

in which never man lay, he felt that nothing would justify him in refusing "The best to the Lord." And let us be assured that when we are generous towards every other thing save the Gospel, and towards every other person but the Saviour who bought us with His blood, he will mark the indignity, as he says, "Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick—thus ye brought an offering; should I accept this of your hand?"

Is there not, too, an unreasoning and irrational complaint against the multiplicity of claims which in these days solicit our help? We can conceive of two conditions in which such claims would be entirely abolished. The one would be realized in a state of actual and absolute barbarism, from which the very idea of improvement should be obliterated, in which there should be no more humanity than was just needful to preserve the race from extinction. Given such a state of things—a state of nakedness that requires no covering, of ignorance that could not even dream of knowledge, of debasement which had never heard of anything higher than its own sensuality, and the very name of claims would be unintelligible.

The other condition is exactly the reverse of this, and will be realised when the last traces of ignorance, and sorrow, and sin have vanished from the earth; when there shall be no Lazarus at the gate of Dives, no outcasts to be gathered in, no orphans to be pitied and cherished, and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. But between these two poles of the world's life, the Egypt of darkness and desolation, and the promised land towards which God is leading our race through a long and eventful pilgrimage, we must prepare ourselves for claims more numerous and more varied than we have met with hitherto. And these claims are not merely human in their aspect. All true claims have their roots and grounds in heaven. The claim of the virtuous poor upon the help of the rich is Divine; that of the insane upon the pity and guardianship of the sane is Divine. And what among the numerous claims now pressing their suit for our generous help do we think ought to be discountenanced and repulsed? Where shall the process of elimination begin? The world needs the Bible; shall we refuse to give another farthing for its circulation? It needs missionaries to expound and enforce its truths; shall we cancel our subscription to the society which sends them? Sabbath schools present their annual solicitations; shall we turn to them a deaf ear? Let us take the list of all the agencies now in operation for the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual regeneration of man, with a view of reducing it within a less formidable compass, and we are greatly mistaken if each society in turn would not be able to plead for continuance with most effective eloquence. It may be the case that some of these organizations might be spared if there were more individual activity, but we doubt whether such as would advocate their extinction would be the parties to help towards their substitution by personal toil. My brethren, we sometimes speak of the glory of England. But in what does that glory consist? In its commerce filling all seas, in its invincible armies, or its equally invincible fleet, in its well-ordained form of government, or the enterprise of its sons? We are insensible to the value of none of these; but, so long as the world is groaning under its sins and woes, the glory of England will be that, with a prompt and tender heart, and with a hand never slack nor heavy, it multiplies agencies which aim at the removal of everything that keeps man back from the purity and blessedness of God. A higher glory still it will have achieved, when these agencies shall have attained their end, and when they shall exist no more, because needed no more. So many claims! what means the phrase but so many endeavours and enterprises towards accomplishing the prayer, "Thy will be done?" And when we are weary of working for the kingdom, and of contributing towards its advent, let us drop the petition from our supplications, for no man can sincerely pray for that to which he refuses both money and labour.

Again; is there not too much of a relative and deferential liberality—a liberality, I mean, which takes its cue and measure from our neighbour? This, we are aware, may operate in two ways, and may stimulate some to a higher generosity than they would exhibit if left to their own unbiassed decision. But for