

executor. In our giving, as in all things else, "God worketh in us *both to will and to do*;" not to *will* only, leaving others to *undo* after we are gone, and to thwart our most cherished intentions. The Christian's calling is to be beneficent rather than benevolent, a well-doer rather than a well-willer. So solemn is the obligation at this point that we desire to enforce it with all the emphasis of entreaty and persuasion which we can command. Whatever men may do, God does not "accept the will for the deed." On the contrary, those who bequeath to Him only the good intentions of their wealth may have to wait in vain and forever on the other side for their alms to come up "for a memorial before God." We believe that our Lord meant literally what He said when He gave the commandment, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.*" To deposit our wealth in the safety vaults of this world, and expect the interest thereof to be remitted forward to us after we have entered into heaven is a delusive expectation, though thousands of Christians are aiming to accomplish this by the provisions of their wills. The Lord's requirement is that we lay up for ourselves "treasures in heaven," drawing interest therefrom now, in the joy of implicit obedience, and the peace of a good conscience, assured that when we are called home we shall go to our wealth instead of waiting in vain for it to come to us. We do not affirm that the Christian is forbidden to lay by anything in this world's banks. Here we must interpret Scripture by Scripture; and the solemn admonition of Paul concerning the Christian's duty to "provide for his own, especially for those of his own house," is by common consent taken to refer to a reasonable provision for one's family. But this provision should not be sumptuous if, indeed, we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." It should not be such as to secure either luxury or exemption from the necessity of labor for our children who come after us. "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content," says the Scripture. This is the pilgrim's portion; and we may do well to secure this much to the aged or invalid of our families who may be left behind. But beyond this we are clearly forbidden to lay up on earth. "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." Blessed are they who can and do receive it, for such make a provision for themselves and for their children, and children's children, of which the prudence of this world knows nothing.

If all disciples of Christ would give while they live, and give according as God has prospered them, what an impulse would be imparted to missionary work throughout the world! Edersheim, in his work upon the ministry of the Jewish temple, dwells upon the rigid requirement of the law that the offerer, in depositing his gift in the treasury of the Lord, must bring it "*in his hand*;" not in his purse, not by proxy—so sacredly personal was the transaction. In like manner, we believe, should Christians give—directly, and from a living palm, and not circuitously, or from dead fingers. To make death our almoner and the distributor of our gifts is a worldly and unsanctified custom, invented, we seriously believe, by Satan.