

municate to others. God will give it more to do with, and then smile upon its augmented benefactions.

The stream of Christian benevolence not only irrigates and enriches the territory through which it flows, but returns at length, bearing on its bosom, yet larger and richer blessings for him who supplied the stream that went forth to gladden the desert. The winds, charged with the vapors drawn from ocean tanks, travel over plains and mountains, dropping their burden of blessing upon the earth, to be surely regathered into streams and returned to swell the ocean exchequer. Such is God's ordination in Nature. Terrible would be the consequences of an arrest of this arrangement. Let the waters that fill the great nursery of vapors remain stationary—let them refuse to yield to the demands of the divine economy in Nature, and never travel in clouds over the continent—let the clouds fail to drop their contents in genial showers to drench the earth and revive vegetation, and how fearful would be the consequences. The world would wither with drought. The fair face of Nature would contract into ghastly wrinkles. The parched and burning ground would blister the feet that touched it. Nor is this all. Those stagnant and stinging sea waters would soon become foul and pestilential. There are certain land-locked expanses which do not yield any succor to the earth. Their own immediate surroundings would famish but for the help which the winds bring them from other sources. They make it a point, never to yield up any of their accumulations. Consequently they become bitter, pestiferous and deadly. Slimy and hideous things crawl out of the stagnant abyss, and sprawl on the sluggish surface. Such inhospitable and surly seas are the *Aral* and *Caspian*, and the ill-omened expanse, called Lake *Asphaltites*. They refuse to bless with their possessions, and consequently become unblest; fit emblems of selfish and niggardly souls, who neither gladden any spot in God's heritage, nor are gladdened in their own. "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

But it is not simply as *Churches* that we are summoned to the duty of Christian Benevolence. *Individual responsibility* must be recognized and felt, or the duty in question will be neglected, and the cause of God will be left to suffer for lack of the necessary means to sustain and promote it. Each Christian disciple, however scanty his possessions, is a steward of a few of the gifts of God, and is required to make some offering, however humble, on the altar of Christian Benevolence. Are we "faithful over a few things?"

How many excuse themselves with the plea that their moderate possessions and income do not permit them to respond to the claims of Christian Benevolence. The attention of such is directed to the example of one, whose humble offering the Saviour has elevated into an enduring renown. It was an insignificant gift, *in itself*—those "two mites" of the poor widow—but how magnificent, for it was her all, "even all her *living*." Little did it swell the contents of the sacred treasury, but how did it kindle the admiration of the Saviour, who estimates the gifts of Christian Benevolence, not by their intrinsic worth, but by their relative value. Neither the poor widow, nor her meagre contribution gained the notice of the wealthy and proud ones who, on that day, swept along the Temple courts, admiring their own, or envying their rival's splendor. But Jesus, passing by the royal offerings of the rich, as if deserving of no special attention, summoned the attention of his disciples to the indigent widow, depositing her trivial, and yet princely charity. Her portrait is hung up in the gallery of the ancient worthies.

In circumstances like those of the poor widow, it would seem almost unreasonable, if not wrong, for her to donate anything to charitable purposes. She might have plead the adage, which some sordid soul has coined, "Charity begins at home." But instead of pleading her destitution against the calls of Christian Benevolence, she brings forth "*even all her living*." She *denied* herself, not merely of the comforts and conveniences, but of the very necessities of life.