

give what He requires, according as it is commanded, that we should "be ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

It is thus plain, that upon the principle of general *equity*, as well as of christian law, it is the duty of *all the members* of the Church of Christ, to feel and to act, as really parts of the whole. But, Christian friends, is all this actually manifested in the conduct of most of you?—in the conduct of Church members generally? Your observation of others, and the testimony of your own consciences must assure you that it is not. On the contrary, does there not exist, to a lamentable extent, either a deplorable ignorance with regard to these obligations, or a most culpable disregard of the most obvious duties? There is no small ground to fear that not a few associate themselves with the Church from purely selfish ends, and if these are gained, 'hey feel disposed to say to their fellow members, not only, "We have no need of you," but "Ye have no need of us." For, what else can be inferred as the sentiment of many, who take little or no interest in either the welfare of Christ's kingdom at large, or of that particular department of it, to which they profess to belong? We affectionately appeal to you, fellow Christians; how does this case stand in regard to you? What is the interest which you take, and what is the part you perform as members of the Church? Like every other association, it has to be maintained by certain secular arrangements. Yet is it not undeniably true that it matters little to many of you *what* is to be done, if more is required beyond assembling yourselves from sabbath to sabbath to hear the gospel? Are the *business transactions* of your congregation entered into with either the hearty concurrence of the whole, or with that disinterestedness becoming those who, by profession, have declared that they "are not thine own?" Is it not on the contrary a fact, that what is required to be done in this way, must be done by a *few*, who in addition to their *own duty*, are their under the disagreeable necessity of doing *that* of their fellow members also, or else allow every thing to stand? Nay more, when the *few* of *willing mind*, have, for the sake of general interests, done the work due from others, and borne responsibilities not their own, they must be content to submit to whatever blame those *for whom they have acted* may choose to lay upon them, for not performing *their* business better. This blame is sometimes so heartily bestowed that one is led to think that conscience must thus be struggling to get rid of its load, caused by unfaithfulness in the stewardship under the great *Master*.

The very *mode* in which some express themselves in regard to such matters, is indicative, not only of their perfect indifference to the general interests, but of a sad want of any proper sense of *responsibility*. The injunction of an apostle to every christian man to "look not on his own things, but also on the things of others," however it may be interpreted by them, has produced no practical results in their conduct. They not only speak frequently of the affairs of the congregation to which they belong, as if they themselves were neutral parties, having no concern with the necessary arrangements, and deriving no benefit from them; but we have known of individuals *taking credit* to themselves for all this indifference, as the result, we suppose it was implied, of a greater sagacity, or profounder humility, than to intrude themselves into such matters,