

now a respectable church, owing all to our minister, and yet we are about to lose him, because we cannot raise him the salary of a common clerk. Is there no remedy?"

Thus thinking, he runs against a man who is coming hastily around a corner.

"Halloa there!"

"Halloa, you there!"

"Why, bless me, Brown, is that you? Come along, you are the very man to help me."

Here followed the usual greetings, and the two friends, arm in arm, go down the street.

They were kindred spirits—men in its grandest noblest sense—men of business, and yet men of God. Men who said little about their spiritual feelings, but whose whole being bent in homage before the Divine.

"Well, Herbert," said Mr. Brown, "what's wrong now? One would almost think you a lineal descendent of the weeping prophet."

"And you would be sad also," answered Herbert, "if you had the same reason."

"And why is that, pray?"

"We are about to lose our minister."

"Never," said Brown. "Why he is one of the finest men I ever knew."

"That may be, and yet we must lose him, for we are unable to raise his salary, and we could not ask him to do with less than he has now."

"Very strange," said Brown. "What are your 'financial arrangements,' as people call them—how do you raise the money?"

"In the usual way. We have pew rents and occasional collections, and yet are going behind £50 every year."

"Yes, but have you all a *God's purse and weekly offerings*?"

"A *God's purse and weekly offerings*!" said Herbert, in utter amazement, "what do you mean?"

"Mean: I mean what I say. But by your looks I know the secret of your church failure. But now, Herbert, you listen to me. Your financial arrangements must be changed. Our church was once in the same condition as yours. We are now flourishing, and the secret is a *God's purse in every house, and weekly offerings in the chapel. We have learned on the principles of the Bible that each Christian should have two purses—one for himself and his wife, and one for God. As a free man with a conscience enlightened by God's word, he must be himself the judge of the extent to which God has prospered him, and of the amount to be put into God's purse; but having once settled the amount, he should think it robbing God to touch the Lord's purse but for the Lord's work. Then coming to God's house with God's purse, let each one have his offering on the table prepared for it. Let that table be looked on as an altar; each man deeming it a sacred privilege to worship God with his substance—a great honor to cast his gift into the treasury. And if you do this, depend upon it you can not only keep your minister, but give more to the poor, and help to spread around the religion of Jesus."*

Herbert was amazed and silent, and they walked for a time ere either spoke.

"Why, Brown, you would make giving money an act of family and public worship."

"And so it ought to be, but only the few look on it as such. Take my own case:—For many years after marriage, when I got my quarter's salary, there was a portion for rent, for baker, for grocer, and all the rest, but none for God. I gave as others do, but I had no special purse for Him. But now, while believing that all I have and am is God's, and that in living honestly I please Him, I

still hold that some definite part of my income should go to God's service, and having acted upon my belief, God has prospered me with peace and plenty, with something also for a rainy day, and I have given to His service three times as much as in former days. Get your church to do the same, and tell me the result. But I must go; good morning."

Herbert walked on in deep thought, and as he mused, the fire burned, a new light was dawning upon his mind. Nobler resolves of self-sacrifice, like so many angels of mercy, were arising from the graves of a dead past. Conscience also, shaking herself free from the fetters of evil habits, claimed to sit supreme on the throne of his soul. He bent in deep sorrow—he knew he had not done the right—and now, at the call of conscience, there came before him in stately array, the examples and commands of God's book. He saw the ancient Jews in a state of semi-barbarism giving one-tenth of their substance unto God; remembered how often in praying that God would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, he had forgotten the condition of bringing one-tenth unto God, that there might be meat in His house; saw the early Christians piling themselves and all that they had as a living sacrifice on the altar of Christ, recalled the numerous allusions to giving in the epistles, and heard a voice crying unto him, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." He was self-condemned—confessed his faults, and then vowed if God would forgive him the past ignorance and cruel neglect, he would begin his life of Christian giving anew.

During business hours his mind turned again and again to the vow he had made, and a new hope arose within. He felt that he had now a hold of the missing link, and determined soon to insert it into the broken chain of holy influence. And the more he thought of it, the more did he realise the full value of the scheme. He saw how that, not only would the minister's salary be provided for, but all the varied and unavoidable expenses of God's house; and instead of the necessity of sending round boxes to each person, all efforts, whether for missions at home or abroad, whether for ground-rent, or house-rent, in fact, everything which a living church ought to undertake, might and ought first to be offered on the altar to God. And arising from it men would thus give, as seeing Him who is invisible, and thus, in its grandest and noblest sense, make to themselves friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness.

He hurried home in the evening, and his wife seeing he was dull, said little, but was very cheerful. Instead of spending the evening in the parlour, he went upstairs and entered upon holy ground. He was alone with Emmanuel; but into that holiest of all no alien eye must look. He came forth a wiser, nobler man. The next day was Sunday, and it was the habit in his house that all should rise as early on that day as on any other—a habit that more would do well to acquire. When he came down he was cheerful but perplexed. He knew the right, but feared lest his wife might not approve. However, he must have her consent before moving a step.

"We must have two purses after this my dear," he said.

"Two purses!" she cried in alarm, "two purses! Why, what have I done; am I not careful enough?" It was too much for her, and she burst into tears.

Here was a scene now—he felt very foolish. However, he managed to smile, and quietly said, "You do not understand me, dearest. You and I must have one purse, and only one; but we have never had a purse for God."