

proved against them. But the non-performance of duty is equally sinful, and as regularly denounced in scripture, as the direct commission of vicious actions. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; does not He who pondereth the heart consider it?" The unprofitable servant who hid his talent in the earth, is not accused of drunkenness, uncleanness, licentiousness, or any similar crime, yet, because he misimproved the talent committed to his trust, he is doomed to the same punishment as the most flagrant workers of iniquity. It is by the regular performance of duty, more than by freedom from vicious practices, that the reality of Christian principle is displayed. There is, perhaps, nothing that brings a man's Christian character to a more decisive test, both to his own conscience, and in the eyes of others, than the circumstance of his voluntarily and perseveringly devoting a fair proportion of his wealth to the service of God, and the benefit of mankind. A worldly-minded man may continue for a considerable time to attend divine ordinances, and make a fair *profession* of religion, while no regular demands are made upon his purse; but when called upon to contribute regularly, at least the tenth part of his income, it is more than probable he would display the latent avarice of his heart, by mustering up a host of carnal arguments against such a demand, and would soon take his station, where he ought to be, among the men of the world.

There is a certain false delicacy which some religious communities seem to feel in meddling with the pecuniary affairs or allotments of individuals, and especially of those who are wealthy, and who move in the higher spheres of society. They are afraid lest the pride of such persons should be hurt by such plain dealing, and lest the funds of their society should be injured by their withdrawal. But, although it is proper to use the greatest prudence and delicacy in such matters, yet if such persons refuse to listen to calm reasoning and scriptural arguments and admonitions, they give evidence of a spirit which is inconsistent with Christian principle; and it is no honour to any church to have such enrolled among the number of its members.

A church of Christ is a society whose members are animated by holy principles and affections; but most of our churches require to be sifted and purified—to be purified from the communion of those who are actuated by a worldly spirit, and who have little more of religion than the name; and, I know no better external *test* that could be applied for this purpose, than that which is stated above. A church composed of eighty "right-hearted" Christian men, generous, ardent, harmonious,