

one of them will insert a clause in his will consecrating a liberal portion of his substance for the maintenance and spread of pure religion in the land.

It sometimes occurs that Christian men of large means withhold now from God's cause what it greatly needs, and what they could easily give, intending at the close of their life to make a liberal donation towards its support. This is very much to be deprecated; for it has often happened that men who flattered themselves that they were preparing to do great things for religion and education in the final disposal of their property, became, by long withholding, so sordid and selfish as to die without remembering either. The best way, the way which the Word of God teaches, is to cultivate a spirit of liberality now, by giving systematically and generously of our means for the support of Gospel institutions, and thus become, at least in part, as has been well expressed, the executors of our own wills. The man who acts according to this rule has not only the satisfaction of witnessing the right application of his gifts—of knowing that these gifts are not diverted from their intended object, as is the case not unfrequently with simple bequests—but he is also doing an immense amount of good to his own spirit. He cultivates a proper sense of his dependence upon God, and of his obligation to love and serve Him. By his liberal contributions from week to week he not only aids the cause of religion directly, but he actually weakens and destroys that passion for accumulating wealth for its own sake which is so apt to gain the mastery over the hearts of rich men, and which has often led to most ruinous results.

It were well for the cause of religion, and well for the spiritual welfare of donors themselves, if a larger portion of their contributions to God were given during their lifetime. Wills have often been broken through the covetousness of heirs and the ingenious devices of the law, so that what was truly and honestly intended for the Church of Christ by testators, has either been wasted in vexatious lawsuits, or devoted to some other objects. Instances came within our own knowledge in which bequests to religious purposes fell into the hands of unworthy heirs, who squandered the whole in works of wickedness, in defying God and destroying themselves, or glided into the hands of strangers who cared not a straw for the memory of the donor, and in whom he had not the remotest personal interest. It is a sore and a sad thing to see wasted in the service of Satan what was originally intended for the service of God. The best way for one to obviate such a painful contingency is to give for the support of religious and charitable institutions during his lifetime as liberally as his circumstances will warrant.

It will however be prudent, yea necessary, for many persons to retain a considerable amount of their property in their own possession till the close of their life, for their own maintenance and the support of those depending upon them. In disposing of this by will they ought not to forget God. If they cultivate a spirit of liberality during their lifetime they are not likely to do so. It is our firm conviction that every Christian man possessed of property should make a distinct acknowledgment in his will of his love to God, and of his deep interest in the salvation of his fellow men. How is he to do this? By leaving all his substance to surviving relatives? No. For that might do more harm than good. Many young persons have been grievously injured by the rich patrimony left them. Relieved from the necessity of all manner of personal industry, some of them had the energies of their nature completely paralyzed; they came to nothing. Their lives, as far as doing real good either to themselves or to others, were a perfect blank. Others squandered in lives of dissipation what parental industry