here the author admits that giving to the support of the gospel, or any charitable giving that is "not of the nature of a gift to God," "forms no part of divine worship."

The scriptures plainly teach that the relations between God and his people are closer and stronger than those between man and man. Our relations and duties to our fellow men grow out of our relations and duties to God. We are all his creatures in common. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loves his brother also." "The love of man springs out of love of God.'

The chief end of every religious duty is the fulfillment of an obligation to God. As the scriptures

make giving a religious duty it must be in response to an obligation to God and therefore giving to God. God does not require us to give, as is commonly held, mainly because the work of the church, or the poor need it. This view presents the wants of a third party or object as the chief motive in giving, and practically loses sight of the direct claim of God upon the giver, and makes the command to give an arbitrary requirement mainly for the benefit of others. It reverses the divine arrangement, and makes man's wants the measure of God's claim, instead of God's claim the measure and supply of man's wants.

God required gifts to him before there was any gospel to support or poor to relieve, even in the family of Adam.

The people in their common sense logic, when asked to give to "God's cause," regard it as giving to *man's cause*, for it is for man's benefit, and his need is the motive urged. They regard it the preacher's cause, the church's cause, the heathen's cause, the poor's cause. Dr. Stillman appropriately says:

"It is all important to put this matter on its true footing. While men regard religious giving as mere charity, and thus appealing to a mere emotional sentiment, not only will they give far less than they ought, but their gifts will entirely fail of divine acceptance."

Here the inadequacy of the common motive is conceded, and yet this author fails to "put this matter on its true footing," by using the terms, "giving to God's cause," and "giving to God" as synonymous terms, and by another even more obvious error, which we will notice hereafter.

The Old and New Testaments teach the same doctrine on this subject. God has not changed the relation his people stand to him in this matter from the beginning. We have language in the Old Testament in reference to supporting the officers of the church as strong as that of the New Testament. "The priests, the Levites and all the tribes of Levi, shall have no part or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the Lord and his inheritance. The Lord is their inheritance, and this shall be the priest's, *due from the people*, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep. The first fruits also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, *shalt thou give him*," (the priest.) Deut. 18: 1-4. Concerning these and other offerings, God says, "They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest." Lev. 23: 20. Now this language of the Old Testament does not annul or contradict the oft repeated affirmation that these offerings were due to God and must be made to him. The distribution to God's servants was distinct from and subsequent to the offering to

God. God said, "These offerings are mine." "my inheritance," "Holy to the Lord." Of the tithes he said, "I give them unto the Levite." Of certain parts of these offerings he said to the priests, "This is your portion of *my* offerings."

That giving to God and distributing to his servants are different acts is distinctly recognized.— "And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, was over the free will offerings of God, *to distribute* the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things." 2 Chron. 31: 14. When these oblations were withheld, God did not say, "Ye have robbed the priests and Levites," but "Ye have robbed *me*."

Now if the distribution of God's offering to his servants under the Old Testament dispensation was distinct from and subsequent to the offering to him, where do we learn that these have been made one and the same under the New Testament dispensation? To sustain the confounding of these two acts, we are referred to such phrases in the New Testament as "The collection for the saints," "The ministrations to the saints," "Do good and communicate," &c. A serious mistake has been made in interpreting the New Testament teachings on this subject by failing to observe the important fact that in the days of Christ and his apostles the Old Testament was the authoritative word of God, the Ho-

ly Scriptures, to which appeal was constantly made, as the rule of faith and practice. The New Testament Scriptures were not written, except perhaps the gospel by Matthew, till between twenty-five and thirty years after the ascension of Christ. A large portion of the disciples of Christ were converted Jews, who carried with them their hereditary attachment to all the essential parts of divine worship. Christ told them that He did not come to destroy but to fulfill the law, and his apostles continually appealed to the law of Moses. These christians did not need specific instructions in relation to those duties that they had been accustomed to regard as divinely enjoined. As they were in the same church, served the same God, and held the same faith with their fathers from Abraham down, they would naturally expect no element in the church or in the worship of God to be changed, except such as the more perfect and enlarged dispensation of the church required.

In relation to this branch of divine service, they knew that from the beginning, it was in part regulated by fixed laws, and in part varied by circumstances. The tithes and first-fruits were fixed, the free-will offerings were varied according to the exigencies of the church. The only points upon which they needed instruction were the changed circumstances in which the new dispensation placed them.

A little close observation will discover that this is the point to which the teachings of the New Testament are mainly directed. The law of devotional offerings to God being perpetual, needed no re-affirmation; the exigencies of the church being greatly changed, and the work and privileges of the disciples being increased, on these points they needed instruction. The increased privileges and the enlarged work of the new dispensation demanded a standard of free-will offerings, supplemental to the fixed law beyond the ordinary measure of the Jewish free-will offerings. The old fixed law of tithes, embracing first-fruits adapted to all times and obligatory under all circumstances, as the minimum standard, was unchanged. No converted Jew would think of falling below that measure.

The object to which the New Testament teachings are directed, is to secure from christians enlarged offerings beyond the former standard, and such as the enlarged privileges and varied exigencies of the church demanded. All the examples presented for imitation are such as went far beyond the former standard. Is there any thing in these teachings and examples that imply the relinquishment of the measure fixed as the minimum for all time? If a man is under prior obligations to pay one dollar, and he is urged, from considerations of propriety and interest, to pay two or three, does

this imply that he is released from the obligation to pay the one dollar?

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SUSTAINS GOD'S CLAIM TO THE FIRST PLACE IN RELIGIOUS OFFERINGS.

The New Testament teachings relied upon to sustain the position that the old law, requiring religious oblations to be made directly to God, has been superseded by an unfixed and voluntary arrangement of contributions directly to the work and necessities of the church, do not teach this doctrine. This we will now undertake to show.

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "show the proof of their love;" and "as touching the ministration to the saints" he regarded it "superfluous to write to them." "The proof of their love" to whom? to the saints? certainly not; but love to Christ as the context shows. The chief point in Paul's exhortation was to enforce Christ's claim to their offerings. He had settled that claim in his argument on the support of the ministry, (I Cor. 9: 7-14) in which the prior claim of God to their offerings under the former dispensation is reasserted by Christ under the gospel. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, &c."

Again Paul exhorts, "To do good and communicate forget not." (Heb. 13: 16.) But he adds, "For with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Now how is this language spoken by a Hebrew to Hebrews to be understood? How must *they* have understood it? Did not the term "*sacrifices*" significantly refer them to the divine law of offerings, in force from time immemorial, and so familiar to them, in which the offerings were required to be made to God before they were used for the benefit of His servants? And could these Jews, so long witnesses of God's jealous regard for His honor in this very service, for a moment believe that he had relinquished this claim, and that without any intimation of such a change? That God is pleased with their sacrifices implies that they are made to Him.

"God required of the Jews many offerings, not of a strictly sacrificial character, and not liable to have their meaning as gifts lost sight of in view of their grand typical signification, such as thank-offerings, peace-offerings, the first-fruits of their increase of all kinds, and the tithes. The amount or proportion of many of these gifts was fixed by divine appointment; of others left to the liberality of the offerer. *One fact applies to them all—they were gifts to God.* They were all appropriated to divine worship. When properly given, they were as truly devotional tributes as were the sacrifices of slain

beasts. They were the formal expression of love, gratitude, reverence and submission to God. These offerings were brought to God's temple and to His priests, and mingled with the vocal praises and prayers which ascended to God in the holy place. Hence these gifts had all their essential features of divine worship. When, therefore, the primitive christians, who were mostly converted Jews, were told by Paul to "do good and *communicate*, for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased," and that the gifts sent to him as God's servant, were a "*sacrifice* acceptable and well pleasing to God;" and when they were directed by him "to lay by in store on the first day of the week, (on the Lord's day,) as the Lord had prospered them," in view of a collection for God's saints, they would readily understand that, while the offerings under the new dispensation differed materially in form from those which the Mosaic law required, they nevertheless were still gifts to God, and were as truly a part of His holy worship.

We doubt not that they made all their contributions with devout reverence, in the spirit of prayer and praise. It is to be deeply lamented that this duty has fallen, in the spirit and the practice of the church, so far below its true original position, that it is degraded by many to the level of a mere financial transaction, or of mere alms-giving, and

that it is treated often with levity."—*Dr. Stillman.*

Again Paul says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." But *mark*, he immediately adds, "Be not deceived, God *is not mocked*," (Gal. 6: 6 7.) Is there any intimation here that God has renounced his prerogative and abandoned His claim? Is it not rather a most solemn *reminder* that He will not relinquish His claim to be honored in this service? He will not be *mocked* by a mere carnal, financial transaction with His servants. He has said that these religious oblations, "of all good things," are "*mine*," "holy to the Lord." He that from carnal motives robs God of the honor due Him shall reap what he sows. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Again the words of Christ, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," (Luke 10: 7.) are adduced to prove that His ministers are to receive their wages from the people as a compensation due to them. We admit that the English word "hire," is calculated to make this impression. But the Greek word means *reward*—a word of wider meaning and most frequently used in the Scriptures, not in the sense of stipulated wages, as when Christ says of the Pharisees, praying to be seen of men, "They have their reward," (Mat. 6: 2.) and to those enduring persecution for Christ's sake, "Great is your reward

in heaven," (Mat. 5: 12.) and of him who giveth a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, "He shall in no wise lose his reward," (Mat. 10: 42.) In these passages the word is not used in the sense of stipulated wages—a *quid pro quo*—but as the result in God's dispensation of grace, of what they did and suffered. In the parallel passage in (Mat. 10: 10.) "The workman is worthy of his meat," a different word is used, signifying "*living*." And Christ does not say the workman is worthy of his "reward" or his "*living*" *from the people*, as a compensation for his services. He does not tell His ministers to make any contract or arrangement for their support, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (*living*.) And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide until you go thence." In these instructions, Christ tells his ministers to make no provision, from their own resources, for their temporal wants; "but into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy"—"what persons reside there, of good report for piety and integrity"—(Scott.) "and there abide till you go thence." (Mat. 10: 9–14.) This implies that the acceptance of Christ's ministers and the gospel they preached embraced the provision for

their temporal wants. If the people receive the gospel, it is an assumption, on their part, of the minister's support as a gospel fruit. Hence, Christ does not tell His ministers to propose or make any arrangement with the people for the supply of their temporal wants; but to avail themselves of the privilege of "living of the gospel," without any formal invitation or arrangement, "and there abide till ye go thence." If the acceptance by the people, of the services of the gospel minister, was not understood to carry with it the provisions for his temporal support, his entrance into their houses without an invitation would appear presumptuous and rude. "And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, &c." "Receiving" Christ's ministers and "hearing their words," go together. The one implies the other. The Jews to whom the gospel was first preached, well understood that the worship and service of God furnished a support for his ministers, and those who accepted the gospel understood the gospel service to yield the same fruit. This was "subjection unto the gospel of Christ." "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel."

This cardinal element of the gospel was fully developed at the outpouring of the spirit at the Feast of Pentecost, when on the first day three thousand were added to the church, (Acts 2: 41), and after-

wards five thousand others, (Acts 4: 4.) See Acts 2; 44, 45, 4; 32-37.

“Had all things common.” Their religious offerings were a common treasury. “Neither said any that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.” Here is the unreserved consecration of their property as well as themselves, unto the service of the Lord. The same rich fruits of single-heartedness in the consecration of their property, is attributed by Paul to the Macedonian christians, who “first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us, by the will of God.” The proceeds of the “possessions and goods” sold, were “laid down at the apostles’ feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” “Freely surrendering up the proceeds of their goods to the management of the apostles, for the honor of Christ and the benefit of the church, and the apostles likewise, and faithful stewards, ordered proper distribution to be made, with the utmost prudence, frugality and impartiality, to every one in proportion to his exegence.” (Paraphrase of Dr. John Guyse.) No needy one of God’s people, nor any gospel work, was allowed to “lack.” Here is the exemplification of the beautiful principle of fellowship and unity which Christ enstamped on christianity. “Bear ye one anothers burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Christianity provides, in its own fruits,

for all the wants of God's people and church. *The Gospel is self-supporting.*

Special mention is made of Joses, a Levite, who, "having land, sold it and brought the money and laid it down at the apostles' feet." Thus acknowledging the claim of Christ to material offerings, in like manner as God had claimed in the Jewish worship.

The case of the Pentecostal Christians does not teach that God's people are to "have all things common," as it respects their individual possessions; but it teaches that religious offerings, when set apart to the Lord, are the common property of the church, and are to be distributed by God's official servants to the wants and work of the church, as every part has need.

Hence when rich Christians give largely for the purpose of building extravagantly fine churches and paying extravagantly large salaries to their ministers, calling it "giving to the Lord," while not uncommonly a prominent motive is to gratify their own taste, or ambition, or pride; this is not "subjection to the gospel of Christ." It is not the "fellowship" and "equality" of the gospel. It is not "giving to the Lord." Let them like those primitive Christians, under a lively sense of their obligation to Christ, and in response to his claim, bring their large offerings and cast them down at the feet of

of God's official servants, that distribution may be made to every one according as he has need.

We have seen enough of money spent on a single church, in surplus ornament and needless grandeur, to build a score of comfortable churches among the poor. Yet the complaint is constantly heard from our church officials of the great lack of means to carry the gospel to the destitute and build churches among the poor. Christ's boast of the excellency of the gospel was, "To the poor the gospel is preached."

The following passages of Paul harmonize with those already discussed.

"I robbed other churches, taking wages to do you service." (2 Cor. 11: 8.) The apostle cannot mean that he had been guilty of actual "robbery;" but that he had accepted from other churches the supplies which were needed for their own gospel work, and which according to the gospel law, ought to have come from the Corinthians, as the fruit of the gospel in them.

The primary meaning of the word here rendered "*wages*" is "the provisions or rations of soldiers." The same word is used in the phrase, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own *charges*?" upon his own provisions or expenses. The same word is used in Rom. 6: 23, "The wages of sin is death." The apostle asked (v. 21.) "What fruit had ye then

in those things wherein ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." Death is the natural fruit, the legitimate and just consequence of sin. This is manifestly the sense in which Paul uses the word here rendered "wages."

By the words rendered "taking wages," Paul means "accepting supplies." The same sense in which he uses the word in the phrase, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?" Paul indignantly repelled the charge of preaching the gospel for *pay*.

In 2. Cor. 12: 13, Paul says, "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome (chargeable) to you? forgive me this wrong." The Corinthians were inferior to other churches in that they were wanting in this gospel fruit. In commending the Phillippians for "sending once and again unto his necessities," he says, "not that I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to *your account*." (Phil. 4: 17.) The apostle regarded the "abounding" of the gospel fruit to their account as the prime end of their giving, and of far higher importance than the supply of his temporal wants.

"Forgive me this wrong." In order to silence the charge of his enemies at Corinth, that he preached the gospel from mercenary motives, Paul felt constrained to decline receiving any thing from

the Corinthians. This he confesses was a violation of the ordinary gospel law, and was a "wrong" to them. But in the course he pursued, he chose what he regarded, under the circumstances, the less of two evils. It was a less evil, at that juncture, for them to be wanting in that branch of the gospel service, than for his usefulness to be hindered by damaging misrepresentations.

These passages teach that Christ's faithful ministers are to expect and are entitled to their living from the fruit of the Gospel they preach, just as the shepherd expects his living from the milk of the flock he feeds.

But the objecter to our views falls back at last upon what he supposes is impregnable ground—Christ's language at the Judgement, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Mat. 25: 40.) "Surely" we are told, "Christ acknowledges the acts of kindness done to his people as done to him, and therefore giving to Christ's needy people is giving to Him."

Let us see whether this language warrants the use made of it. It will not be contended that Christ means to teach that these acts of Christian kindness and duty *procure* for his people eternal life—The welcome, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foun-

dation of the world." This would be clearly justification by works. It will be conceded that these christian acts are to be rehearsed at the judgement only as fruits and evidences of faith in and love to Christ. Faith in Christ alone procures the sinners acceptance with God. The witnesses of the judgement cannot take cognizance of faith, but they can of its fruits. Hence the legitimate fruits of faith are to be produced as evidence that his people are entitled to his kingdom.

But if these acts are to be produced as evidence of faith, they must be such as faith only can produce. But we ask, what motive impels to these christian acts towards those Christ designates as "these my brethren." Is it their love to these brethren, or is it their love to Christ, or is it the love of Christ to them? Doubtless love to the brethren and love to Christ are not wanting. But is it not manifest that the love of Christ to us must be the controlling motive in every act that is recognized by Him as the fruit of faith in Him?

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5: 14.) *A deep sense of indebtedness to Christ's love—obligation to Him*—is the impelling motive. But

how can Christ recognize the giving to his needy brethren as giving to Him? Does he recognize that to be a fact which is *not* a fact? Manifestly not. He is not dealing in metaphoric or symbolic language. He is uttering a literal truth, setting forth evidence as Judge. Because of the intimate union between himself and his people—He in them and they in Him—*that* is done to Him which is done to them, recognized as His. He is the head, they are the members. They are one with Him—a part of himself. What is done, therefore, to Him to from redeemed sinners—what His love merits and His honor claims—He recognizes as given Him when given to His members for His sake. Not being able to reach the Head to make our offerings to Him in person, we give it to the hand, recognizing it as done to the Head, and the Head accepts it because given to a part of himself, and as a response to His acknowledged claim. Thus it is the legitimate evidence of faith in Him.

Mary poured the costly ointment on Jesus in person when he was upon the earth—Jesus accepted the oblation and rebuked the hypocritical economy of Judas, who asked why it was not given to the poor; saying, “The poor ye have always with you;” as much as to say “There will be time enough to honor me through my members, when I personally am beyond your reach.”

The Paraphrase of this text by old Dr. John Guyse, a hundred years ago, well expresses its sense.

“As I know how your hearts stood affected towards me, and how all your works and labors of love were performed for my sake and in obedience to my command; the interpretation I have given of your actions, by their principles, is a righteous judgment. * * * Therefore I assuredly tell you, that since ye have done these things to one or other, though it were only to the meanest, of these my members and servants, whom ye now see at my right hand, and whom I reckon as my brethren, I judge what ye did to them, because of their relation to me as done to myself; and all this I place to my own account, that as ye therein owned and honoured me before men, so I may now own and honour you in the presence of my Father and of his holy angels.”

It is manifest that giving directly to and for the benefit of our fellow men or even our fellow christians and the church, may, and does for the most part at this day, fall short of that giving to Christ which he requires, and which is contemplated in the passage under consideration. If any are still unable to see the distinction, we will endeavor to make it plain by an illustration.

I meet a man in want and distress. Moved by feelings of humanity and the stronger feeling of christian kindness, I minister to his wants. Is this of itself the ministering to Christ contemplated in his language? The needy man may be a Jew, a

pagan, an infidel, or an atheist. While the relief of this man is demanded both by humanity and religion, it cannot be ministering unto Christ, for the reason that the recipient is not of Christ's brethren—is not one with Him. It is true Christ says, "Do good to them that hate you," and Paul says, "If thine enemy hunger feed him and if he thirst give him drink." But does Christ say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to your *enemies* ye have done it to me?" No, verily. He does not say so. He could not say so in truth, for they are not his members—a part of himself. But suppose the needy man be a christian, is the relief I afford him certainly an act which Christ will acknowledge as done to Him? This depends upon the question whether my kindness was prompted by the love of Christ, and felt to be due Him. Many ungodly men perform acts of kindness to christian men. Their acts will certainly not entitle them to the welcome, "Come ye blessed of my Father;" and the christian man may, and no doubt often does, perform these acts from feelings but little, if any holier than those of the ungodly man. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love to God as well as to man) it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. 13: 3.

But suppose I discover that this needy man is the brother or son of the man who, by imperiling

his life and enduring great suffering, saved my life and delivered me from an awful calamity; and that my benefactor asks these acts of kindness to his suffering brother or son, as the expression of my gratitude to him. Instantly there springs up in my heart a new motive that transcends and obscures all others as the light of the rising sun does that of the stars. The controlling feeling of my heart now is, to respond to the reasonable claim of my benefactor and prove my love to him. But suppose, further, that my benefactor says to me that for his gratification, and in order to keep ever fresh in my heart a lively sense of my indebtedness to him, he desires me, out of the means he helps me to acquire, to make a small donation to him frequently during life. These donations he does not need himself, but he has many needy friends upon whom to bestow them.

Now I ask, what would be the motive that would impel me to make these donations? Would it simply be to supply the wants of my benefactor's needy friends? Would not my inexpressible obligation to my *benefactor* be the transcendent motive? And would the fact that my benefactor had needy friends upon whom to bestow my donations be any material consideration in determining whether I would give to him or not? If I have no knowledge what he would do with my offerings of gratitude,

would I be any the less ready and bound to make them? And when I make them, do I not make them to my *benefactor* and not to his poor friends? But suppose my benefactor instead of asking me to give to him, says to me that he makes no claim upon me for himself—that he does not need my benefactions. But as he has many needy friends and there are many sufferers in the world whom he compassionates, he recommends these to myself in company with many others like indebted to him. But he leaves it to us to decide when these parties are in need, how much they need and what proportion of the amount necessary to supply their wants ought to be expected from each of us. Is it not manifest that this materially changes the case and weakens the motive on my part to give, and opens the door for carnal pleas to curtail my benefactions? My benefactor now makes no claim for himself, but only in behalf of suffering men, of whose case I am to be the judge, both as to their need and my ability. When the wants of any of these parties are presented, the first thing usually done is to institute a comparison between his wants and my own. It is now a question between two needy parties, and one of them is both defendant and judge—Piety makes a modest plea in behalf of the needy applicant, while the flesh presents, as a counter plea, a long list of self wants. The world stands

at one ear whispering, "I offer you a more profitable investment of your means;" and the devil, with the deceptive voice of an angel of light, whispers in the other ear, "there are many others better able to give than you are"—"charity begins at home." The needy party—the plaintiff in the cause, perhaps living at a distance and not being in court, and the other client, who is both defendant and judge, with his artful counsel clamorous for their cause, the verdict is hastily rendered, "Found for the defendant," or perhaps, as a sort of compromise with conscience, "a widow's mite for the plaintiff." This sordid, and humiliating decision is the natural result of allowing the carnal, selfish heart to be the judge of its own duty. The moment my benefactor relinquished *his* claim for my donations to be made *to himself*, and only asked them to be made to his needy friends, at my discretion, the all powerful and only adequate motive—the *felt obligation to my benefactor*—was virtually relinquished, or placed in a position to be lost sight of. And when he left it to *me* to judge of the wants of the needy parties and of my ability and duty to give, it opened the door and invited the world, the flesh and the devil to enter and contend for the spoils. That selfishness will get the victory over charity in this contest is inevitable.

The reader cannot fail to see the bearing of this

illustration in the interpretation of the scripture passage under consideration.

The confessed and lamentable shortcomings of the christians of the present day in this duty, are legitimate fruits of the fatal fallacy, that the giving to God, as formerly required, has been dispensed with under the gospel, and that the business of giving to any object is left entirely at our discretion—that we are left sole judges in this matter, as to the objects asking our benefactions, whether any of them are deserving—and as to our duty and ability to give, whether we will give much or little, or any thing. And yet, this grudging penurious, contemptible giving to man that for the most part characterizes this service at this day, constrained not by the love of Christ, but at best by only a modicum of true christian feeling, mingled with a large share of unsanctified motives, christian people denominate, "*Systematic Benevolence*" "*The Science of applied Christianity.*" And stranger still, by some sort of metamorphoses, they profess to transform this misnamed "*Systematic Benevolence*" (for the most part it merits neither the term systematic nor benevolence), into a solemn act of divine worship. This pretended worshipping of the holy God through this sordid benevolence to men, is scarcely as respectable a force as praying to our Divine Lord through the Virgin

Mary, calling her the mother of God. And yet christian men, in support of their systematic robbing of Jesus Christ of his honor, have the presumption to quote his own words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Will any one with the word of God before him presume to question that the prime and essential reason for this service exists in the relation between God and the individual believer, and that the presence of a third party needing the gift does not constitute the essential reason, nor can the absence of this third party dissolve the obligation? And can any one at all acquainted with the teachings and practice of the church at this day, affirm that giving to God in response to his claim for this service, is to any considerable extent either held or practiced? Is it not the prevalent doctrine that the obligation to perform this service depends upon the contingency of a party or object that in our fallible judgment needs our benefactions? And does not this loosing of the silken bond of Christ's constraining love and imperative demand, and this attempt to bind us with the straw rope of human wants and sympathies, account for the lamentable delinquency of God's people, that is so much complained of?

If it be contended that the claim of Christ upon

his people is made *through* the wants of his church and a perishing world, we answer, no chain is stronger than its weakest link. This plan inserts a link of silver-plated *clay* in the midst of the golden chain of Christ's love. There is enough of carnal self in most christian hearts to break this chain, easier than Samson did his withes.

Christ, our divine Redemer and infinite Benefactor, says to us, that for the maintenance of his honor and in order to keep ever fresh in our hearts a lively sense of our dependence, indebtedness, gratitude and love to him, and faith in him, he requires us, out of and in proportion to the means he enables us to acquire, to make frequent offerings to Him. The very nature of this service and the prime reason for it, make it manifest that the presence of a third party needing these gifts cannot be an essential element in the obligation, but only a subordinate end which Christ wisely provides, that the obligations his honor and our hearts demand may be farther used for his glory. It has been seen that Christ's language at the judgement sustains this view. That language implies faith in Christ and a distinct acknowledgment of obligation to Him, and it requires that the service must be done to Him, or to the recognized members of his body for his sake as the Head.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAUSES OF THE DELINQUENCY IN GIVING.

1st The gospel is preached, sinners are converted, members are taken into the church and continue in it, without the doctrine being distinctly taught that, to "honor the Lord with their substance and the first fruits of all their increase"—that frequent offerings "of all good things,"—is an essential part of the christian service,—a grand ingredient of the cross they take up, and is as indispensable to their crucifying the flesh, overcoming the world, growing in grace, honoring and pleasing God, as prayer or any other service. That no one can be a christian after Christ's pattern who neglects it. Members of the church do not understand as did the primitive christians that in giving themselves to the Lord they give their property also. They do not engage to do this. They are not taught it in their creeds; they are not taught it from the pulpit; they see it habitually neglected by a large portion of the members of the church without rebuke; no suitable arrangement is made by the authorities in the church to encourage and enable *all* the people, even the poorest, to make material offerings to God "of all good things;" if they have not money they feel excused. The claim of God upon them for their substance is but feebly felt, if recognized at all, on the part of most

Christians. It has not taken hold of the conscience. It has not been imbibed as a cardinal principle. This central, powerful, controlling motive is almost wholly wanting.

2d. When the languishing work of the church impels the preacher to urge the people to give, instead of urging the want of means as evidence that they are not worshipping God with their substance, and hence are robbing God and their own souls, the prime reason usually urged is that the money is needed to send the gospel to, or to supply some want of some of their fellow men, perhaps himself. The first difficulty encountered is that men can always see their own wants more clearly and feel them more keenly than they can see and feel the wants of others. They may all admit that the gospel ought to be supported and carried to the destitute—that it is somebody's duty to do it. But the personal duty of each individual is usually settled by himself somewhat in this way. He says: "The Bible teaches, as I understand it, that my first duty is to provide for myself and family. I have hard work to do this. I do not see how I can spare much, if any thing, for these charitable objects—"charity begins at home." I do not see that I am called to deprive myself of that I so much need for the benefit of others." The preacher may call it the cause of the church, the cause of

the gospel, the cause of God; but the man regards this a sort of pious ruse of the preacher. The case, as before stated, is simply this: The man sets himself on the judge's bench to decide the case of a claim of his fellow man against himself. Self is the judge, his numerous wants his witnesses, and Satan volunteers as advocate. It does not require the wisdom of Solomon to see that a just decision in such a case is impossible.

3d. Another impediment in the way of securing means for the work of the church on the present plans, is the division and consequent diminution of responsibility. It may be admitted that the gospel ought to be supported—that christians generally ought to contribute to it; but the principle works here that is expressed in the old adage, "what is every body's business is no body's business."

The responsibility is divided out among a large number. Each one can make out himself, to a greater or less extent, an exceptional case. He admits that those who have means to spare ought to give, but he can see a great many who are much more able to give than he is. With this view of the case it is not difficult for selfish ingenuity (and self is amazingly ingenious) to make out his individual responsibility *very small*, and his conscience is satisfied with a corresponding gift. This is the

practical working of the prevailing modes of raising means to support the gospel. Is it surprising that comparative failure is the result? In the case of one's pastor there are influences brought to bear somewhat more effective than the motives that prompt to give to the general enterprises of the church. There is a popular feeling among most church-going people, even outsiders, that they ought to pay something to their own preacher.—They are receiving the benefits of his labors, and they think they should render him some compensation. This, too, is customary among respectable people. Personal attachment also to the minister often has much to do in giving to him. But with many, although they may admit that the preacher's claim to a support is just, yet their secret feeling, which they often unconsciously betray, is that he ought to feel indebted and gratified to them for their kind consideration of his wants. This reveals the fact that they are not giving to God—that they are not influenced by the prime motive in gospel giving, the unspeakable claim of God upon the giver for ten thousand times more than he can render—that their largest offering is but a feeble response to an immeasurable obligation—that it is a debt, not a benefaction—that it is due to Christ, not to his servant.

V U

Dr. Stillman, from whose article we have quoted

presents with much force and beauty many sound and scriptural views, but unfortunately mingles with these what we believe to be damaging errors that largely neutralize the force of the truth.

Under his second head, viz. "Giving to God's cause in the discharge of a responsibility," he says: "The scriptures plainly teach that what God has given to his servants is not an absolute gift, but a literal *trust*. * * To keep back even a part of what God requires them to appropriate thus, is nothing less than a breach of trust—an embezzlement—a fraud; it is robbing God. There is no discretion given in this matter, except as to mere circumstantialia." Again, under his third head, viz: "Giving as the response of love and gratitude for redeeming mercy;" speaking of the "failure" of the present methods of raising church funds to meet the demand, he says: "The appeal for religious gifts is not put as distinctly and as strongly as it ought to be upon the divine claim for redeeming mercy. The claim is indeed recognized, but the connection which our giving has with the cross of Jesus Christ seems to be remoter and feebler than that of any other of our religious habits. The view is too much confined to other aspects of this duty. We need to look at it more intently as the claim of ~~U~~red~~Y~~eming love. We need to bring our offerings to Calvary and lay them down at Jesus'

feet, in full view of his dying agonies, and with hearts full of the impressions of his amazing love—fresh with the recollections of our utter ruin by sin, and overflowing with thankfulness to him who gave himself for us. Here is the place to learn our duty, to determine the question, “How much owest thou unto thy Lord?” and to bring our dull, selfish hearts to the exercise of a true christian gratitude.” These are excellent sentiments. They have the ring of the sound metal. But unfortunately between these two quotations the author introduces a very drossy sentiment that seriously damages the strength of the true metal. He says:

“God gave to the Jews a fixed law of contributions.—This, no doubt, helped to prepare his church for the freer method of the New Testament. He now lays no tax, but appeals to the hearts of his blood bought people. He throws every interest of his spiritual kingdom, every enterprise connected with his glory, and every claim of a world perishing in sin, unreservedly upon their affections and convictions of obligation. If this plan fails, then all these interests fail, so far as they are connected with the employment of pecuniary means. If his people refuse to give, he will not compel them. He has provided no alternative.”

The gist of this passage may be thus expressed : “God under the New Testament lays no imperative claim upon our property.” “He now lays no tax.” But throws himself upon the generosity of his people.”

Weak believers, prone to self, will exclaim, "Happy freedom!" The gospel is without money and without price. We can now do as we please, and give or withhold as we choose, without the dictation of any one, even of God himself."

Is it possible that God has left "every interest of his spiritual kingdom, every enterprise connected with his glory." "*unreservedly*" to be determined by so unreliable an arbiter as "the affections and convictions" of his fallible children? Has God given us no instructions to guide us in this duty, and no command to require its performance? Are our cold "affections" and erring "convictions of obligation," to be our sole rule and guide? Are the high and imperative claims of God upon us to bend to the low and vacillating scale of our wavering "affections and convictions?" Is not this preposterous? Again this author says: "Like the Master they (his ministers) should leave the practical decision of every such matter to the consciences and hearts of the people.

* * * Then will the modern church become like the primitive—counting nothing they have as their own, and parting with their goods as every man may need, *or as the Master may require,*" (the italics are ours.) Here he admits that the Master does "*require*" something, and therefore has not "left the decision of every such matter to the con-

sciences and hearts of the people." If the "decision" of our consciences differs from the master's "requirement" the decision of our consciences is *sinful*.

But he says: "If his people refuse to give he will not compel them. He has provided no alternative." This is certainly a startling assertion, if indeed it be not unintelligible. What does he mean by "*compel*"? Physical force is out of the question. Does he mean moral or spiritual compulsion—a requirement under penalty of God's displeasure and his providential and spiritual judgments? If so, his assertion is manifestly erroneous. He has before characterized "keeping back a part of what God requires" by the terms, "embezzlement, fraud, robbing God." Do not the laws both of God and man compel a man to deal honestly? not by physical force, but by the force of "pains and penalties." Would a human court say to a man convicted of fraud, "we will not *compel* you to act honestly, we leave it to your "conscience and convictions of obligation"?

The author regards "religious giving as an *imperative duty*" (the italics are his) and adds; "If it were known and felt that religious giving, being commanded by God, is just as binding as the duty of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and of honoring father and mother, and that with-

holding these required gifts is as really sinful as bearing false witness against our neighbor or taking God's name in vain, could these church members continue to neglect this duty?" Here he classes the sin of "withholding these required gifts" along with Sabbath-breaking, dishonoring father and mother, bearing false witness and taking God's name in vain. But he says: "God will not compel his people" to cease the "sin" of "withholding these required gifts." Of course, then, he will not "compel" them to keep the Sabbath holy, to honor father and mother, to tell the truth, and honor God's name, but will leave these "unreservedly to their consciences and convictions of obligation."—But will not God punish the liar, the Sabbath-breaker, the swearer? Has he not said, "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain?" and "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone?" Is not this very strong *compulsion* to reverence God's name and to tell the truth? and as the author has classed "the sin of withholding these required gifts" along with these sins, must we not conclude that God will as certainly punish the one as the other? The author farther says:

"We have no option as to whether we shall use God's money as he requires, or as we wish. The responsibility is plain and fixed. We must discharge it faithfully or incur

dreadful guilt. When a man deliberately and systematically refuses to respond to God's calls for a due proportion of his means, it is not a mere inadvertance or infirmity. It is persistence in wrong. It is plain rebellion."

Must we not, therefore, condemn and deprecate the assertion; "If God's people refuse to give he will not compel them." The author contradicts himself and God's word. After setting before us a dish of excellent meat, he *drugs* it with a poisonous *opiate* that puts the conscience asleep. The author of "Mammon,"—Rev. John Harris, a very forcible writer, deals with the sin of covetousness in the church in a masterly manner. But when he comes to speak of the remedy (on which he says but little) he fails to present any thing that is clear and tangible. His interpretations of scripture are sometimes very unsound, and tend to neutralize the truth he so forcibly presents. For example; In urging the importance of system in giving he quotes with approbation Payley's exposition of 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," that there be no gatherings when I come." "By which," says Payley, "I understand St. Paul to recommend what is the very thing wanting with most men, *the being charitable upon a plan*; that is, upon a deliberate comparison of our fortunes with the reasonable expenses and

expectations of our families, to compute what we can spare, and to lay by so much for charitable purposes." What a gross perversion of this passage, and the whole tenor of the scriptures. Conceding to the carnal heart just what it asks, to put self before God and the body before the soul. Does Paul say anything about "a deliberate comparison of our fortunes with the reasonable expenses and expectations of our families?" or does he give the least intimation that we should "compute what we can spare, and lay by so much for charitable purposes?" Paul says, "Let *every one* of you lay by with himself *whatever has been prospered.*" Make the christians of the present day judges of the comparative claims of their own wants and the wants of the church, with the hundred tongues of carnal self clamoring in their ears, and dictating "the reasonable expenses and expectations of their families," and how much will they "*compute they can spare for charitable purposes?*" In the majority of cases manifestly nothing. If the poor widow that cast "into the treasury of the Lord" her two mites, had *computed what she could spare,*" after providing for "the reasonable expenses and expectations of her family," how much would she have given? So of the Pentecostal and Macedonian christians. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things he possessed was his own." "The abundance of their

deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Acts 4: 32-35. 2 Cor. 8: 1, 2.

"It is said in 'Mammon' for some to give a 'twentieth or even a fiftieth would require the nicest frugality and care.' This was not the spirit of the ancient law of Israel. Every man received something and every man must give something. Where is the exception releasing the poorest from the tenth? This law is as wise as it is stringent. The poor man is benefitted by the exercise of the 'nicest frugality and care.' It is the most salutary discipline for himself and his household. It is the very habit which the poor most need to form and cherish. It elevates the mind to save something for the cause of God. He knew human nature well who has imposed this duty upon it. "He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." It is a mistake to lead the poor to think they have nothing to do or to give to God. This is a lesson never more required to be taught than in our day. The rich are to give abundantly out of their abundance, and the poor out of their poverty. God designedly made His service heavy in the ancient economy. His demands never ceased and none were exempted."

"The accomplished author of 'Mammon' referring to the conduct of Abraham and Jacob in giving a tenth of their property to God, uses the phrase ;

“Without implying that their example has any obligation on us.” The meaning of this saying is by no means clear. It would be injustice to interpret it to signify that in the writer’s opinion the example of Abraham and Jacob should have no influence upon us. Although such a meaning might fairly be ascribed to the terms employed. It must be explained as conveying the sentiment that in this particular case we are not bound to imitate their example. Even so understood, however, its correctness may be questioned. We cannot but regard it as one of those unsound interpretations which prevail so generally on the subject of religious contribution. For in these views this distinguished author is far from being singular.”—*Gold and the Gospel, pages 169, 199.*

One prominent cause of the prevailing delinquency in the church, is that the neglect of this duty is not regarded and treated as a sin, and therefore an offence to be reproved and, if necessary disciplined. Our creeds, church courts and ministers utter no distinct voice on this question.

In the General Assembly of 1869, the committee to examine the records of the Synod of Mississippi took exception to the action of the Synod in the following case. A church session had sent up to a Presbytery the following overture: “Ought not a church officer who persistently refuses to contrib-

ute his equitable proportion in supporting the gospel, to resign his office?" The Presbytery gave no definite answer to the overture, but referred the session to Form of Government, chapter xiii, section 6, 7, which are as follows:

6. "The offices of ruling elder and deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of either office but by deposition. Yet an elder or deacon may become, by age or infirmity, incapable of performing the duties of his office; or he may though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character, to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs. In either of these cases, he may, as often happens with respect to a minister, cease to be an acting elder or deacon.

7. Whenever a ruling elder or deacon, from either of these causes, or from any other, not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the session shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on these records. Provided always that nothing of this kind shall be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by the advice of Presbytery.

The session being dissatisfied with the decision of Presbytery, appealed to Synod, and the Synod sustained the action of Presbytery. The Committee of the Assembly took exception to the action of these courts, on the ground that the answer to the overture did not meet the case—that the chapters in the "Form of Government" referred to, did

not apply to the case in question. The causes that allow an officer to "cease to be an acting elder or deacon," are those "*not inferring crime.*" But the terms of the overture not only implied but expressed criminality. The officer "*persistently refuses* to contribute his *equitable* proportion." This was the judgment of the session, the truth of which the Presbytery did not question. Now a man who "persistently refuses" to do that which is "*equitable*" is guilty of injustice and dishonesty. Our "Book of Discipline" says, "An offence is anything in the principles or practice of a church member, which is contrary to the word of God, or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification."

Now this man, in the judgment of the session, was "persistently refusing" to perform a duty required by the word of God. His conduct, therefore, was not only "in its own nature sinful," but he being an officer and a man of large means, "tempted others to sin and marred their spiritual edification." In the opinion of the committee of the Assembly the Presbytery ought to have referred the session to the Book of Discipline as well as the Form of Government, and to have told the session, if admonition failed to remedy the evil, they should resort to discipline. A motion was made in the Assembly "to strike out this exception" from the report of

the committee; which after some discussion was carried; though, to the credit of some of the members, only by a small majority. Thus the Assembly sustained the action of the lower courts, which virtually declared that our Book provides no remedy for a "persistent" course of conduct which according to the teachings of the scriptures, is manifestly "in its own nature sinful, and tempts others to sin and mars their spiritual edification." The session clearly regarded the conduct of that officer as sinful, and the influence of his example as pernicious in the congregation. But all the higher courts, to which the session looked for counsel dodged the question, either from want of well defined views on the subject or for lack of courage to assert them.

That same Assembly passed a paper, in which it "earnestly and solemnly enjoins upon all the sessions and Presbyteries under its care the absolute necessity of enforcing the discipline provided in our Constitution against offences;" and among the *offences* of church members specified, is, "availing themselves of the expedients for *evading pecuniary obligations.*" The Assembly pronounced the "evasion of pecuniary obligations to *man*," "an offence," but decided that the evasion of pecuniary obligations to GOD was NO OFFENCE.

Now if the session had asked the Presbytery, "what is to be done with an officer, persistently

guilty of embezzlement and fraud," (as Dr. Stillman characterizes such cases as the above,) what answer would the Presbytery have given? Would it not without hesitation have said, "*Discipline him;*" "cleanse the church of God of so heinous an offence and scandal."

The examples we have given in this chapter, will serve as samples of the "milk and water," wishy-washy teachings on this subject—"blowing hot and cold with the same breath." With such teachings from the *teachers* of the church, how can the people know their duty? "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?"

That credit may be given when it is due, we will give an extract from the minutes of the General Assembly of 1854. That Assembly seemed to be earnestly *feeling after the truth*, and advanced some sound and scriptural views, which unfortunately have been but little heeded.

In the "Report of the committee on contributions to Benevolent objects," we find the following:

"The calls are for the most part unheeded; and the glaring sins of indifference and covetousness rest upon the churches.

"How can this adverse state of things be accounted for? Your committee might enlarge upon the causes, but prefer the less unpleasant task of suggesting a remedy.

"But there are to any remedy certain barriers, which must be removed. One of these we mention with great re-

luctance, and yet we sincerely believe that there will be found in it a principal obstacle. We mean *the apathy of the Teaching and Ruling Elders* in relation to this entire subject. The criminal neglect of many churches to honor the Lord with their substance and with the first fruits of all their increase, is occasioned in a great measure by the neglect of their teachers to expound faithfully and frequently the *law* of Christ's kingdom in relation to this obvious and explicit duty, explaining the scriptural *method* of obeying it, and the scriptural *motives* to obedience. The word of God in almost every page contains something in relation to this law, its motive or its method, and in view of this fact it is difficult to account for the prevalent error, which regards this duty more as *advice* than precept, and more as *optional* than obligatory, unless the solution is discovered in the remissness of the ministry 'rightly to divide the word of truth' on this particular point. Your committee would repel the charge of indiscriminately censuring our brethren in the Lord, whom we love and venerate as a pious, learned and able ministry, to which many of us belong; but we appeal to the established principle that faithful pastoral labour in the pulpit, and in the family, is followed sooner or later with commensurate success; and when applied to the point before us, the committee express their firm conviction, founded upon their own experience and observation, that not one of the Assembly's churches which enjoys the stated means of grace, would remain delinquent after receiving the faithful and affectionate instructions of the ministry on the scriptural law of beneficence, its motives and its method. Give the people light, and by the help of God's spirit they will walk in it.

"The Committee quote from one of the resolutions placed

in their hands, that, the doctrine of the scriptures interpreted by the Confession of Faith, is 'that collections for pious uses are a part of the regular ordinances of worship on the sabbath.' The truth should be plainly stated, that while our creed is orthodox, the practice of many of our churches in this department of christian duty is heretical; and they are so far guilty of 'holding the truth in unrighteousness.' The question whether *covetousness*, like any other sin should not be disciplined, ought to engage in these days of Christ's coming the profound attention of every Presbytery and every session; and no person, in the opinion of the committee, should be admitted to sealing ordinances, whose views on this subject are not clear and scriptural."—*Baird's Digest*, pages 155-6.

In the 4th Resolution of the committee to prepare a response to the address of Rev. R. McIlwaine, Secretary of Sustentation, adopted by the Synod of Virginia, 1872, the Synod affirmed briefly but substantially the same views expressed in the last extract, and the doctrine for which we contend, in relation to the scriptural "motives" and "method" in obeying the law of Christ. The Synod says:

"That there is one and only one sure and scriptural way, to remedy the painful deficiency of funds, continually experienced by our evangelical agencies, and that is, to teach christians first to cultivate their own graces of self consecration, gratitude, and faith towards Christ, *by continual offerings of their substance as an expression to Him of these principles*: "first giving their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." As our christian people thus cultivate their own graces and blessedness, the fruit will

so abound in the Lord's treasury, that along with their own spiritual joy, which is their strength, the work of God in the world will abundantly prosper."

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOLUNTARINESS ATTRIBUTED TO THIS DUTY UNSCRIPTURAL.

There is claimed for this duty a principle of *voluntariness* not authorized by the scriptures, and that is not attempted to be applied to any other religious duty.

Rev. J. A. Smylie, from whose article we have quoted, appropriately remarks: "The human race are prone to extremes. The Reformers found the revenues of the church collected by means of civil pains and penalties. This was an extreme. The Reformers have been gradually forced to the conclusion that the principle was wrong. But they swung off to the opposite extreme, and *voluntarism* became the popular cry."

"The whole subject of charity had become odious to those who had long been contemplating the abuses of their church, and especially the frauds and atrocities perpetrated under the cloak of that Christian grace.

"Unhappily, the Reformers not only scouted the Romish abuse of charity, but they neglected to give this divine grace that place in their system which it occupies in the New Testament, which it claims in every Christian's heart,

and without which all forms of religion must be incomplete, if not false. In none of the formulas of the Reformation; in none of its creeds, confessions, catechisms, did the subject of charity figure according to that precedency which is given to it in the teachings of Christ and His Apostles; and in many instances it was lost sight of altogether. The doctrine of human depravity, imputed righteousness, justification by faith, repentance, regeneration, the headship of Christ, the freeness of God's grace, among very many others, were brought to light and indicated as truths of the gospel; innumerable errors of Romish doctrine and belief were singled out, refuted, and held up to ridicule or public detestation. All this was done, but all Reformers have found it more easy to pull down than to build up. Men can seldom glory over their own work. They dragged Romanism from the horse, and in attempting to mount, they went clear over to the other side."—*New Themes, pages 108-9-10.*

Under the blinding influence of excited and indignant opposition to the exactions and corruptions of Popery, the Reformers doubtless caught up the idea that there is no positive law under the New Testament dispensation demanding material offerings to God, but that it is left to the voluntary choice of the people. This voluntariness is construed to mean that a man may perform this service or not, at his own option, he being the sole judge as to his duty in the matter, as to whether he will give anything, or as to how much. This is practically the doctrine of the majority in the

church at this day. It is practically the doctrine taught by a majority of writers and preachers. Now we confidently assert that there is no such voluntariness recognized in the word of God. There can be none such pertaining to any duty we owe to God. Every religious service must, *in the proper sense*, be voluntary, to be acceptable to God; that is, we must *choose* to do it—do it *willingly*. But the converse, that we are at liberty to leave it undone, or to be the judges how it is to be done, is not true. We are bound by an imperative law to do it; to do it willingly, and in the way God directs. Prayer must be performed voluntarily, willingly, or it is not acceptable to God—is no prayer. But a christian is *bound* to pray. The honor of God and the interests of his own soul demand it. *The obligation is not dependent on his choice. It is an inflexible law.* Precisely the same principle governs the duty of giving to God. The christian is *bound* to give. The honor of God and the interests of his own soul demand it. *The obligation is not dependent on his choice.* But he must *choose* to give—give willingly, to be accepted.

The writer last quoted, says of the text: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel;" "This is no commendation, but a law. It is a law given by Christ to His church. It is then the duty of the

church and she may of right enforce this law. All who come within the pale of Christ's church subject themselves to this law as fully as to any other law of His kingdom."

This is manifestly a correct view of the binding nature of this law. Obedience to this law of Christ, Paul defines "*subjection* unto the gospel of Christ." But the views of this writer that follow the last quotation show that he has misapprehended the scope of this law. He says, "It is most astonishing that the idea should ever be entertained that a government of any kind can efficiently maintain itself by voluntary contributions of its citizens or subjects. The fact is established by all the history of the past that a government *must enforce* the collection of the necessary amount of revenue to carry itself on."

We entirely accord with this writer that "it is most astonishing that the idea should ever be entertained that a government of any kind can efficiently maintain itself by voluntary contributions of its citizens or subjects," taking the word "voluntary" in the sense he uses it—the popular sense. This idea is inconsistent with the laws that govern the human mind and the motives that impel to human conduct. Moral beings are governed by *law*; and every law, to be effective, must have its penalty to enforce it. There must be a sense of

obligation and accountability. If men were as holy and righteous as the angels, they could not be safely, trusted to perform their duties without law and accountability. The very idea of *duty* is conformity to law—obedience to obligation. It is a fallacious idea that the *affections* of even holy beings, much less of christians, who are partially under the influence of a depraved nature, can be relied on to secure the performance of duty. Paul, with all his ardent love to Christ, and the souls of men, would have made shipwreck of duty had he been held to it merely by his affections. “For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” “For the *love of Christ* constraineth us.” “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them.” How sadly defective would men prove in the dearest and strongest relations of human life—the relations of husband and wife, parents and children—if left to the impelling force of their vacillating affections. A sense of *duty* is the balance-wheel that keeps the machinery of conduct in regular motion, with consciencious minds. The popular idea of “*voluntaryism*” in religious duties, is a *tinsel* farce—a cunning device of satan.

But the law of Christ, referred to by the writer last quoted, does not authorize the church to “en-

force the collection of the necessary amount of revenue *to carry itself on.*" This is reading Christ's law backwards, and makes him teach what he did not teach. Christ's law enjoins two things; first, that his people shall worship him by offerings; second, that his ministers shall live of *this* revenue, drawn from his treasury. We admit; "It is then the duty of the church, and she may of right enforce this law"—the law of offerings to Christ—not "the collection of the necessary amount of revenue *to carry itself on.*" This writer further says:

"We believe it ought to be the established law of the church to authorize the deacons to assess upon the members, *pro rata*, according to each one's ability to pay, the amounts necessary to be raised for the different objects requiring money, and that the deacons, if it be necessary, might go so far as to assess upon each one to the extent of a tithe of his gross income, and the collection of these assessments should be enforced by regular enactments."

Now the laws of Christ do not need or justify any additional legislation on the part of the church, any "established law of the church, to authorize the deacons to assess upon the members *pro rata* &c." The law of Christ *has* assessed upon his disciples all that is required of them. Church officers have a right, and they are bound to enforce obedience to the laws of Christ, but they cannot make a law. If the law of Christ enjoins the tithes or other offerings, the church has no need to enact such

law. If Christ's law does not so enjoin, the church is not authorized to do it. The tithes were not assessed on the Jewish people by the officers of the church, and the people did not pay them to the officers. The tithes were assessed *by God*, and paid to *God*—"Holy to the Lord." As the Lord's inheritance," the "meat of his house" was dispensed to his ministers. "This is your portion of *my* offerings."

"*Even so* hath the Lord ordained that those who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel." When Christ refers to a former divinely appointed arrangement, and says, "*Even so*" shall it be under the gospel, are we not doing gross violence to his words when we make him sanction a procedure which was not only *not found* in the example he copied, but which if it had been attempted, would have been rebuked as dishonoring and robbing God, and usurping his prerogative? Are we not guilty of perverting Christ's law, when we make him teach that it is the duty of his people to take the support of His ministers into their own hands, to be attended to in their own way, and ignore His claim and prerogative? Would God have tolerated in his ancient people an attempt like this, to rob him of his "honor" and "his inheritance," and to undertake to provide for his ministers in their own way, and according to their carnal notions of their ability and the minister's wants?

It will be seen that the views we have presented impinge upon an old and cherished arrangement in all the christian churches for the support of the stated ministry. In the arrangement for settling a pastor over a congregation in the Presbyterian church, the congregation make out a "call" for his services, in which they make to him the following pledge: "And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum &c." It may be thought strange and even presumptuous for a minister in this church, "in this advanced stage of the science of applied christianity," to call in question the soundness of this long revered and practiced rule. But to relieve the shock that some may feel, at what they regard a presumptuous assault upon our revered standards, we will say, that our "Form of Government" stands upon different ground from the "Confession of Faith." The "Confession of Faith" contains a summary of doctrines carefully worded to express what we believe to be the teachings of scripture, and texts of scripture are quoted to sustain every part. But in the "Form of Government," while it is held that the government of "Presbyters"—hence Presbyterian—is the church Government of the New Testament, yet it is not contended that the details are all matters of divine revelation.

A note in an old edition of the "Confession of Faith," on the 14th chapter of the "Form of Government," in which the rule we have called in question is contained, says: "The contents of the first eight sections of this chapter, and of several other parts of the form of government, especially the whole of the fifteenth chapter, do not, it is apprehended, need to be explicitly and directly supported by the words of scripture. They relate to those circumstances and arrangements in the order of God's house, which, though useful to be specified in a formula of church government, are, and must be left, in a great measure, to human prudence, assisted by some general directions of scripture."

It will thus be seen that the details of the "Form of Government," are not held to be inspired or infallible, but "must be left in a great measure to human prudence." Our church courts have, for several years, been discussing proposed changes in the "Form of Government." We hope that one of the changes that will be made will be to make the pastoral call conform to the scriptures.

Our only apology for calling in question the above pledge in the pastoral call, is, that the examination of the scriptures and the observation of the workings of present plans in the church, have led, yea driven us to our present position. Our honest aim has been, without prejudice or partiality, to learn

and receive the truth, as God has taught it. We only ask that the doctrines we advocate be tried by the touchstone of divine truth, and by that test let them stand or fall. We are forced to the conclusion that the pecuniary arrangement in the "call," between the people and Christ's ministers is not the plan that Christ appointed for the support of his ministers, but is an entire subversion of his plan, and a damaging error. It has been seen what we understand Christ to mean by his command, "They that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel," and that he could not have meant to sanction the plan now in use, because it cannot be deduced from a fair construction of his words, and is contrary to and condemned in the divine plan which he took for his model.

Let us see how the present plan works. When a congregation purposes to obtain a minister, an important inquiry is, how much salary will it take to support him? If he has a large family, this is a serious impediment. But they find a man they think will suit them. The officers circulate a subscription for his salary—a few subscribe promptly and liberally. But a man of large means, in whose heart, though a professed christian, the grace of giving has not been cultivated, if indeed implanted, puts down a sum far below his fair proportion. One after another, seeing his subscription, says:

“Mr. A. is worth three or five times as much as I am, of course I cannot give as much as he.” And consequently many subscriptions are put down much below what they would have been but for Mr. A.’s low subscription, and far more is lost by the influence of his subscription than it calls for. But the amount is made up—the least that will secure his services—and the preacher is called, pledging him “all proper support,” “and that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of &c.,” and in the solemn services of installation, with uplifted hands, they “engage to continue to him, while he is their pastor, that *competent* worldly maintenance which they have promised.” Now in this solemn transaction, in many, probably in most cases, a falsehood is affirmed, for in many cases it is not true, and many who make this solemn pledge know it is not true, that the amount promised is a “competent worldly maintenance,” and will “free him from worldly cares and avocations.”

But pay day comes, and the deacons go around to collect the salary—some have been unfortunate, or unsuccessful in business, and “have nothing to spare.” Some have objections to the minister. Some have removed from the congregation. Some have died. These subscriptions are either diminished, delayed, or not paid. And though the con-

gregation bound themselves conjointly as a body, for the salary but few consider themselves responsible for any more than their personal subscriptions. The salary, falls short and the pastor loses the deficiency.

This imperfect picture, to which more painful features might easily be added, portrays some of the transactions and results in a majority of our pastoral charges. What a solemn *farce* are many of these pastoral calls and installation services!

It may be fairly assumed that God adopted the plan for the temporal support of his ministers in the Jewish church that he saw to be wise and good—*the best*. The relations between God and his ministers and people are the same now that they were then. His ministers have the same temporal wants now that they had then, and more arduous work. No change has taken place in the relations between God and his people and ministers, creating the necessity for any substantial change in the arrangement for ministerial support. Especially has there been no change as it respects the *relative position* of the three parties, God, his ministers, and his people. This relative position in the arrangement was its very heart and life, and the very relation that has been violated in the plan now in use. God has always been jealous of his divine rights, and has always severely rebuked the least assumption of his

divine prerogative by his creatures. In the organization of his church and worship, he placed himself in his high and rightful authority, claiming with one hand to receive the homage and offerings of his people, and from these, with the other hand, to mete out the needful supplies to his servants. If the Jewish people had dared to question the wisdom of this divine arrangement, and had said; "This business is too onerous, these priests get too much, they are too independent; we will take this business into our own hands; we can make a better bargain with them than God has made; we will not give them a share of "all good things" as God does; we will make them live on less—just what we choose to spare after providing for ourselves:" how would God have treated this daring presumption and rebellion—this double insult? First robbing him of his honor and "his inheritance," and then usurping his prerogative to dispense his revenue at their pleasure! We refer the reader to the cases of Achan, Nadab and Abihu, as illustrations of God's abhorrence of covetousness and usurpation. Since our Lord takes this ancient arrangement, in use for twenty centuries, as the model for the gospel church, without, in this connection or anywhere else, intimating any essential change, are we at liberty to change or abolish any of its essential features? And yet we have presumed to lay un-

hallowed hands on God's work, and have taken the very heart out of it, and left it a deformed and lifeless skeleton. We are doing the very thing that God would not have tolerated for a moment in his ancient people. We say to God, "stand aside, *we* will attend to these preachers—we will see that they do not 'wax fat and kick'—we will make them live on what we can conveniently spare—we have no idea of lavishing the hard earnings of our toil upon men who make their living by talking a few hours on Sundays, and riding about eating good dinners."

While it is just to say that this narrow and selfish spirit is not manifested by all, yet this is no uncommon thing, and the plan itself tends to beget and foster it. The people cast about to procure the best preacher they can at the lowest price. As it becomes a financial transaction, unavoidably the arts of trade and the tricks of jockeyism will steal in. As in other financial transactions, the people have an eye to obtaining the largest service for the least pay.

The minister of Christ, set apart to the holy office of preaching the gospel, and commanded to be "not given to filthy lucre;" is compelled to throw himself into the market. Once on the tide of trade, he naturally floats with the current, and is tempted to hire himself to the highest bidder. Thus the

house of God becomes the house of merchandise. We involuntarily think of the scourge of cords, and imagine how Christ would lash the traffickers out of his house were he again on earth.

What a spectacle! Christ's ambassadors *sell* and his people *buy* the invaluable gospel of salvation; the latter often screwing down the terms of the bargain to the lowest practicable penny. Call this, "honoring God with their substance!" Acknowledging their infinite indebtedness to Him! The people call it "paying the preacher;" and so the book calls it, (not the Bible). As evidence that this "pay" is for a consideration, and is not as an offering to God, if they are without a preacher they do not pay. Now if they owe this to God as their Sovereign and Redeemer, the circumstance of having preaching or no preaching could not affect the obligation. We find no law requiring God's people to give to Him if they have preaching but excusing them if they have no preaching. The language of the call implies that the pay of the pastor is not due to God. The subscribers do not consider they are under any obligation to give what they thereby promise, until they voluntarily assume it. "We *hereby* promise and *oblige ourselves* to pay to you &c." "*We hereby oblige ourselves.*" This implies an obligation assumed at the time and not existing before.

Many sore evils resulting from this departure

from the simplicity and purity of the gospel, the writer has seen and felt for a quarter of a century—evils damaging to the faith and efficiency both of minister and people. We could give humiliating facts that would cause the face of every sincere christian to blush in shame for the credit of christianity.

CHAPTER VII.

EVILS OF THE PRESENT METHOD OF SUPPORTING THE MINISTRY.

1st. It is damaging to the minister's trust in God, The obligation the people take upon themselves to pay a certain amount to their pastor, he expects them to fulfill. He regards it a solemn contract and he depends on their sense of justice and fidelity to comply with their engagement.

There is no more trust in God on the part of the minister than when a mechanic builds a house for his neighbor and takes his bond for the stipulated price. The pastor looks to and depends on the pledges of the people and when they fail, he charges them with unfaithfulness and injustice to him.

Now the gospel plan is for the minister of Christ to depend on the power of the gospel, under the divine blessing, to produce his support, as the gospel's legitimate fruit. "Who planteth a vineyard

and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk thereof?"

The planter of the vineyard depends upon the fruitfulness of the vine he cultivates for his support. The shepherd depends on the product of the flock he feeds for his living. These depend upon the blessing of God upon their labors. But under the present arrangement the pastor does not depend on the fruitfulness of the gospel, but on the pledges of the people for the stipulated amount, whether his labors be more or less successful. And the people do not feel bound to pay him any more, no matter how prosperous his labors may be. This depending on the pledges of the people, instead of the gospel, leads the minister to trust in man rather than in God. It is therefore a hindrance to the cultivation of faith in God, and confidence in the power of the gospel.

2nd. It often occasions the pastor to incur the the prejudice and displeasure of the people, and thus damages his influence and usefulness. In the majority of pastoral charges the people fail to comply with their engagements. The pastor, after bearing long with broken promises, and suffering much embarrassment in his work, is constrained to "stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance." Under the influence of chafed feelings which he has long restrained, he speaks with warmth, perhaps

with severity. Some almost always take offence, and the most delinquent are the first to do so. These charge the pastor with talking too much about money—with not preaching as well as formerly—with not visiting enough; when, if there is any truth in these charges, *their* delinquency is the chief cause of the failure. Alienation is the consequence.

The pastor perhaps drags along a while, weighed down with discouragements, and at last resigns his charge, and the people give their "reluctant consent," with the salvo of many professions of their high appreciation of his worth and the efficiency of his labors. The minister tries another field, probably to repeat a similar experience.

3rd. Another evil of the present method is, the inequality in burdens and advantages that it works among the ministry.

When a young man enters the ministry, an important consideration in determining upon a field of labor, is to find one that will afford him a temporal support. His success in this matter depends much upon the attractiveness of his gifts. If he be a man of popular talents, he will likely secure a position in a wealthy congregation; for such have the means to buy the best talent. In such a charge he is free from worldly cares and is able to give all his time and energies to the ministerial work. And besides in such a charge there is likely to be the

best organization and material to aid him in his work. Thus sustained he succeeds well and is applauded as a working and useful minister.

Another young man enters the ministry of moderate and not so attractive gifts. He beats about awhile seeking a field of labor. Finally he receives a call to a charge where there are plenty of people who need and are willing to hear the gospel, but few who feel able and willing to contribute much towards the minister's support. They promise him, as the best they think they can do, half or two-thirds of a support. A portion of what is promised is never paid. He is compelled to neglect his studies and his pastoral work, and to engage in some other business to supplement his support. Consequently, he does not succeed well in his ministry. His congregation does not grow. His people become dissatisfied and complain. He struggles on awhile, hoping by hard work to overcome his difficulties. But at last either his health gives away under his double burden, or out of heart, he pulls up stakes and tries another field, hoping for better success, but in all probability only to undergo a repetition of his former sad experience.

The inequality we complain of may be illustrated by a homely comparison.

Select two horses of unequal capacity. Put a burden of two hundred pounds on the stronger,

and of one hundred pounds on the weaker horse, and they will travel with something like the same ease and speed. But reverse the burdens, putting the heavier burden on the weaker, and the lighter on the stronger horse; and, while the stronger horse will move with increased ease and speed, the weaker horse will move heavily and probably soon break down.

The practical operation of the prevailing mode of ministerial support, is to put the heavier burden on the weaker horse. Ministers of the best talents and attainments and therefore the best qualified to preach with little study and to grapple with difficulties, find charges where they are enabled to give their undivided time and mind to preparing for and performing their ministerial work; while ministers of less talents and attainments—the very men who need all their time and mind for study and work—are burdened with two men's work and cares—are compelled to preach with little study and to study with a divided and harassed mind.

“There is no single evil amongst us now for the abatement of which there need to be louder or more earnest outcry than the evil of a secularized ministry. The scarcity of ministers is appalling to any man who earnestly desires to see the earth full of the knowledge of God. And yet scores of ministers are secularized in one way or other because their support is inadequate. Many a faithful laborer worthy of his hire, many a good soldier of the cross who

ought not to be forced to carry on the war at his own charges, is eating up the little patrimony he inherited and which ought to descend to his children; or he is rolling up a debt which will crush him; or he is harassed and oppressed with unavailing efforts to clothe himself and family, and get food for them out of a scanty income. And if some of this sort of men should resort to tent making of one kind or another, in order to continue in the ministry there is surely a fault lying at somebody's door; but just as surely it does not lie at their door."—Dr. J. L. Wilson, *S. Pres. Review*, January, 1870.

"This claim (of the ministry to a support) is not restricted to the period of active service, or the best years of a ministers life, but covers the whole period of it; when worn out, or laid aside by providential causes as well as when in health and the flush of life. The teachings of the Old Testament on this point are clear and positive. The maintenance of the Jewish priesthood was not left to the hazard of chance, or to the free-will offerings of the people. Jehovah deemed it of sufficient moment to ordain "a statute forever," securing a definite, adequate and permanent provision for the entire sacerdotal order. The form, extent and conditions of this provision form an interesting study, which we commend to the christian church as timely and pertinent. In estimating the expense of a support for the ministry it is not sufficient to take into view the bare necessities of the present. This is the practical rule. "What can he live on?" is the main question which decides the amount of salary voted to a pastor. And no circumstances which may go to reduce the estimate is overlooked. What are his services worth? What will his needs require, looking at his life as a whole? are not considered. The actual

want of *to day* is all that is provided for. That such a rule is unjust in principle, contrary to the express provisions of God's law, and hard in its operations, it needs no argument to show. Like other men, ministers sicken and are laid aside; overtax their strength and must rest and recuperate; wear out and must resign; die and leave dependent families. And what are they to do, to whom look for bread and shelter, in these contingencies? Our rule of support provides them nothing. Their only resource is cut off the moment any of these calamities befall them. It is a shame and a cruelty! For a church to demand and receive the entire service of a christian minister, whose education has cost him years of hard study and thousands of dollars *at the bare cost of food and clothing for the time being*, and as soon as the prime of his years is spent, and a younger man is preferred, or as soon as misfortune befalls him; and to dismiss him without resources to be taken care of by his relations, or suffer actual distress, and possibly die in the poor-house, is unfair and unrighteous dealing and none the less so because done in the name of religion. But the paternal, humane and all merciful spirit of christianity condemns such a course. And yet it is practiced all over the church. It is done so often as to excite no attention, call forth no rebuke. Hundreds of faithful pastors are every year dismissed from their charge for no other reason than the temporary failure of health, in very many cases caused by excessive labor, or because they are getting somewhat advanced in years, and a younger and more popular man will suit them better—dismissed without resources or provision of any kind.

How contrary to the statutes which God ordained in Israel! He did not cast off the disabled, the enfeebled, the

worn out, the aged, or the widows and orphans of the sacerdotal tribe. All were thoughtfully provided for. When the appointed twenty-five years service in the temple were ended, the Jewish priest might retire to his home in one of the priestly cities, and receive, till the day of his death, his share of the tithes which constituted the inheritance of his tribe."—*Ministerial Relief*.

"Three theories obtain respecting the right method of sustentation of the New Testament Church and ministry.

1st. ALMS—This opinion was introduced by the Waldenses, in consequence of the abuses that prevailed in the Romish Church; and is still held by them; one-third of their contributions being given to the minister, one-third to their missionaries, and one-third to the poor.

2. COMPETENT MAINTENANCE—This opinion is held by the Church of Rome, as Ballarmino declares. It originated with Popery. The Man of Sin having grown to such an incorrigible pride and license, as to usurp all rights, and do all things after his own pleasure, being beyond the control of prince or emperor, began to change the ordinance of tithes, first by exemptions, then by appropriations, transferring them from one to another. To uphold these sacrileges and usurpations, the Popish canonists were first corrupted; who, ignoring the first and chief end of tithes, viz: *a tribute due to God*; and insisting only upon the second consideration, viz; that of being a maintenance due to ministers; gave to the Pope, as sovereign disposer of the revenues of the church, power to alienate, commute and appropriate them, as he thought fit. As long as tithes were owned to be *jure divino*, the Pope's alienation might be disputed. Therefore the Schoolmen framed a convenient distinction, *that the divine and moral law extended only to a competency for the ministry,*

but as to the determinate quantity of a tenth, this was only of ecclesiastical institution.

3. **TITHES**—This is the unanimous judgement of the Fathers, and the voice of the Church uncontradicted for more than a thousand years.

We shall show that the first and second theories are groundless and that the third only is scriptural.

1. That Alms are not the proper support of the ministry the Apostle shows; "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" 1 Cor. ix: 7. If the soldier, the shepherd, the husbandmen, may claim their wages, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice, so too may the minister claim his maintenance as his due. To deny his maintenance, is injustice. But if injustice, then he has a right and part to the goods of the people. For justice gives to every man his own, and not that of another, whence it is evident that a minister has a right and part in the goods of his people. To take this, therefore, is not to take alms, but to take his own.

Again: The laborer is worthy of his wages. No one would say that the beggar is worthy of alms. Now, if the laborer be worthy of his wages, then he may justly challenge it, not beg it as alms. For if wages it is due by justice. But alms are not due by justice; otherwise, there would be no difference between justice and charity. Therefore, if alms, not wages, if wages not alms.

2. The theory of *Competent Maintenance* receives no countenance from scripture, either by positive precept, or by necessary inference. The passage which tells us, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, recognizes the same proportion as due to ministers under both Old and

New Testaments. This "*Competent Maintenance*"—which is only alms after all—is something very different from the ordinary maintainance of ministers, for it was never practiced in any age. In the patriarchal age, tithes were paid. In the Mosaic age, tithes were paid. In the apostolic age, more than the tithes were paid. If this competent maintenance be ordained of God, then it is tithes; if by man, it is not God's ordinance, and the sooner the inventions of men are abandoned by the Church of God the better.

3. The only remaining theory is the scriptural one, that tithes are appointed by God to be the support of His Church and ministry in every age. We shall show this, and first; that tithes are not of Levitical origin, not Ceremonial, not Judicial, but Moral, and so binding on every age and observed by every people."—*Dr. A. W. Miller, S. Prisby't'n Review, April, 1873.*

It would take volumes to record the sad history of the disappointed hopes, unblessed labors, overworked energies of body and mind, shattered constitution, broken spirits, embittered feelings, sad broodings over dark providences, through which many ministers of Christ, willing and anxious to do their master's work have struggled for years, never suspecting that the fountain from which these bitter waters flowed is revealed in the warning of Christ: "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men;" and in the stinging words of Jehovah, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord."

4th. The present method hinders both the poor and rich from giving according to their ability. If the minister is furnished with even the plainest style of living, the poor will say, "He lives easier and better than we do—It is not fair that we should deny ourselves of our scanty means to give to him." The consequence is, that the poorer class give very little, and many give nothing to their minister's support. These lose the blessing from this means of grace; whereas if they had learned that Christ requires "every one" to give something to *Him*, for his honor and their soul's good, their excuse of poverty would have no force. They would be ashamed to dispute *Christ's* claim, with the example of the poor widow and her two mites before them.

The rich too are hindered. They understand that they have performed the bulk of their duty when they support their own pastor; and hence their contributions to the missionary causes of the church are often a mere pittance. Whereas, if they were giving to Christ in proportion to their means, probably the larger part of their contributions would go to carrying the gospel to the poor. This is the way the treasury of the Lord is to be supplied with means to spread the gospel. Christ gave it as a proof of his Messiahship, and of the truth of his gospel, that, "The poor have the gospel preach-

ed to them." But it is the reproach justly cast upon the church at this day, that the rich fare sumptuously on gospel privileges, while the poor get only the crumbs.

In the last General Assembly, (1872), on the proposition, "In ordinary cases, no probationer shall be settled over a regular charge until he shall have spent two years in itinerant missionary labors under the direction of the Presbytery;" Rev. J. H. McNeilly remarked:

"We say then, in the first place, that it will supply us with men *easily supported*, who can preach over wide districts. This supply we cannot now obtain. It is as much as we can do to hold our own. It is impossible for us to see the vast destitution outside the bounds of our churches, which we do not reach at all, without comparing our own Church with others in this respect. The Methodist Church reaches the masses in a way that we often do not. I thoroughly believe that the Presbyterian system is as well adapted as any other for reaching them. But the facts are that we do not reach them. There are vast multitudes to whom we do not preach the gospel at all. And yet here is the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The distinction which separates this dispensation from every other is that, unto the poor the gospel is preached. In the Apostolic Church the work was divided into two departments. When the Apostles organized a church in any place, they ordained over it elders, some of whom were preaching elders. The Apostle then, with this corps of assistants, such as Timothy and Titus, went to other fields preaching the gospel and gathering

churches. So it is our business to organize churches—to give them faithful pastors, whenever we can, and also to send out and gather other churches. In the present state of affairs we cannot do this, because of the difficulties which I have spoken of. A man with a family cannot do this work as effectually as others. I know there are such men who have denied themselves and done this work, but it requires of them greater sacrifice. We are bound also to take into consideration *the amount of money we can get*, and to be economical. I suppose every missionary committee in the church is obliged to make every dime go as far as possible. Now, if we can secure men who can do this work *on a smaller salary than men with a family*, let us send them.”

It is thus confessed that men of experience, who have families to support, cannot be employed to preach the gospel to the poor, because the means for their support cannot be obtained, and yet it is a law of Christ that “they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel,” including their families. Now if the rich christians *would give to the Lord* the amounts they pay their preachers, they would see that they have no right to draw from the Lord’s treasury any more than their poor brethren. Have the rich a higher claim on God’s treasury than the poor? It may be that a man ministering to a wealthy congregation may be entitled to a larger salary than a man ministering to a poor congregation; but it is not because *they have given it*, but because the minister *needs it*. When the Pentecostal christians laid their large offerings at the apostles’ feet, dis-

tribution was made from the common treasury, to every one, *according as he had need*. Those who gave much did not claim a larger share because they had given more than others. Paul says, "not that other men be eased and ye burdened, but that there may be equality; as it is written, he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack." 2 Cor. 8: 13, 15.

The truth is, what most christians pay their preacher they do not give to God at all, but claim the right to appropriate it for their own benefit, without regard to the wants of others. This is surely contrary to the "equality and fellowship" of the gospel. In this selfish and unscriptural policy lies the great impediment to the Evangelistic and Missionary work.

Now the gospel plan avoids all these evils—all this occasion of offence—this rock on which so many qualified and laborious ministers of Christ have been wrecked. The gospel plan does not place the minister in this unpleasant attitude to his people, to be looked upon with a jealous eye, to be regarded as an expense and a burden to them, and his appeals for money as prompted by his self-interests. The supply of his wants is not the first and principal object of their giving, and in no sense is it the standard by which their oblations are to be measured. Whether his wants be many or few,

does not effect this claim upon them, for the question with them is, how much they owe to Christ, and how much the interests of their own souls demand. When the minister treats of this subject in this way, the people do not regard him as pleading his own cause or that of some foreign party, but as laboring as the servant of Christ to promote their good and usefulness, as they would regard him when urging them to prayer or any other religious duty.

“If we will but remember what is literally the fact, that in bestowing his assistance on its various objects, the Christian is only giving what belongs, *not to himself, but to God*, it will be apparent with how much greater authority he may be appealed to, and what far greater fervor such appeals will be likely to have. It is too frequently the case that in the bestowal of his means in the service of God, the notion of duty or obligation is often as little felt as it is in mere secular matters; and so it happens that what may be given to a cause eloquently pleaded is denied to the same cause when feebly put before us. Let the believer but reflect that in reality he has no right to withhold his assistance, that he is only allowed the discretion of selecting such objects as appear to him most to require aid, but that what he is asked for is not really his but God’s, and he will see the propriety of altering his conduct, and to look less to the manner of advocacy and more to the cause which is advocated.”

“They who preach the gospel should live of the gospel,” by the same divine ordinance that gave to the Jewish priesthood a share of the altar sacrifices.”—*Gold and the Gospel*.

“We have now shown that in no respect was the Levitical priesthood superior to the christian ministry, and entitled to a larger measure of support, whether as to work, qualifications, dignity, expenses, number, and others besides ministers provided for. But it may be said that the ancient regulation would be unsuitable now because of preferable methods of support. What are these? Voluntary offerings? Or pew-rents, a tax upon worshippers? As to the first, they have proved a failure—and proved to be such by the accumulated experience of the past. Facts, indisputable facts, have settled that point, and their name is *legion*. How many Christians contribute, what every Jew did, more than one-third of their income? To what disreputable expedients do “Christian” men and women resort—fairs, tableaux, even lotteries—to build a house of God, or to eke out a miserable pittance to a half-starved minister of God, called a “salary!” The victims of voluntaryism are numbered by thousands and tens of thousands—a Babel monument, “whose top would reach unto heaven.” As to the second method, the pew-rent system, it is not only unauthorized by, but inconsistent with, the principles of the gospel. That gospel was especially designed for the benefit of the poor. “Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” But the pew-rent system leads to the disparagement of that very class who are the special objects of the divine regard. For “if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment,” it leads to its being said to him “that weareth the gay clothing, sit thou here in a good place; and to the poor, stand thou there or sit here under my foot-stool.” This system

has interposed an unholy barrier to the ordinances of religion, by banishing thousands of the poor from the house of God; and thereby preventing the permanent, the crowning demonstration of the divine origin of christianity from being given; "*To the poor the gospel is preached.*" It is one chief cause of the enormous spiritual destitution which exists throughout the land, and of the moral and spiritual evils which prevail among the lower classes of the community. This system is also inconsistent with the honor of the great Head of the Church. As it has been well remarked: "When church funds are raised by pew-rents, which are like license to worship and to hear the gospel; or are raised by collections which rise and fall in amount in proportion to the eloquence of popular preachers; or are raised by subscriptions which are not unfrequently extorted from unwilling contributors, by the energy and personal influence of zealous collectors, the Lord's dignity in the matter is compromised, his honor is wounded by the mistakes of his friends."—*Dr. A. W. Miller.*

CHAPTER VIII.

MISINTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES CORRECTED.

I CORINTHIANS 16: 2.

"Upon one of the Sabbaths, (a Jewish expression for the first day of the week) let every one of you lay by with himself, treasuring up, whatever has been prospered, that when I come there be no gatherings:" (a literal rendering of the Greek.)

This was an order given to the churches of Galatia and repeated to the Corinthians. The words "whatever has been prospered," seem to embrace the entire income. But Paul had before referred these Corinthians to the Jewish law of offerings (chapter 9: 8, 9, 13, 14) and intimated that they were acquainted with that law. "Do ye not know." He doubtless therefore expects them to understand the expression, "whatever has been prospered," to mean "God's portion of their income," the minimum measure of which was a tenth, and they might add as much more as they found it in their hearts to give. If we take our English version, "as God hath prospered him," as expressing the sense, this indicates *proportion*. E. g. If we propose to a landlord to cultivate his lands and render him rent, "as God prospers us;" which would mean in proportion to the crops raised; the question would at once arise, *what* proportion of the prosperity or income? Shall it be a third, or fourth, or some other proportion? Unless some definite proportion is implied, the terms, "as God has prospered us," would have no intelligible sense. In any case, therefore, the apostle must have expected the Corinthians to be guided by some well understood rule of proportion.

"Whatever may have been the reason of this provision, it is a matter of fact, that the converted Jews have been accustomed to a like arrangement. Both Philo and Jose-

plus inform us that the Jews were wont every sabbath to make collections at their synagogues, of their tithes and spontaneous gifts, to be sent to the temple. This custom was adopted into the Christian Church, with such modifications as the new dispensation required. The appropriation required to be made at home, irrespective of a church contribution, would secure a more universal compliance, than if it was to be made in the church from which some would be detained; and yet it did not hinder public collections, when convenience required them."—*Rev. Parsons Cooke on this verse.*

"The near resemblance of the system proposed by the Jewish law-giver to that presented by the christian apostle, is easily accounted for by the fact, that both the law-giver 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 interest and the glory of God."—*Rev. Edward A. Lawrence.*

The following letter written to the secretary of a "benevolent society," is a specimen of the practical operation of this rule:

"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 greatest 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.*'

Another testifies as follows:

"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.

"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 warmhearted Christians *must determine be-*

forehand on the system they will adopt, if they would secure the benefits of the gospel plan, 1 Cor. 16: 2, to themselves and the cause of Christ."

The words, "lay by with himself," enjoins the setting apart the Lord's portion individually, and at home. The additional term, "treasuring up," seems to refer to putting the offerings into the common treasury. This meaning is indicated by the phrase that follows, "that there be no gathering when I come."

If the oblations set apart at home by the scattered individuals and households were not collected into a common treasury, there would of necessity be "gatherings" when the apostles came.

The injunction to set apart these material offerings, *on the Lord's day*, implies that they are acts of religious worship, and a part of the gospel services.

Guyse's Paraphrase of this verse in the main expresses the sense.

"That every one who is in any capacity for it, would from week to week freely separate, and lay by him, certain proportions of his worldly substance for this charitable use (religious service,) and put them into the common stock on that day, as a treasure for the poor, and a treasure that will turn to his own best account, and let this be done according to the revenue of his estate, or according to the gains by business and labor, which God has given him, be it more or less, the week before, that so, when I may have opportunity of coming to you, the contributions may be ready

collected, and there may be no need for me to excite you to them then, or to wait for their being brought together."

II. CORINTHIANS, CHAPTERS 8 & 9.

Paul, having spoken highly of the christian spirit and character of the Corinthians, in this epistle, closes the 7th chapter with the words, "I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things." He was about to send Titus to visit them a second time, for the purpose of furthering the grace in them he had been instrumental in beginning, and to receive their offerings, "laid by with themselves and treasured up" according to the former "order," (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2,) to be appropriated to the needy and suffering saints at Jerusalem. The apostle's address to them on this subject occupies two chapters, and is the fullest exposition of "this grace" found in the New Testament.

He presents no touching narrative of the necessities and sufferings of the persecuted Jerusalem christians; but lays before them several weighty motives to stir up their hearts to the manifestation of the spirit and conduct becoming the blood-bought followers of Christ.

(a) He holds up for their consideration the bright example "of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their

deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality." (single-heartedness.) 8: 1-5.

(b) The duty of christian fellowship in bearing one another's burdens—"the fellowship of ministering to the saints." 8: 4—"liberal distribution," (literally, "single-hearted fellowship.") 9: 13.

(c) The symmetry and beauty of the christian character, when "this grace abounds" in proportion to others. "Therefore as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and all diligence and your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." 8: 7.

(d) Their inexpressible obligation to Christ.—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 8: 9.

(e) That God would provide them "all sufficiency in all things, to abound to every good work." 9: 8.

(f) That in abounding in "this grace," they would "glorify God," and "prove their love," to Him. 9: 11-13, 8: 8, 24.

This service is termed "grace," and "subjection unto the gospel of Christ." 9: 13, 14.

The Apostle closes this model address on this important christian duty, and his expressed gratification that in this service they "glorified God," with the heartfelt words, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Some passages in this address require notice; as under the influence of the warped sentiments on this subject that prevail at this day, they have been misconstrued.

Let it be observed that the apostle held up a high standard for christian attainment in this grace, and therefore had no occasion to re-iterate and enforce the divine law of religious offerings, as old as the church of God and equally as permanent. He therefore says, "I speak not according to commandment, (i. e. to lay down the law to you) but to prove the sincerity of your love, by means of the forwardness of others." 8: 8. The noble self-consecration of the Macedonian christians carried them far beyond the minimum rule prescribed by divine command; and he would not have the Corinthians to be behind them in proving the sincerity of their love. He wished them not to be satisfied with the *least* that was admissible, but to vie with each other in striving to manifest their deep sense of obligation to Christ and love to Him. His saying that he "spake not according to commandment," rather implied the existence of a command that he might adduce. He even says, that he thought it "superfluous"—scarcely necessary—to write to them, knowing and having boasted of the forwardness of their minds. He did not think it necessary to exhort *them*, but only to exhort the brethren to go and "finish in them

the same grace, and complete their bounty (blessing) before announced."

II. CORINTHIANS, 8: 2—"*Riches of their liberality,*"

The Greek word rendered "liberality," means "simplicity," "single-heartedness." "In simplicity and godly sincerity." 2 Cor. 1: 12. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity," (single-heartedness,) Rom. 12: 8. "In singleness of your heart as unto Christ." Eph. 6: 5. These christians manifested this single-heartedness in this service, in that, "they first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us (his servants) by the will of God." They first gave themselves, and as a consequence their property. Their property was included with themselves in their self-consecration.

The same principle is presented by Christ when, in support of his exhortation, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven:" and his declaration, "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and mammon:" He says, "The light of the body is the eye. If thine eye be *single*, the whole body shall be full of light." And when Paul says, "For me to live is Christ." "I have espoused you to one husband."

The earnest christian has a "single eye" to Christ. All his ends and aims are brought within this line of vision. Guided by this "single eye," his path is

full of light—full of blessing—full of good fruits—
He “lays up his treasure in Heaven.”

The unstinted gifts of these christians were the legitimate fruits of their single-hearted devotion to Christ—“*the riches of their single-heartedness.*” Now this “single-heartedness” is the fruit of grace—the triumph of grace—“the unspeakable grace,” for which Paul gives thanks to God. The english word “liberality” falls short of the apostle’s meaning. There is no recognition of *grace* in it.

It is as often used to express the generous acts of unconverted men as of Christians. It expresses human generosity rather than the grace of Christ. God is able to make all grace abound to his people, and makes “the abundance of their *deep poverty* abound” in giving. This is “the riches of their single-heartedness.” The deep poverty of the poor widow, abounded unto the riches of her single-heartedness to Christ when she cast into the treasury of the Lord “all her living.”

II. CORINTHIANS, 9: 5-11.

“That the same may be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not of covetousness.”

The word rendered “bounty,” means “blessing.” “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Paul doubtless includes the double blessing to the giver and to the receiver.

The word “covetousness,” sounds strange in this

connection. The Greek word means, "a larger portion;" and hence it is sometimes used to express the *desire* for a larger portion—inordinate desire—which is covetousness. But what can "inordinate desire"—"covetousness," have to do with giving? We give the views of learned commentators:

"The apostle calls that "covetousness," which is done sordidly, and as extorted from a covetous person.—*Beza*.

"To give alms out of shame, or to satisfy the importunity of others rather than out of love and good-will, is a symptom of a covetous temper."—*Whitby*.

The declaration of the apostle that immediately follows supports this view. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." These words describe the covetous spirit.

When the apostle would have their offerings "ready as a matter of blessing and not as of covetousness;" he encourages them to give cheerfully and largely with the belief that the duty is doubly blessed, and more blessed to the giver than to the receiver; and he would warn them against the reluctant and stinted giving of the covetous man who sees no good but in getting and hoarding.

"He which soweth in blessings, shall reap also in blessings." "Every one according as he purposeth in his heart, not with sadness nor from compulsion, for God loveth the cheerful giver." (a literal rendering of the Greek.) The apostle teaches here as in other places, that cheerful giving to God, is sowing

in blessings, and the sower will reap in blessings—sowing gospel seed and reaping gospel fruit.

“Not with sadness nor from compulsion.” As before remarked, the Apostle is urging these christians to a larger consecration of their substance to God than was required under the old dispensation, and the apostle’s exhortation not to give “sorrowfully nor from compulsion,” implies that there was a compulsory law which he wished them to exceed in their willing and cheerful offering. The words, “Every one according as he purposeth in his heart,” do not teach that the dictate of the christian’s heart, whether large or small, is to be the measure of his duty. The apostle had just assured them, “He which soweth in blessings shall reap also in blessings.” He expects the christian to believe this. If he believes it, he will desire to sow largely. The apostle tells him, if he chooses in his heart to sow largely, to *do it*, unhesitatingly and cheerfully, not lamenting and grudging the seed sown, but joyfully looking to its large and blessed fruits; and for the encouragement of the giver’s faith, points him to his infinite and unfailing reliance; “For God loveth the cheerful giver; and God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” Could words express a fuller guaranty of *all sufficiency*?

The believer is thus told not to consider his own ability or inability; but *God's* ability, who promises abundantly in his word, "to minister bread for his food, multiply his seed sown, and increase the fruits of his righteousness." In this passage *giving* is twice termed "*righteousness*," not "benevolence." It is viewed in its relation to the law of God, not to the wants of man.

Paul prays that the Philippians might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness;" and afterwards commending them that they "did communicate with his affliction," "communicate with him as concerning giving and receiving," "sent once and again unto his necessity;" he adds, "not because I desire a gift; but I desire *fruit* that may abound to *your account*." Phil. 1: 11, 4: 14-17.

"For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is more abundant also through many thanksgivings unto God. Through the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for the subjection of your assent to the gospel of Christ, and single-hearted communication to them and to all."

The glory of God in the christian's subjection to the gospel of Christ, is here claimed to be the prime end of this service. The supplying the wants of the saints is the out-growth of the former. This order is a cardinal law in the divine government.

“The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” “The second is *like unto it*, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

“This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.” I. John 4: 21.

If ministers of the gospel at this day would pattern after the example of Paul, and press upon the consciences of their people *the claim of Christ and the need in their own souls*, for the practice of “*this grace*,” they would have no occasion to make earnest, touching and reiterated appeals in behalf of the needy. This Paul concluded was “*superfluous*.” But they would find “single-hearted” christians “to their power, yea and beyond their power, willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty to receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”

“Such is the law of the New Testament, binding us to interweave with our sabbath-keeping, a constant habit of consecrating to God a portion of our means of living.”

I. TIMOTHY, 5: 8

“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

“The sacred writer, in giving directions relative to the maintenance of widows, distinguishes between such as the church shall relieve, and such as should be supported by

their own relatives; and concerning the latter, he makes the statement in question. Whence it follows, first, that the provision contemplated by the apostle is not a laying up beforehand for future contingencies, but a present supply of present necessities, a simple maintenance of needy relatives from day to day. And, secondly, that, instead of countenancing parents in the accumulation of great fortunes for their children, he is speaking of the maintenance which children, if able, should afford to their aged and destitute parents. With the subject of *providing for families*, therefore, the text in question has nothing to do. Rightly interpreted, we see that it enjoins, not *accumulating*, but *giving*. How humiliating is the only explanation which can be given of the general perversion of this Scripture, and of the pertinacity with which that perversion is retained."

CHAPTER IX.

UNSCRIPTURAL PHRASEOLOGY.

If we have rightly apprehended the scripture teachings on this subject, then much of our religious phraseology needs to be reformed and conformed to gospel truth. The terms, "Christian benevolence," "Systematic benevolence," "benevolent schemes," "benevolent contributions," &c, are all based on and tend to foster the error that the only giving required in the New Testament is giving to our fellow men in need, or to a religious cause, the benefits of which accrue to our fellowmen. Hence it is termed "benevolence"—"charity."

Offerings to God are not "systematic benevolence"—they are *Christian worship*. *Benevolence—wishing well*, is not expressive of our feeling toward God, but our feeling toward man. All such terms as applied to gospel giving are inappropriate, for they lead the mind away from God rather than to him. The tendency is to put God aside and for the giver to regard *himself* as the benefactor instead of the mere instrument of God's grace.

The term "Benevolence," is nowhere used in the New Testament to express a religious duty. It is but once used and then to express a domestic duty.

If giving to God is an act of religious worship, which is generally conceded at this day, why not express the service by some scriptural term? We have scriptural terms for all other acts of divine worship, such as prayer, praise &c. "Oblations," "offerings," are scriptural terms. All such terms as "benevolence," "liberality," "bounty," in the meaning that they now bear, smack of self righteousness rather than of grace, of spiritual pride rather than of conscious dependence and unworthiness. The service of contributing to the Lord's Treasury—of worshipping God by material substance, might be termed "Christian oblations," or "religious offerings"—and the service of distribution to the work of the church, by the several terms now used, Foreign Missions, Sustentation, Education, Publication, &c.

"Systematic Benevolence," to the performance of which the ministers of this day are in vain endeavoring to urge the people, is not God's worship—is not gospel giving.

"It is to be deeply lamented that this duty has fallen, in the spirit and practice of the church so far below its true original position, that it is degraded by many to the level of a mere financial transaction, or of mere alms-giving, and that it is treated often with levity."—*Dr. Stillman*.

"Facts compel us to open our Bible with the impression that the church is committing some great error somewhere, in the practical sense of her duty, as to furnishing the means of evangelizing. There must be something out of joint. Some principle to which God has committed a moving power, is dislocated and bereft of its power."—*Rev. P. Cooke*.

"To whom do Christians give what they contribute to foreign missions and other benevolent objects? We profess to give to Christ, but do we? Is he prominent before the heart as the person receiving the gift—which is often drawn out by piteous appeals based upon human wants, and sufferings, and degradation? Is not most of our so-called Christian giving unintelligent, and without the two elements of *cordiality* and *proportionate ability*? With many it is "systematic" simply as a business habit, and because order is better than impulse.

I have been thinking over this matter in the light of facts. Many who are abundantly able in our churches give nothing to *foreign missions*, on the principle of "Why so much waste? Sell it, and give to the poor around us."—

Their eyes are blinded. They do not see Christ in the cause. They see human obstacles, and in their judgement think they can do better with their money.

If they do not see Christ, and do not give to him, then there is no faith connected with their giving, even when on system, and because of habit, it is practiced. Now is there not a defect in our present methods, which will soon tell fearfully upon our churches as material wealth increases? With how many churches are giving to Christ a part of the regular worship and a means of grace, as much as the hymn, the prayer, the scripture, and the sermon? Let us trace this neglect a little. A collection is taken in church for foreign missions, for home missions, for the Bible cause.—The human object—the plan of man's devising—is pressed upon the head and heart of the hearer. Immediately the decision of a large number present is, "I prefer some other object;" and with an easy conscience the opportunity of receiving grace passes from them. The object itself is canvassed, scrutinized, suspected and gravely felt to be a mercenary one, because it requires paid agents to give it currency and success in the business world. Now suppose the church continue the same selection of objects from the opening year, assigning a *pro rata* share of the weekly collection to each one, and giving every donor entire freedom to direct his offering to any place or object on the globe by simply enclosing it. Then let the person of Christ, in scriptural words, be placed before and pressed upon every heart as the guide, the guardian, the God, when the offering is taken up in the sanctuary. Two things are gained—an act of worship and a means of grace. No one will refuse the rightness of this loyal act to the personal Saviour and God. All will allow that he is worthy, that, he has in

providence cared for them, and that he is the only Saviour of the soul. The call for the free-will offering every Sabbath will soon be recognized as needful for the appropriate worship of God, as much as prayer or praise.

And now the opportunity of faith occurs, because it is directly to a Person, and not indirectly through an object. As faith enlarges, all the graces will be nourished. Giving is intelligent only when it is to Christ; because only when He has the first place will the giver examine his object to see if it be worthy, in the sense of carrying his Saviour to those who are lost."

"Only thus can *cheefulness* and the *proportionate measure* be preserved. For wherever Christ is, there the Spirit is, since his testimony now is wholly of Christ. If, then, Christ knock at every heart on the Lord's day saying, "How much owest thou me?" the spirit is instantly at hand to influence that heart and beneath his pleading it yields its hardness, and opens voluntarily, from gratitude and a loyal desire to render unto the Lord what is really his own, and bought at such a price.

This is not a theory. It has been tried with the highest and best results—of enlarged benefactions, sanctified hearts and devoted lives. It is God's way. As soon as it becomes ours, we shall see a revival of the missionary spirit for the speedy completion of the work of this age."—*Christian Giving, By a Pastor, Missionary Herald.*

Some ministers seeing the evil tendency of prevailing views, and wishing to restore this service to its scriptural order, will tell the people that giving to God's cause is an act of divine worship, and that they ought to worship God by giving of

their substance to Him. But proceed to urge the pressing wants of some church enterprise. The *need of their money* is, after all, the prime reason for their giving. If such ministers could read the silent thoughts of their hearers, they would perhaps be surprised, that many regard the calling of this business "the worship of God," as a sort of religious *farce*. The people do not feel that they are giving their money to God. The question they are asked to consider, is not so much what they *owe to God*, as what their fellow men *need*—they are asked to deny themselves to supply the wants of others; and the frivolous pretexts with which they parry the appeals of the preacher, show that they do not look upon it as giving to God, as a response to his imperative claim.

When asked to give to 'Foreign Missions,' many will reply, "the Greeks are at your doors." When asked to give to Domestic Missions, they will perhaps reply, "our own neighborhood is missionary ground," "We can't support our own preacher." If asked to contribute to a preacher at home, some will say, "He is better off than we are." Thus the inventive genius of selfishness is ever ready with an excuse.

Some twenty years ago, the writer was engaged in visiting the churches in the Synod of Virginia, collecting funds for a church cause.

In a collection taken in a small congregation, I found a bank note of a larger amount than the entire balance of the collection. I spent the night with the elder who made this contribution. He manifested much interest in the cause in which I was laboring. When I was about to leave next morning, he handed me five dollars more. Not being accustomed to see men give money unasked, my first thought was that he had construed my conversation into an effort to draw more money from him. I assured him that I had no such intention, but thought he had at first contributed liberally. He replied that he did not so construe my conversation, but that the money was in the Lord's treasury, and he thought the cause I was representing was entitled to that much more. He then stated that he had made it a rule for several years to set apart a tenth of his income from his practice (he was a lawyer) as the Lord's portion. When any religious cause was presented, he appropriated to it out of the Lord's treasury, such portion as he thought the cause was entitled to. He added that he gave a great deal more, and with more ease and satisfaction than he did before he adopted this plan.

I now saw the secret of his giving unasked, and so freely and largely. It was the difference between distributing *the Lord's money*, and taking it out of his own pocket. He did not need the influ-

ence of earnest persuasion and importunity to relax the rigidity of the pocket nerve. The victory over self had been achieved, once for all, when he determined to set apart a tenth to the Lord. He now had no contest with self, but was acting as the impartial distributor of his Lord's funds.

This case illustrates the important principle for which we contend, and which seems so generally overlooked, that the primary ends in religious giving, viz: honoring the Lord, and securing blessing to the giver, are accomplished in setting apart money or other substance *to the Lord*. *The offering to the Lord*, irrespective of the distribution and use, is the intrinsic element. The distribution and use are circumstantial and secondary.

CHAPTER X.

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS—GIVING, ITS ANTIDOTE.

We take the liberty of extracting largely, on this subject, from "Mammon," by Rev. John Harris.—He probes the disease to the bottom and exposes all its hideous deformity. He however uses the terms "benevolence," and "cause of benevolence," according to the prevailing sentiments of the present age, where he ought to use "giving to God." He sets forth the true character of the evil, but misses the mark in the application of the remedy.

“Covetousness denotes the state of a mind from which the Supreme Good has been lost, labouring to replace Him by some subordinate form of enjoyment.”

“The truth is, covetousness is native to our fallen nature; and, unless religion vanquish it, in its indiscriminate ravages, it will vanquish religion. Other forms of selfishness are partial in their operation, being either confined to a party, or, at most, to an order of character; but *covetousness is the sin of humanity*: it is the name of a disease which knows no distinction of class or party—the epidemic malady of our race. Never, perhaps, was self denial a rarer virtue than in the present age.”

“Men think not of covetousness, and of themselves, at the same time. He who can decide, with equal facility and precision, the exact point at which cupidity begins in another, no sooner finds the same test about to be applied to himself than he discovers a number of exceptions, which render the standard totally inapplicable. It was remarked by St. Francis de Sales, who was greatly resorted to in his day as a confessor, that *none confessed the sin of covetousness*. And he who “knew what was in man” sought to alarm our vigilance by saying of that sin what he said so emphatically of no other, “take heed and beware of it.”

“It is true of every passion, that it has an established method of justifying itself; but of covetousness it may be said that all the passions awake to justify it; they all espouse its cause, and draw in its defence, for it panders to them all; “Money answereth all ends.”

“The very prevalence of the evil forms its most powerful plea; for “the multitude never blush.” We might have supposed that its prevalence would have facilitated its detection and exposure in individual cases; but owing to its very prev-

alence it is that so few are conscious of it. We keep each other in countenance. Having been born in the climate, we are not aware of anything pernicious in it. The guilt of this, as of every other sin, is measured by a graduated scale; and as all around us indulge in it up to a certain point of the scale, it is only from *that* point we allow covetousness begins; we begin to reckon guilt only from that point. Indignation is reserved until that point is passed, and the passion has become monstrous and extreme."

"We have adverted to the numerous maxims and proverbs, by the currency and frequent repetition of which, the world seeks to fortify itself against the claims of benevolence, and to justify itself in its all-grasping endeavors; do you find these maxims occasionally falling in self-justification from your own lips? He whom you acknowledge as your Lord and Master has declared, "that it is more blessed to give than to receive;" a saying which falls like a paradox, an enigma, an impossibility, on the infidel covetousness of the human heart—do you find that your heart, when left to itself, sympathizes more cordially on this point with your Master or with the world? The same Divine authority has pronounced it to be a characteristic of the pagan and ungodly world, to care for the provision of their temporal wants as solicitously as if no Providence superintended the world, no "heavenly Father" cared for them; do you stand apart from the irreligious in this respect? If their conduct proves that they have no God, does yours prove that you have one? If the world could lay open your breast, would it not be justified in concluding, that though you have a God, you cannot trust him? That, in temporal things, you are obliged after all to do as they do—rely exclusively upon yourself? And when the hour returns for your appearance

in the closet, in the sanctuary, at the post of christian usefulness and benevolence, but returns to mourn your absence; where, then are you to be searched for with the greatest likelihood of being found? At the altars of Mammon?—amidst the engrossing cares and services of the world?"

"You confess that God may justly complain of you as slothful and unfaithful in his service; would Mammon be justified in urging a similar complaint? Or, rather, may he not boast of you as one of his most diligent and exemplary servants? Are you providing more earnestly for the future moments of time than for the future ages of eternity? Which, think you, would make a greater demand on your patience, an argument to prove that you ought to give more to the cause of benevolence, or an excuse and justification for giving less?"

"In mechanics, the strength of a moving power is estimated by the amount of resistance which it overcomes; now, what is the strength of your benevolence when tried by a similar test? What does it overcome? Does it resist and bear down your vanity, love of ease and self-interest? Does it impel you to sacrifice "the pride of life," that you may increase your contributions to the cause of mercy?"

David prays. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness." If any order of piety in the christian church could have claimed entire immunity from the sin, surely it was that to which Timothy belonged. Yet we hear the apostle Paul warning even him. He had seen so many apparent proficients in piety drawn in by this moral *maelstrom* and drowned in perdition," that he called on his "dearly beloved Timothy, his own son in the faith"—called on him with more than his usual earnestness, to flee to the greatest distance from this fatal vortex. "O man of God,"

said he, "flee these things." As if, by a special appointment of heaven, the monitory strain addressed to a man of God—to such a man of God—and echoing through the church in all ages, should make it inexcusable for all inferior piety ever to doubt its liability to the sin.

"On no subject, perhaps, are the scriptures more copious and minute than on the sin of covetousness. If a faithful portrait of its loathsome character can induce us to hate it; if a sight of the virtues which it has extinguished, the vices with which it is often associated, and the depraved characters in whom it has most flourished; if the tenderest dissuasives from it, and the terrors of the Lord warning us against it; if Sinai and Calvary uniting and protesting against it—if all this combined can deter us from the sin of covetousness, then the Scriptures have omitted nothing which could save us from its guilty contamination.

"Thou shalt not covet." Such is the language of that command which not only concludes, but at the same time completes, and guards, and encompasses the moral law. If love be the fulfilling of the law, it follows that the whole decalogue is to be regarded as a law against selfishness; so that every selfish and every covetous act is, in effect an infraction of the whole law. It is love to ourselves at the expense both of God and our neighbor.

"Covetousness appears to have been the principal element in the first transgression. For did not the sin consist, chiefly, in an inordinate desire for an object on which God had virtually written, "Thou shalt not covet," and which properly belonged to another? in a disposition which originates all the acts of a grasping cupidity? It is observable that the terms in which the primary sin is described, bear a close resemblance to those in which Achan describes his covet-

ous act. "When I saw among the spoils," said he, "a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, then I coveted them and took them." "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." she saw, she coveted and she partook.

"And having entered into the composition of the first sin, and thus acquired a bad pre-eminence, *it has maintained its fatal ascendancy under each succeeding dispensation of religion.*

"What was the first sin of the christian church? it was covetousness in the instance of Annanias and Sapphira. It was covetousness which first interrupted the joy and stained the virgin glory of the present dispensation. And presently we shall see that it will take a leading part in the fearful drama of the final apostasy."

"Such is a mere outline of the representations of Scripture in relation to the guilt and evils of covetousness. Entering with the first transgression, and violating the spirit of the whole law, it has polluted, and threatened the existence of each dispensation of religion; infected all classes and relations of society; shown itself capable of the foulest acts; is described as occupying a leading place in the worst state of heathenism, in the worst times of apostasy, and in the worst characters of those times; and has the worst sins for its appropriate emblems, and its nearest kindred, and "all evil" in its train,"

"The term *mammon* according to its derivation, imports, *whatever men are apt to confide in.* The original term for *faith* is of the some derivation and for the same reason—because it implies such a reliance on God as the worldly mind places on riches. So that *mammon* came to signify riches,

because men so commonly put their trust on them. And when our Lord perceived the astonishment he had excited by exclaiming, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!" the only explanation which he gave, and which he deemed sufficient, imported, that as the danger of riches consisted in trusting in them, so the difficulty of possessing them, and not trusting in them, is next to an impossibility—a difficulty which can only be surmounted by omnipotent grace."

"Now, to trust in any created object, is to partake of its littleness, mutability, and debasement."

"Covetousness frequently serves in the stead of a thousand bonds to hold a religious professor in league with the world. Indeed the sin may be much more potent in him than in many of the avowed ungodly around him. In them, it has to divide the heart with other sinful propensities; but in him, perhaps, it reigns alone. They can range and wander at will over a large field of sinful indulgences, but he is restricted to this single gratification. As a christian professor, he must abstain from intemperance, licentiousness, and profanity; but worldliness is a sphere in which he may indulge to a certain extent without suspicion, for the indulgence comes not within human jurisdiction. If he would be thought a christian, he must not be seen mingling in certain society, nor indulging in a certain class of worldly amusements; but without at all endangering his christian reputation, he may emulate the most worldly in the embellishment of his house, the decoration of his person, the splendor of his equipage, or the luxury of his table. Accordingly, the only apparent difference between him and them, is—not in the greater moderation of his earthly aims, nor in the superior simplicity of his tastes, the spiritual elevation

of his pursuits, the enlarged benevolence and christian devotedness of his life—but, that the time which they occupy in spending, he employs in accumulating; the energies which they waste in worldly pleasure, he exhausts in worldly pursuits; the property which they devote to amusements abroad, he lavishes on indulgences at home; and while they are pursuing their gratification in one direction, he is indemnifying himself for not joining them by pursuing his gratification as eagerly in another. The loss of one of the bodily senses, it is said, quickens the perception of those that remain; worldliness alone remains to him, and that is quickened and strengthened by perpetual exercise. All that is unsanctified in his nature flows from the fountain of his heart with the greater force, that it has only this one channel in which to run. He may therefore be the more worldly in reality, for not allowing himself to be worldly in appearance. His worldliness is only compressed into a smaller compass. Profess what he may, and stand as high as he may in the opinion of his fellow-professors, he is essentially a worldly man. The world has its sects as well as the church, and he may be said to belong to one of the “stricter sects” of the world.”

“But where covetousness does not lead the professed believer to open apostasy, it involves him in the guilt of idolatry; and this, in the eye of scripture, is a step beyond. If the former be the rejection of the true God, the latter is the adoption of a false one. Endeavor to escape from the charge as he may, *his covetousness is idolatry.*

“Your devotedness to the world, we would say to the christian mammonist, tends, more than any of the arguments of infidelity, to confirm men in their insensibility to the claims of the Gospel. That Gospel found you, we will sup-

pose, in close worldly alliance with themselves; worshippers together in the temple of mammon; running the same race for the prize of wealth, having no aims or desires but such as wealth could gratify; and, consequently, bending all your endeavors after it. Subsequently, however, you profess to have undergone a change; and, when they hear you describe the nature of that change, or hear it described for you, they hear it said that you have at length found the pearl of great price; that you have been put in possession of a good which renders you independent of all inferior things, and which enables you to look down with scorn on those objects about which you have been so eager and selfish, abandoning them to such as knew no higher good; that, henceforth, your treasure is in heaven, and there will your heart be also."

"They hear this, and are amazed! They have not been able to detect the slightest abatement in the ardour of your worldly pursuits. They find you still among their keenest competitors in the race of wealth. What *new* object of affection you may have adopted, they know not; but they will readily acquit you of all ingratitude to your *first* love; for they can testify that your pulse does not beat less truly to its smiles and its frowns than it did when you knew no other object of regard. Whatever object you may trust *more*, they know not; but this they can witness, that, judging from your conduct, you do not trust money *less*; and, were it not that you *say* so, they would not have known that your eye was fixed on any invisible dependence. And when, besides this, they hear you admonished for your worldliness, and reproached with the tenacity of your grasp on wealth, and denounced for your devotion to self and your want of devotion to the cause of your new adop-

tion, how can they be otherwise than confirmed in their opinion that your profession is hypocrisy, and all religion only a name? And the effect is to deepen the sleep into which they have sunk in the arms of the world.

“We all know the persuasive power which the example of the martyrs and early confessors of the cross exercised on those who beheld it. Their entire dedication of their property and lives to the cause of Christ struck at the very throne of Mammon. Numbers awoke as from a dream; for the first time suspected the omnipotence of wealth, and were seized with a noble disdain of it. They saw men advancing with the standard of a new kingdom: the sincerity of those men they could not doubt, for they beheld them in their onward course, sacrificing their worldly prospects, trampling on their wealth, and smiling on and confronting death. The contagion of their example they could not resist; they fell into their train, and enrolled themselves as their fellow-subjects. But will not your opposite example, coinciding as its worldly influence does with the natural propensities of men operate far more powerfully in detaining men from Christ?”

“Now, one of the leading purposes of God in instituting a church, is, that, in the midst of this awful confederation of evil, he might have a people perpetually protesting against the prevailing apostasy. For this purpose he gives them *himself*, that, by admitting them to the Fountain, he might raise them, before the eyes of the world, to an independence of the stream. And, for the same purpose, he gives them, a portion of earthly property, of that common object of worldly trust, that they might have an opportunity of disparaging it before the world by subordinating it to spiritual ends, and thus publicly vindicating the outraged supremacy of the blessed God.”

“How momentous the issue, then, depending on the manner in which christians employ their property. By their visible subordination of it to God, they would be “condemning the world,” and putting a lasting disgrace upon its idol; they would be distinguishing themselves from the world more effectually than by assuming the most marked badge, or by making the most ostentatious profession; they would be employing the only argument for the reality of religion which the world generally will regard, which it cannot resist, and which would serve in the stead of all other arguments. Many things there are which the world can part with; many sacrifices which it can make in imitation of the christian; but to “esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt;” to sacrifice wealth, is an immolation, a miracle of devotedness, which no arts of worldly enchantment can imitate. They can understand how religion may be subordinated to gain; but that gain should be *sacrificed to God*, is a mystery which no article in their creed, no principle in their philosophy can explain. O, had the christian church been true to its original design, had its members realized the purpose of its heavenly Founder, they would have chained the idol, Wealth, to the chariot of the Gospel, and have led it in triumph through the world.”—*Mammon*, by Rev. John Harris.

“The practice of this duty, (giving to God) is the best remedy against the sin of covetousness on the one hand, and extravagance on the other. The exercise of any grace is the most effectual safeguard against the prevalence of its opposite vice. It is, indeed the only effectual safeguard. “Break off thy sins by righteousness,” said Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, “and thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” The heart of man cannot be unoccupied; it must be the seat

either of good or evil. Against that deadly sin of covetousness, then, the best resource is a glad compliance with God's precepts in the bestowal of our substance. Nor is this to be thought a trifling reason to influence us to this duty. Most insidious, most fatal, and most common, is the sin of covetousness. "The disease" says Dr. Chalmers, "is as near to universal as it is virulent." Wealth is the goddess whom all the world worshippeth. There is many a city in our empire, of which, with an eye of apostolical discernment, it may be seen that it is almost wholly given over to idolatry." It begins, perhaps with the specious plea of providing for the present and future wants of one's family, and passing through intermediate stages, ends, not unfrequently in being idolized simply for itself until we see the fearful picture of the miser, devoted to the acquisition of money without any reference to the gratification it is capable of procuring, and who, delighted in the possession of imaginary riches, lives and dies amid the realities of the direst poverty.—*Gold and the Gospel.*

"Then the multiplicity of cares which come upon one devoted to worldly accumulations, and the keen solicitude employed on money-adventures are so exhausting to the benevolent affections, so adapted to fix an undue value on money, that we need, for our own safety, all possible *engagements of mind in opposite directions.*

"No apology for neglecting the soul is so much in use as that of the multiplicity of cares, the want of time occasioned by labors and enterprises for gain.

"And here is the occasion for the action of some counter-acting element; for this is the reason why the gospel, preached to anxious worldlings, is a precious seed thrown away among thorns. The cares of the world and the de-

ceitfulness of riches choke the word ; they follow a man like his shadow, engrossing his thoughts, absorbing his soul, even while his body is in the house of God.

“Now the more one is exposed to this deluge of cares, all tending to put forward the growth of selfish affections, the more he needs that method of counteraction provided in the divine rule under consideration. The mind acting so much in one direction, needs to regain its health and balance by much action in the other : and God has interposed to bring relief to this point of danger and laid on us the duty of combating our love of money by making sacrifices of money. In this way he engages us to put one of our greatest enemies to the torture, and crucify him till he dies. This is a main branch of that great duty of mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts : we give our love of money a new wound as often as we make a sacrifice in a gift to the poor. It comports with the economy of grace, that our giant enemy shall not die by a single blow ; his destruction must be the work of time, of our whole life ; and the plan of our warfare best suited to its design, and to our natures, is one which engages us to a constant repetition of wounds, under which he dies by inches”

“It is no easy matter to be a drunkard, or profane, or dishonest, or licentious, and maintain a reputable standing among Christians ; but one may indulge his supreme love of the world in the form of covetousness, and yet maintain a specious semblance of religion, and a fair standing in the church ; indeed the church is quite too charitable towards her uncharitable members, and that because her own standard of beneficence is too low, and her own perceptions of Christian obligation in this matter are dim. There is now and then in human society what is called a *miser*—a man of

large means whose selfishness is so extreme, as to defeat its own purpose and inflict misery on himself. Such a one is held in general abhorrence, as a violator of the primitive law of society. Living only for himself, and refusing to contribute to the pleasures and advantage of society, he is by the common consent of men degraded to a lower order of beings; men make themselves merry at his expense, and find amusement in discourse of his strange habits. But the man who under more decent appearances, lives wholly to himself in the church of Christ, is even a more gross violator of the primitive law of that society, and his character deserves no more indulgence. Yet, for the reasons which we have given it finds a degree of indulgence; and worldly minds in the church can indulge their covetousness, when they could not other forms of sin as gross; and for the same reason, there are probably many in the church in supreme devotion to this form of sin, without being conscious of it. Hence, this sin should be the more guarded against in the church by extending and confirming those habits of beneficence that counter-work it."

"It is very possible, however, that some have never felt any want of the aid of such habits, and have never thought of giving as a means of crucifying the old man—just as many a prayerless man has never felt any need of those influences of the divine life which the good man secures by prayer. Of course they have nothing in their own experience by which they can appreciate this Christian law of alms. They have no conflicts with the power of selfishness, because they have always been submissive to it. Such, however, would soon discover what is wanting, should they set this Christian rule before them, and endeavor to adopt it as the law of their conduct. Ye who have no need to cultivate

a more benevolent heart, will of course find no reluctance to put in practice a rule of benevolence so reasonable. And if you are reluctant, that reluctance is proof of your selfishness, and your need to enter a school of vigorous discipline. This reluctance is proof that you have need to exercise your heart to self-denials as constantly as the rule contemplates."

—*Rev. Parsons Cooke.*

"Giving is an essential part of the Christian religion.— This position needs no special argument. In support of it the whole New Testament cries aloud. The system of redemption is from first to last, one prodigious process of gift. God loved the world, and gave his only begotten Son. The Son loved us, and gave himself to death for us all. This giving does not rest at the point of bounty, but passes on to that of inconceivable sacrifice. Every man on whose spirit the true light of redemption breaks, finds himself heir to a heritage of *givings*, which began on the eve of time, and will keep pace with the course of eternity. To giving he owes his all; in giving he sees the most substantial evidence he can offer that he is a grateful debtor; and all the life of Him in whom he trusts says, far more pathetically than words could say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving is ordained by Christianity to be both bountiful and cheerful. It does not satisfy the demands of our religion that we give; we must give much. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." This refers to the amount of gifts; but having decided that the amount must be unsparing, Christianity is not even then content; that unsparing amount must be given with a cheerful heart, "not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." One of the oddest things in all argument is that this passage is sometimes resorted to as a cover by those who

claim the liberty to give away as little as ever they please. Let them turn to the passage—II. Corinthians, ix : 5-7, and they will see that it is not left to them, or to any man, to decide whether giving shall be on a bountiful or a sparing scale. That it is not to be sparing and is to be bountiful, is settled ; and then a cheerful heart is commanded in addition. The two-fold requirement is, a gift not sparing as to amount, nor grudging as to feeling. * * *

“If every one, before assigning any portion as a thank offering to the Giver of all, is to spend what meets his views of providing for his own and his children’s wants, present and prospective, in ninety-nine out of every hundred cases it will prove that the surplus for giving away is next to nothing. In many cases, giving liberally will be postponed till the family provision is made, and resources are fairly in advance of demand ; and by that time all heart for giving will be gone. In fact, this rule of giving away all you have to spare, is that by which multitudes think they are living ; whereas, could they get an account of all they gave on this system last year, and resolve next year to consecrate the small proportion of a tenth, they would be utterly astonished to find how much the latter exceeds their habitual liberality. One strong reason for some definite rule lies in this ; That we have far better memories for our virtues than for our obligations, for the pounds we give away than for those we receive, or spend upon ourselves. Even truly excellent persons, who have not tested their givings, monstrosly exaggerate the amount of them to their own minds. The relish of one act of liberality remains long upon the lips ; and some who believe that “their hand is never out of their pocket,” would be confounded if the great account when all items are entered were placed before them, and

they saw how miserably little their endless deeds of generosity amount to. The first expenditure of all should be that which sanctifies the rest—that which is not for self, or flesh, or earth, or time, but for the Lord, for gratitude, for the training of the soul, for store in heaven. Our own morsel will be sweeter and more wholesome too, when the due acknowledgement has been first laid, with a bountiful hand and a thankful heart, on the altar of the Saviour. “Ye shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor green ears, till the self-same day that ye have brought an offering to your God.” Lev. xxiii: 11. This was the spirit of the first fruits—a spirit of noble preference for holy feeling over selfish care.” —*Rev. William Arthur.*

We have chosen to present largely the views of others respecting the gigantic sin of *covetousness*, and its appropriate *antidote*; that by the mouth of many witnesses every word may be established!

We pity the callous heart that can withstand the force of these barbed arrows. The sum of the whole matter is: *Covetousness* is the primeval and central sin of man—the parent of sins—*Idolatry*. With consummate art, like its first father, this dominant sin has crept into God’s house and tempted his children to forsake Him and worship “mammon.” The sin of the world has become the sin of the church.

To subdue this leprous malady, God, who knew the heart of man, appointed an appropriate antidote. As our worldly wants, pursuits and possessions tend daily to aggravate and strengthen this disease, God has wisely prescribed as a counteracting agen-

ey, the frequent giving to Him portions of our worldly substance, as a standing protest against the treasure of mammon, a standing acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, and a standing check to the besetting sin of covetousness. The virulence of the disease and its daily aggravations, require the antidote to be frequently, largely and faithfully applied.

Alas! that God's people have been so long duped by quack remedies, emanating, stealthily from the world, the flesh and Satan.

"A religion that did not check our selfishness could not come from a God of love. Creatures there are, and creatures too, calling themselves Christians, above all names, who would fain take the benefit of this religion of love without its costing them anything! O, could we lift one such soul abruptly away from the midst of this assembly, up and up into yonder celestial light, and there set it upon the sea of glass; as it saw its own image reflected in that sea, with so much of greed, of earthliness, of self, of meanness, shown in the blaze of that day, would it not shriek out in terror, that heaven was the most horribly exposing place wherein to a poor wretch was ever driven?"

"I plead, then, most importunately plead, for practical attention to this duty now. I plead for man's sake, for the gospel's sake, for the Church's sake, for the Lord's sake, for your own sake."—*Rev. Wm. Arthur.*

CHAPTER XI.

SATAN'S LIE REFUTED.

It is a subtle suggestion of Satan to the carnal heart, that we cannot afford to give so much of our substance to God and his church—that giving diminishes our means of living.

The pretexts and pleas that God's people so often set up to excuse themselves from giving, unquestionably prove that they have but little, if any faith, in God's word and promises in relation to this duty.

The Scriptures abundantly affirm that the willing and cheerful giver shall be blessed both in his soul and in his "basket and store." And how could it be otherwise? God is infinitely wise and good. It is as impossible for him to require anything of man to his injury, as it is for him to lie, and he would do both, if he did not bless the cheerful giver.—
"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." The teachings and promises of God, in respect to this duty, are abundant and explicit. Will not God fulfill his promises to his people in respect to this duty as readily as any other? He has even established it as a law in his moral kingdom, similar to the law in his natural kingdom, that as the seed sown in the soil shall yield an increase, even with more certainty will the giving to Him of our worldly substance yield a rich return. "Give and it shall

be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together." There is no law of grace more uniform and sure than this. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he that soweth in blessing shall reap also in blessings." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, there is that withholdeth more than is mete, but it tendeth to poverty." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and the first fruits of all thy increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Here is the assertion of the law of cause and effect—the effect resulting as a consequence of the cause. He that soweth reapeth. "Honor the Lord &c," "so shall thy barns be filled with plenty." This is God's established law. The converse is equally a law. "There is that withholdeth more than is mete, but it tendeth to poverty." Is the conduct of the Christians of this day governed by these divine laws in the economy of grace? God's empty treasury, and the number of his giftless people answer that the mass of his people do not regard these laws, and the only solution of this habitual neglect is, that they do not believe God's word.

Well might Christ exclaim of this generation in this, as he did of his disciples in another matter, "O, faithless generation, how long shall I bear with you."

The root of this evil is doubtless contained in the fact, that the pernicious error has crept into the church in latter times, that the Old Testament regulation of giving to God, with the commands and promises relative to this duty, have become obsolete under the New Testament, and are therefore not binding on the consciences and lives of Christians. This error has been handed down, as a tradition, unquestioned and unexamined, for generations; and yet there are but few who will even attempt to give a reason for the belief. In fact there is no support found for it in the New Testament.

No one disputes that many of the ceremonies and services of the Levitical ritual of worship, including all sacrifices typical of Christ, have accomplished their end and ceased under the New Testament. But the service of worshipping God by devotional offerings did not belong to the typical service, did not originate with the Levitical law, and did not fall with it. The unjustifiable liberty that the supporters of this opinion take with Old Testament teachings and usages, would sweep away a large portion of Old Testament scripture as obsolete and not binding on us. For example, a passage quoted above, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, &c.," is not connected with the Levitical law, but found in the Proverbs of Solomon, and is immediately followed by, the words: "My son despise not the

chastening of the Lord, &c;” quoted by Paul in the 12th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Now if Paul regarded the 11th and 12th verses in the 3rd chapter of Proverbs as the inspired word of God for the guidance of New Testament Christians; who will undertake to say that the 9th and 10th verses are obsolete and not binding? The opposers of the views we advocate, are forced, either to reject this passage or abandon their doctrine. This brief passage embraces and distinctly expresses nearly every point we contend for, and if this passage was adopted and practiced by the church, we would almost be ready to say that we would ask nothing more.

“Honor the Lord with thy substance,”—Here is the duty of worshipping God by offerings. “And the first-fruits.” This requires God’s portion to come *first*, “of all their increase”—This demands God’s portion of *all our increase*—in Paul’s language, “*all good things.*” “*So shall thy barns be filled with plenty.*” This connects the duty with temporal prosperity. Here, as it were in a nut-shell, we have all the cardinal elements of this service.

But if this passage is to be expunged from the Christian’s Bible, then may you expunge the divine counsels, “a wise son maketh a glad father,” “I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me,” “a good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children.” And the whole cluster

of beautiful and inspired gems that compose that book; for they all rest on the same authority.

“Now if the command, “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase,” be the word of God to us, and binding on Christians, why is it not obeyed? But where is the church that enjoins obedience to this command upon its members? or whose members obey it?

Another passage, (Mal. 3: 7-12) has been perverted to suit the modern views. The short book of Malachi contains two themes, the rebuke of God’s people for their sins, and predictions of Christ and his kingdom. The third chapter opens with the announcement of the Forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, and of “the Lord, the messenger of the covenant,” who “shall suddenly come to his temple,” “and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” verse 3.

When Christ came, he purified the church and prepared it for his reign under the latter dispensation. “He would ‘sit as a refiner of gold and silver,’ ‘to purify his church and the hearts of his people, from all dross;’ and thus he would prepare a pure race of ministers, and a spiritual priesthood, (instead of the corrupt and rejected tribe of Levi) who might present before him a holy worship.”—*Scott in loco.*

“That they may offer unto the Lord (Christ) an offering in righteousness.” “Then shall the offering of Judea and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in days of old, and in former years.”

All this is manifestly to take place after the coming of Christ to his temple, and his purifying his church. “The offering of Judea and Jerusalem,—pleasant unto the Lord,” was the offering of the purified church under Messiah’s reign, the christian dispensation. To bring about this reformation, the Lord says, “I will come near to you to judgment.” verse 5. And charged them of a number of sins, the last in the catalogue and dwelt upon more fully than the others, was “robbing Him in tithes and offerings,” “Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them.” verse 7. “Will man rob God? yet ye have robbed me.” This is the chief in the catalogue of sins from which he would purify his church when he would “come near to them in judgment,” which he did when he destroyed their temporal blessings by the scourge of the Roman sword.

But the modern doctrine is that the law of tithes and offerings was abrogated by Christ, and ceased to be binding under his dispensation. Now where there is no law there is no transgression. If the law of tithes and offerings had ceased to be in force, it could be no sin to neglect that service. If the

law of tithes and offerings was abrogated by Christ, he must have purified his people from a sin after the delinquency charged ceased to be a sin. What havoc do human traditions make of the word of God. Christ said to the Scribes and Pharisees "why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions."

But it may be asked, "Do not the blessings promised on repentance in verses, 10, 11, 12—'I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, &c.'—'and all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts,' refer to a period prior to Christ?" There is no foundation for this opinion, as the Jews were never in so prosperous a state from the days of Malachi to Christ.

On a parallel promise, in Zeph. 3: 20, "For I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord," Dr. Thomas Scott remarks, "The Lord would cause true christians to be greatly honored and commended in all those countries where they had been stigmatized and treated with contempt. Especially converted Israel shall be thus honored among all people of the earth, when they shall be gathered from their dispersed and captive state into the church of Christ and into their own land, in the open view of all nations. These events alone can fully answer to the lan-

guage of this prophecy." That the passage under consideration has not been generally carefully examined by those who quote it, is manifest.

Several authors whom we have consulted, who have written on the subject of gospel giving, in quoting we suppose from memory, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, &c." leave out the phrase, "*That there may be meat in my house,*" which expresses an important element in this service, but one almost entirely overlooked in modern teachings, viz: that God's revenue brought into his house is the *meat* for the supply of the wants of his church. "Azariah the chief priest said, since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty; for the Lord hath blessed his people and that which is left is this great store." II. Chron. 21: 10. We have heard the words, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house," used to enforce the faithful performance of all the christian duties except the one the words express; and the words, "If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, &c" used to encourage God's people to pray for the outpouring of his spirit to revive his work.

This passage nails to the wall Satan's lie, that God's people cannot afford to give so much to Him. Among the blessings promised to the obedient peo-

ple is, "Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store."
—Deut. 28: 5.

God challenges his people to "prove him *herewith*," that is, by "bringing *all* the *tithes* into the store-house," "if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." The windows of heaven are *shut* to withhold providential blessings from those who withhold from God his portion. "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground." Here is blessing, prosperity and protection promised to those who render to God the portion due him.

Of those that feared the Lord, He said, "and they shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels." "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." At the day of judgment will be exhibited the marked distinction between him that serveth God and him that serveth not God, between those who pay "their offerings in righteousness" and those who "rob God." At the judgment Christ will approve those who have "ministered to Him," and condemn those who have failed to "minister to Him"—who have robbed Him.

Thus it will appear that the searching scrutiny

of the final Judge will be but the consummation of his warnings and promises by his prophets." "Ministering to Him," was the prime duty required, and "robbing Him," was the chief sin charged in the days of Malachi. "Ministering to Him"—"an offering in righteousness"—was the prime service Christ claimed, and "robbing Him" was the the chief sin from which he purified his church when "He suddenly came to his temple." "Ministering to Him" is to be the badge of title to his kingdom, and "robbing Him," is to be the mark of condemnation, "in that day when He shall make up his jewels," and "shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Thus the first act of homage, "an offering in righteousness," that God required of the fallen family of Adam, shall be the criterion in the final judgement of Adam's race.

"One of the most instructive and impressive facts that can be stated on this whole subject is found in the history of the Jews, and ought to be known to the most cursory reader of the Bible. They gave not a tenth, as is generally supposed, but fully one-third of their gains to religious uses, and notwithstanding this heavy draught upon their wealth, they prospered as a people—prospered as no people under the heavens ever prospered; they had almost no pauperism, that great running sore in every large city—that great problem for the statesmen of Europe, which none of them have yet mastered. Not only were the Jews blessed in the ob-

servance of this divine law, but they never failed to be punished when they withheld the offerings that were required by the Mosaic code, or brought the sick and the lame, they were stripped and peeled and made to feel that God honors only those who honor him. It stands out as a fact constantly recurring in their history, that when they attempted to rob God they inflicted loss upon themselves. All gotten gains are sure to bring a curse, says the worldly adage; but there is a deeper meaning which the world has not fathomed, and that is, that all property from which the Lord's portion has not been given brings a curse sooner or later to the possessor; *the untithed dollar will sting the hand that grasps it.* * * *

"No one has a right title to his property till the Lord's portion has been taken out of it. There are christian people all over our land greatly straitened in their business, for no other reason than that they give too little. Their contributions are not proportioned to what the Lord has given to them. * * * They do not give enough to secure heaven's blessing on their substance; and without this blessing they can have no enjoyment in all they have. There is a connection as certain, as unyielding as the iron chains of fate, between giving and the enjoyment of property; between giving and the increase of worldly possessions; between giving and spiritual blessings. God, both in his word and his providence, has bound these things together; and those who attempt to divorce them, though they may seem to prosper for a time, will be found in the end to be making money "to put it into a bag withholes." The man who gives as God requires will prosper as other men cannot; currents of prosperity will be opened up and poured upon him to his great surprise and joy. The local church, that through its membership complies with this

ordinance of giving, will have the sweetest smiles of the master—will be “as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.”

“Let us once more go back to the Jewish history, where there are so many “ensamples” for our instruction and warning. For long weary months the land of Israel had been consumed by drought; the grass had withered, the springs and streams had dried up, the ground cracked open, the leaves upon the trees crumpled and fell, the cattle stood about with swollen tongues moaning for water. What is the cause of this terrible judgement that shades every brow and makes every heart quail? There is a cause, and it is easily found. In yonder temple is a room in which were stored the offerings for the priests. Those who served at the altar were fed by these offerings of the people; this was all their living; they were not allowed to own and cultivate land, but they were to be supported from the temple. Now, however, that store-house is empty—there is *no meat* in it—nothing for priests and Levites to draw their daily supplies from.

* * *

“Under the felt pressure of the drought, the people turn to the temple and ask what is to be done. God says, *Fill that room*; heap it up to the ceiling; bring all your tithes, not a part now and a promise of the remainder hereafter, but bring them *all*—the **WHOLE**—and I will stop the drought; yea more (He always gives more than we can expect,) I will give you such overflowing harvests that your barns will not hold them; just see if I don’t; try me; put me to the test; prove me now; bring the tithes and you shall have the crop. The offerings are brought with many a strain and murmur and misgiving and shrinking back, they are brought; all arrears are paid; that long black account is canceled; and as the last bag full of wheat is heaved

upon the great pile, some one looks around and says, there's a cloud; I suppose now we'll have rain. No, says another, we have been deceived so often, all the people must certainly starve. But the cloud spreads and thickens; then a drop splashes upon some upturned face, and another, and yet another is felt. And now the shower comes on, and the people clap their hands and shout aloud for joy; the springs gush out, the streams overflow their banks, the ground everywhere is soaked, and fertility takes the place of barrenness, and such a bounteous harvest the hills and vales of Judea never bore. So God fulfilled his word.

"All over this land there are churches—cold, shriveled-up, dead things, called churches—no efficiency, no activity, scarcely any symptoms of life; prayers, if there are any prayers at all, are so dull and heavy that they never rise to Heaven; sermons are unheeded and unappreciated, and fall as water spilled upon the ground, no impression made upon the world, no conversions, no growth in Christian life, no enjoyment of religion, no comfort, no assurance, nothing to distinguish professors from the world, except that their names are on the Session-book, and they are sometimes seen at the Communion table. There is no out-poured spirit, no shaking among the dry bones, no sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees. If this world is to be converted by such churches, then the millennium will not be here soon, and the day of Judgment is yet a long way off. Over such scenes, we suppose the angels, as they fly past on their missions of mercy, cover their faces with their wings and shed the tear of real grief. But why such scenes, why this dearth and famine, and mildew and death, where all ought to be vigor and joyous life? Would you like to have the answer—would it interest you to have the matter explained? Here is the explanation, whether you

want to hear it or not. There is **NO MEAT** in God's house.

* * * God will not, God cannot bless a church with an empty store-house; the heavens are brass; no prayer goes up, and no Spirit comes down, while that ugly record stands on the register above.

People tell us they cannot afford to give. Can they afford to do without giving? Can they bear the consequences of attempting to rob God? No church under the heavens can have its welfare and efficiency advanced—no church can have the elements of real prosperity that does not honestly and fully meet its pecuniary obligations. **NO MEAT, NO BLESSING.**—*Rev. J. C. Lindsay, S. Pres, Review, July, 1872.*

CHAPTER XII.

GOSPEL MOTIVES TO GOSPEL GIVING

There are several cardinal truths, closely linked together, that the Gospel lays upon the conscience of every Christian.

1st. He *himself* is not his own. He belongs to Christ. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, *therefore* glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his."

When Paul called attention to "the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that the abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality," (single heartedness) he added as accounting for this single-

heartedness. "But *first* gave their *own selves* to the Lord, and unto us, by the will of God." This is the natural order. The thorough single hearted gift of *ourselves* to the Lord, is necessarily followed by the giving of our worldly goods, for the latter is included in the former. When the wife gives herself in marriage, her worldly goods go with her. If therefore the gift of ourselves to Christ is thorough, single-hearted, our worldly goods are included in the marriage vow.

2nd. It follows, therefore, that the substance that God has in the hands of the Christian is not his own. God has never made him a fee simple title to it, but only lent it to him on certain conditions and for certain uses.

The disciple of Christ is a "*steward*," entrusted with talents to be used in his Master's interest (his own interests being identified with Christ's,) as a test of his fidelity and fitness to possess an inheritance of his own. "If ye have not been faithful in that which is *another's*, who will give you that which is your own?"

The doctrine of the stewardship of Christ's people is not a mere figure of speech—an empty form—as many regard it; but a literal matter of fact; more literally true than that a renter and tenant among men is not the owner and hence not entitled to unrestrained control and use.

3d. Christ requires that his ownership and Lordship shall be kept in constant remembrance; and as the most effectual means to this end, he demands that his people shall make frequent offerings to Him of their worldly substance. Their hearts need this service, perhaps as much as prayer. This is not a mere nominal demand, it is no figure of speech, but a literal matter of fact, as truly so as that the rent of a tenant is not merely nominal, but expected to be paid. "To man's discretionary use of God's trust to him there is, and always has been a limit." "In the disposal of his property, there was a portion placed out of his discretion, of which God said, "This may not be used for thy pleasure, *it is mine.*"

"Who is Lord over us?" is the suggestion of the natural heart. Deny it, or disguise it as he will, practical independence of God is the darling aim of the natural man, in all his ways, in the use of all his talents, and among them, of his substance. To use it just as he pleases himself, on his pleasures, on his vanities, subservient to the attainment of power, or, as in the miser's case, to hoard and worship it for itself, is the determination and the habit of the unregenerate mind. To use it *as God pleases*—with a thankful spirit for his own purposes, with as thankful a spirit when expended on objects foreign to himself—this is not in all his thoughts."

"How absolutely necessary, then, that there be a perpetual check to this universal tendency! a perpetual reminder to man that he is not a sovereign, but a subject; that his

goods are not his own, but God's: and this is found in that perpetual ordinance in force in patriarchal, and Jewish and Christian times alike, whereby God has reserved for his own especial glory and service a portion of that which in his bounty he has bestowed on man. This is the rent which reminds the tenant that he is not the owner in fee; this is the interest which reminds the borrower that the principal belongs not to him; this is the tribute money, which reminds a subject nation that it is not independent; this is God's share, to remind his creature that all belongs to him." —*Gold and the Gospel.*

4th. Offerings to Christ, whether from the rich or poor, must absolutely come *first*: even before "what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink and wherewithal ye shall be clothed." This, too, is no hyperbole—no figure of speech, but a literal matter of fact, and obviously the only safe and just arrangement that could be made, as a man must pay his rent grain when he gathers it, else it will be consumed and he will have nothing to pay. If christians recognized that their offerings were due to God himself as Proprietor, they would see that his claim must come *first*, before their temporal wants. But when they regard their gifts as going to man they *will act* upon the adage, "charity begins at home."

5th. The gifts of God's people to Him, do not diminish their worldly substance—are not a pecuniary loss—but are seed sown in faith, that under the

law of grace, will yield a rich return in temporal as well as spiritual blessings; so that the more they give the more they will have to give. While on the other hand, God chastises those who withhold from him his due, by withholding from them his Providential favor and "cursing their blessings."—"Prove me herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing." "If you will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. (Mal." 2: 2.) "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is mete, but it tendeth to poverty." Here is a fine field for the daily cultivation of faith, but in which this grace is seldom brought into requisition. *Faith* can put Christ's claim before bodily wants, when reason cannot see how to do it.—*Faith* never says, "I have nothing to spare." *Unbelief* often does. The faith of the poor widow had "two mites" to spare, though she had nothing left. Faith says, God's offering must be paid or his frown must be incurred—my heart must suffer—my business be unblest. First the kingdom of God, bodily wants after. This is the law of grace.

Every believer is expected heartily to subscribe

to these doctrines, and pledge himself to these services when he becomes a follower of Christ. All these five scripture doctrines are embraced in Christ's four words, "*Let him deny himself.*" It is manifest that the mass of christians of the present day have not *so* understood and *so* embraced the gospel. They have not *so* denied themselves and taken up the cross. They do not understand that to be a christian requires this service as truly as prayer. The reformation needed is nothing short of a revival of genuine godliness, and this can only be brought about by the divinely appointed means. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4: 2-4.)

Let the ministers of Christ preach the whole gospel; not neglecting to teach and press upon the people of God, in the spirit of love, the claim of Christ upon their worldly substance. "First to give their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God;" and then to give their substance to him as he gives them the grace and the means. Let ministers patiently show the people both the

duty and the encouragements to give to God—that *this* part of “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and that which is to come;” not a burden to be shunned, but a privilege to be welcomed—not a pecuniary sacrifice, but a seed, when sown in faith, that produces a rich temporal fruit—all of which the scriptures abundantly teach. “Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound in *this* grace also.” “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

It is the duty of every christian to pray for blessings upon others as well as himself; but manifestly it is his first duty to pray for *himself*. The most important end to be secured by every christian in the performance of this duty is *his own good*. So in the duty of *giving*: the christian should have an eye to the good of others, but the chief and vital demand for this service is *his own good*. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” It is the duty of every christian to labor for the salvation of others. But manifestly it is the first and great question with him to secure the spiritual life of *his own soul*.

Ministers should therefore plainly teach their people the *personal interest*, spiritual and temporal,

involved in this duty—an interest that cannot be neglected without incurring guilt, and God's displeasure, entailing leanness on the soul and even hazarding the soul itself. The personal obligation and interest should be placed above and even distinct from the needs of the church, so that the people would see that the prime and indispensable reason for this service lies in their own spiritual wants and that the good to be accomplished to others is secondary and incidental. "Disinterested benevolence" is not taught or recognized in the scriptures. It does not consist with the nature of moral beings. God never required any being to do anything that was not for his own good. Christ taught, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself."— But he said "There is no man that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and in the world to come, eternal life."

That so many laborious ministers of the gospel are painfully embarrassed and crippled in their work for want of support, and that the wide missionary fields at home and abroad, ripe for the harvest, are so poorly provided for, is truly a sore evil. But the defective self-consecration and the low state of faith among christians, and the worldly-conformity and covetousness prevalent in the

church, resulting in large measure, from the neglect of this divinely appointed means of grace, is a *much more alarming evil*; for it is *sucking out the life-blood of the church*, is the mother of many spiritual evils, and the want of means for the work of the church is but a part of its degenerate offspring.

Let ministers say to their people, we do not ask you to give to us ministers, we ask you to give to Christ for his honor and your soul's good. We are not employed by you to preach the gospel, we are sent by Christ. We are not your servants, but Christ's. We are not paid by you for our services, we live of the fruits of the gospel.

We do not ask you to give to "Foreign Missions," to "Sustentation", to Education for the ministry", &c.; we ask you to give to Christ, as he requires of his redeemed followers, and as he gives you faith and means. This service is too important to your soul's interest to leave it to be measured and regulated by your imperfect knowledge and views of these church enterprises. But few christians have the opportunity of forming a correct judgment of the importance of these causes, and therefore many make frivolous excuses for not giving to them.— But every christian knows that he is infinitely indebted to Christ, and he never can have a fear of giving to an unworthy object or giving too much when he gives to his Redeemer. Let all classes,

then, be taught and encouraged to "Honor the Lord with their substance and with the first-fruits of all their increase." Let the church authorities provide suitable arrangements whereby all can give to the Lord of whatever substance they have—"Communicate in all good things," according to the apostle's injunction; "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."

When the divine teachings, "in demonstration of the spirit and power," take hold of the christian judgment, conscience and heart, a fountain will be opened that will need no *pumping*, but by the power of faith working by love, will pour a perpetual stream into the treasury of the Lord. The poorest will claim the privilege of giving to Christ—"The abundance of their joy and deep poverty, abounding unto the riches of their single-heartedness, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of ministering to the saints." And the larger and wealthier congregations, instead of bestowing four-fifths or nine-tenths of their contributions upon their own pastor, and one-fifth or one-tenth upon the great work of spreading the gospel to the perishing millions, will find that one-fifth or one-tenth will abundantly supply their pastor's wants, and will leave four-fifths or nine-tenths to support

the ministry among the poor and send the gospel to the destitute.

“The christian will regard his charities, however great, as the *discharge of an obligation*. The right to give or withhold at pleasure belongs to God alone. To his creatures God says, “Ye are not your own;” and emphatically to his ransomed children, “Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.” The very beginning of the religious life is an act of entire consecration to God. The christian’s profession is a constant proclamation to the world that the claim of Him who bought him with his blood, covers his estate, his faculties, his all. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Therefore ransomed sinners, whatever thou givest, thou dost but “render unto God the things that are God’s.” “Oh! Lord, our God! all this store that we have prepared cometh of thine hand and all is thine own.” Hence the terrible declaration of God—not against those who gave nothing but against those who gave what was of inferior value—“Ye have robbed God.”—*Zaccheus*.

CHAPTER XIII.

TITHES THE MINIMUM MEASURE OF GOD’S PORTION.

The question is frequently asked, ‘How am I to decide how much and how often I am to give?’—With some this is an honest, perplexing question; with others, it is asked much in the spirit that the Pharisee asked the Saviour, “Who is my neighbor?” for the purpose of avoiding the truth.

If the five Scripture principles we have present-

ed, be heartily embraced, the difficulty will be solved. Let the believer receive as literal, living, practical truths, that he is not his own; that his substance is not his own; that God requires frequent offerings to him as acknowledgements of his ownership and man's dependence, and for our growth in grace; that God's portion little or much, must come *first*; that God loves and blesses the cheerful giver, while his displeasure rests on our basket and store when his portion is withheld; let him believe, embrace, and attempt in reliance on divine grace, to practice these Scripture teachings, and he will need no further rule as a guide to duty,

Let the Christian, with an eye to his obligation to Christ, and dependence on his grace, give something, whatever he can, regularly, often, if not money, something else; and like the man who prays often, the more he prays, the easier the duty becomes, and the more he values and loves the privilege—this communion with God is his strength and joy; so the man who gives often, the more he gives the more he values and loves the privilege, and the more he can give; for experience gives his faith encouragement and strength. Scripture teachings and promises respecting this duty no longer sound to him as unmeaning jargon.

“Give and it shall be given to you”—He now knows what this means. “He that soweth in bless-

ing shall reap also in blessing." He knows what this means. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He knows what this means. "The abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their single-heartedness" He knows what this means. Does unbelief whisper in his ear; "I have nothing to spare; he startles with shame at the Satanic suggestion, and faith responds, "*God is able to make all grace abound toward you.*" We venture to affirm that the Christian who has thus served Christ for twelve months, is not troubled with the perplexing question how much and how often he must give; any more than the Christian who has learned to pray often and knows its necessity and value, has any difficulty as to how often he ought to pray. A Christian with clear views of his obligation to Christ and lively faith, does not need any fixed measure of amount or rule of frequency in giving. He walks by faith and not by sight. God is his dependence, and his faith is his measure. When unbelief says, "I cannot spare it;" faith replies "*God is able to make all grace abound.*" He is my endorser. The Pentecostal christians needed no fixed measure of amount as a guide in their giving. The Macedonian christians needed no fixed measure. Zaccheus needed no fixed measure. The poor widow needed no fixed measure.

But there are many who attend the house of God

and are disposed to participate in this service who do not profess to have christian faith; and there are many who profess to have the christian faith who have not the faith just described. These classes ask, "How are we to know the measure of our duty?" Does the word of God furnish no explicit guide in this so important duty, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool need not err therein?" We answer, yes; unless he be of the class described by the homely verse,

"A man convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still."

"Has God left the decision of this important matter to each man's conscience and judgment, or has he made known his own will thereon? I do not think any *a priori* reasoning can determine this point—at least with such as are disposed to reduce God's claims to as small a compass as they can; but I certainly think that the weight of antecedent probability is in favor of his having done so. Let us remember, at this stage of our enquiry, that the gift of *any portion*, no matter what, of our goods to the bestower of them does not appear by any means to be a natural suggestion of the mind, as some might suppose. The recipient of bounty with ourselves does not feel himself called on to return a portion of that bounty to the giver. And far less would he feel the necessity of such return when it was God who was the bestower, from the consideration that he, who had all things in his power, could not possibly want anything at his creature's hands. If, then, it be but reasonable to suppose that it was God who first claimed from the creature a portion of his gifts, it seems equally reasonable

to suppose that he mentioned what that portion was to be. This is the natural inference, unless we are to suppose that *anything*, no matter how mean and trifling and worthless, is sufficient for God.

“What hath God said?” Has he spoken to us in that book which is the lamp to our feet and the lantern to our paths, or has he been silent there? If he has spoken there, clearly then the controversy is decided with those to whom this essay is addressed—namely, such as take the Bible for their one infallible guide; if he has not spoken, I should despair of deciding it by any other reasoning. But that he has done so—not merely for one time, dispensation, or people, but for all times and dispensations, that he has done so for us Christians, as he did for his ancient people Israel, is the conclusion to which a careful examination of Scripture has led me, and which I will endeavor to prove in the following pages :

“That God has, in the case of his people, Israel, required the tenth of man’s substance to be given for his service, and expended as the circumstances of that dispensation required, is not disputed. The first question, then, that meets us is, when did he first require it? Was this as a *Divine Institution*, first imposed on a particular nation, and first ordained in the Mosaic law, or does it date from a much higher antiquity? Do we draw our first argument with Christians, that it is our duty to devote a tenth to their Lord from the fact of their being the successors of Israel, to whom it was a duty, or can we appeal to an earlier authority, before Moses gave the law from Sinai, or Abraham was separated from the Gentile world? It will be perceived that I rest my great reliance in this question on the *divine institution* of this proportion of a tenth. I certainly do so.

I am fully persuaded, that if it has not this foundation to rest on, other arguments, however forcible with individuals, will have no overpowering weight to silence the objections or overcome the natural selfishness of the mass of men, even of men professing godliness.

“ We have reason to conclude from Scripture that every important part of human worship and obedience has had its origin, not from man, but directly from God himself.— True worship never sprang from the earth, and ascended with acceptance to Heaven ; but from Heaven she came to earth, and thence went back as a welcome visitant to her original home, the bosom of God. And if it be said that this argument might hold good for the direction of a *portion* of man’s substance being given to God, but that God would, probably, leave the exact proportion to each believer’s own discretion, we answer, that he has himself shown that the proportion of the gift is not beneath his notice, for in the Mosaic law he has ordained a tenth.

The institution of the Sabbath day affords a parallel case, and one bearing very forcibly, as it appears to me, on our present enquiry. In acknowledgment of the great fact of the creation, and of the sovereign power of the Creator over his creature, God would have man to dedicate a portion of his time to his service. Did he then leave this portion undefined? Had he done so, humanly speaking, we would not have had a Sabbath day at all. Men left to their own judgment, would have varied from each other in the portion set apart. Indolence and aversion to spiritual things would narrow and curtail that portion, till, at length, the very semblance of it would have vanished from among men.”—*Gold and the Gospel.*

The careful reader of the scriptures need not be

told that from the days of Abraham down through the Patriarchal age for five hundred years we have in the briefly recorded history, repeated instances of the giving to God the *tenth* of all products, while no express command of this duty is thus far recorded. In the days of Moses God appointed a regular and formal service and worship, and commanded the tenth of all to be offered to him, besides other offerings and sacrifices. The bloody sacrifices were confessions of sin and typical of Christ. The unbloody offerings were acts of devotional worship. This continued for fifteen hundred years, till the offering of Christ, the Lamb of God, superceded the sin offerings, and the whole temple worship was modified to suit the expanded character of christianity. The Church under both dispensations was *one*. The infant Jewish church expanded into manhood in christianity. The essential elements of the Jewish worship were not abolished, but modified in form. Prayer, praise, reading and expounding God's word, were all continued. Were tithes and offerings so long in use as the comprehensive and only form of worship abolished? There is no evidence that they were, but much to the contrary. Is there any conceivable reason why they should have been abolished? For more than fifteen hundred years of the world they composed the whole formal worship.—Prayer and praise received their expression in ma-

terial offerings. Up to the coming of Christ material offerings composed the chief part of divine worship. There must have been some special propriety in this form of worship, as God so long gave it such pre-eminence.

“How expressively 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.”

But some contend that tithes and offerings were adapted to and required by the politico-religious character of the Jewish government—the Theocracy—and therefore not adapted to or demanded by christianity. It is a sufficient refutation of this opinion to state the facts, that tithes and other offerings were strictly acts of religious worship, and not a state revenue; were long in use before the existence of the Jewish government established by Moses, and the first mention of the tithes had no connection with or reference to the Jewish government or Mosaic worship, *but had especial and sole reference to christianity.*

There is a very important personage presented in the 14th chapter of Genesis, the only account of whom in the old Testament is contained in three verses embracing these facts. Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God, bearing

bread and wine, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him tithes of all. It is universally conceded that Melchizedek, appearing here as the superior of Abraham, the human father of the church, to whom Abraham paid tithes, and from whom he received blessing, was presented solely as a type of Christ the promised seed of Abraham—the Saviour of the church. Paul makes this clear in his epistle to the Hebrews. He says as many as six times that Christ is “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” And he says that Melchizedek was “made like unto the Son of God.”—Appearing without a genealogy, which was required of the Aaronic priests having no record of his parentage, his descendants or his death, and thus, so far as the record showed, “having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” he presented a fit type of the eternal son of God who abideth a priest forever. Melchizedek was king of righteousness and priest of the most high God. Christ is king of saints and priest forever. Melchizedek did four things: he brought forth bread and wine, and he tithed and blessed Abraham. Christ adopted the bread and wine as the emblems of his broken body and shed blood. Christ, as the great High Priest procured and bestows infinite blessings. Shall we not apply the regal feature of the type, and say it is

not fulfilled in Christ? Melchizedek was *all type*. No other parts of his history are recorded. There appears to be no other use for him. He appears to have been presented solely to shew what Christ would be and do. The type must find its counterpart in the antitype. Paul uses both acts of Melchizedek, his tithing and blessing Abraham, as proofs that Christ, the antitype, is a divine Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

“The Apostle, in interpreting the names of Melchizedek and of the seal of his kingdom, plainly from the context assigns to them a spiritual and typical import, * * adapted to the design of foreshadowing the antitype. In the latter, we must seek suitable characteristics and when the terms are applied to Him, we must understand them in the largest sense.”

“The reason why the divine Providence gave to Melchizedek, in his name, residence, character, and the peculiar record left him, these particular characteristics, was, *that he might be fit* for a type to represent the Saviour to come. So that it is literally true, Melchizedek was *made like* that divine King and Priest, whose official character had been, from eternity, shaped out in the divine intention, although it was not actually exhibited in the flesh till many generations after Melchizedek.

“Verses 5, 6, (chapter vii) are designed to strengthen the argument, from the consideration just presented in v. 4. In these three verses (with the 7th as a summary appendix), we have presented the first of the three arguments by which, as was stated in the Analysis, the superiority of the order of Melchizedek to the Levitical priesthood is proved.

This first argument subdivides itself into two kindred ones; (a) that Melchizedek tithed Abraham; (b) that he blessed him; both of which imply superiority." "The scope of this part of the Apostle's language is: The priesthood gave the Levites their pre-eminence over their brethren descended equally with them from the loins of Abraham: a greater priesthood must his be, who, though having no genealogy from them (in fact, having no genealogy whatever to confer distinction on him) tithed and blessed Abraham, their father, and the receiver of the promises."

"In judging of this argument, we must remember the pre-eminence given by God to Abraham, in that he made him the father of the faithful. We must remember, too, that the receiving of tithes, or pronouncing of blessings, belonged to official or natural superiority. The superiority of the Levites over their brethren, in virtue of which they tithed and blessed them, was only official. Melchizedek boasted no such technical and official superiority derived from mere regularity of genealogy, and yet he tithed and blessed the patriarch who was both the natural and official superior, both of Levi and all his equal brethren."

"These may possibly warrant the idea that the Levitical priesthood was wholly *derived* in its functions and immunities, while Melchizedek's, without genealogy, and under no law, combining the regal and priestly character, exhibits a priesthood of a higher order, and typifying that of Christ, who, in virtue of his divine nature *has authority in himself to tithe and bless.*"—*Dr. F. S. Sampson on Hebrews.*

"Now, every part of this transaction has force. The goods, let it be remembered, had been, all of them, the property of those to whose rescue Abram had gone; none of them had belonged to the party of Chedorlaomer, and, con-

sequently, Abram's only claim to them lay in his having recovered them in battle. This did give him a claim, which the king of Sodam was willing to acknowledge, but which Abram wholly refused to profit by for himself. "I will not take," said he, "anything that is thine." Now this, I think, places his gift to Melchizedek in a far stranger light than it would have been in, had we viewed it as simply having been an acknowledgment to God for having restored to him his own property, or for having placed within his hands the property of the kings he had subdued. He had in the transaction gained nothing for himself; he will accept of nothing for himself; he disowns his own claim to any portion of the spoils. But he evidently knew that God had his claim to a part of them, in token of his right to all; and the only use he will make of a victory, which had placed all in his possession, *is to pay to God his portion of a tenth*, the rest he returns to the original owners. This fact, I think inconsistent with any other theory than that here advocated—that the gift of a tenth was *at this time* of divine appointment. Had the goods been his own, it might have the appearance of a voluntary act of gratitude; but since he refused any personal right in them for himself, it has all the appearance of being an act of known and recognized duty. If they had been his own he might, doubtless, have given to God what proportion of his goods he pleased; but, as they were not his own, he would scarcely have been generous with another's property. He surrendered his own claim, but he could not surrender God's. The tenth, which he gave him he must have felt was not his to withhold—that it was the peculiar property of him to whom all belonged.

Again, Abram's gift is accepted by Melchizedek plainly as his right. As God's priest he blesses Abram, and as God's

priest, *he receives tithes from Abram.* (The Greek, Heb. 7 : 6, is *tithed Abraham.*) The one appears just as much a part of his office as the other. Now, this gift of a tenth was certainly an act of religion. It was not required by Melchizedek from any poverty of circumstances, for he was a king, and probably a richer man than Abram. It was purely an act of religious homage, and so St. Paul reasons it in the seventh chapter of Hebrews. The same Apostle's comparison of Melchizedek with the Levitical priesthood, and his assertion of the superiority of the former over the latter, absolutely requires us to believe that the payment of a tenth by Abram to him was not a voluntary act, which he might have withheld at pleasure, but was the discharge of positive obligation. If we consider his argument with a little attention we will not fail to see this. The Levitical priesthood, *by the command of God*, received tithes of their people. *Their command to do so* is noticed by the Apostle in the fifth verse as their privilege, and is certainly a most important part of it. But it follows as certainly that Melchizedek had *the same* claim to a tenth from Abram which they had from the Jews—that is a divine command. If you deny this, and say that Abram's gift of a tenth was purely voluntary—that Melchizedek had no positive right to this proportion—that it might have been withheld from him without any infringement on his just claims, you certainly place him, in this respect, on an inferior footing to the priesthood of Aaron, and take away one of those grounds on which St. Paul claims for him a superiority over Levi—namely, his right to a tenth from Abram. This latter argument appears a conclusive one, and seems to follow from the Apostle's comparison of the two orders of the priesthood in the seventh chapter of Hebrews. For

surely, if a tenth were Levi's right, by divine ordinance, while Melchizedek had no such right at all, he is, in this respect, inferior to Levi, and Paul's argument from his reception of a tenth from Abram an inconclusive one.

"This case being then established, the time of the occurrence and the persons engaged in it render it of peculiar value. It took place before the covenant or circumcision was ordained, before the first step was taken toward the formation of that Jewish constitution which was developed under Moses, and, consequently, wholly free from the inference (a groundless one as we shall afterwards see) that, being a part of the Mosaic dispensation, it has been done away in Christ." "It was then a person who was the peculiar type of the Head of the christian dispensation, and in times peculiarly prophetic of the christian era, as well as at a period distinguished by a plain mark of separation from all that might be distinctive of Judaism, we find this payment of a tenth to God in force by his own command." —*Gold and the Gospel.*

It has been shown that Melchizedek was the type of Christ, that all he did was typical, for only the typical part of his character is recorded.—Melchizedek tithed Abraham, the human head and representative of the church, with whom the covenant was made and to whom the promises were given. Abraham manifestly acted as the representative of the church, for Paul says, "Levi paid tithes to Abraham." Now the use of a type is to set forth some characteristic of the antitype, which is to be fulfilled in the latter. Is not the conclusion, therefore, irresistible, that Melchizedek's tithing Abra-

ham the representative of the church, teaches that Christ, the antitype of Melchizedek, would tithe his people? Does Christ or any of the New Testament writers any where intimate that He repudiated this feature of his type? That He declined to claim tithes? There is no such intimation, but much to the contrary. In the argument of Paul for the support of the gospel ministry, which we have presented, it appears that, referring to the Levites living of the tithes paid to God, Christ ordained, "*Even so, they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.*" Surely this does not look like repudiating the tithes.

When Christ denounced the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in "tithing the mint, annice and cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of the law," did he say, "this is all out of place, there is no tithing now?" No, he said, "*These ought ye to have done and not to leave the others undone.*" Does this look like repudiating the tithes?

Paul says Melchizedek was "made like unto the son of God," If Christ does not tithe he is not like his type in this prominent feature.

"He was a most extraordinary and wonderful priest; priest, not of one age, not of one nation, not of one religious society, but of all ages, of all nations, priest of the universal church, priest of the whole world; without predecessor, without successor, "made like unto the Son of God, he abideth a priest

continually." He was the type of Christ, *the representative of the Christian dispensation*, even before the Jewish came into being. To him Abraham paid tithes before he became a Jew. And in Abraham, Levi also paid tithes. Thus, the Patriarchal church, in Abraham, and the Jewish church, in Levi, unitedly paid tithes to the Christian Church in Melchizedek. Thus, Gentiles and Jews were, in a figure, one in Christ, even then. Melchizedek already possessed the land, Canaan, which was Abraham's only in promise; and was officiating at Jerusalem, as prophet, priest and king. Thus Christ, through his representative, already held the land of promise, long anterior to Joshua; and discharged his mediatorial offices in Jerusalem; "In Salem also is his tabernacle," Ps. lxxvi, 2—the symbol of the gospel rest and kingdom, and of the higher rest and kingdom of Heaven, into both of which believing Jews and Gentiles enter, and are blessed by Christ, as kings and priests forever. To this extraordinary priest, Abraham and Levi paid "tithes of all" their estate. The priesthood of Melchizedek has never ceased, but abideth continually," being *fulfilled* in Christ's. And as tithes were paid to Melchizedek, a perpetual priest, only as the type of Christ, so it follows, they are due to the great Antitype continually. Thus says the Apostle: "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." Heb. VII, 8. But how does Melchizedek still live as a priest, and receive tithes, save in Christ? And, therefore, *Christ, who liveth, still receiveth tithes*. If tithes are to be paid to him that liveth forever, they are ever to be paid; so that as before the law they were paid to Christ, so too, after the law, they are to be paid to Christ, who liveth forever. If Christ *receiveth* tithes, then he has not abrogated

them, then he has confirmed them, not only negatively, by not forbidding them, but positively by approving the payment of them, and himself now in Heaven, ever living to receive them. It is a gross mistake to suppose, as some do, that the Apostle, in these words: "The priesthood being changed, there is made, of necessity, a change also of the law," Heb. vii, 12, intimates the abrogation of the law of tithes. The Apostle shows that the rites and ceremonies peculiar to the Levitical economy cease, being fulfilled in Christ. Aaron yields to Jesus, who is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek; and the priesthood of Melchizedek is not changed, but abideth forever, and to the priesthood tithes forever belong."—*Dr. A. W. Miller.*

"Having shown already, and particularly in the case of Abram, that the giving a tenth of our goods to God was in conformity with the divine command, we view Jacob's conduct in the same light. We regard him not as performing what he esteemed a mere voluntary act, but as discharging a sacred obligation; as making that return to God for his bounty which he knew to be expected from him. If we have consented to the reasoning in Abram's case we can scarcely doubt that Jacob, his grandson, and of course acquainted with his conduct, acted on the same motives. He is a link connecting together evangelical and legal times—the days of Melchizedek and those of Moses, exhibiting the harmonious action of believers in varying dispensations in obedience to an unchanged commandment. Regarded thus, it places our subject in, perhaps, a fuller and plainer light, more divested of circumstances not essentially connected with it, than any other similar transaction; and certainly supplies some matters of moment, which we could not with certainty have inferred from

Abram's offering of a tenth. And, first, Jacob's vow is a vow of all future blessing, and therefore, to be continued through his lifetime. We might, perhaps, have supposed that Abram's offering this proposition was an isolated act on his part, called forth on a particular occasion. If such were our opinion, Jacob's vow corrects it. This proportion was God's due at *all periods* of the believer's earthly existence; whether at times when God more plainly and more remarkably opened his hand and filled him with abundance, or when in the ordinary course of his providence he "blessed his basket and his store." It was to be called forth, not merely on such occasions as the victory of a few over many, which restored to its owners what had seemed lost beyond recovery; but was also to be the return for those more unobtrusive but equally eloquent proofs of the divine goodness, which nature, in her revolving course presents—that sun which gives life to the creation, those dews which refresh earth's parched surface, those "rains from Heaven and fruitful seasons, which fill man's heart with food and gladness." Such is one lesson we learn from Jacob's vow—"Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

"Again, Jacob's vow is to be regarded as of importance in this respect, that no part of it was for the use of a priesthood. Melchizedek had gone as he had come; the priesthood of Levi was not yet in being; the priest of Jacob's household was Jacob himself. Yet now, as well as before or after, was this proportion of a tenth paid to God. Now, this fact is of value. It separates the matter wholly from man's jurisdiction, and places it in its simple original light, as *an act of pure, unmixed homage to God*. When there was no ministry to support it, it was yet God's claim,

and accorded to him. I do, therefore, value this fact highly. Had the tenth never been given save in connection with a ministry, this might, with some minds, have obscured its great primary object. But here nothing stands between the offerer and the Being to whom he offers—no class or caste may presume to say, “This is ours, it was ordained for us;” for here we see it to be God’s and God’s only, ordained for his sole glory. Now, I am not arguing against the claim of God’s ministry to a portion of this tenth; far from it, I am simply laying down this fact, drawn from Jacob’s case, that the institution of a tenth had this for its first, and I may say its sole object, the glorifying God in the offering to him a portion of that which all came from him, and which all, in fact, belonged to him. What God wills us to do with it, how to use it, and in what proportion is another question altogether. But this we may be sure of, that it was for God it was ordained, that he might be glorified in that which was his.

“The last consideration, that in Jacob’s time no portion of the tenth was for the use of a priesthood, while it was yet paid to God, helps to make certain what we have previously shown to be at any rate probable, that this custom dates from the beginning; that when the Sabbath day was hallowed, and sacrifices ordained, then, too, a tenth was fixed on by God as the portion which man was to return to him.”

“I know not if this throws any light upon the much-vexed question of Cain and Abel’s offering. It was on the part of both an act of religious homage. Cain seems to have expected as his right that his offering would have been accepted, which he could scarcely have done if he had not known it to have been commanded. *Was not this his tenth*, which the reason even of the natural man allows to

be due to God, and which therefore Cain offered, while he disdained *such an offering* as spoke of atonement? Abel, in the firstlings of his flock paid his tenth and also confessed his faith in a sinner's religion, which is the religion of atonement. Cain, in the fruit of the ground, paid his tenth too, but he would make no confession of sin, acknowledge no need of a Saviour—a type of those later Pharisees, who would not so much as defraud God of the tithe of their garden herbs, while they disdained the atonement of Christ and shed his innocent blood. To this the language of God to Cain seems fully to agree: “If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? that is, “If thou art righteous, thou hast indeed made me the only offering I could require—an acknowledgment of my sovereignty and a return for my bounty;” but “if thou dost not well,” if thou be not righteous, “thy offering is not sufficient, thy sin still lies at thy door unremoved, and I can be pleased with no work of thine;” or, if we prefer Archbishop Magee's translation, who for “sin” reads “sin-offering,” then God, in plain language, tells him that for the removal of his unrighteousness animal sacrifice was required, typical of the efficacious sacrifice of Christ.”

“Agreeable to the whole tenor of our past reflections, I regard the Mosaic institution of a tenth as but the continuance of God's ancient claim with a new application of it for the purpose of the Mosaic ritual. I regard it not as a new ordinance, but the republication and assertion of an old one. For the proof of this I rely of course, on what has been advanced in the previous chapters, and if the arguments there have been sound, the matter is placed beyond dispute.

“Again: It is much more consistent with the Scriptural

character of God to suppose that in this ordinance he continued a rule previously enjoined by himself, than that he adopted a scale which had first recommended itself to the uninspired judgment of man. The whole spirit of scripture leads us to conclude that the true God borrows nothing from man. He is the teacher, never the taught. Let us mark the way in which it is spoken of: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's, it is holy unto the Lord." The use of the present tense forbids us to suppose that now first was a tenth made the property of God; it obliges us to allow that it *was already his*."

"Before leaving this chapter there is one inference that I wish to draw. We saw, in the instance in Abram's life, that God's tenth was all of it given to Melchizedek; in Jacob's case we concluded, that none of it was devoted to the maintenance of a priesthood; while in the present chapter, we see that its principal object was for the support of the ministry of Levi, including the Jewish priesthood. What I would infer, then, is this—that while the tenth is at all times due and to be paid to God, the way in which he wishes it to be used is not always the same, but varies according to the dispensation and his appointment. It may all of it go to support a ministry, or none of it may be spent that way, or a portion of it may suffice. All depends on the expression of his will, to whom it belongs."—*Gold and the Gospel*.

There are but few direct recognitions of the tithes in the New Testament for two manifest reasons:

1st. The gospel was preached to the Jews and to those familiar with Jewish worship. From time immemorial the tithes, by divine appointment,

formed a part of the divine service. It was taken for granted that every custom of divine appointment was of perpetual obligation unless explicitly annulled or superceded. Silence was enough to continue the tithes in force. But there is not entire silence. Paul addresses the Corinthians as though they were well acquainted with the law of tithes; "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things, (the Levites who lived of the tithes) live of the things of the temple?"

2nd. Christ's claim upon his people, under the fuller dispensation of christianity goes beyond the tithes. "*All that he hath,*" is to be held subject to the will and disposal of Christ. The early christians, imbued with the virgin spirit of christianity, never thought of stopping with the tenth. Some of them gave all. The law of tithes, therefore, simply stands upon the inspired record, as God's first appointment in the infancy of his worship, and the lowest measure He has ever authorized. It stands as a break to check the downward tendency of backsliding faith, to prevent wreck and ruin. If any one desires to know the least measure that God has ever required, he has it here. If his faith can go no farther, let him follow this rule. It has been endorsed by Christ as the time honored minimum, while He does not limit his claim to this rule. He expects the manhood of the church to attain a

higher standard than was required of it in its infancy.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRESENT FAITH AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH FAR BELOW THE GOSPEL REQUIREMENT.

It is manifest that the christians of the present day, with few exceptions, do not understand and embrace the gospel as teaching and requiring what we think has appeared in this discussion to be its teachings and requirements.

What means this universal cry of complaint and lamentation, that God's people withhold the supplies needed for the work of the church—that "one half of the members of the church give nothing," and that every church enterprise is languishing? a doleful lamentation reiterated in every religious paper, and sounded from every pulpit. It is simply a humiliating confession that we have not a *full and living gospel*—that an essential branch of the gospel is not practiced, is not believed, is not fully taught.

The gospel is a selfsustaining institution. It provides for and supplies its own wants from the inexhaustible fullness of its own treasury—from the deep flowing stream of its own divine spring. What are the numerous schemes and appliances for ob-

taining money, and the reiterated appeals and reproaches sounded from the pulpit and the press? They are simply a rickety, man-devised machinery to pump a constrained and scanty supply from wet-weather wells that often go dry.

The following is a mild sample of the complaints that could be reckoned by the score, and even the hundred. "Let it be further considered that *some feasible plan for enlarging the funds of benevolence* must be adopted, in order to realize the hopes of the churches from their necessary enterprises. This is apparent from the difficulty of sustaining these enterprises on their present scale. This deficiency is not owing to the want of means in the church. There is money in profusion for railroads, manufactories, any enterprise which promises a return to self. But where is the money for the Lord? The great current of christian property is as yet undiverted from its worldly channel. The scanty rills of charity which at present water the garden of the Lord, and the ingenuity and effort employed to bring them there, compared with the almost undiminished tide of selfish expenditure which still holds on its original course, remind one of the slender rivulets which the inhabitants of the East raise from a river, by mechanical force, to water their thirsty gardens; the mighty current, meanwhile, without exhibiting any sensible diminution of its

waters, sweeping on in its ample and ancient bed."

Let God's ministers faithfully strike, with the hammer of unadulterated gospel truth, upon the stony heart, and God will cause the living waters to gush forth abundantly to supply the whole wants of the Church, as the stream in the wilderness gushed from the smitten rock and followed and supplied Israel. When the overwhelming claim of Christ upon his blood-bought people is personally understood, acknowledged and felt, the miserable refuges of lies which carnal hearts construct to screen themselves from giving, by "comparing themselves among themselves," by comparing their own wants with the wants of church causes, and by dividing out responsibility until it becomes a mere gossamer, *are swept away*. Satan's artillery, with which, entrenching himself under the very walls of Zion, he has committed such havoc upon God's host, *is spiked*. The artful pleas and pretexts with which selfishness blinds and sears the conscience, *are silenced*. The line of personal duty is compressed into the single pointed question, "*How much do I owe unto my Lord?*" "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and like the question, "What must I do to be saved?" it must be decided by the guidance of God's truth and the help of his grace, under the deep conviction that the decision involves the divine favor or displeasure. Let the living

gospel fountain be opened and the rickety machinery of modern use will be as superfluous as would be a hydraulic ram to carry the resistless waters of the Niagara down its stream. God's living stream needs no pumping machinery. The *gospel* in the heads, hearts and lives of his people, spontaneously yields the fruits upon which the laborers in his vineyard are fed.

Hundreds of Christ's ministers are forced from their Master's work to obtain a living from secular business, not because they lack either head or heart to preach the gospel, but because they have unknowingly preached a *defective* gospel and have tried to supply its defects by their own bungling inventions.

"*Systematic Benevolence*," rather, "*Systematic Pumping*"—a prominent branch of the modern gospel—is not laid down in our creeds, or theological books, is not taught in our Theological schools, is not found in the Bible. Hence our students of divinity have not been "systematically" taught this modern "science of applied christianity."—When, therefore, they come to the practical work of the ministry, they find themselves wanting in this most difficult, delicate and perplexing part of the work imposed upon them. Many break down under the ordeal, and are shoved aside as defective vessels. In a word, they fail, not because they cannot preach but because they cannot *pump*. Thus,

the minister's sin of ignorance brings "blasting and mildew" upon his work, sorrow and suffering upon himself; while the people in unbelief and covetousness, "*rob God*" and their own souls. "*God robbery*" is as truly the crying sin and curse of the church at this day as it was in the days of Malachi. If Jehovah were to send his angel to mark out his revenue that has been withheld from him, what an astonishing amount of *God robbery* would it reveal. He would find his plundered goods everywhere, among every class—the rich, the moderate liver, the poor; in our barns, in our fields, in our flocks, in our herds, in our stores, in our shops, in our banks, in our parlors, in our wardrobes, on our tables; *even in the house of God, on the persons of his worshippers*. Everywhere the eye turns it reads the condemning brand, '*God robbery*.' God himself, with indignant astonishment, asks, 'will a *man* ROB GOD?' Yet ye have robbed ME. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed *me*, even this whole nation. Bring ye *all* the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be *meat in my house*, and prove me herewith, if I will not open the window of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall be not room enough to receive it."

To compress the vital points of this whole question in a nutshell, we would say, there are two main roots that supply life to this great evil—

1st. "*Robbing God*" is not taugnt and not regard-

ed to be a *heinous sin against God and a dark blot on the christian character*. Hence christians, habitually guilty of this delinquency, are not troubled in conscience, and are not looked upon as offenders. Defrauding man is looked after and disciplined; defrauding God, is winked at and tolerated.

2d. Christians, for want of appropriate instruction and practice, have not learned and *do not know how to give to God by faith*. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

The minister often complains of and reproves his people for not giving, when, if he would take their place, he would find himself almost as much at fault as some of his people would be in attempting to perform his duties in the pulpit.

Perhaps the most difficult part in the work of "crucifying the flesh and overcoming the world," is to subdue covetousness and cultivate the grace of giving.

The remedy for the first error, under the divine blessing, is for ministers, patiently and faithfully to teach and apply the whole truth on this subject, plainly pointing out the duty and the sin of neglecting it; and for church authorities to provide suitable arrangements to accommodate all the people in this service, and to enjoin and enforce obedience to the law of Christ.

The remedy for the second error, is for chris-

tians, with a deep sense of their obligation to Christ and in dependance on his grace, *to practice the duty with what faith they have*; accompanying their effort with the appropriate confession and prayer, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

"Return unto me and I will return unto you saith the Lord of hosts."

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRACTICAL OPERATION OF THIS SERVICE.

There are two departments in Scriptural giving:
 1st. Oblations to God, as acts of worship and means of grace. 2d. Distributing God's revenue to the wants and work of the church:

In the first we have ample scripture teachings to direct us in the practical performance of the duty. In the second, the scriptures could lay down no definite rule that would suit all ages and conditions of the church, because the wants and work of the church are continually varying. When, however, God provides a revenue for his church, surely he may trust his official servants to make a judicious distribution of it to the varied wants and work of the church.

In relation to the first department of this service

we will sum up the leading features of the duty as set forth in the scriptures:

1st. It is the duty of *every one* to make oblations of his material substance to God. Every one is the recipient of God's bounties, and every one is required to serve and worship God with the talents given him. "*Let every one of you lay by with himself, treasuring up, whatever has been prospered.*"

2d. *God's portion*, as far as practicable, must be set apart *first*, before any portion of his bounties is appropriated to our own use. The honor of God and the faith of the Christian demand this.—God's claim stands before all creature wants, and he is jealous of his honor. "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the *first fruits* of all thine increase." "Seek *first* the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be *added* unto you." This is "walking by faith."

3d. Every one should give according to his means. "It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." "Lay by whatever has been prospered."

4th. It should not amount to less than *a tenth* of the income in the course of the year. This is the lowest God has ever appointed, and he has never abolished this first appointed rule. There is no approved example in the Bible that fell below it. All the teachings and examples in the New

Testament go beyond it. "All the tithe of the land is the Lord's." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house." "Do ye not know," said Paul to the Corinthians, "that they who minister about holy things live (feed) of the things of the temple?" The Levites here referred to lived of the tithes. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel."

5th. As this service is a mode of divine worship and a means of grace, it is required, as far as practicable to be performed on the Sabbath. "Upon the first day of the week, &c."

6th. The successful and acceptable performance of this self-denying duty requires *faith*. God has especially connected temporal favor and prosperity with this branch of his service. "Honor the Lord with thy substance; SO shall thy barns be filled with plenty." "Give and it shall be given to you." "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering,"— "All things are possible to him that believeth. "But without faith it is impossible to please him." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Faith lives and grows by exercise. This grain of mustard seed, when cultivated, becomes the greatest among herbs. *Faith in God*, is the encouragement Paul urges for the performance of

this duty. "God is able to make all grace abound towards you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound unto every good work." And as we must ask that we may receive, Paul follows the promise with the prayer; "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." This is the example for every christian's prayer and faith. Scripture and experience teach that a man to learn to pray, *must pray*; to learn to trust, *must trust*; to learn to give, *must give*.

The leading doctrines and duties embraced in this important service, are still more briefly comprehended in *two passages* of Scripture.

1st. "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." Prov. 9, 10.

This precept contains four vital points in this divine service.

(a) The command to every individual to *honor God* with offerings of material substance.

(b) These pious offerings are to embrace a portion of *all* God's bounties.

(c) That God's prior and superior claim may never be lost sight of nor neglected, He demands that his part shall be set aside *first*, before any por-

tion of his bounties is appropriated to our own use.

(d) It is affirmed to be a law in the divine economy of grace and providence, that God's favor shall attend the temporal labors of those who honor Him in this service.

2d. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by with himself, treasuring up, whatever has been prospered; that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16: 2. This precept re-affirms the first three points in the former, and, in addition, gives more specific directions for the practical performance of the duty.

(a) It enjoins frequency and regularity—requiring attention to this service, as far as practicable, *every week*.

(b) It provides a way for those to attend to this duty, who are at any time denied the privilege of public worship; and also those who may have no money at command; directing them to lay aside every week God's portion of all increase whether of money or other substance.

(c) The revenue from this service, gathered into the Lord's treasury, anticipates and supplies the wants of the church. "Treasuring up, that there be no gatherings when I come."

From these scripture teachings we are led to the conclusion that it is not indispensable to the acceptable worshipping of God in this service, that

the offerings be made in his house, though this would appear desirable when practicable Offerings in many can ordinarily be made in connection with public worship. But confining the service to this method, cuts off many, especially in country congregations, from the privilege of participating in it. Many attend public worship very irregularly, and many seldom have money when they do attend.

The scriptures provide for these contingencies, by authorizing and requiring oblations "in all good things." "The first fruits of all increase; and "to lay by with themselves."

The practical method, therefore, seems to be this: For those who can do so, to make their offerings when engaged in public worship; and when detained from the house of God, to lay by with themselves, on the Lord's day, and take it to the house of God, or deliver it to the officers of the church, the first opportunity.

For those whose business and means render it impracticable to make their offerings in money, they have the privilege of depositing God's portion of their substance, of whatever kind they have, with the officers of the church. This makes it necessary for church officers to provide suitable places of deposit, especially in the agricultural communities, and to take charge of the offerings of the people.

In relation to the business of the distribution of the Lord's revenue to the wants and work of his people and church, it is not easy, perhaps not practicable, to prescribe regulations that will suit all parts of the church. These must be shaped out by each denomination of christians to suit their church machinery and work; and every general plan adopted by any denomination will have to give scope for variations in different parts of their territory. We will suggest a plan, for both departments of this service, that might be adopted in the Presbyterian church:

Let the General Assembly set forth the general features of the scripture teachings, and the practical operation of this divine service; as it respects its nature, obligation, importance and operation; its place and use in the Christian system, as a mode of worship and a means of grace; the blessing, spiritual and temporal, attending its faithful performance, and the damage to both attending its neglect. And let that court solemnly enjoin upon the ministers of our church plainly and patiently to explain to the people these doctrines and duties, and to take proper measures to secure their practice by every class in the church. And let our people be affectionately exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls," and earnestly enjoined, as they would fear God and avoid his displeasure and chastisement,

diligently to perform this christian service, due to Him, and their own souls, rather than to their fellow men.

To this end, let the church courts enjoin upon our church officers to encourage the people and afford to every class the opportunity to make their offerings regularly, and as often as practicable, in connection with the public service and worship of God. But since many are seldom provided with money to cast into the treasury of the Lord, and since the scriptures authorize the giving to Him of "whatever has been prospered," of "all good things," "the first fruits of all increase;" let church sessions, in connection with the deacons, when there are deacons, be required to provide suitable places of deposit and take charge of the offerings of the people. Let each Presbytery be authorized to determine what proportion of the Lord's revenue (within certain limits to be specified by the Assembly) shall be appropriated to the support of the gospel ministry in its bounds, and what proportion shall be apportioned to the other departments of gospel work; and also what amount of support each minister laboring in its bounds is entitled to. Let the deacons in each church (whose office is to minister God's funds, "to feed tables"), under the direction of the session, and when there are no deacons, the ruling elders, be authorized by Pres-

bytery, to appropriate, of the substance contributed in their congregation — per cent. to the support of their pastor or supply, and — per cent. to each of the other church causes, allowing any contributor, who may desire the privilege, to designate the object upon which he wishes his offering to be expended.

Let these officers be required by Presbytery to take charge of the oblations of the people, and to dispose of them as Presbytery may direct, and make a full report semi-annually to Presbytery, which body should have the control of the distribution of church funds, within the limits prescribed by the General Assembly.

To revive these important scripture doctrines and duties, almost lost sight of in the christian church at this day, it devolves upon the ministers of the word to give special attention to the subject; showing the people wherein they are liable to God's fearful charge made through the prophet Malachi against His people of that day, in respect to this service. "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts." And by diligently and faithfully expounding and enforcing the divine precepts and warnings, invoking the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the truth, endeav-

or to induce the people to "return unto the Lord."

It devolves upon church officers, God's commissioned rulers and executors, to give particular attention to this neglected service; to encourage, aid and lead the people in it; to provide suitable places, when needed, where the people may conveniently deposit their oblations, and to take charge and dispose of them as the church courts may authorize and direct.

Hence it devolves upon church courts to direct the management of this service, and to enjoin upon their ministers and other officers the faithful execution of the solemn trust God has devolved upon them as the shepherds of his people.

APPENDIX.

WILL A CHRISTIAN ROB GOD?

OR,

THE TITHE THE MINIMUM

OF

THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLATIONS;

BY

REV. JOHN W. PRATT.

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PREFACE.

THAT there is some radical defect in the system by which the gospel ministry is supported in our country must be evident to any one who will give a moment's thought to the subject. The painful reports which are made every year to our Presbyteries of salaries insufficient to keep our ministers from all anxiety about the maintenance and education of their families, and of a want of punctuality on the part of congregations in meeting their engagements with their pastors; the impassioned appeals that are found necessary on the part of the Secretaries in order to sustain the Committees of Education, Foreign Missions, Sustentation, and Publication in the work entrusted to them; and the notorious failure of our Church to rise to the demand of the present era upon its liberality, ought to lead the whole church to a serious study of the question, *whether the whole theory upon which money is raised for the support of the ministry and for the aggressive work of the Church is not false and unscriptural.* The following essays were written with a view of directing the mind of the church to this important subject. They appeared originally in the "*Central Presbyterian*," and therefore they bear the marks of the hurried style of composition which usually characterizes short articles written for a newspaper. The writer wishes that he had time to elaborate some parts of the argument in order that the position he has taken might be more completely

fortified ; but as this is impossible, and as some for whose judgment he has great respect have thought that the republication of these articles even in their crude form may be productive of good, he has consented to append them to the very able treatise of Rev. A. L. Hogshead, with only such alterations as are necessary to present the subject in a few continuous chapters.

LEXINGTON, VA., *July, 1873.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AS TO GIVING.

CHAPTER I.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.—Rom. xv : 4.

That is to say, the Old Testament is not a dead letter, as some seem to think.

In Genesis xv : 20, it is written, "And he gave him *tithes* of all:" that is, Abraham gave Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, one-tenth of all property recovered by him from the Confederate kings who had been robbing Lot and the king of Sodom.

Abraham would not touch a thread or a shoe-latchet for himself, but he could not rob God of what was His due. Who was Melchizedek to whom he rendered this tithe? Why, he was a king, richer probably than Abraham; he did not need the tribute; he had done nothing to deserve any acknowledgement at Abraham's hands. But he was also a priest of God. Abraham knew that to God he was indebted for his late victory, and without any question as to the wants of Melchizedek, he rendered to God what he felt was God's due.

But how did he happen to hit upon a *tithe* as the

proper ratio? Why not a half, or a third, or a fourth? This is the first mention of a tithe in the Bible. The question is, was this ratio accidental? The Apostle Paul, incidentally, by a single word, in the 9th verse of Heb. viii, explains it. The giving of tithes was the *payment of a debt*. "Levi *paid* tithes in Abraham." But in determining the amount of a debt the payer is not consulted; so that Abraham cannot be supposed to have fixed the ratio. Besides, as the spoils out of which he paid tithes were, previous to their recovery, an unknown quantity, it is clear that the debt which he paid was determined as to its amount by the valuation of the spoils themselves. The amount of this indebtedness of Abraham to Melchizedek, must have been determined in accordance with a previous well understood ordinance. And as Melchizedek "received" it as priest of God, without any demur, it is clear that it was a Divine ordinance with which Abraham was complying, when "he gave tithes of all." Nor can we suppose that Melchizedek would have "received" anything at all from Abraham, if he had not regarded it as a matter of course, and in accordance with well-known, long established usage. The inference from these reflections is inevitable, *that tithes to God were ordained by God himself, and had become a law for every worshipper of the Most High, before the time of Abraham.*

Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to thee.—GEN. xxviii: 22.

Jacob said this. "But Jacob was not a Christian, you see." No, Jacob was not a Christian. "And therefore," says some one, "his example cannot be pleaded as an argument to show that a Christian ought to give at least a tenth of his income to God."

Jacob not only was not a Christian, but was not even a Jew. This remark deserves emphasis, because it is so common to speak of the "Jewish tithe," as if the oblation of a tenth was a peculiarity of the Mosaic economy.

After all, was this any great stretch of liberality in Jacob? If we may consider Jacob as making a bargain, it would seem that he was making a sharp one. "*Give me ten tenths, and I will give thee back one tenth,*" vows Jacob. Not so very liberal after all.

Still Jacob had the right idea on one point. He recognized the truth that all his gains would be the gift of God.

Another thing is clear. Jacob made the vow for life. It was a perpetual obligation. This seems to be an advance upon Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek. That may be said by some to have been exceptional. But there can be no doubt in the case of Jacob. It was a vow that bound him for life.

One striking thing in connection with Jacob's vow was that when he made it, he had nothing but his staff in his hand, and his clothes on his back.— A stone was his pillow; the bare ground was his bed. Think of a fugitive, an exile from home, a penniless wanderer vowing to give God one-tenth of his future income! Do penniless Christians now often make such vows? "But Jacob was not a Christian, you see." He lived in simple unsophisticated times; he had not learned all the tortuous and ingenious evasions of duty with which we are familiar;—that God does not expect a poor man who can barely obtain the necessaries of life to give any thing to Him;—that God cannot expect of a rich man to give so much as a tenth of his vast income, &c., &c. Poor, simple minded Jacob! How much he might have saved, if he had only been a Christian!

What disposition did Jacob make of this tenth? How could he give it to God? At first, when he had gathered together a few sheep and oxen, he might readily have consumed a tenth of them in sacrifices; but when he became rich, when his flocks covered the hills and his cattle were lowing all over the plains, he would have been compelled to spend most of his time in sacrificing if he had offered them up on an altar.

How did he dispose of this tenth? There was

no priesthood to support. There was no temple service to maintain. There was no pauper population to feed. There were no missions to the heathen. We are not bound to designate the channel into which he poured his tithes. But these questions and the foregoing statements suggest the the following most important idea,—that the measure of Jacob's oblation was not determined by the wants of a priesthood, or of a temple service, or of the outlying heathen world. His offering was made to God alone. In whatever mode he may have disposed of it, it is clear that it was neither ecclesiastical, nor eleemosynary in its destination; it was a purely religious offering; it was towards God, and terminated on God alone. This is a very important idea. For it brings into prominence the fact that Jacob vowed the tithe as an act of pure, unmixed homage to God. Nothing stood between the offerer and the Being to whom he offered. It was God's due and God's only, ordained for His sole glory. Its sole object was the glorifying of God in offering to him a portion of that, all of which came from Him, and all of which in fact belonged to Him.

But how did Jacob happen to fix upon a tenth? Why not an eighth or a twentieth or a fiftieth? Why a tenth? Here again is the same question that perplexed us in regard to Abraham's tithes to Melchizedek. Can we suppose that this coincidence

was purely accidental? Or that a solemn religious act of consecration by both patriarchs was determined in its proportion by mere caprice? This is too shallow and superficial a view to be entertained for a moment.

How then did Jacob happen to hit upon the idea of a tithe? It was not an accident; it was not caprice. This proportion was not determined by a calculation of what he might be able to spare; for, at this time, he had nothing, and could not foretell his probable income. His vow was an unconditional surrender of a tenth part of a quantity yet unknown and contingent.

The idea was not original with Jacob. He got it from Abraham through his father Isaac. He was evidently impressed with the idea that a tenth of all his substance *belonged* to God. Without any elaboration of this thought, it must occur to every mind by immediate inference that the chosen family, of which Abraham was the founder, practised tithing as a matter of course; and that they did it either under immediate Divine dictation or in accordance with long and well known tradition. As Abraham *paid* tithes, so Jacob vowed to pay tithes—a debt to God acknowledged by both.

The proposition that the law of tithes was given by God himself is immensely strengthened by the well established fact, that “numerous instances of

the use of tithes are found in profane history prior to and independently of the appointment of the Levitical tithes under the Law." Assuming it as true that this custom can be traced back to a very remote antiquity, the following remarks are precisely to the point.

"Whatever custom has prevailed over the world among nations the most opposite in polity and customs in general, nations not united by commerce or communication, (when that custom has nothing in the nature or the reason of things to give it birth,) must be derived from some revelation, which revelation may in certain places have been forgotten, though the customs introduced by and founded upon such revelations still continued; and further, this revelation must have been made antecedently to the dispersion at Babel, when all mankind being but one nation and living together as one large family, were of one language and governed by the same laws and customs."

Again, another writer says, "Now since this proportion of one in ten is certainly indifferent in itself any more than one in seven or eight, it is reasonable to believe that this custom of paying tithes, like that of sacrificing, had some Divine direction for it and that it was derived from Adam to Noah, and from him to posterity, till at length at the dispersion of Babel, it spread over all the world."

CHAPTER II.

“All the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruits of the tree is the Lord’s; it is holy unto the Lord. And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord,”—Lev. xxvii: 30, 32.

And thou shall eat before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, &c., that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.—Deut. xiv: 23.

- This is the Mosaic law in regard to tithes, promulgated just two hundred and seventy years after Jacob made his vow. We have now reached a point in the history of God’s people where the demands made upon them are just double what they were in the patriarchal age. For although it is common to speak of the Jewish *tithes*; it is more proper to speak of the Jewish *fifth*. It will be new to thousands of the members of the Church and to many of the ministers that the passage quoted from Leviticus refers to one tithe, and that from Deuteronomy to a second. Our space is too limited to be wasted in proving what may be so easily verified by any one. If any doubt the statement, let them consult Michaelis’ *Laws of Moses*, vol. 3, art. 193; Horne’s *Introduction*, vol. 3, part 3, chap. 3, sec. 6; Kitto’s *Cyclopedia*, and Smith’s *Bible Dictionary*, article “Tithes.”

Much might be appropriately introduced here

in regard to the moral grounds on which each of these tithes was demanded by God, and the object to which they were appropriated; but the brevity of these essays forbids any excursions from the straight-forward path to the conclusion at which we intend to arrive.

The proposition on which stress is now laid, is that every Jew was required by a divine institute to devote *one fifth* of his annual income to the service and worship of God. The demand was imperative; never relaxed in any case.

Another proposition equally important is *that compliance with this demand was purely voluntary*.—There was no legal coercion: there were no collectors of tithes: there was no governmental machinery to enforce payment. “The rendering of what was due, was simply a matter of religious obligation, and where this failed, the claim could not be enforced by any constraint of law.” (Vide Fairbairn’s *Typology*, vol. 2, page 261.)—The faithful performance of this duty depended solely on the enlightened and faithful consciences of the people. Now it is this fact which more than any other goes to prove that the *law of tithes belongs to the domain of morals and not to that of ceremonials*.

A very proper distinction is universally drawn between the moral and ceremonial law of the Mosaic code. Compliance with all the demands of

the ceremonial law, all of which related to external rites, was enforced by penalties. Whoever ate leavened bread during the feast of the passover; whoever ate the fat of a burnt offering, or any manner of blood, or of a peace offering on the third day after its sacrifice; whoever touched a dead body and then neglected the purification prescribed; whoever compounded the holy anointing oil, or any thing that had a perfume like it; whoever failed to bring his sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle; whoever did any work on the day of atonement; whatever man-child failed to be circumcised—was “cut off from Israel.” But for the sin of covetousness, of which the withholding of the tithes was merely the outward manifestation, there was absolutely no penalty. And this fact, that an infraction of the law of tithes was remitted to the conscience of the Jew as the ultimate earthly tribunal, proves that *that law was a part of the moral as distinguished from the ceremonial code of Moses.*

We have said that the payment of these tithes was not enforced by any legal machinery, and that the failure to comply with the law was not punished by any civil or ecclesiastical penalty; and we have inferred from these facts, that the law of tithes was a part of the *moral law*. It is to be expected that this proposition will provoke strong and even angry

denial. Yet we do not see how it can be disproved.

The Mosaic code was composed of three parts; or, more accurately, it embraced three constituents: The Civil or Judicial Law, The Ceremonial or Typical, and the Moral.

The law of tithes could not have been civil law; for, as all acknowledge, the dedication of a portion of the Jew's substance to God was a religious duty, it was a holy oblation. The very language "holy unto the Lord" implies this. The very fact that the feasts in which the second tithe was expended, were to be eaten away from home in a holy place stamps the oblation as a religious one.

Neither could it have been a part of the Ceremonial law, for there is not a shadow of any thing ceremonial or typical about it.

If it was neither Civil nor Ceremonial, then by the "law of immediate inference from disjunctive judgments," it must have been part of the Moral Law.

Our Lord generalized the Decalogue into two commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c., and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." That is to say, these commandments are the germ out of which springs the whole moral law. And the law of tithes sprang out of both these germs. It had a tap-root in each. So far as the oblation was an honoring of

God with the substance, it sprang out of the first; so far as the appropriation of tithes to the support of the Levites was an act of justice, and the feeding of the stranger, the widow and the fatherless with the second tithe was an act of charity, it sprang out of the second. It was in fact simply a specification under the general law of the Decalogue which forbade idolatry and "covetousness which is idolatry." It was simply an authoritative divine exposition of the law of love to God and to man. It did not bind *down* the Jew to a *minimum*, but it held him *up* to it. It said, "Less than this God will not receive. If you withhold it you 'rob God.' You rob Me if you do not consecrate one-fifth to Me in tithes and offerings." This was the break-water which God in his wisdom saw necessary to erect against the tide of selfishness, avarice, covetousness, and secret idolatry, which threatened the human nature of the Jew. It was the divine declaration that the man who refused to give *at least* as much as one-fifth to God was an idolater at heart.

Now were it not for the fact that God accepted a tithe from Abraham and Jacob, we should be warranted in saying that it is the duty of every Christian to devote at least one-fifth of his income to God.

We have assumed the very lowest ground for which any Scripture can be pleaded, in order to

step up to the higher position which we desire to take before we conclude these pages.

Although we think we have proved that the law of tithe was an authoritative exposition of the moral law, many will reject the proposition, and assert that it belonged exclusively to the sphere of the Civil and Ceremonial. The position we now assail is that of those who say that since the Ceremonial and Civil law of Moses is abrogated, the Church of the New Testament has no right to base any instruction upon it. It is "not the doctrine of Christ, and the Church does wisely not to promulgate it."

Well, let us see. It is not the doctrine of Christ that *infants shall be baptised*. The only positive authority we have for giving to infants the sign and seal of the covenant is to be found in "the earlier and more obscure history of the Church." The New Testament is silent on this subject. It cannot be proved that there were any infants in those households of whose baptism we have an account in the Acts of the Apostles. "It is not the doctrine of Christ" and the Baptists "do wisely in not attempting to promulgate it." The simple, satisfactory, and conclusive reply to this argument is that infants were made partakers with their parents in the sign and seal of the covenant of grace from Abraham till Christ, and that it *is* the doctrine of Christ because *He never repealed the ordinance*. One

reason why no opposition is made in our Church to thus going back to Abraham for authority to administer infant baptism is because *there is no money to be paid* by parents in connection with it. If there were, one half of the Presbyterian Church would join the Baptists.

Again, will the objector tell us where the Christian Church gets any authority for forbidding a man to marry his sister? Not from ante-patriarchal usage; not from the example of Abraham; not from the New Testament, "it is not the doctrine of Christ;" not from the decalogue, but simply and only from the Mosaic Civil law. If then we are not "to go back to Judaism to find precepts" to instruct us on this subject, we can find them no where else. Not a word about incest in the ten commandments. But the Levitical law is an authoritative exposition of the law contained seminally in the seventh commandment. And it *is* the doctrine of Christ, because although contained in the Civil law of Moses, it involves a moral element, and *Christ never repealed it*. Just so the law of tithes was an authoritative exposition of the first, second, and eighth commandments; and it *is* the doctrine of Christ, for *He never repealed it*.

CHAPTER III.

In the foregoing chapters, we have established the following propositions : That Abraham *paid* tithes ; that Jacob, under the influence of ancestral instruction, vowed obedience to the law which his great progenitor obeyed ; that Moses incorporated the existing law of tithes in his code as a part of the Moral law, and added to it a second tithe which the demands of the tribe of Levi rendered necessary.

The question is, Does this law remain in force under the Christian dispensation ? We answer—

1. God having made a law, none but God can abrogate it. The burden of proof lies upon those who say the law has been abrogated. Where is the line of the New Testament to prove this ? The presumption is that it continues in force until the contrary is proved.

2. It is said that the New Testament is silent on the subject ; that there is the total absence of an express command. To this we reply, 1st. That the New Testament is *not* absolutely silent. Our Lord said, "Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God ; these ought ye to have done, *and not to leave the other undone.*" Can this be construed into any thing like abrogation ? And 2dly. That no express command was needed.

The New Testament has no decalogue. That code having been once announced and never repealed, remains in force. Its injunctions are not so much categorically repeated, as assumed as still obligatory. Now we have seen that the law of tithes was the outgrowth of the Moral law, and therefore it is of equal obligation with its letter.

3. "If the reason for a law remains, and if given to mankind before the birth of Moses, it binds mankind." (Hodge.) This is the argument on which reliance is placed for the perpetuity of the Sabbath; and it is just as good for the perpetual obligation of tithes.

(a) The reason for the law of tithes remains. The primary, though not the only design, was the honor of God by means of man's substance. A duty binding on all men—a duty recognized even by Cain—a duty rendered by Abraham and Jacob in obedience to what we have shown had been a divine institute for ages. The uses to which the tithe was applied, was only secondary. We do not know what Abraham did with his annual tithe. We only know that in one instance he gave it to a King who did not need it, simply because he was a priest of the most high God. We do not know what Jacob did with his tithes, except that in one instance he *wasted* part of them in pouring oil on an altar as an act of religious worship. The pri-

mary reason exists now in full force ; and the secondary reasons—the demands of philanthropy and christian benevolence—are enhanced a thousand fold.

(b) We have already proved that the law of tithes was a law for all mankind before the birth of Moses ; and we need not repeat the proof.

It is clear from all these considerations that the law of tithes was never abrogated and remains in full force for all mankind.

Without multiplying words, we quote from a tract by Rev. Wm. Arthur of England, on "The Duty of Giving away a Stated Proportion of our Income."

"He who fixes on a tenth as the proportion, fixes on far less than was required of a Jew. He who fixes on less than this deliberately excludes all Scripture instructions, and chooses a standard for which no part of God's word offers a justification."

"But it is objected, 'In urging upon us to give away a tenth, you are reviving the Levitical law, and that is abolished.'" We have proved that that law is not abolished, and must be held as binding as any other part of the Moral Law. But to meet this objection on its own ground, we quote Mr. Arthur again. "I do not see that the objector would fare a whit better with one who, like myself, was not disposed to contend that the Levitical provisions are

literally in force. Indeed, the difference between those who hold that they stand and those who hold that they are abolished, lies more in word than reality. Those who hold that they stand, would hardly contend that the letter is in force; for that was, that the tenth should be given to the tribe of Levi, which, to the letter, we cannot fulfil. And those who hold that they are abolished, surely do not mean that their spirit is abolished. The spirit of that law is, "of thine own have we given thee." This is not abolished; and blessed be God, never will be! And surely you do not mean that this spirit, so right and good, in passing from Judaism to Christianity, forsook a more sensitive body for one grosser and heavier with earth!

"But we are not now to be brought under rule; for the law is love! Many whose heart has never led them into the troubles of over-giving, catch up these words and as a defence against giving something definite, cry out, "Oh! the law is love, the law is love."

"To you that use this objection, we have only one thing to say: If the law is love, will you keep the law? Then all we contend for, and more than all, is secured. Among laws, none is near so exacting as love. It has never felt, never done, never given enough. It is "never ending, still beginning." Its great things of yesterday, are little things of to-

day; and its great things of to-day will be little things to-morrow. The law of love! It is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." And yet you are invoking this law of love to save your money! Poor Jacob! poor Jew! how much you might have saved, if you had only been such Christians as have grown up in the church under this "law of love!"

"If a Christian may, according to his religion, lawfully devote less than a tenth of his income to holy purposes, then Christianity has lowered the standard of a virtue, and that the virtue of benevolence."

CHAPTER IV.

"Ye are not under the law, but under grace.—ROMANS vi: 14.

Paul is speaking of the moral law. Christians are no more under it than the citizens of Virginia are under the law of China. But in what respect are they free from the moral law.

1. *Free from its penalty.* Christ hath redeemed them from the curse of the law.

2. *Free from it as a command.* In the kingdom of grace of which they are now citizens, the moral law has no prerogatives. They are not come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion. The kingdom of grace is a domain where there is no moral law

external to themselves and no punishment. A glorious truth which many Christians do not know, and, for fear of Antinomianism, refuse to believe.

Of what use then is the moral law to those who are in Christ, to those who are really under the Spirit?

1. To keep them under grace; to hedge them in as with a flaming sword, and confine them within the secure domain of grace, whither they have "fled for refuge." Just as the law of the blood-avenger was paralyzed at the confines of the city of refuge, but was operative outside of them, so the moral law is powerless in the domain of grace, and all-commanding outside of it. And just as the law of Goël served to confine the fugitive inside of the city of refuge, so the moral law serves to hedge in the believer in the kingdom of grace.

2. To restrain and hold them back from sins which otherwise they might be inclined to commit.

3. To present continually before their eyes a representation of the righteousness which through the grace of the Spirit believers should ever be striving to attain. That is, *the law is a rule to guide, but not a command to be obeyed under penalty for disobedience.*

These principles are fundamental to this argument. A recent writer says, "If any one imagines one-tenth too much to give to the Lord, he is

at liberty to make his gifts as small as he desires." It is against this Antinomianism in regard to giving that we most earnestly protest. Thus it is that Christian men, out of the very generosity of Christ, construct an argument to prove that mean men need not give any thing, or that they may give less than the people of God in ancient times, and yet be very good Christians. There are numbers of narrow, penurious members of the visible Church, who, will be fortified in their ineffable stinginess by such words as these.

"We are free,—we have the Spirit and are not subject to bondage." True, but free only to act as the servants of Christ. "Free," what! to keep one day in ten, instead of one in seven? "Free," what! "to make our gifts to the Lord as small as we desire?" *"The freedom of the Spirit is a freedom only within the bounds and limits of the law."*

Some Christians are staggered at statements like these. They say, "If there is in the domain of grace no law and no punishment, then what hinders that we should break the law without transgression and with impunity; for where there is no law, there can be no transgression and consequently no penalty?"

To this it may be replied, that this is no new doctrine. The Westminster Confession, Chap. XIX art. 6, says, "Although true believers be not under

the law as a covenant of works to be thereby justified or condemned, yet it is of great use to them, as well as to others, in that as a *rule of life* informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly." As believers are not justified by the law when they keep it, so neither are they condemned by the law when they break it. This is what is meant by "believers are not under the law as a covenant of works."—But the Apostle not only teaches this but something more. He gives it as a reason why believers shall be sanctified, that they are "not under the law, but under grace." And then he asks the very question, only in another form, which we are now answering;—"What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace!" Now the asking of this question shows that the Apostle is teaching the very doctrine for which we are contending. The question is pertinent only on this supposition. If there is no law and no punishment in the domain of grace, shall we sin? That is, shall we sin because we may sin with impunity? Does the scheme of grace provide for permitting men to sin? "By no means," says Paul; on the contrary it is a scheme intended and adapted to sanctify men and deliver them from the dominion of sin.—The objector may reply, "Why this is very strange; you remove the motive which deters men from sin,

by removing the penalty; and not only that, but you declare that the imperative element in the law is also removed, and yet you say that this very removal of the penalty and of the command is the means by which conformity to the command *as a rule* is secured." Yes, this is just what Paul teaches in Romans vi, 14.

But although the objector may be silenced by this apostolic dictum, he cannot help feeling dissatisfied; because there is no apparent connection between what Paul says *will follow* and the *cause* which he says is to produce it.

And this very natural dissatisfaction calls for further explanation of the doctrine. The distinct question presented for solution is, What causal relation is there between the total abolition of a command and the abrogation of its penalty, and a more implicit conformity to that command than was ever secured by it when in full force? How does this follow that? We answer, "When the believer receives Christ as the Lord his Righteousness he is not only justified by grace, but he comes into a state of grace; i. e. he gets grace into his heart as a living, reigning, governing principle of life. What, however, is this grace, but the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and this spirit is emphatically the Holy Spirit; holiness is the very element of his being, and the essential law of his working; every desire

He breathes, every feeling He awakens, every action He disposes and enables the believer to perform, is according to godliness, and if he only is sufficiently possessed of this spirit, and yields himself to His direction and control, he no longer needs the restraint and discipline of the law; he is free from it, because he is superior to it. Quickened and led by the Spirit, he of himself loves and does the things which the law requires.

“The law considered as an outward discipline placing him under a yoke of manifold commands and prohibitions, has for him ceased to exist. But it has ceased for him in that respect only by taking possession of him in another. It is now within his heart.”—*Fairbairn, Typology*, vol. II, pp. 128 & 129.

The question at once occurs, If the law is in the believer's heart, is he not a law unto himself? What further need now is there for an objective revelation of the will of God? Why may he not now discard the Bible and live according to the spontaneous impulses of his renewed nature, guided by the Holy Spirit within him? This leads to another statement in regard to the uses of the law. The *law itself* is in no proper sense abolished or rendered unnecessary by the revelations of the gospel. The Apostle does not say that it is. He only says that through grace, believers are not under it, and in a conjugal sense are dead to it. But though this is

true, yet the righteousness required is as much binding on their consciences and expected at their hands, as it ever was before they were introduced into the domain of grace. Hence the Apostle in the same epistle in which these expressions about freedom from the law occur, inculcates conformity to the law's requirements as the very perfection of Christian excellence. Vide Romans XIII, 8-10. And this is what the Westminster Confession means when it says, "Yet it is of great use to believers as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly." That is, although they are controlled by the Spirit of Christ which is in them, that Spirit does not *reveal* to them the will of God; and hence they need the written law "to inform them of the will of God" and to be for them "a rule of life." Now the law of tithes, like the law of the Sabbath, is a part of the Moral Law, and it is a guide to duty informing believers of the will of God in regard to the measure of oblations which He will accept and approve, and containing a positive rule which He would have them observe in all their offerings to Him.— And it is because the ministry, the authoritative expounders of the will of God, have criminally neglected to teach God's people their duty, that the neglect of this one duty has become the flagrant,

God-dishonouring sin of the Christian Church in this land. The ministry and the courts of the church have systematically suppressed the *rule* which is written legibly all through the Bible, and doomed God's people to the curse pronounced against those who "rob God."* "We are cursed with a curse, for we have robbed Him, even this whole nation."

We fancy we can see the twinkle of the eye with which the objector to our position will catch up these last words, and say, "Cursed with a curse,"

*NOTE.—In Malachi, the failure of the priests whose "lips should keep knowledge," to instruct the people in regard to the tithes, and thus causing many to err from the law, is called a "corrupting of the covenant of Levi." And as a consequence, God says: "Therefore have I made you contemptible and base before all the people."

The support of the priests was derived solely from the tithes. For the actual payment of the tithes, the priests were dependent on the enlightened and faithful consciences of the people. The rendering of what was due, was simply a matter of religious obligation, and where this failed the claim could not be enforced by any constraint of law. And when the priests were unfaithful to their duty in enlightening the people, their sins were visited upon them, in a just retribution, by a withdrawal on the part of the people of the appointed offerings. As it was then, so it is now. *The ministry have connived at the robbery of God and they are starving and are despised, and have been "made contemptible and base" before the people, because they are starving.* They have submitted to every species of sacrifice, as they have supposed, from a tender regard to their people; and their "only reward has been an accumulation of injuries and cold-blooded contempt."

did you say? I thought we were now in a domain where 'there is no law and no punishment.'"

This cavil which we have put into the mouth of the objector, serves to bring out the distinction between the Law and Grace. Under the Law the threatening is, "If thou do it not, thou shalt die:" Under Grace, "If thou do it not, *I will chastise thee with a rod.* PSALM LXXXIX, 31-33.

Our Confession, Chap. XVII Art. 3, meets this cavil and answers it. Believers "may fall into grievous sins and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, *and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.*" It may be a very salutary inquiry for thousands of penurious christians in our land, whether all the misfortunes and losses of property which they experienced by the late war, are not to be legitimately classed under these temporal judgments" which the Confession specially mentions; and whether persistence in a course of dishonoring God by withholding tithes due Him now, will not be followed by blasting, mildew, failure of crops, commercial disaster and ultimate penury. "*Why should ye be stricken any more?*"

We insist upon the proposition that Christians

are not under the moral law as a command. Its chief use to them now is as a guide to duty. The law of tithes stands on precisely the same ground with the law of the Sabbath. The Mosaic Sabbath was abolished the day Christ rose from the dead. If that law were in force, Christians ought not "to kindle a fire throughout their habitations on the Sabbath day." But all the laws of Moses have been swept away;—the Sabbath, and tithes, and all the rest. But the law of the Sabbath remains in full force for all mankind, because it was a law before Moses; and the law of tithes remains in force for the same reason.

The mistake in all who deny the force of our argument is in *assuming* at the outset that we are "going back to *Judaism* to find precepts" wherewith to stimulate Christians to duty. Judaism, *as such*, has nothing to do with this argument. The strength of our position lies in the fact that in all ages previous to Christ, a tithe was the least that God would deign to accept from his people.

Another error, that may as well be noticed here, is, that the fixation of a minimum absolutely precludes the offerer from giving any more than a tenth. "Every man as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity; for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver," is quoted from the New Testament, as if it were an injunction in-

consistent with the law of tithes. Now we quote from the Old Testament a similar injunction addressed to those who were confessedly under this law. "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 yet when the New Testament utters precisely the same idea, it is claimed that it means that the minimum of a Christian's giving is left to his own discretion. The passage quoted from the New Testament can no more set aside the Christian's duty to give his tenth to God, than the passage quoted from Exodus can set aside the Jew's obligation to do so. Both passages are in fact appeals to the free spirit of those who, having the means of being liberal above that measure of a tenth laid down for common observance, think that they can spend their abundance in no way so well as in the cause of God.

Another grievous mistake is the opinion that the New Testament requires greater consecration to God than the Old. The Gospel has many advantages over the Mosaic dispensation, but this is not one of them. It was of old, even from the beginning, required of all men that they should love God with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the strength, and their neighbour as themselves. More than this, the Gospel does not and cannot command.

If it consists with the spirituality of the Church that believers should give themselves wholly to the Lord, it is hard to see why the dedication to Him of *at least* one-tenth of their incomes should be inconsistent with its spiritual character. All these objections arise from a singular confusion in the minds of those who make them, by which they mistake a *new motive* to obedience, for a *new rule* of obedience. The *new motive* is the love of Christ. The *old rule* stands.

The old rule stands, but as a *rule* and not as a command. Turretine, (vol. II., p. 126,) states the principle thus: "It is one thing to be under the law as a covenant for the attainment of life; another thing to be under the law as a rule of life. In the former sense Paul says, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," as to its covenant relation, curse, and rigor; but in the latter sense we always remain bound unto it, though for a different end: for in the first covenant man was to *do this* to the end *that he might live*; but in the other, he is bound to do the same thing, not that he may live, but *because he lives*." Now the freedom of the Spirit is a freedom only within the bounds and limits of the law. But we have shown that the law from Abraham to Christ never accepted any thing less than a tithe as the offering due to God; and it is hard to see where any man gets the authority for saying, "If any one

imagines one-tenth too much to give to the Lord, he is at liberty to make his gifts as small as he desires." We dwell upon this point, because it is this rank Antinomianism in the Church that has paralyzed her energies for a century, especially in this section of the country. Suppose any one should hold the doctrine in this form: "If any one thinks" a seventh of his time "too much to give to the Lord, he is at liberty to make his" Sabbaths as few "as he desires." Why, it would end in his keeping no Sabbath at all; just as the principle has ended in the case of many Christians of abundant means in their giving annually but "*six and one-quarter cents for the conversion of the wur'ld.*"

There is a well-defined opinion current throughout our whole Church that giving as much as a tithe is not necessary to salvation. If this means that it is not necessary as a ground of acceptance with God, the same is true of every duty. The only ground of acceptance with God is his mercy in Christ. But if this may be pleaded as an excuse for the non-performance of one duty, it may be done for the failure in all, and so turn the grace of God into licentiousness. But if it means, (and this is what it does mean with those who entertain it) that this amount of liberality is not necessary to prove our vital union with Christ—we say, this depends on circumstances. Christ claims that the

whole heart shall be His, and that the outward conduct shall evince that He rules supreme within. Less than this He will not admit as evidence of union with Him. If then God has given us light to see that a tenth is acceptable to Him, and we from love of money withhold it, we thereby say that we love the world more than God. In such a case the giving of at least one-tenth is necessary to salvation. "Good Master," said the young man, "What must I do that I may have eternal life?" Mark the reply, "Go sell what thou hast and give to the poor; and come, follow Me." We commend this lesson to those who think they can keep their money under the "law of love" and the "law of faith," and get heaven into the bargain. If any cling to their money, because it is not necessary to salvation to part with it, they may rest assured that parting with their money is necessary to *their* salvation. So much for the Antinomians.

CHAPTER V.

“For our sakes no doubt this is written.”—1. Cor. ix: 10.

The object of this chapter is to state that an appeal to the Mosaic law as a guide to Christian duty is legitimate. Although we do not “go back to Judaism for *precepts* to stimulate people to their duty,” we imitate the Apostle in going back to Judaism to enlighten ignorant and stingy people as to what is duty. The Apostle in the 9th of 1. Corinthians is arguing that ministers are entitled to a support; and, to prove it, he appeals to the law of Moses. He uses the application of the offerings of the Jews to enforce similar duties among Christians. He takes from that part of the law which suited his purpose. His proof is the case of the Jewish priesthood. “They which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.” But that the whole system under the law was meant to impart its lesson under the gospel, he intimates in the 8th verse; “Saith not the law so also.” But it was as much the teaching of the law that the people should offer to God a tenth, as that the priests should obtain a portion of the offerings. It is therefore as incumbent on Christians to give a tenth to God as to support their ministers. The same law which teaches the one, teaches the other also.

If this doctrine were only taught by the ministry as it ought to be, we should not have so many

piteous cases of ministers who after tithing their paltry salaries, "do not leave bread enough at home to make them strong for their appropriate work." We shall prove by figures before we get done, that "the very first operation of the law of tithes," instead of "making these consecrated men the objects of charity," as is feared, would be to raise them at once from the position of mendicants to that "ordained by the Lord, that they which preach the gospel shall live of the gospel"—yes, *live*, and not starve on bread and water. If it is in fact true that "every man who is renewed by the Holy Spirit *wants to do* every thing in his power to glorify God in his body and spirit," (which we fully believe) how comes it that so many "consecrated men" are permitted to starve on a "meagre support of bread and water," by congregations abundantly able to provide for all their wants? The reason is clear. These same "consecrated men" have never insisted on the law of Christ in their teachings. Christian men, no more than other men "*want to do*" a duty until they know it to be a duty. Why, under this vague and indefinite teaching—we were about to say, this air-built declamation—about the "law of love," many ministers in Virginia have almost been paupers, and the heathen have been perishing for a century. Many churches in the Valley have been systematically trained to penuriousness

under this undefined and shadowy "law of love."— Rev. W. S. White, D. D., in his "Letters to a Probationer," tells the story of a rich church that applied, *with the approval of its pastor*, to Lexington Presbytery for permission to reduce his salary from \$700 to \$550. And he says, "The most surprising part of the whole business was that the petition was granted." Not surprising at all. These same presbyters had never distinctly formulated the law of Christ. They had been preaching, all their lives, the doctrine that the love of Christ will constrain men to do their duty without ever telling them that the least Christ would accept was a tenth of their incomes; which in the case of this church was more than \$50,000. One-tenth of it would have given their pastor \$2,000 and left \$3,000 for the aggressive work of the church. They had preached the *motive* without ever expounding the *rule* of obedience.

If then the love of Christ constrains all men to *consecrate all to his service*, one of two conclusions is inevitable: either there is only a small handful of the 90,000 members of our Church who are real Christians, or these 90,000 people sadly need instruction as to duty. And if they have not learned their duty after a century of preaching on the "love of Christ" it is not likely they will ever learn it.

CHAPTER VI.

Having shown that the least a Christian ought to consecrate to God's one-tenth of his annual income, we come to the New Testament ordinance as to the mode in which the duty is to be done.—The rule is definite, and the directions explicit. "*Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*" (1. Cor. xvi: 2.)

1. *Let every one of you.* Addressed to to all, rich and poor, male and female. The only possible exemptions, minors who have no income, and inmates of poor houses.

2. *Lay by him in store.* (1.) That is, you are not to wait to be asked, but to treasure up beforehand, so as to be ready to meet any call. Things done without premeditation are generally ill-done. If there is no settled purpose as to giving and no previous preparation for it, the amount will be left to chance, and will depend upon what one may happen to have in his pocket. And if he happens to have nothing, he may love Christ very much, and yet give Him nothing.

(2.) The money is not to be mentally, but actually set apart, either by passing it to the credit of of your "benevolent fund" on your Ledger, or by putting it in a separate box or purse. The best plan is to do both—to set it apart on the Ledger,

and then put it away in a purse, where you will find it when you want it.

3. "*On the first day of the week.*" This shows that the Lord's day is the time for carrying out the injunction. It is this that stamps it as an act of worship. The *principle* taught is that the practice of storing up for future distribution should be adopted as often as a person receives his wages, or rents, or dividends, &c., be it weekly, or monthly, or quarterly, or yearly. This is the great proof text which establishes the duty of Systematic Giving.

What we desire especially to emphasize now, is the apparent ignorance of our General Assembly in regard to the "Apostolic plan," as it is called in the "*Pastoral Letter*" of 1871. "We suggest," says this letter, "that *weekly collections* be taken up in all our churches *when practicable* in accordance with the Apostolic plan." (Minutes, page 38.) The plan is not a good one, *and it is not Paul's*. *He says not a word about weekly collections in the churches*. This plan was often as *impracticable* among the Apostolic churches as in the churches of Virginia. Paul never ordered the churches in Galatia or Corinth to do any such thing. Paul was divinely inspired, and the General Assembly evidently was not.—Paul foresaw that there would be churches that would have preaching only once or twice a month, or that there would be rainy Sundays when the

churches would be almost empty. He therefore devised a plan that would be practicable in any and all the churches on earth, and that would work in *bad weather* as well as good. "*Let every one of you*"—the rheumatics who can't come to church, and the "honorary members" who only come on communion Sundays—"lay by him in store," literally, *treasure up at home*. The Greek is *para eauto*, the common expression for *at home*, corresponding with the French *chez soi*, and with the German *bei sich selbst*; (Vide Robinson; Lex. on *para*; and Winer's Greek Gramr. Part 3, sec. 48.)

The injunction is to lay the proportion up at home whether the Christian goes to church or not, and keep it there, until the demand shall be made for it; which in this case was not made, as we learn from 2. Cor. VIII: 10, until at least six months after. Not a hint of any collection in the churches.

Our Assembly makes its suggestion with bated breath, meekly, as if it feared lest it might offend somebody, or lest some timid church session should say, "Our people will never stand that." The Apostle's plan was much better; and he did not fear to "order" the Galatians and Corinthians to adopt it. (1. Cor. XVI: 1.)

Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God hath prospered him*.

Literally, "*whatever hath gone well with him*." It is with this clause we are now concerned. The Corinthian believer, after he had received his week's earnings, was required on Sunday morning to lay by in his own house a religious offering. The first question that pressed upon his conscience must have been, "How much is it my duty to devote to God?" "I want to do my *whole duty*" in the premises. I want "to be entitled to be satisfied with myself," so that I can go to church with "the answer of a good conscience" in appearing before my God, and be able to say with the Psalmist, "I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; I have hoped for thy salvation and done thy commandments." Does Paul mean that I am to give "all my living?" This question of *proportion* is one of the very first importance.

Now nothing is clearer than this; that the gospel never intended that a man should give away all his living. It is pure fanaticism to teach this. Christ never intended that his people should pauperize themselves or their families. Whatever a man gives must be a part of the whole. And that of necessity is a *proportion*, whether it is a fiftieth or a tenth, or a half.

"But," says the objector to systematic giving,

“you speak of giving a tenth; that is an arithmetical law, and you will never bring the hearts of Christians under a cold arithmetical law. Arithmetic sounds of school-houses, and counting houses, and dry statistics, and other ungenerous things.” Well, it is so; and we cannot deny it;—to say you ought to give away at least a tenth is to speak the language of arithmetic. But is the principle less sacred for that? “Remember the seventh day to keep it holy” is an arithmetical expression. And is there any thing unhallowed in the Sabbath, because a square seventh is cut off from our time, and is just in that arithmetical proportion to be consecrated to God? Arithmetic follows you wherever you go. If you do not give a tenth, but a ninetieth, even that is an arithmetical proportion; and in fact, go down however low you may, if you give any thing, at any time, it still bears an arithmetical proportion to the whole. If we made a tenth the *highest* limit, we might be taunted with arithmetic; but when we name it as the lowest point where any scriptural footing can be found, this sentimental talk about arithmetic is an arrow that flies below us.” (From Rev. Wm. Arthur, before quoted.)

We say then that this question of *proportion* must have pressed on the Corinthian conscience. Where was it to look for light? To the man's own

impulses? It is said that the right heart needs no rule, that it is a law unto itself. Still the man has to settle the rule of *proportion*. He cannot give all; for that would convert him into an "object of charity." It cannot be determined by what he can spare without feeling it. This would be a very variable quantity in different cases, and infinitesimally small in all. Where is the man to look for a rule? The *motive* is overpoweringly strong. This is the love of Christ constraining. But the *rule* is to be found in the written law of God, and in the history of his ancient Church. The law of the Lord is perfect, and is an infallible guide to duty; and that law plainly tells him that *God never was willing in any previous period of the history of the Church to accept less than a tenth as an evidence of His people's loving Him with all their heart.*

The Corinthian believer was bound to seek a rule of proportion. He would seek it in Scripture. The example of Abraham would first claim his attention. He would hear him say, "God called me out of Ur of the Chaldees, sanctified me by His grace, and honored me with the title "Friend of God." In token of my gratitude, I devoted a tenth of what he gave me to His service. My gratitude prompted me, and I knew by the immemorial practice of all God's people that such an offering was required and would be accepted by him."

Jacob would say, "Early in life I was favored by a gracious Divine revelation; and, remembering the lessons and example of my father and grandfather, I immediately vowed to give the required tenth."

Moses would appear and say, "Here is the Moral Law, with its grand generalizations, requiring complete consecration to God, and its minute specification of one of the ways in which He would have His people prove their love to Him. A tenth is the proportion in which it has been customary to serve the Lord. A tenth is the proportion that has been offered from the beginning, and therefore it is recognized in my written law; but now it is not confined to a tenth. There is one tenth for the support of the ministry; another for the feasts, and a tenth every third year for the poor. The whole of my economy is so framed as to train the Lord's people to habits of generosity and self-denial, and to overcome the natural selfishness of the human heart. My testimony is that a tenth is *the lowest proportion ever recognized by God*. My law goes far beyond this; for it demands at least a fifth. But inasmuch as the discipline of this provision is purely moral, and would lose its virtue if enforced by penalty, my law leaves it to every man's conscience to enforce the performance of his duty."

The Corinthian believer would then consult the history of God's ancient people to see how they

obeyed this law that had no penalty. And so far from the law of tithes producing and cherishing a self-complacent spirit, leading the Jew to feel that he "had done his whole duty and had a right to be satisfied with himself," he would find in the glorious pages of Jewish history many occasions when a free spirit animated the nation as one man, and each vied with the rest in pouring out free-will offerings vastly exceeding all the tithes. From Exodus xxxvi: 5, 6, he would learn that, on an extraordinary occasion, these same Jews who had paid their two tithes, "had to be restrained from bringing;"—from 1. Chron. xxix, that for the building of the temple, the amount of money voluntarily contributed by these same tithe-oppressed and tax-burdened people exceeds all calculation;—from Ezra ii: 68, that the people on their return from Babylon, in deep poverty, "offered freely for the house of God, and gave after their ability" for the re-construction of their desolate house of worship. Never did they think that in thus exceeding the requirements of the law, they were exceeding duty and making God their debtor. Their language was, "Who are we that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."—1. Chron. xxix: 14–16.

If the Corinthian believer, after such a survey of

the history of ancient giving, could have come to the conclusion that Christ, who had loved him and died for him, would approve the gift of *less than a tenth*, then he must have reached the amazing *non-sequitur* that the gospel with its expanding and ennobling motives allows men to be stingy in proportion as their obligations are increased, and that *the effect of Christ's gospel as contrasted with Judaism is "to lower the standard of a virtue, and that the virtue of benevolence."*

The Corinthian conscience must have been clear on one point; viz., that whatever proportion he might find it his duty to adopt, *less than a tenth* he must not dare to "lay by at home every Sunday morning." And knowing full well that since he was "not under the law, but under grace," and that the law did not bind him as a command, but was simply a finger-board pointing out the path of duty, he would joyfully comply with its *rescript* under the gospel, and *imitate the grace that Christ exemplified*, who though He was rich, for our sakes became poor.

The question about the tenth having been definitely settled, the Corinthian convert would inquire, "Is the tenth the proper proportion for me under the gospel? The law says, *at least a tenth*; is that enough for me?"

Let us suppose in the case of a Corinthian in the

common walks of life whose wages were paid every Saturday night. For the sake of clearness, suppose that his wages were 100 *denarii*; and that to support his family he spent 75, and put away 25 for a rainy day. Or to reduce the thing to modern standards;—that his weekly income was \$20, and that he laid up \$5.

Remembering the examples of Abraham and Jacob, and the law of Moses, he would without any doubt as to his duty, “lay by *at home* on the first day of the week,” one tenth, or \$2, out of his weekly earnings. But suppose God so prospered him that his weekly income sometimes reached \$40 per week. Would the consecration of one tenth, or \$4 satisfy his conscience now? Shall he give only one tenth of his prosperings now, when, as before, he needs only \$15 per week? Shall he spend \$15, give God only \$4, and lay up for himself \$21? Would that be giving as God had *prospered* him? Would he not be hasting to get rich, if he should do this? The enlightened Corinthian would say, “When I was netting \$5 a week, I gave God two-fifths of my *increase*; and shall I give Him less now that He has prospered me so abundantly? I will still give *two fifths of my increase*, which is now \$25. I will surely give ten dollars a week now, which is *one-fourth* of my gross income.

Of course, this is merely an illustrative case in-

tended to exemplify the doctrine, that as our profits increase above the demands of our family necessities, the ratio, or proportion of our giving should rise also.

Without arguing this, we shall now give an example drawn from real, modern Christian life.

In November, 1821, Nathaniel R. Cobb, of Boston, at the age of 23, drew up the following document:—

“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 20,00 dollars, I will give *one half* of my net profits; if I am worth 30,000, I will give *three-fourths*; and *the whole* after 50,000 dollars. So help me God; or give it to a more faithful steward, and set me aside.

N. R. COBB.”

November, 1821.

He adhered to this covenant with conscientious fidelity. At one time finding his property had increased beyond 50,000 dollars, at one stroke of the pen, he gave the surplus, \$7,500, to a theological institution which had already received from him \$15,000.

We see how he lived; let us see how he died.

In his last sickness, this is what he said:

“Within the last few days, I have had some glorious views of heaven. It is indeed a glorious thing to die. I have been active and busy in this world. I have enjoyed it as much as any one. God has prospered me. I have every thing to tie me here. I am happy in my family. I have property enough. But how small and mean a thing does this world appear on a sick bed! Nothing can equal my enjoyment in the near prospect of heaven. My hope in Christ is worth infinitely more than all other things. The blood of Christ! The blood of Christ! None but Christ!”

Blessed saint! The fragrance of a life like thine will diffuse a perfume through the ages.

Oh! reader, you say, “Let me die the death of the righteous.” “*Let*” you. Who hinders you?— Nothing but your own *covetousness*. If you would die this man’s death you must live his life.

CHAPTER VII.

A plan for raising the amount necessary for one of the Committees of the General Assembly has been adopted by one of our Presbyteries which seems to us so utterly opposed to the spirit of the New Testament that we protest against it. It consists essentially in determining first, what will be the probable demand for the current year and then apportioning to each church its share of the burden; that share being determined by a certain percentage of the salary it pays its pastor. And this is called a "minimum standard" by which the churches are to be guided in making their contributions.

We object to the plan suggested because it is a mere expedient not based on any Scripture. It proposes a "minimum standard" for Christian beneficence for which the word of God does not afford the shadow of a pretence. If it should be adopted by any Presbytery, it would tend to settle its people in another rut of stinginess, on a plane a little above the present one in which they are travelling indeed, but at an infinite distance below the plane on which the charities of the Church ought to move.

What right has any Presbytery to fix a "minimum standard" unauthorized by the word of God? Now the standard proposed is determined by two things: first, the probable wants of the Committees

for the coming year;—which is estimated at \$165,000;—and secondly, a percentage on the aggregate of ministers' salaries, that percentage being determined by the probable "want" aforesaid.

Now the principles upon which this scheme is constructed, seem to me to be false and *dangerous*.

1. Let us consider the wants of the Committees.

First, *Foreign Missions*. Our Church ought to have at least fifty missionaries in Japan, fifty in China, and fifty in South America. *Two hundred* missionaries to the heathen is the very smallest number that we ought to be this very hour supporting; because the Church is abundantly able to support them. By reference to the Minutes of 1872, it will be seen that our thirty-six missionaries required \$36,000 for their support. Two hundred missionaries would cost the Church \$200,000. Now multitudes of the heathen are perishing for want of these \$200,000, which the Church is spending on its own selfish indulgences and extravagances.

Secondly, *Sustentation* could readily employ \$100,000 more; and "wants" the sum, if the Committee only dared to dream of getting it.

Thirdly, *Publication* "wants" \$100,000 more, to pay for its new house and to publish the numberless MSS. of our ablest writers and thinkers, that have to go a begging Yankee concerns to let them appear in print.

Fourthly, *Education* "wants" at least \$50,000 to help the candidates whom we have, and to enable them to live decently, like Christian gentlemen.

Fifthly, And oh! who can contemplate the condition of the widows and orphans of our dead brethren, and know that the great Church in whose work their fathers and husbands starved while they were alive, doles out to them the paltry sum of \$74 per annum, without feeling the blush of shame and indignation tingling in his cheek? Here is another "want" of at least \$50,000.

Altogether these "wants" amount to \$500,000.

Now we hold ourselves bound to demonstrate, that our Church is able to spend \$900,000 per annum for these objects, and then not give the tenth of its income.

2. The aggregate of salaries paid to the ministry is made the basis of the calculation of the percentage.

But the salaries of most of our ministers are notoriously meagre. Is that to be assumed as a standard of Christian beneficence which is a sin and a shame in the Church? Is the Church to be forever tied down with the very shackles of its own penuriousness? Ought Presbyteries, or any body, to seek to educate the Church to any such narrowness? Such Presbyterial action tends to indoctrinate the people in false principles; and, in the case of some

churches that could be mentioned would lead them to say, "The less the salary the less for the Committee." No! no! Let the Presbyteries and the preachers boldly teach the doctrine of Christ as contained in the Old Testament interpreted by the New; and then the Church will come up to her duty. It is not "vain to expect to reach the goal at once," since the "goal" which is desired, is the very starting point of all true Christian life. But the Church never will reach the goal, if the ministry and the Church courts persist in attempting unscriptural expedients for raising money. The whole plan is objectionable, because it is an attempt to "heal slightly the hurt of the daughter of my people." "The hurt of the daughter of my people" is COVETOUSNESS; and the Church will never get well of its present impotence and palsy until some Reformer shall shake her as Luther did, and teach the *ministry* and the people the people's sin. If God's people only *knew* their duty and did it, a great revival would set in all over the land; and the Church would become a thing of life and inspiration, because, like the wheels of Ezekiel, the spirit of the living creatures would be in it.

But it is said, "The aggressive work of the Church cannot be carried on in any of its departments upon the plan of tithing. We must have the spirit of consecration which will not only not stop

at tithes, but which will not begin with them."

Our object is to examine this oracular utterance. We fully concur with the principle that we ought not to "stop at tithes;" and we now undertake to prove that the Church, as a whole, begins with *fiftieths* and stops at *fiftieths*: that if the Church did "begin at tithes," and fell so far short as to "stop at them," her aggressive activity would be four-fold.

By a large induction of particulars, we are prepared to prove that no average man or woman in the South can be fed, warmed, sheltered, clothed and doctored, for less than \$200 per annum. This is what it costs to keep prisoners in our county gaols. Insane patients in the Western Lunatic Asylum of Virginia," cost annually, including the interest on buildings, \$244 apiece; in the Alabama Insane Hospital, at Tuscaloosa, \$272. The mean cost of these unfortunates may therefore be stated in round numbers at \$250.

Now we maintain that the average "keep" of the members of the Presbyterian Church must be as expensive as that of the prisoners in our county gaols. They *must* spend at least \$200 per annum. But if they spend it, *they have it to spend: i. e., this is their income.* We lay it down as incontestable, that the members of the Presbyterian Church have an average income of \$200 per annum. Now there

are 91,208 members of the Presbyterian Church, and this number multiplied by 200, will give \$18,241,600 as the lowest conceivable income of the Church members. Of course it is *in fact*, three times as large; but as we are dealing with *minimums*, we are content to put it at that figure. Now the tenth of 18,241,600, is 1,824,160; or, in round numbers, one million, eight hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. The amount actually paid in salaries, congregational expenses, and "miscellaneous," in 1872, was \$924,367; in round numbers, nine hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Subtract this sum from 1,825,000 and we have just \$900,000 remaining for the "aggressive work of the Church."

How much *did* the Church give? Why, the paltry sum of \$159,432; leaving \$740,568, withheld from God!!! Had all the tithes been brought in, the "aggressive work of the Church" would have had \$740,000 more to expend than it did expend; *i. e.*, we gave one-fifth of what would be given if we tithed our incomes.

Only think what could be done with \$900,000: \$300,000 to Foreign Missions; \$300,000 to Sustentation; \$100,000 to Education; \$100,000 to Publication; \$100,000 to Disabled Ministers and their families!!! And yet, "the aggressive work of the Church cannot be carried on in any of its departments upon the plan of tithing"!

We defy any one to invalidate these figures.—
Why, the tithes withheld by Virginia Presbyterians alone amount, on this basis of calculation, to exactly \$149,000. And yet we go to Church and sing, just as if we meant it, though we do not, and “*lie unto the Holy Ghost,*”

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,” &c.

In the language of “OLD GRUM,” “If a man wants to know the meanness of human nature more fully than he can know it in any other way—of religious, baptised, orthodox, Presbyterian human nature—let him study this subject of giving as it is practiced in our churches.”