

commendation. And yet these very individuals may not have contributed at all proportionate to their means, or their ability, either as to what they have received, or as to what they require to expend. The very servants of such individuals may have given vastly more, in proportion to their incomes. What then, do you ask, is the criterion by which they ought to be regulated in the matter of their giving of their substance unto the Lord. Plainly, not the wants and necessities of the case, nor the payment of their just and lawful debts, if the expression may be admitted, nor the full implementing of their sacred engagements. What then? The amount of worldly possessions that the Sovereign Proprietor hath committed to them as stewards. This is what they ought to look at and be guided by. Of course the sum they appropriate to religious purposes out of this, will depend on their state of spirituality; on their sense of obligation to redeeming love; and therefore the propriety, the indispensable necessity, of their making the whole a matter of conscience. And if this were the case, if the rich were to give in proportion to their means, how ample would be the provision for the maintenance of divine ordinances, and how rapidly would they be extended! And would this make any encroachment on their temporal comforts?—Not in the least degree! Their barns would aye be full, and their coffers would be like the woman's pot of oil.

3rd, And finally, they ought to seek to give of their substance unto the Lord, under the conviction that they are thereby called to the exercise of a distinguished privilege. It is, no doubt, as we have shown, a solemn duty laid on all the hearers of the Gospel, to give as the Lord hath prospered them; but it is something more—it is an unspeakable and glorious privilege—a privilege which the loftiest cherub would earnestly covet. And why is it so? Is it because God hath himself written, in letters of gold, "It is more blessed to give than to receive,"—or is it because Christ hath declared, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." It is a privilege on these grounds, no doubt. But it is so on yet higher and more exalted grounds—because we are thereby using the means that God hath placed within our reach, for the promotion of his glory in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of saints. Who can calculate the revenue of glory that will redound to all the persons in the Godhead, even from the contribution of the Widow's mite. By the blessing of the Most High, one soul may be