

They besought Paul "with much entreaty" to take their gift! What urgency of love! How true to the mould of truth into which they were cast! They preserved in sacred remembrance the message of love which had redeemed them. It came beseeching them not to receive the grace of God in vain; and now, in humble imitation of such exuberant love, they beseech others to partake of their bounty. O, dear Brother, this is the kind of love we need. A small band braced with such affection, would fill the coffers of our Educational, Missionary and Periodical departments, to overflowing. God would "bless them," and "make them blessings."

There are two ways in which we may dismiss this subject from our minds, without deriving any real advantage from it, against which permit me to warn the reader;—first, admiring the picture, but never seriously intending to imitate it. O, remember, my fellow Christian, that God does not exhibit these things in his word, as the author of an exquisite panorama, for you to behold, admire, and neglect,—but to awaken strong desires for such attainments, and to foster the hope of reaching them; for the Macedonians were men of like passions with us.

A second way of getting clear of the subject without advantage, is to admire the master-strokes of Paul's pen. In this matter, however, you must know he is not inventing: he is only declaring what he witnessed in real life among the disciples of Macedonia; and he lays these things before his Christian brethren at Corinth to animate them in attempts to reach the same eminence: "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also *finish* in you the same grace also." Dear reader, remember the motto: "Look back. Look around. Look forward. What has been, may be again." The mortal

remains of these Macedonians have long mingled with the clods of the valley, and their happy spirits gathered to the assembly of the just in heaven; the night veil of this state laid aside, and the morning of the long-desired day now shining fully upon them. Let us then "be followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promise." "GO YE, AND DO LIKEWISE."

Now, what was the *secret* of such unusual liberality? Trace the stream to the fountain, the ray to the sun: "I would have you to know of the *grace of God* bestowed on the churches of Macedonia." This is undoubtedly the ultimate; but what the proximate cause or causes?

1. *A thorough consecration to God.* "They first gave their own selves unto God." As long as a man continues his own centre, and can look alone to himself for supplies, we shall find his resources wasted on that self. And in the fulness of his sufficiency he will still be in straits; his thoughts, his plans, his actions, all terminate on himself. But when, through the grace of God, he is emancipated from this tyrant, and devoted to the service of his Saviour, he looks beyond himself and yields to the authority of the Most High. What he had previously to reserve to expend on the all-consuming lust of carefulness for the future, now becomes free for immediate use; and much of that which he had formerly lavished on himself becomes sacred to the service of his Divine Master. Happy in the favor of his God, he is made the less dependant on the comforts of life; and experiencing the holy blessedness of religion, he parts the more readily with every thing which subserves its diffusion among men. Consecrated to Him who, while on earth, went about continually doing good, he humbly attempts to tread in his footsteps, who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." Yes,