

If the people are poor, it will be apparent; but is that so? The respectable appearance of our people every where throughout the country shews the reverse of this. Our houses, in the majority of cases, contain furniture not only in abundance, but of an expensive description,—not to mention valuable jewellery and works of art. Ay, and we may be “adding house to house and field to field.” And is it not the case, that the Lord’s cause is either hardly thought of or the smallest amount given, just so as to save the donor from the blush of shame?

Oh, then, is there not something wrong here? Why should there be such lack in giving? Not, it is to be feared, in poverty does the reason lie, in by far the majority of instances. No, no, not there, we are constrained to affirm. The reason, we greatly fear, is want of loving regard for the prosperity of those great efforts in which the Church of Christ is engaged. If so, is not this a sad state of things? Can we wonder that there are so few “enquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward;” that “the ways of Zion mourn;” that so few, comparatively, are “brought out of darkness into His marvellous light;” that among professors of religion there is “leanness of soul,” and a holding back from coming up as *men* “to the help of the Lord against the mighty?” Alas, no!

Surely the reason that the world is not sooner converted to the Saviour, is the worldliness of these professors of His name, who do not deny themselves for His sake as “good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” “Bring,” saith the Lord, by the prophet Malachi, “Bring all the tithes into the store-house, and prove me now herewith if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out such a blessing as there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

The Saviour’s teaching is, “Give of your abundance, of good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over,” for “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” The apostle’s rule is, “Give as God hath prospered you;” and give cheerfully, “for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

If the above premises and conclusions are true, you redeemed ones,—you who can set to your seal that there is a power in the Cross of Christ,—that you are washed from sin through faith in Him, whose inward consciousness attests this truth, and in whom the fruits of a holy life give further evidence of the blessing you have experienced,—you and I, my brethren, who love Zion, what must we do? Well, first examine our own hearts, asking, “What am *I* doing for my Lord?” If we are not coming up to the standard of the gospel in the duty of giving, “the perfect law of liberty” will teach you. Look into it. This being done as in His sight who will shortly say to us, “Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward,” let there, then, be earnest and special prayer, that we may have clearer views of this duty, and practice it, in order that we may grow in grace and in living conformity to the example of the Lord Jesus.

If the Christian thoroughly understood and practised this duty, as “God hath prospered him,” the results would be not only that the Church’s entire work would be invigorated and strengthened, but that the hearts of her devout labourers would be cheered and refreshed, and would bound into fresh life and activity, and new energies would be put forth for the conversion of the world to her exalted Head.

While writing on the duty of “Christian giving,” one is tempted to write on; it is such a broad field. And to be plain, we must express our fear that the *pulpit* has not given to the people its “certain sound” on this matter—