

Christ, and a better foundation of confidence will not indeed appear in the act, but be revealed in connection with it. It is no wonder that sometimes we fail to know whether we belong to Christ, when half our life, for our worldly estate is a great part of it, lies outside of Him altogether.

There are few Christians who do their duty in respect to contributions to the cause of Christ, and a vast number who think that a free gospel and free salvation should never make demands upon them. They forget that there is a harmony between every individual part of the work of grace, whether it act without or within, as a power to justify or to sanctify. God's love apprehended and shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit, constrains us to love and live to Him that gave Himself for us. So a free gospel, that tells of a free salvation, works by God's free Spirit, till the disposition breaks its narrow bonds, and becomes itself free and liberal. "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you," is an apostolic command, the full force of which is rarely seen. It may be rendered—"pour out liberally, for God, who has all riches of grace to bestow, is pouring in." When little flows forth of effort and means for the extension of God's cause, we may be sure that there is little influx of God's grace into the heart.

"According to your faith be it unto you," said Jesus to the blind men who sought their sight, and so He still speaks to all that seek His grace. Giving is a gauge of faith, and thus of the grace that is proportioned to faith. "Give and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete, withal, it shall be measured to you again." These are the words of Christ, and they apply not only to what men will return to us for our good offices to them, and to the supply of means for our liberality by Him whose are the world's silver and gold, but also to the higher gift that the same Lord will bestow upon those whose faith leads them to dispense liberally in His service. How little, alas, does faith enter as an element into our giving. The treasury is enriched out of our superfluity, and not by the self-denying tax upon our necessity, that brings faith to the test. If God did not make the cup of each member of His Church to overflow, there is fear that the treasury would be an empty one. And at the present day, it needs so much to make the cup to overflow. It is like the outlet of a lake that is dammed across at the narrowest part, after long and careful dredging has deepened all its channels and raised its banks. It holds water enough to make two or three lakes of the size it was before flow down with a mighty current; and yet it simply begins to drip over the barrier for a few hours before the great convulsion comes that swallows up the whole. So men increase their desires and nominal necessities until death tears them and their wealth apart, leaving the treasury empty as they found it.

"Set your affections on things that are above." "Lay ye up for yourselves treasures in Heaven. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." It may be said that these passages do not allude to money in any sense. We hold that they do, and that in this connection only can men make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. This mammon rightly employed shall go before, not to condemn us at the throne, but to justify, as showing the reality of our union to the Saviour, by the possession of the spirit of Him, who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich."