

sure to possess it; what is that something? Whatever it may be, rest assured that it is not the glory of God, hence his is the position of the man who should earnestly desire a responsible stewardship for the solitary purpose of employing its revenue for the purpose of ministering to the demands of a selfish heart. And if on earth such a steward would soon find himself covered with shame, and immured within the walls of a prison, what must be the consequences to a rational being acting thus as a steward of God, when he reaches the day when the Lord shall come and reckon with him? Will not everlasting shame and contempt be his only inheritance?

In desiring wealth, then, men desire the privilege of becoming unfaithful stewards, they long to handle the instrument of their own destruction. But some suppose if they only possessed wealth, they would employ it with a far-reaching liberality, that would make thousands to rejoice. It is possible that they might; but not at all probable. Such a benevolent calculator is not taking into the account the natural influence which growing wealth exerts upon the human mind. He forgets that a morbid appetite is formed in the soul for gain, as the natural result of wealth's accumulation, just as a morbid animal appetite is formed by the tippler, as the natural result of the constant use of intoxicating drinks. In the latter case, every glass adds strength to the inebriate's appetite, and rivets upon him with greater security the manacles of a degrading slavery; so with the former, every new thousand, cast into the treasury of self, only whets to a keener edge, the desires of avarice, and he finds the desire to do good waning, as wealth is increasing. The only exceptions which you will find to this rule, exist in the case of some great and good hearts, sanctified by the grace of God. Who then can lay the flattering unction to his heart, that he could guide so frail a bark as his, safely through the whirlpool of wealth, and gain the port of heaven in peace?

A high authority has said, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And shall we desire a condition in which it is extremely difficult for a man to live and be saved? And again, let us remember the growing power of covetousness; a man is often generous and compassionate, and contributes freely of his substance for benevolent objects, when possessing little of this world's goods, who when brought into the possession of wealth becomes another man, manifesting to the world a totally different character from that which made him the admiration of all who knew him. Mammon dries up his once gushing sensibilities. A mark is fixed by him which must be reached; that point gained, and he has another set in the

distance, and the claims of benevolence, or the demands of Christ upon his property, are thorns in his path which impede in his estimation his progress to his golden height. And that once friendly heart now ceases to be warmed by the genial fires of friendship. This reluctance to reciprocate the glowing sentiments of friendship is often ascribed to pride; this in some instances may have its effect, but a darker demon than pride itself is gnawing the vitals of social feeling, and hedging up the soul against the encroachments of social intercourse. That demon is *Mammon!*

As the love of money increases, the soul in the same proportion ceases to love every thing else, and soon deems it positively dangerous to have a friend, unless it may be one here and there carefully and cautiously selected from the number of those who are in no danger of needing his assistance. And thus a once generous heart, that beat true to the exalted impulses of a hallowed friendship, voluntarily excludes himself from the pleasing joys of the social circle, and the sympathies of his race. Poor miserable man! the beggar on the street whose heart is free to roam amid virtuous loves, is richer far than he!

And then look at the effects of avarice upon his intellectual capabilities! He might, until caught in the snare of mammon, have been a leader in every public movement, having for its object the spread of truth or the salvation of man. But public interests must be consigned to the management of others, however incompetent they may be for the task imposed upon them. Mammon has no affinities for public welfare; this is the appropriate work of benevolence, and covetousness and benevolence can never coalesce. Hence the reason why an avaricious spirit robs God of its intellectual capabilities, as well as its money. A son of mammon would be acting contrary to the superinduced instincts of his degenerated nature, were he to cooperate heartily in works of public benevolence; and then, besides being contrary to his nature, there is ever before him the dread thought of incurring responsibility. And he seems to be willing to go down to the grave, and to meet Christ in the judgment, having declined to assume responsibilities obviously connected with the interests of Christ's glory upon the earth; declined them lest, peradventure, in moving forward, instrumentally, the glorious work of salvation, he should retard the work of money-making. Retard the work of accumulating that dross, which will soon, ah! very soon, be able to do nothing for him, unless it may be to procure a richer coffin, and a more costly winding sheet than those which will wrap up the mortal remains of the poor.

Thus, whether we regard covetousness as a direct embezzlement of the Lord's

goods; or mark its scathing and desolating effects on the heart and the intellect, we equally feel the terrible appropriateness of the Saviour's declaration, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Our Lord here refers to those who trust in riches; and it is of such that I have been descanting. I repeat what I formerly stated, that it is no sin to be rich; but it is a sin to be covetous, whether we be rich or not. Covetousness may develop itself in small matters, as well as great ones. The man who unrighteously detains from the service of God, his shillings or his pence, may be as truly covetous as the man who detains his thousands. It is true in this respect he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. And he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If a man cannot find it in his heart to part with a small sum to sustain the cause of Christ at home and abroad, with what propriety can he cherish the deceitful thought, that the possession of wealth would open his heart and make him liberal? would not riches have just an opposite tendency?

It is a mercy on the part of God to keep many of us poor, otherwise we could not, without a miracle, be saved, and the days of miracles are past. It is a solemn question which we may all propose to ourselves, "how much owest thou unto my Lord?" Covetousness, and not wealth, is said to be idolatry, and ruinous to the soul. The Saviour knew its dangerous tendency, and often rebuked it, and cautioned the disciples against it. And what a striking reproof does David give the avaricious: "Let them be as grass upon the house-top, which withereth before it groweth up; wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves, his bosom; neither do they that go by, say, the blessing of the Lord be upon you! we bless you in the name of the Lord!"

Now, instead of sustaining such a character as this, it ought to be said of us, "The blessing of those who are ready to perish come upon us;" and such blessings will come sooner or later, if deserved! It is our appropriate work with the mammon of unrighteousness, so to employ it, as to make unto ourselves friends, who, on discharge from our stewardship, will receive us into everlasting habitations. And what a field opens up before us in which to operate with effect. If we look at home, even at our own doors, how many objects of charity appeal to our sympathies, and invite our liberality; and how many hearts may we make to rejoice by sharing with them only a little of the bread that perisheth. But when we think of the moral destitution of the people, their church-going privileges to the contrary notwithstanding, it must affect profoundly every benevolent