

made to it in the Epistles. I can readily anticipate that some of the readers of the *Adviser* will be ready to exclaim, what! have you never read the epistles to the Corinthians, or that portion of them where the Apostle lays down the law for the observance of weekly contributions for the relief of the poor? Yes, I have read, and carefully considered the special instructions given by Paul to the Corinthians for the two-fold purpose of stirring them up, and directing them in the best way, according to his judgment in their circumstances, of making a collection for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem, which they had previously determined upon, and of which the Apostle had boasted to the brethren, in Macedonia. But while giving those instructions, to guard against any misapprehension I have heard him saying, "I speak not by commandment;" and again, "herein I give my advice." Had the disciples in Corinth been previously taught by the authority of the Lord to make weekly contributions for the poor, there would have been no necessity for the Apostle writing to them as he did, neither would he have said, "I speak not by commandment." Not having been able to learn from the teachings of the Apostles, that they established a fixed institution for the relief of the poor, binding upon all the congregations of the Lord, under all circumstances and throughout all time. I shall now endeavor to show that in the nature of things such an institution would have been impracticable, and diverse to all the other positive commands of the gospel. All the positive ordinances in the kingdom of God's dear Son are obligatory upon all those who would either enter or are citizens of his kingdom, whether they be rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, and are so ordered by infinite wisdom that they can be obeyed by all, and the blessings connected with their obedience enjoyed in common by all. But giving for benevolent purposes, whether weekly or otherwise, cannot in the nature of things be attended to by all the Lord's people; for the poor, as long as they remain so, have it not in their power to give, and obligation in this department of the Lord's service resists only upon those who have it in their possession to give, and is measured according to ability. There are also occupations in which Christians are lawfully engaged, the nature of which renders it impossible to ascertain the amount of their weekly prosperity. From the teaching and practice of some of the brethren, it has ap-

peared to me that they regard the term fellowship in the second chapter of Acts as authorising weekly contributions for the benefit of the poor, and that it is one of the positive ordinances of the new covenant. The effects of this teaching has been, to rob this labor of love of half its blessedness and moral influence, by leading many coldly to cast in their penny weekly as a formal act of obedience to a positive rite. In other cases it has produced in individuals possessing conscientious minds, unhappiness, in consequence of their inability to yield obedience to that which they had been led to view as a binding obligation upon all. Contributing and communicating of their worldly substance for the relief of the poor by those who have the opportunity and possess the ability, is one of those good works of a moral character with which God is ever well pleased, and would be a means of increasing the happiness and well-being of our race, were the philanthropy and benevolence of the Christian system practically carried out in society, even though it had not been commanded by the authority of Him whose right it is to govern throughout the entire empire of God, and whose life and labors on earth were the most sublime exhibition of benevolence, and self-denial for the benefit of others the world has ever seen. Let it then be understood, that while I esteem it one of the beatific requirements of the gospel of Christ, that his disciples should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are in covenant with him, I regard it as left to the wisdom of the brethren to determine as to the most efficient manner of carrying out this good work, whether by weekly collections or otherwise, and the system or plan adopted by any of the congregations of the Lord, as belonging simply to the chapter of expediency. Love is the supreme law of the dispensation of favor under which it is our exalted privilege to live. The condescension, mercy, and love of God, as manifested towards us in Christ Jesus our Lord, when viewed by the eye of faith, is intended and well adapted to implant this principle in our hearts which leads to the practice of every virtue; the fulfilling of every law that is holy, just and good. That love that would fulfil the commandments of the Lord Jesus, is something more than a mere sentiment existing in the mind, manifesting itself in words of sympathy—there must be deeds of real charity.

In searching for the truth in relation to the positive institutions of the gospel, we