

## A PARABLE WITH A POINT.

A gentleman who had accumulated a vast fortune was suddenly seized with an impulse to help somebody. He employed an agent to select three poor men, who were reported to be worthy, as objects of his generosity. They were invited to call at different hours at the elegant residence of the generous benefactor.

To the first who was introduced he gave the choice of three kinds of business. Choosing the grocery trade, the rich man gave him the sum of \$3,000 with which to commence and carry on the enterprise. The second preferred the dry-goods business, and to him was given \$6,000 to purchase and stock a store. The last selected farming, and he was entrusted with \$10,000.

After five years' trial the grocer, the dry-goods man, and the farmer were still alive: their families had been fed and clothed, and their affairs were in good shape. One morning, toward the close of the fifth year, the agent of the benefactor of these men called upon each in turn, beginning with the one who had received the smallest amount.

"Good morning," said the agent, "Five years ago my master gave you \$3,000. He is to-day in need of money to carry on other benevolent enterprises, and has sent me to see how much you will give to help him in his charitable work?"

"I am glad you called on me," replied the grocer, promptly and cheerfully, at the same time handing the agent a five-dollar bill and saying: "Take this, and call again when your master needs more."

The agent called at the well-filled store of the dry-goods man and stated his object.

The merchant heard the agent and then abruptly hurried away to serve a customer, the net profit of that single trade being, as he gleefully told the agent on his return, about \$3. He then invited the agent into the office, and after making several enquiries concerning the kind of enterprise contemplated, and expressing his idea that the "heathen at home" needed to be taken care of, first, handed the agent \$1, saying: "I hope it will all be used."

Calling upon the farmer the agent reminded him of the \$10,000 which he received and stated the needs of his master likewise. The farmer excused himself while he consulted his crop record and his wife, and after looking at the clouds in the sky, and speculating about the dry season, and saying: "I don't expect to see it rain for a month," handed to the agent a quarter of a dollar, remarking as he did so: "Don't expect too much of us hard-working farmers.

Twenty-five cents is a good deal off a sheep's back."

How many grocer, merchant and farmer Christians who believe in and acknowledge a divine Providence, and hold their property and stock at a net valuation of thousands of dollars, yet who dole out their pittance of twenty-five cents and fifty cents, when they ought to be turning into the Lord's treasury for benevolent and missionary work not less than five or ten or twenty dollars a year!

It is neither charity nor benevolence to pay preachers who preach to us or to build churches in which to worship. That only is benevolence which blesses others without any hope of return.

## PROTESTANT PROGRESS, vs. THAT OF ROME.

Protestantism is advancing rapidly throughout Europe as well as in the United States, while Romanism, with all her boasted progress, does not keep pace with her rival. Some faint-hearted ones get frightened at the cry of Rome's growth, and think that she will soon swallow up Protestant England and America; but statistics show that Protestantism is relatively making the larger gains. The *Methodist Times*, of London, presents an array of figures demonstrating that for the last hundred years Roman Catholicism has not grown any thing like as fast as Protestantism. Europe, in 1786, contained 37,000,000 Protestants and 80,000,000 Romanists. In 1886, Protestants numbered 85,000,000 and Roman Catholics 154,000,000. Thus it is seen that the Romish increase has been less than twice their number, while in the case of Protestants it has been nearly two and a half times. Now turn to the United States and the British Colonies. In 1786, the Roman Catholics numbered 190,000, and now number 9,930,000. During the same period in these lands, Protestants have grown from 2,700,000 to 47,000,000. Putting all together, we find that within the last hundred years Protestants have increased from 27,000,000 to 134,000,000 while Romanists have grown from 80,000,000 to 163,000,000, or that Protestants have multiplied nearly four-fold, while Roman Catholics have increased only slightly over two-fold. Let Protestantism be true to her principles, and she has nothing to fear from Rome. Let her, then, be more wide awake and aggressive. She has the gospel purity, energy, and enterprise which should count in the race for dominance, and she must show still greater progress in the next century.