

nit cannot be subjected to the test of the outward senses, there exists a tendency to depreciate that object, no matter how valuable in itself. The tendency is to matter-of-fact and money-making; what is immediately or indirectly convertible into wealth is a commodity highly prized, what is not is despised—the value of an article is how much current money will it bring. It has been well said, “In the clank and din of our never tiring machinery the voice of wisdom is often drowned, and the most momentous and stirring truths are little esteemed, because they cannot be rated in the prices current or sold on the Exchange. We are impatient to see the material results of every truth, and to have its profits told up on our fingers, or pressed into our palms. So, on the other hand, if any principle or practice, plan or expedient, be it true or be it false, will effect our purpose, produce a needful impression, and secure an end that we deem desirable, we are prone to think it allowable because it is effective. We idolize effect. And a philosophy of expediency thus springs up, which sacrifices every thing to immediate effect, and to mere material results—a philosophy, which in practice, if not in theory, is driving rapidly against some of the very bulwarks of our moral principles that our fathers believed justly to be grounded on the law, and built into the throne of God.” Political economy strives hard to swallow up theology, and the law of self boldly presents itself as the corner stone on which to raise the temple of true wisdom! In proportion as this spirit rules in any community, in the same ratio must the doctrines of the cross, the price of which cannot be given by weights and measures, pressed into the palms or told upon the fingers,—they cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof—appear as useless, and those whose duty it is to proclaim their work, and press them on the attention of men, be viewed as having doubtful claims on society for support; receiving but little of this they have no right to complain! This spirit, too, may in some measure, account for the demand, so urgent in our day, for extensive ministerial visitation. In these duties there is something more after the “fashion of the world,”—something more similar to the way in which it “spends its money,”—than many may imagine. Besides being therein something tangible and visible, bodily labor, exercise of muscle, the employment of matter are essential elements, and for which the world deems it proper to reward with certain fixed rates; whilst intellectual efforts pass unappreciated and unworthy of recompense. Indeed, they who are much engaged in mental toils are by many deemed to enjoy times next to idlers, or at least in comparative ease. In vain do physicians assure

us that “two hours hard study are more injurious to the vital energies of our constitution, than a whole day’s bodily labor;” in vain are examples presented to prove the correctness of this view; so materialistic have many become that they think there is no labor but that of the body—that there is no care but that of getting money, no sorrow but in disappointed effort for it, no joy but in its possession, and no work worth enduring or naming, but such as looks to this as its end!

Unscriptural views about money may be considered another cause. Many Christians view the employment of money to procure the vanities, pleasures, and profits of this world as its only proper and legitimate use. Money, they consider in all respects, to be of the earth, earthy. According to this class, it is neither of God nor for his service, that true religion and the true use of money are wholly antagonistic, so that the effort to unite them is profane and sacrilegious.—Doubtless, this wild theory underlies the wide distinction made by some between things temporal and things spiritual in the church, and assigns to one class of men who need not be as pious as elders, if at all church members, the care of temporalities; whilst the elder, lest he dim the sacred lustre of his office with the gold and silver of the sanctuary, is to superintend, to the great disadvantage of Zion’s property, only what is spiritual. Are these views scriptural? The prices of the things that were sold not only went for pious ends, but were laid at the apostles’ feet. The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof. Did he not make the gold, and so settled its quantity and quality, even when he laid the foundations of the earth, that it becomes a ready and convenient representation of earth’s treasury, of its necessities and comforts? A convenience whose author is God and not man. The wisdom and goodness of God are as much stamped on gold as on any other of His handy-works; and, therefore, it places us under as sacred obligations to serve Him by its use as that of any other of His inferior creatures. He claims the gold and silver as His, no less than the corn and wine, and oil, and the wool and the flax. Hosea ii. He denounces the sacrilege, which robs Him of His rights in this particular, as well as in others. Hosea ii. 11. He will free his creatures from the bondage of Satan and the world, because of sin. The gold and the silver by which men serve themselves and their idols must, as of old, go to build the tabernacle of the Lord. There it finds its appropriate place and use. Zech. xiv. 14. Meantime, it is enough to observe that they who assign gold to the temple of mammon, as its only proper place, are at least consistent when they deny the Lord’s servant a clear right to it!