

beneficence we are to give all we can, and besides our regular offerings to keep the vestal flame of habitual charity even glowing on the altar of our hearts. If we only think of the "great love wherewith he hath loved us;" if, as one says, "we only pass by the cross on our way to the altar of obligation, nothing will appear too much to give, and the richest offering will appear totally unworthy of the divine acceptance." If, like Zaccheus, we feel the thrilling sense of redemption in our souls, we shall exclaim, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." Or if, like the early Christians, the love of Christ constraineth us, we shall first give ourselves a "living sacrifice," and then all that we have as a free will oblation on the altar of Christ.

FREQUENCY.

5. This doctrine teaches, *that our contributions should be frequent.* Nothing is more common than complaints about the increasing demands that are made upon our charities. But if giving is an act of worship, its chief value is its frequency. It is not praying once, but praying oft that does good to our souls; so it is not giving once, but giving continually that fills our souls with fatness. Rare givings, like sparse prayers, will bring leanness upon any soul. He whose gifts are like angels' visits, will find his blessings few and far between.

THE TIMES.

6. This doctrine also *fixes the season when our contributions should be made.* Time, not eternity, is the season for prayer. Life, not death, is the period of worship. If then beneficence, is an act of worship, how absurd to postpone it for a dying legacy. As well might we put off prayer till after death. As well might we expect to fast and pray through heirs and executors, as to assign to them our worship and beneficence. The design of giving, like that of praying, is not God's benefit but our own good. "He does not need our gifts; his are all the gold and silver, and cattle upon a thousand hills;" he can command in a moment all the resources of the universe. The chief object of giving, is therefore, the good that accrues to our own souls, the grace which it exercises, the divine blessing that accompanies it—in a word, the reflex benefits which are thereby returned into our own bosoms; but all these are lost, when giving is postponed for a dying hour. It involves the folly of doing an act after it is too late to effect the very object which the act was designed to accomplish.

But time will not permit further detail. Enough has already been said to show that this doctrine extends its comprehensive and discriminating reach through the whole field of practical beneficence. There is not

a principle that it does not settle, not a difficulty that it does not solve, not a detail in the whole sphere of its practical operation that it does not determine.

PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.

Now, from these premises, what is THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSION?

It surely follows, from all that has been said that *this doctrine* is the reformatory, vivifying principle by which the beneficence of the Church is resuscitated, sinewed with new power, and guided to a nobler destiny. From the development which I have already made of Christian beneficence, from its objects, its ends, its principles, its modes and instruments of action, it is perfectly manifest that it contains the elements of tremendous power. It is a leverage of living principles, which, if rightly placed and properly wielded will move the world. But hitherto it has been in a measure inert. Never in any age of the Church have its powers been fully evoked, or its activities thoroughly exercised. Its action has been rather that of spasmodic impulse than of uniform, expanding life. Even to this hour it is a drivelling giant, huge in its frame, gigantic in its proportions, and mighty in its sinews; but weak, impotent and ineffective in the manifestations of undeveloped life.

The grand question for this age of the Church is How shall this giant principle be roused, vivified, strung with new energy, and brought to bear with all its stupendous influence upon the destiny of the world? One age of the Church has settled its doctrines, another its polity; each in turn has wrought out and established some great principle; but the great problem which, as it seems to us, divine Providence has given this age of the Church to solve, is this: The best method for evolving and developing the inherent powers of Christian beneficence, and for bringing it to bear in practical and efficient operation on the salvation of the world.

Now, the solution of this problem is found, we think, in the simple doctrine THAT BENEFICENCE IS WORSHIP. If beneficence has languished since the apostolic age, it is because this truth has lost its place in the unwrought belief of the Church; if Sampson has driven, it is because he is shorn of his locks. This truth is the secret of his strength; restore it again to its proper place in the practical convictions of God's people and Sampson is himself again. It supplies just what is needed. Beneficence is ineffective for two reasons; *it lacks life and system.* Now this doctrine supplies the desideratum it gives *life and impulse.* Let a man really believe, and with what a holy ardor will it fire his soul; let him but