

well as for the world, if they could sell some of their possessions and buy therewith more of a spirit of doing good.

But there are others of an entirely different spirit. They love every good cause; their whole is in each effort for the salvation of men; but they are poor, really so, perhaps extremely so. It may be they are in debt, and feeling that the property in their hands does not really belong to them, they do not know whether it would be right to gratify their benevolent feelings. They fear lest the cause of Christ should suffer through what the world might call an unwarranted if not an unlawful liberality. Such might be reminded that nothing really belongs to them, that in every thing they are but stewards. But as it is the misconstruction of the world they are afraid of, let us turn to the world for the solution of their difficulty.

It is an established principle among business men, that when a man fails, as it is called, his creditors are entitled to his available property, in exact proportion to the amount of their claims. And if his assets do not suffice for the payment of each, one is not paid in full and another left wholly unpaid; but all fair alike. The assets are equitably divided among them all, and each gets the same percentage of his full claim. This is an universal rule; no one disputes its equity; and business men would at once dispute any deviation from the principle.

Now apply this, their own rule, to the case before us. A Christian is in debt, and unable at the moment to meet all the demands of his creditors. He owes so much to A., B. and C. for value received; then he also owes to God. He owes him for life, for the support and continuance of life, for the creation and preservation of every member of his body and faculty of his mind. He owes him for all his mercies; for that very value that came through A., B. and C.; and especially does he owe him for the unespeakable gift of his dear Son. Do not say because that is a gift, therefore it involves no debt. In view of it as the chief mercy, the Apostle calls the presenting our bodies as living sacrifices a reasonable service; and we are told Christ died for us that we should live to him. And such debt, where the obligation exists without a written bond, men of the world call debts of honor, and insist on cancelling them first of all. Now on what principle of worldly justice would men shut out altogether the claims of so large a creditor? And if they are shut out, on what principle can they maintain any other claims? And remember, I am not pleading for an exclusive regard to the claims of God, as they plead an exclusive regard to their own claims; but for a proportionate regard to all.

Perhaps they are afraid God will claim too large a share, and so diminish theirs; but they need not fear. God is neither selfish nor unfair, nor disposed to take advantage of them in any way. If, on the one hand he says, Bring ye all the tithe into the storehouse; on the other, he also says, Owe no man anything. He enjoins the payment of the debts due to those very men who rob him of what is due to him. And while he does so, he is very lenient in the collection of the great debt those men themselves owe to his goodness. So far from losing, I am persuaded that he who allows the claims of God to be regarded equally with his own, will never be the loser; while those who refuse the consideration of his claims will just as surely not be gainers.

TWO KINDS OF ELDERS.

Even a single elder may be greatly influential. The statement has two aspects; for he may do great harm, or great good. One elder may do much injury. It is not necessary to this that he be a liar, or swearer, or drunkard; for such a man would bring himself under discipline, and could neither become nor remain an elder in any of our churches. It is enough to make him worse than useless, that he be an impracticable and troublesome individual. If such a character is rarely to be found, yet, to complete a sketch, he may at least be supposed. We naturally depict a person of this sort as possessing a very good opinion of himself. The like favourable estimate he may not entertain in relation to others, or his very respect for them may secure them a measure of his jealousy and ill-will. Being of a soured disposition, he may have a morbid discontent with existing arrangements and regulations, and speak as if all things were amiss for want of his mending. In sessional deliberations he may have many cases to bring forward, and motions to submit, and speeches to make, and become very oratorical and intractable if any impatience be manifested under his effusions. In forwarding his views, he may communicate much with elders whom he is most likely to influence; and thus form something like a party in the session, and then talk of opposite sides. If poorly supported by his brethren in the eldership, he may set to work in the congregation, and by *ex parte* representations of what is passing, stir up dissatisfaction there, and then plead a 'pressure from without' in apology for his earnestness. By no means deficient in the love of power, he may feel as if power were most expressively shown in opposition. To aid another, might rather seem to him to be weakness. When good proposals, therefore, are made, and do not emanate from himself, it may be his frequent course first to doubt of them, and then labour to defeat them. He may be commendably devoted to the cause of civil liberty; and, transferring his notions of political abuses to ecclesiastical administration, and thinking that the extravagances of the state have all crept into a Presbyterian church, however spare may be its finances and economical its outlay, he may suppose that he acts the patriot and reformer, in calling for indiscriminate retrenchment, and frowning on every kind and generous suggestion. Yet this elder may

not be without traits of excellence; or, as some would say, redeeming qualities. He may be versed in scripture—he may be diligent in a good work when it meets his mind; and no one would feel entitled to pronounce him positively a bad man. But, if an office-bearer in the church have the cast of mind which has just been indicated, or anything resembling and approaching it, he may not only be prevented by his temper from accomplishing much in Christ's cause himself, but become a faithful hindrance alike to sessional and congregational reformation.

On the other hand, a single elder may do great good. It is not necessary to this that he be a man of extraordinary powers, or of immense wealth; nor must we depict him, to account for his successful services, as a paragon of moral excellence. He has his failings, but he knows them himself, and an humbling consciousness of them sheds a sobriety over his bearing, and inclines him to be respectful in his communications with others. That abuses exist, he sees and deplors; and he applies himself, but with the meekness of wisdom, to effect the correction of them, and reckons it better, in accomplishing his object, to avoid a battle than to gain a victory. He throws his soul into beneficent enterprises, and it takes the mould of them, expands to their capaciousness, rises to their altitude, and recedes to their immeasurable distance from meanness and vice. In prosecuting the cause of Christ, he is drawn more into fellowship with Christ, imbues more of the spirit of Christ, and hence becomes more thoroughly Christian in all his views, feelings, and engagements. One can mark a discernible progress in his piety. There is a ripening aversion to evil, a deepening delight in true goodness wherever found, and a growing readiness for every good work. Even his friendship, always sincere and trustworthy, evinces more of a mellowing kindness, a purer tone of sacredness in its sympathy, more of that exquisite tender-heartedness which 'rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep.' How valuable is such a man to all with whom the providence of God allies him! What a treasure is he to a minister!—what a treasure to a session!—what a treasure to a congregation! While he lives, he does far more good than is ever suspected by himself, or shall be known to others, till 'the day shall declare it;' and when he dies, good men carry him to his grave, and make great lamentation over him.—*Dr. King on the Eldership.*

HINTS TO A PRAYERLESS MOTHER—As a little boy sat looking at his mother one day, he said, "Grandpapa will be in heaven! Aunt will be heaven! Mary will be in heaven! Baby is in heaven! But mamma!" Here the child paused and looked very solemn.

"Well, dear," said the mother, "what about mamma? Will not mamma be in heaven?"

The little fellow shook his head very gravely, and replied, "O no, no!"

"Why do you say so?" asked the mother, deeply affected.

"O, you do not pray," he replied; "so you will not go to heaven."

"Yes, my dear, I do; I often pray for you when you do not see me—very often, indeed."

"Ah, I never saw you, then. Kneel down now, and let me hear if you can pray."

The mother knelt by her child, and prayed aloud for herself and little one, and that day learned a lesson she will never forget.

Mother! are you going to heaven? Do your little ones think you are going, by all they observe in your walk and conduct? Are you leading them in the way to go to heaven? Do they often hear your voice going up to the throne of God for them? Those who do not pray on earth, may pray when earth is passed, and their prayer then will not be answered. The rich man prayed for one drop of water—a very small request—but he did not obtain the boon he asked. May you be anxious to pray now, that your prayer may be heard and answered.—*Mother's Friend.*

AN APPEAL TO YOUTH—There are some who are distinguished by the fear of God in their youth; some Isaacs who prefer an evening walk to meditate to the crowded avenues of dissipation; some Josephs, whose image is "a fruitful bough by a well;" some Davids who love the harps of Zion, and have no ear "for the song of the drunkard," or "the mirth of fools;" some Timothys who "from childhood have known the Scriptures, which is able to make them wise unto salvation;" and hail you on your early escape from the paths of the destroyer, on your early separation from a world, which attracts only to show its emptiness, and elevates only to depress, on your early union with the wise and good. Go forth in all "the beauties of holiness;" honor God, and serve your generation according to his will. Religiously occupy the stations you are to ennobel, and form the connections which you are to bless. "Adorn the doctrine of God your saviour in all things." Earnestly pursue the glorious course which you have begun; be not weary in well-doing; grow in grace as you advance in years; "abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;" "approve the things that are excellent;" and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. And what hinders any of you, my young friends, from joining yourselves to the Lord? Weigh the reasonings which you have heard; suspend for a while the influence of your passions, and endeavor to feel the force of the motives which have been adduced. Deliberate, or rather decide, for there is no time for hesitation; "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" the language of the Redeemer is, "To-day," and will you say with Pharaoh, "To-morrow?" Every delay will have you more remote from the God you have to seek; every delay will place more barriers between you and