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THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF GIVING.

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CHRISTIAN LAW OF GIVING.

EVERY man ought to give, and most men do give. Many are seriously puzzled to know how much they should give. Before attempting to aid them directly in the solution of this problem, we will state a few preliminary considerations bearing upon the subject.

The Divine will has been revealed to man in three dispensations of providential discipline.

First was the patriarchal, which revealed and illustrated the wisdom, majesty, and power of God in connection with the world of nature.

Then came the Mosaic, which especially revealed and illustrated His holiness, justice,
mercy, and sovereignty in the history of the Jewish nation.

Lastly appeared the Christian dispensation, revealing and illustrating His love in the sacrifice of his Son, and in the establishment of a spiritual religion, with love as its spring of energy and supreme principle of law.

The patriarchal religion, with its few and simple duties, made comparatively little encroachment upon the life of self. The Jewish system attacked the life of self in many ways, but legalized much that remained—as in the case of multiplicity of wives, which were permitted them "because of the hardness of their hearts."

But the Christian religion seeks the utter extirpation of the life of self, as being essentially opposed to its spirituality and benevolence, and hence depletes it in every possible way.

In harmony with this view, the patriarchal, family religion required the giving of one tenth.

The Jewish national religion extended that demand to about one third. The Christian
universal religion, in accordance with the breadth of its design, made still larger demands, in order thus to illustrate its principle of love, and secure the extirpation of the life of self.

No truth can be properly appreciated until our thoughts are lifted to an altitude corresponding with its nature. We should, therefore, examine the **Christian Law of Giving**, not from the low grounds of our own selfishness, or of views of duty which have been begotten by such selfishness, but from the lofty heights of God's purposes as declared to us in the march of his revelations down through the dispensations.

There are two classes of principles likewise bearing upon the subject which, considered in their mutual relations, may reveal the law which we are seeking. They are, first, The mental, social, and naturally religious. Second, The gracious, or supernaturally religious.

Let us start with the assumption of three principles of the first class, all so generally admitted that we need not stop to prove them:

First, The existence of a faculty presupposes
the duty to exercise it under appropriate conditions.

Second, The existence of relations originates corresponding obligations. For example, if one is in the relation of a parent, he has a parent's duty to perform; and so of all other relations.

Third, Any duty that may be ascertained by the application of the above principles may be modified, but cannot be abrogated, by the laws of grace.

In the application of the foregoing principles we shall use the terms employed by phrenology simply as the most convenient to express underlying mental facts, without, by so doing, indorsing or denying its claims.

That there is in the human mind a faculty, Veneration, the proper function of which is to reverence and adore; and that there is another faculty, Conscientiousness, the function of which is to bring the mind to the test of right, and to utter an imperative Ought or Ought Not in regard to moral actions, will not be denied.

Further, that these faculties are found in
relations of guilt; that is, where the conscientious *ought* stands opposed to the actual accomplishments of the soul, is a fact of universal adult experience.

That, under these circumstances, these faculties should have a spontaneous expression, is a law of their being, because such are the conditions which naturally excite them to instinctive activity.

What that expression is, the history of the race makes evident, for that history is one long record of the attempts of men to *sacrifice* in the fulfillment of their religious convictions. Hence our first proposition, namely: The existence of the faculties of Veneration and Conscientiousness, in relations of guilt, instinctively predisposes to sacrifice. In the accomplishment of this design, the paid employment of others to offer the sacrifices has been a legitimate inference, either from a consciousness of personal unfitness, or from the onerousness of the service required. Hence all nations have had their sacrifices, and their priests to offer them.

These faculties find further natural expression in the support of such rites, ceremonies, and institutions as may seem to be required by the main object, namely, the offering of acceptable sacrifices. Hence all nations have had their religious rites, ceremonies, and institutions.

That there is a faculty, Benevolence, the proper function of which is to sympathize with the suffering and to relieve their necessities, and that this faculty exists amid suffering and want, none will question.

The instinctive expression of Benevolence, in relations of want and suffering, is the immediate relief of the suffering, and, by natural inference, the making of such provisions to alleviate it, or to prevent its recurrence, as the thought of the age may suggest; hence the sympathetic reliefs of charity, and the merciful provisions in the form of beneficary institutions, etc., for its continued benefactions.

Hence our second proposition, namely: The existence of the faculty of Benevolence in
relations of suffering and want instinctively predisposes to offerings of charity.

Now, if there be a revealed religion which is designed to save men with such faculties, amid such relations of guilt, want, and suffering, it must, in the nature of things, make some provision for the employment of these faculties.

Accordingly we find Abraham, when returning from the pursuit of Chedorlaomer and his confederates, offering "tithes of all" the spoils to Melchizedek, "priest of the most high God."

And Jacob, at Bethel, after his wonderful dream, vowed that if the Lord would be with him he would give him a tenth of all that he might gain, thus proving that, under the patriarchal dispensation, a tenth was the recognized amount to be sacrificially apportioned to religious purposes.

The Mosaic economy gave direction to such natural expressions of function in a variety of laws, for example:

First. The law of priestly support, which
gave to the tribe of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance.

Second. The laws concerning temple-feasts and sacrifices, which required every male Jew to go, from wherever his home might be, up to Jerusalem three times each year to spend a season in feasting before the Lord. Two of these occasions lasted seven days each, and the third one day.

Third. A soul-ransom of half a shekel (about twenty-five cents) was demanded of every person over twenty years of age whenever the people were numbered.

Fourth. The acceptance of the service of the Levites instead of the first-born males of Israel, or, if there were more of the first-born males than of the Levites, then the acceptance of the redemption money (five shekels—about $2 50 each) in place of the surplus first-born.

Fifth. The redemption or the sacrifice of the first-born male beasts. If clean, they were to be sacrificed to God; if clean, but blemished, they were to be eaten; if unclean,
they were to be redeemed by the payment of five shekels.

Sixth. The apportionment of the spoils taken in war. The prey was to be divided into two parts, one for those who went to the war, the other for the congregation.

God's levy on the first was one in five hundred of men and cattle, and on the second, one in fifty; while it embraced all the gold, silver, and jewels.

Besides all these requirements, there were certain national laws which entailed great sacrifices upon the people. In the first place the sabbatical year, occurring every seventh year, in which they were forbidden to sow, reap, or gather, but were compelled to live upon the sixth year's harvest, and allow the poor to gather the seventh year's growth, must have been a serious burden to them. Then came the year of jubilee—every fiftieth year—in which they were not only prohibited to sow or reap, but were required to give liberty to their slaves, cancel their debts, and keep the whole year as a jubilee to the Lord.
In addition to these was the law concerning fruit trees. The first three years' bearing was unclean; the fourth was holy to the Lord; the fifth and thereafter might be appropriated by themselves. As if all the foregoing were not enough, every third year's tithes, or tenths, were to be given to the poor, and beyond all this the people were commanded likewise to be generous to the poor in voluntary gifts. Deut. xv, 17-11.

So far was this care for the poor extended, that the people were not only not to glean in the corners of their fields, but if a sheaf was forgotten in the field they were forbidden to recover it, as it was to be left for the poor.

Still further, there were obligations to meet special emergencies, such as the erection of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, and the repair of the temple upon various occasions. The magnitude of the offerings made at the building of the temple may be regarded as indicative of the habitual generosity of the Jewish people under the influence of their laws of benevolence.
According to Dr. Clarke, David prepared of gold $3,685,714,285, and of silver $2,432,432,430.

He gave of his own private substance $105,488,250 in gold, and $17,027,500 in silver.

The chief fathers also gave in gold $175,813,750, and $24,325,000 in silver, making a grand total of $6,440,801,215 from the Jewish people inhabiting a tract of territory about as large as the State of New Hampshire. This was about $4,293 for every fighting man, and over $700 for each man, woman, and child in the realm.

That sum is more than twice as large as our national debt. It is one hundred and thirty-four times the value of all the churches and parsonages of the M. E. Church in the United States. It would build 32,204 churches like the new St. John’s Church, of Brooklyn, at a cost of $200,000 each!!!

The New Testament dispensation likewise gives definite expression to those functions of our nature which lead to sacrifice and
benevolence, in four well-defined and clearly stated laws:

1. The law of family provision; 1 Tim. v, 8: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

2. The law of ministerial support; 1 Cor. ix, 14: “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel;” and Gal. vi, 6: “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”

3. The law of governmental supply; Matt. xxii, 21: “Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s;” and Rom. xiii, 6, 7: “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”
4. The law of Observation of Need—1 John iii, 17: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

These are statutes designed to control Christian life, and in conformity with which that life is an unspeakable blessing to the world, but in antagonism with which that life is spurious, or at least faulty and imperfect.

But laws are always modified by principles.

This brings us to the second class of principles noticed at the beginning of this investigation, namely: The principles of grace, in connection with which these laws are to be exhibited.

Before enlarging upon these, it is well to insist upon the reasonable distinction between legal proprietorship and moral ownership.

The man may be the legal proprietor of all that he has in possession, but God is its owner; hence, any demand that he lays upon man's substance is a debt to him, and man can rightfully claim only the use of such
portion as may be exempt from his requirements.

And even the use of that must be in conformity with the obligations of stewardship which He has laid down. The principles of grace referred to, which modify the four laws of benevolence revealed in the New Testament, are:

First, Love, laid down in the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and in its preceptive statement called the "Golden Rule," Luke vi, 31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

And also in their special statute for doing good—James iv, 18: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

All these are but different expressions of the same principle of love.

Second. Loving Sacrifice. As a natural corollary, the principle of loving sacrifice for the brethren springs directly from that of the love just named.
This principle is laid down by John xiii, 34, and xv, 12, 13: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."
"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" indicating that it may be the Christian's duty to lay down his life for others. And, as if purposely to guard against a possibility of mistake upon this point, John says: "Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

This principle of loving sacrifice has, in the Scriptures, certain special illustrations in cases of Church emergencies, for example:

On the day of Pentecost, the great multitude of strangers who were relying upon the hospitality of the Jews were, when converted, utterly without means of support; hence, "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the
things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

Again, when, at a later period, persecution had broken up the ordinary industries of the disciples of Jerusalem, and they were in great distress, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

This last example was a divinely-imposed tax upon the resources of one portion of the Church for the relief of another, and both illustrations are designed to teach us what the Christian principle of loving sacrifice demands
IN EMERGENCIES—even the surrender of all to God for the good of the Church.

Third. The third principle of grace is laid down in the parable of the Talents, and is that of IMPROVEMENT OF MEANS FOR THE GLORY OF THE MASTER, according to two well-defined rules:

1. Each must improve his own trusts. The one with five talents has those five to care for, while the one with ten must use all of the ten, and none others.

2. Each must improve them in the ratio of their magnitude; that is, each must cultivate his entire ability, be it more or less, so that each separate talent shall have full development; hence, as each of the first five talents of him who has ten (A) equals in increase that of each of the five talents of him who has but five, (B), therefore the increase of the second five of (A) is unmatched by any thing in (B). Consequently (A) has in the aggregate double the increase of (B); that is, in the ratio of the magnitude of his gifts, and nothing less than this can meet his obligation.
The fourth principle of grace is **Antagonism to Covetousness.**

This principle crops out in many places in the New Testament. We designate a few, and invite careful attention to the citations:

1. **The thorny hearer**; he who "received seed among thorns, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word, and he became unfruitful," is a caution against covetousness.

2. **The rich young seeker**, to whom Christ would show, by a single test, that so far from "loving his neighbor as himself" "from his youth up," he loved his money more than his own soul, is a warning against the self-deluding power of covetousness. Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be **perfect**, go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful, for he was very rich."

2. **The parable of Lazarus and the rich**
man was designed not so much to show the different states of good and wicked men in the future world, as to point to the legitimate results of indulging a covetous disposition, for it was spoken to the Pharisees, "who were covetous."

4. **Conversatio**n, that is, conduct without covetousness, is commended. Heb. xiii, 5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

5. The **company of the covetous** is prohibited. 1 Cor. v, 9–11, Paul says: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. . . . But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat."

6. The **love of money** is deplored. 1 Tim. vi, 10: "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they
have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

7. The vile associates of covetousness are named. Mark vii, 20-22: “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.”

Rom. i, 29-32: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents. Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

True, this recital is repulsive, but is it not significant that covetousness is coupled with
these enormities, and over and over again catalogued as a kindred spirit?

Paul tells us that the covetous are to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. 1 Cor vi, 9, 10: "Know we not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Eph. v, 3–5: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Strange that covetousness, the one only respectable sin in virtuous communities, should
be classed with such abominable associates in God's word!

Depend upon it, God means something by it!

8. The things which expose to God's wrath likewise warn us against covetousness. Col. iii, 5, 6: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which thing's sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

What, then, is this fearful covetousness that must be antagonized?

In Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English alike, it signifies eager, longing desire.

Yet its condemnation is not in the fact that it is desire, nor yet in its strength, for we are commanded to "covet earnestly the best gifts."

On the other hand, it is not in desiring temporal things, for the parable of the talents teaches us that increase of substance is even commanded; but it is in giving to
INTERESTS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE THE STRENGTH OF DESIRE THAT BELONGS ONLY TO SPIRITUAL THINGS!!

The mind is so constituted that it cannot covet wealth of gold and wealth of gifts at the same time; hence, he who covets gold instead of God, gives it the chief place in his heart, and by doing so becomes an idolater.

Covetousness is generally marked by two or three peculiar and dangerous features:

1.) It commences long before it is suspected, and usually in the guise of some laudable ambition; for example, to provide for one's own household, to acquire the means that will enable one to be more benevolent, or in some other really commendable way.

2.) Insensibility to its existence increases in the ratio of augmented danger; that is, the more commanding it becomes, the less consciousness of obedience its victim has.

3.) It so perverts the conscience that its victims often, perhaps usually, think themselves right in their course.

So, that it is difficult to find one whom the
world and the Church brands as covetous, who does not justify himself in all his penuriousness, honestly believing that he is only doing his duty to himself, yet—"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Now we are prepared to lay down the Christian Law of Giving in sundry propositions of practical bearing, all drawn from a careful analysis of the principles of grace before mentioned, and a patient comparison with them of the New Testament Laws of Benevolence.

First. The calls of government must be met regardless of personal judgment. When a demand comes from the government in a legal way, the Christian should recognize and obey it without a murmur. If it be in the form of heavy taxation, he should meet it as one of the claims of God upon his property, and regard it as one of the duties which he owes to Christ as well as to his government.

Second. Each is under obligation to give his proportion of an adequate support to his
minister, regardless of personal preferences. One may like some other minister much better than his own, and may choose to hear some other rather than his own; but all this does not exonerate him from the obligation to support his own so long as he remains in the relation of a parishioner to him, unless providential circumstances interpose to prevent.

Third. Each is expected to make a reasonable provision for his family.

This is incumbent upon every man.

He who, in the day of prosperity, squanders his earnings by extravagance, so that when adversity comes he is obliged to ask the aid of charity, sins against God in that fact. An adequate provision for his family is his sacred duty; but, like most other duties, its extent can only be determined by a careful comparison of all the circumstances of the case with counter-balancing obligations.

One should accumulate, but he should also give. But how much he should give, what proportion he should save or give, cannot be determined by the strength of the propensity
in either direction, or by any Old Testament example, or single New Testament precept, but by carefully weighing all the interests and obligations concerned.

The basis of an estimate for a competent family provision should in general be the following items, namely:

1. The number of the family. All other circumstances being equal, the necessary expenses of a family will always be in the exact ratio of its numbers. Hence, this becomes an important factor in the calculation of the amount needed for family provision.

2. Their social position must be taken into the account.

Social distinctions will exist as long as men respect talent more than imbecility, position and influence more than obscurity and powerlessness, and as long as they love wealth for the blessings which are locked in its coffers.

Equality of social position can only exist with equality of talent, energy, opportunity, and providential blessings—a state of things
that never has existed, and never will in this world.

Diversity in social condition is as much an ordainment of heaven as variety of features, complexion, or stature. Position in life should, therefore, enter as another important element in the estimate of the sum to be allowed for family expenses.

But it should be remembered that this gives no license to extravagance in any sphere. It makes no concessions to the vanity of mere show, and gives no indorsement to unhealthful indulgences, demoralizing amusements, or unchristian indolence.

Social position does not permit any man to live an indolent life; and he who voluntarily indulges such a life will have a fearful account of napkin-wrapped talents to render at the Great Day.

No Christian can live other than the most active life that his circumstances and health will permit without bringing guilt upon his soul.

There is too much to be done in this world
of sin and misery to permit a man to live a drone.

3. The next element in the calculation for provision for the family is NEEDFUL EDUCATION. Here the rule should be: every child should, if practicable, have the education that will best qualify him for the effective accomplishment of his work in life.

Before, then, one can accurately estimate how much he needs with which to educate his family, he must determine what his children are to be. If one son is to be simply a day laborer, a common school education may be all that is required.

If another is brilliant, has strong studious propensities, and desires to become a lawyer, a physician, or a minister, a collegiate education may be a necessary qualification for the most effective work in his sphere. No matter how poor the parents may be, they are justified in endeavoring to give that boy the education that will best fit him for his work in life. And no matter how rich they may be, they are not justified in giving him any
more than that which will best qualify him for his position.

If the day laborer will be better fitted for his work by a collegiate training, and if he can, without an undue sacrifice of other interests, secure it, the principle under discussion accords to him the right to have it.

If still another son, with sufficient capacity, aims to become a man of science, he should have not merely a college course, and a scientific course after that, but, if practicable, all the advantages of the foreign universities in addition.

So of daughters. Each should have all the culture that prospective employment or position may demand, when viewed from the most reasonable stand-point possible under the circumstances. Of course these statements are very general.

So various are our habits of thought, arising from constitution, education, and association, that any more definite rules would inevitably clash against the honest judgment of multitudes of good men.
But great care should be exercised lest a penurious disposition blind the judgment into denial of the rights of children in this respect, or, on the other hand, lest an unhallowed family ambition lead to such lavish expenditures as will prove a squandering of the talents of our stewardship.

4. Their suitable establishment in life, in the position that they are designed to fill, either by business or marriage, is also included in needful family provision.

It should be borne in mind that the Church is designed to be perpetuated through the family. Hence, some of the most important duties of the parent are predicated upon the assumption that the children will be faithful to Christian obligations.

This is one: The business capital or marriage portion is committed to the child in trust for God. Hence, while its amount should be regulated by conscientious convictions, it should be a principle controlling those convictions, that the children should not be enabled to live in indolence; and that in ordinary cir
cumstances, no legacy or further portion whatever should be left to them.

Let this be distinctly understood. It is a Christian principle, fairly deducible from the facts and logic of this essay, that all the child is to have after his education should be given him in his outfit, provided he has business capacity, trustworthiness, and appropriate opportunity; and provided, also, that the outfit can be given without damage to the reasonable provision of the parents for their own old age.

We are aware that this point will be strenuously controverted. But if suitable support, education, and establishment in life do not comprehend the whole of a parent's duty toward his children in the use of the Lord's property, (save in the exceptional cases—misfortune, sickness, etc.,) then no rule can be given, and godly parents will continue to bequeath to godless children, to be used in the service of Satan, the property that has been consecrated to Christ, and professedly held in trust for the interests of his cause in the world.
There is no more glaring absurdity in the Church than the common practice of leaving thousands to children who do not need them, and are not made better by them, merely because the father acquired or held them, while the very cause which that father professed to love supremely goes begging for the miserable pittances doled out by the stunted hand of hoarding piety.

5. A reasonable reserve for parents in old age or disability should likewise be included as a part of enjoined family provision. Practically this is one of the most difficult points to settle connected with this extremely difficult subject.

How much scope should be given to trust in Providence, and how much opportunity for grateful returns from the children in the form of support in old age or disability, can only be answered by the individual judgment in full view of all the circumstances of the case, and with an earnest desire to be a faithful steward of the Lord's money; always remembering that the tendency will be toward excess of pro
vision rather than excess of trust, either in God or in children.

In general terms, provision for age or disability may be calculated upon the basis of official or social position, previous justifiable habits of life, and special personal, domestic, or related circumstances.

It may be objected that this duty of family provision, as thus explained, gives such latitude to acquisitiveness that it practically exonerates the great mass of men from the obligations of benevolence.

We answer: In this, as in most other moral duties, much must be left to private judgment, under the direction of the individual conscience; for no rule can be given so precise and rigid as to hold tightly all advantages, and yet so flexible as not to be unjust to disadvantages.

The best that can be done is to lay down a rule, and then educate the conscience by precepts relating to the rule. Had the golden rule itself been cast upon the world alone, it would have been merely a beautiful moral
sentiment, but as powerless as beautiful. It needed all those special preceptive enforcements that are found in the New Testament, such as James iv, 18, etc., to render it, in the estimation of men, an authoritative proclamation of duty.

So, in the matter of giving, we draw rules from the word of God; but the conscience must be educated to apply them correctly.

Again, it has been objected that the example of the poor widow, whom the Saviour commended because she cast "all her living into the Lord's treasury, is, by implication at least, against any provision for the future.

But to this it is sufficient to reply, that she did not live under the Gospel economy, but under the Mosaic; hence, her example is not pertinent. Besides, the Saviour's commendation seemed designed not so much to recommend the extent of her benevolence, as to show that in God's sight her gifts were more valuable than were those which entailed no sacrifice.
It was her spirit of sacrifice that Jesus approved, not merely for the sake of the sacrifice, but because of the contrast which she furnished to the pompous gifts that had no merit of sacrifice whatever, for they gave "out of their abundance."

6. Business capital, which should be preserved, enlarged, or diminished, according to the business judgment of the proprietor, in order to secure the largest honest returns, is also to be estimated as a part of this provision for one's family; that is, one whose business yields enough to meet all the foregoing claims to a reasonable extent may, if he deem it best, appropriate a large share of his increase to the enlargement of his capital, if his object be to use it, and its increase, as God directs.

But, while meeting the demands of government and the calls of the ministry, and while making such provision for the family,

7. Each must meet the wants of the needy according to the demands of the golden rule. To understand what those demands
are in any case, suppose a transposition of circumstances with the destitute, so that you are the suffering one and he is in your present condition, what, then, would you have a right to ask or expect of him?

Settle this question impartially, and the golden rule requires you to do the same for him.

Again, while meeting the demands of government, the ministry, the family, and the golden rule,

8. EACH MUST RESPOND TO THE CALLS OF CHURCH EMERGENCY, whether they arise from sudden and general distress, and embrace all that a man has—as in the early Church at Jerusalem—or whether they spring from local straits that necessitate only a tax upon surrounding regions, as in Paul's call to the Galatians and Corinthians for the relief of the saints at Jerusalem at a later period. And all this must be done according to the law of the talents, which is, the more one has the more must he give, other things being equal.

There is yet another principle of impera-
tive obligation upon all, rich and poor alike, namely, that of antagonism to covetousness.

Each must give enough to keep down eager desire, even for family provision.

It is his only safety.

When the desire for money becomes absorbing, whether in prince or beggar, it is that covetousness that God abhors, and its natural and only antidote is giving, giving, giving—depleting the plethoric desire till its imperiousness is subdued and its clamors are hushed. All this must go on while one is making provision for his family, and it should always begin with the first independent use of means, in order to develop the faculty of benevolence in the same ratio that acquisitiveness is developed in the process of securing the means. But when that provision is made—that is to say, when one has enough, considering the number of his children and their social position, to educate them and give them a fair outfit in life, with no license to extravagance—and when he has business capital
that gives him an adequate income, and has made reasonable provision for his old age—after all this is done, every dollar that he earns belongs to God for immediate use. He has no right to lay up more.

This rule, therefore, absolutely prohibits the amassing of great fortunes, except it be for some specific purpose of benevolence; for example, the founding of institutions of learning or charity, or the prosecution of a great business that corresponding profits may be made for God; for, when a man has made reasonable provision for his family, all the surplus—either of past or future accumulation, whether by accretion, industry, or inheritance—should be used for benevolent purposes, according to the principle of antagonism to covetousness. And as it would be a covetous desire to wish to keep any thing beyond one's needs, this law demands the gift of all.

Again, the special statute under the golden rule, namely, "To him that knoweth to do good," etc., also requires the same surrender of all above our needs, as already detailed;
for no one can fail to know how he might do good with all his surplus accumulations. So that, notwithstanding the apparent license given to hoarding in some of the foregoing statements, if all be taken together, as they are designed to be, we fail to perceive any laxity in the theory.

On the other hand, while pliable as the ever-varying circumstances of men, it is rigid as the laws of heaven, and no man, in the faithful, practical use of it, will ever be chargeable with covetousness, or a non-performance of his entire duty as the steward of the Lord's property.

A few logical inferences from this doctrine may appropriately close its discussion.

1. No Christian has a right to hold in his possession property beyond what is required for family provision, as before detailed, except as business capital or in trust for another.

2. When adequate family provision has been made, all the income from his capital should be given immediately to God, without waiting the uncertain issues of a legacy.
3. When he dies, or becomes permanently disabled, the capital itself should all be used for benevolent purposes, unless still needed for family provision, none whatever being appropriated to individuals, institutions, or societies that do not need it.

4. That portion of family provision which may be no longer needed by reason of the death of one or both parents, or one or more of the children, should be sacredly devoted to God—not divided among the remainder, unless to supply existing deficiency in their apportionment.

5. After reasonable family provision has been made, any legacy received by the parents should be immediately devoted to benevolence, or used as business capital in the interests of benevolence, and ultimately to meet its claims.

6. Christians should distribute their surplus as far as possible in health, and should always have their wills made, so that Satan may not, by means of the statute laws concerning intestates, cheat God's cause out of that which is its due.
7. While making provision for his family, the Christian should meet the calls of the needy according to the exigency of the case.

8. While making that provision, he should honor the demands of Church emergency according as Providence may lay their pressure upon him.

9. While making that provision he must **ANTAGONIZE COVETOUSNESS AT ANY COST**. His first and paramount duty is to save his own soul, and if covetousness can only be kept down by stripping himself of **EVERY THING**, he should resort even to that extremity. The spirit of covetousness must be slain, or the soul is lost!

**Practical Results.**

The practical results of the adoption of this doctrine by the Church would be:

1. The curtailment of extravagant outlay in times of prosperity, and the husbanding of resources for the demands of duty, thus greatly diminishing the number of the poor.

2. The consecration to God, in an active
life, of talent and experience that might otherwise step into retirement, thus adding indefinitely to the resources of the Church.

3. An ever-open ear and purse to the calls of benevolence, thus multiplying the givers, and making their burdens relatively lighter.

4. The distribution of the overgrown fortunes, that only curse their possessors, into numberless channels of active service for the Master, thus employing uncounted millions for Christ which now do little for him.

5. An exhaustless supply of means to the Church, which would soon cause all of her charities to flourish, and carry the Gospel to the ends of the world.

The practical adoption, by any Church that we have ever known, of either of the three rules of giving, namely:

Observation of need, Church emergency, or antagonism to covetousness, would increase their contributions manifold; much more, the adoption of them all.

Finally, my reader, the Christian law of giving is thus before you. It has been
elaborated with much prayer and effort, and is believed to present all the principles that may be needful, in any case, to form a correct judgment of duty in detail.

The responsibility of knowledge is now yours. Your spiritual welfare is more intimately connected with this than with almost any other duty.

May God help you to inquire honestly, investigate impartially, estimate duty conscientiously, and act consistently, and thus make to yourself "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations!"

THE END.