

ity of feeling and action. We have significant appetencies, which would have no meaning, if we were created for a solitary life. There is nothing redundant in us. We can weep with others, but this is because we can help them: and the power implies the duty. "We are not our own." We have within us what belongs to others. It is vested in us for their use. It was only after Cain had become a murderer that he deemed himself his own, and impudently enquired. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

It has been the fashion to consider charity as a thing to which the needy have no right.

But if the sympathies of our nature, and the power to give them expression, are to be considered as intimations of the will of God, then the obligation even of benevolence itself rests on the highest moral basis. Human law may not command it. It may be all the more sacred on that account, for the holiest spheres of our spiritual life are beyond the province and the cognizance of earthly legislation. Neglect of the duty of succouring a neighbour in his distress may not be indictable at a human tribunal. No present and temporal penalty may threaten us, if we refuse to teach the ignorant—to guide the perplexed,—to restrain the wandering,—to comfort the sorrowful,—to encourage the fearful,—to warn the reckless,—and to seek and give the lost. But that we have withheld from our neighbour what belongs to him, is most startlingly implied in many of the utterances.

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth his bowels of compassion from him; he dwelleth the love of God in him?" For "this world's good," and the temporal need which it may relieve, substitute "eternal riches," and the spiritual necessities which they can relieve and satisfy. The argument of the Apostle assumes a stringency and a solemnity,

which may well prompt to "deep searchings of heart"

Who can think for a moment of this aspect of duty without being smitten with the self-accusation, "I am verily guilty concerning my brother?" And if guilty, then benevolence is, in the highest view of man, not option, but obligation. It is one of the triple demands of heaven; for "what doth the Lord thy God require of thee? Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." These and these equally, He requires, He will have justice, He will have piety, *He will have mercy too.* Oh! selfishman! if such I address to day, thou art a blot upon the bosom of this fair world. Thou art a jarring note in else unbroken harmony of the world. The Sun reproves thee, as it refuses to engross one beam for itself, and pours out its golden effulgence, as if conscious that its fountain was inexhaustible;—The flower reproves thee, as it retains not with miserly greed its fragrance, but commits it all to the passing gale! The sea rebukes thee, as it bears laughingly on its bosom the commerce of nations, or nourishes in its silent depths fish for the service of man, or sends aloft its cloudy exhalations! The clouds rebuke thee, as they do not consume their own precious burden of waters, but distil them upon the thirsty earth.

Listen to that choral harmony—listen, and be ashamed—"for thou, even thou, art not thy own!"

II. Let us consider the reason which the Apostle assigns for this fact,—"*Ye are bought with a price.*"

He might have grounded the fact on other considerations. He might have said "*ye are not your own, for God created you; you are the sheep of his pasture, you are the work of his hands.*" Or, he might have said, "*Ye are not your own because God preserves you in Him, ye live, and move, and have your being.*" Sin, however, has dulled and deadened