

the Holy Spirit's operations, and we shall endeavour to show that liberality on scriptural principles is as decidedly the result of the influences of the Holy Spirit as any other feature of the Christian character.

(1.) If we attend to the principle which is necessary to render any act we perform a Christian duty, or to bring it in accordance with the mind of God, we shall see the necessity of the Holy Spirit. Paul teaches, that "whatsoever we do we should do all to the glory of God." This principle must therefore be necessary to constitute the outgoing of our feelings and deeds of kindness—Christian benevolence—from which we may see how much we depend on the Holy Spirit, to incline and enable us to act under the influence of a principle so exalted. Man is naturally selfish, and unwilling to part with what he possesses except for some purpose of his own—for his own gratification, or to gain some advantage to himself. There are various motives, which may induce the selfish to give for some benevolent object, which will not be acknowledged as service done for Christ. And you will oftentimes meet with those who, from a naturally kind disposition, are at all times ready to respond to what calls may be made for some object of benevolence. These are frequently called liberal or benevolent. Because such individuals are always to be found, and because the otherwise selfish may in certain circumstances be induced to give for some good cause, it may be supposed that it does not require the influences of the Holy Spirit to make us benevolent. But it is not the mere act of giving which constitutes scriptural benevolence—it is not the mere outgoing of kindly feeling or sympathy to the object recommended—the liberality required by the gospel must be from love to Christ, or at least from a conscientious regard to His will. This is the grand principle which runs throughout the writings of the apostles. Paul says, "Whatsoever

ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." And Peter requires "that God in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ."

(2.) In connection with this is the spirit with which we are required to attend to the duty. There may be convictions respecting the duty which lead to some conformity, but what is done from mere conviction is seldom attended to with pleasure. One of God's requirements respecting benevolence is, that what is given "be without grudging, for God loveth a cheerful giver."\* The influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary to take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto men, that the heart shut up to itself may be opened and embrace with its affections the authority, the requirements, and claims of Christ, that what is done may be from regard to him. The surrender of the heart is necessary to render any service acceptable to God, and this alone can render his service a source of satisfaction to ourselves. God, in his condescension and kindness, looks more to the heart than to the act, as it is but little we can do at the best, but when the principle is right, what is done is accepted. The two mites of the widow showed the state of her heart respecting the claims of God, that she was willing to devote to his service all that was under her control, and for this she was approved by Christ. And according to the language of Christ, the most insignificant act may not only be done from a regard to Christ, but will be acknowledged as indicating the state of the heart in relation to him. "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water, only, to a disciple in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." We learn from these examples, that it is not so much the amount of what is given or done, which is considered by him whom we profess to serve as the state of the heart; showing, that were we able to do more for his honour it would be our