

more than they all;" not more absolutely, but more relatively to her means.—The rich gave "out of their abundance," contributed to an extent which scarcely diminished their ample stores, and subjected them to little or no inconvenience, and called for no great exercise of self-denial. But the poor widow gave "out of her penury," out of very scanty means. She had no husband to provide for her, and when he died, he had left her in deep poverty; so that all she had in the world was a single farthing, which she may have earned by her labour. But she gave it cheerfully to God, although it was "all the living that she had," all that she had to subsist upon at the time. She trusted in the good providence of God, and depended on his blessing for the success of her industry and the supply of her daily bread. How few have ever manifested such generosity and piety as this! how few could willingly give up *all* that they have for God! If this widow had been of a selfish spirit, she would have thought that she had more need to get than to give; and worldly-wise men would say that her conduct exhibited the greatest folly. But the Saviour approved of her deed, and that was sufficient. He pronounced the highest commendation upon her, and he holds her forth to the admiration and imitation of all succeeding generations, as one who scorned to ask charity, but felt it more honourable and blessed to give, for supporting the worship of God, and maintaining the celebration of his appointed ordinances.

There are three leading topics suggested by this narrative, to which we would solicit the attention of our readers.

1. *The duty of giving to the cause of God.*

The duty is incumbent upon all, of every rank and station. The Jewish temple indeed has been destroyed, and all its ceremonial rites have passed away; but the obligation to contribute, according to our ability, "unto the offerings of God," remains in all its force. If it was the duty of God's ancient people to contribute of their substance, to repair and enlarge the temple, and to maintain the worship and ordinances of God's house, is it not also our duty to contribute, as he has prospered us, in order to maintain and extend that purer and more spiritual worship, which he has established in these latter days? If God expressly reserved the *tithes*, or the tenth part of the produce of the land of Israel,

to maintain the appointed ministers of religion—if he complained that those who withheld these tithes were guilty of "robbing God" will he now hold those guiltless who refuse to give any part of their substance, to maintain the preaching of the gospel, and the celebration of Christian ordinances? No man indeed has a right to dictate to his brother, as to how much he must give to "the offerings of God;" of this, every man, who knows his own circumstances best, must be the best judge. But still, every man is bound to consider and decide, as in the sight of God, looking to his individual circumstances and obligations, what proportion of God's gifts to him he ought to give back to God. And though the same rule may not be applicable to every case, yet, as it is well known that, in our own Church not a few are giving a tenth part of their whole income to the "offerings of God," surely it is at least desirable, if not incumbent, that others should endeavour to come as near as possible to this standard. And if this were done, then doubtless the cause of God would be greatly advanced, and the Saviour's kingdom widely extended.

But what is more important than the amount contributed, is the *spirit* in which our contributions are given. We must give, not in a grudging or grumbling spirit, but willingly and cheerfully: not for the sake of appearance, but from a sense of duty; not as an act of mere charity, but as a matter of imperative obligation; not by fits and starts of alternate generosity and narrowness, but according to a stated and definite rule. "Do ye not know," says the apostle Paul, "that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? *Even so* hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." And they are as much entitled to this as the labourer is entitled to his hire; and entitled to it, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of their people, in order that, being set free from worldly cares and anxieties, they may be enabled to "give themselves wholly," and without distraction, to the duties of their sacred office.

And while it is our duty to support the gospel in our own land, it is also our duty to extend it to our fellow-creatures, at home and abroad, who have never heard its joyful sound. No man liveth unto himself; but every man, and especially