

THE HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD.

FEBRUARY, 1861.

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. The blessed Head of the Church has placed all his people under an infinite obligation of grateful love in laying down his life for them even while they were enemies and thus bringing them into a state of friendship and reconciliation with God. Now are we his friends if we do whatsoever he commands us. We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. More than a mother would do for her child, more than a husband would do for his wife, more than a patriot would do for his country, Christ did for his enemies who thirsted for his blood. If, therefore, He has done so much for us, what should we do for Him? Let us answer this question by asking another:—What would you not do for a fellow-mortal who had saved you from death? If he succeeded in saving you only by enduring death in your stead, with what anxious tenderness would you recall his dying commands! What would you not do for his widow and orphans! To what sacrifice would you not submit in order to honour his memory! Now carry these very feelings into the case as it stands between you and Christ. You owe him infinitely more than you can owe to any mortal—for he has done for you what none else on earth or in heaven could or would do.

What then will you do for Christ? I will call myself by his name, I will be baptized into his Church—sit at his table—read his word—pray to him in private and sometimes in public. I will pay my pew-rent or subscription regularly. I will give him the smallest coin in the realm whenever the collection box comes round. I will occasionally give a little,—a dollar or a pound, more or less,—for Missions or religious Societies, and grumble as I do so, or at least look sour at the collector. I will give a *little* to almost all the schemes of our own church, and to other Societies, for I do not dislike to see my name in annual reports and lists of acknowledgments. If a special appeal is made on behalf of any object of importance I will double my contribution. If every one were to do as well as I have done there would be little room for complaint.

Very well! There are Christians who do not come up even to this mark. You know them, reader, by the dozen. As matters are at present in the religious world, they are the *few* who rise above the standard we have indicated. Alas, what a standard! It manifests no active, cheerful beneficence, no giving to Christ under the delightful constraint of love, no free-