

### THE RULE OF BENEVOLENCE IS FOR ALL.

"Let every one of you lay by him in store." This is a very essential part of the plan, considered in its public bearing. What is more to be desired, than that the whole church be brought up to duty? Vastly more would be accomplished, even under the existing order of things, than is, were all, who profess to be Christ's, to do something. How much more yet—incalculably more—were all to observe faithfully the Apostle's rule! The treasury of Christian benevolence would be overflowing. Very soon would Bibles, and Tracts, and the living Preacher, be found in every benighted corner of the world. And, did the faith, and humble prayers of the church, keep pace with these operations, a long time could not elapse before the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Every friend of the Gospel ought to be reached and induced to adopt the rule. Every Christian, I say, for the cases of those who are supported by charity, or who, by force of other circumstances, are positively unable to bestow anything, are so few, compared with the whole body, and especially in this country, that they need not be taken into account. The Apostle made no exception in writing to the Corinthians; and yet, doubtless, there were not a few among the poverty-stricken and persecuted believers in that city, who had to struggle hard for their bread. But he knew too well that "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;" he knew too well the safety of trusting in the Lord and doing good, to deem it necessary to guard his order by any clause of exception. It may be laid down with hardly a reservation, that every one whose necessities do not make him a receiver, ought to be a giver.

Let any one who has never entered into calculations on this subject, or witnessed the operation of the plan, take his pencil, and set down against the name of every member of his church the average of what he probably could, without inconvenience, lay by him in store on each Sabbath morning, and then add up the amount. He will be astonished to see how much his church might raise every week. Let him then multiply this amount by fifty-two, and he will be more astonished to see what a sum might be made up in a year without any one being poorer for his giving. Let us suppose a church of two hundred members, and that the amount deposited by each member averages twenty-five cents a week. Taking all classes together, there are few churches in which this average could be oppressive. We have for the result, fifty dollars a week, or two thousand six hundred dollars a year. This is, doubtless, a much larger amount than is ordinarily raised in a year by churches of two hundred members; and I am confident I have not approached extravagance in this estimate. Nothing but energy in introducing, and perseverance in establishing the system, is needed to more than verify the above result.

It is but just, that every member of a church should bear his proportion in sustaining the operations of the body, both at home and abroad; and surely, equality and harmony, and brotherly love, must most abound in that church where each one does his proportionate part. Why then are not the fragments more generally gathered up, that nothing be lost? It is not because the poorer members of the church are not willing to do according to their means than the more wealthy. Is it because in the aggregate these small sums would not make a considerable amount? It is not to be doubted that in many instances that the amount actually raised might be doubled by their being collected in. It is because they would not compensate for the trouble of their collection? The rule of the Apostle precisely meets this point. Let the poorer brother be induced to lay by him in store on each Lord's day, and he will thus accumulate an amount which he will be encouraged to bring in of his own accord, as it may be called for.

No plan can lay claim to being perfect, which recognizes a necessity for the extensive employment of collectors. Every church should establish such arrangement as will afford to its members opportunities at regular periods—say monthly or quarterly—to bring in for themselves their donations, for particular objects. The year might be divided into portions, each having reference to some distinct department of the general field. Such an arrangement on the part of the churches in conjunction with the plan for weekly deposits by the members, in their individual capacity,

would obviate to a great extent the necessity for much of the machinery now generally employed, and which is so generally found to be extremely difficult to keep in uniform and effective operation.—Primitive rule of giving, by Rev. J. R. Scott.

### Stand Fast.

How much of Christian character and usefulness is involved in this injunction! It is easy enough to take a position. The difficulty is to maintain it. It is easy to resolve. But to keep one's vows requires moral courage and strength. It is easy to admit, in general terms, our defection from Christian consistency; but to set about correcting our faults, calls for real effort. What an amount of good purposed and good beginnings are wasted for want of steadfastness. Fickleness and irresolution fritter away the most promising developments of character. If Christians would only hold fast to that which is good; if they would but block the wheel against retrograde movements; if ministers could rely upon them to retain the vantage ground to which they have led them; what a different aspect would the Church present. But alas, how often must the foundation of repentance from dead works be re-laid? How often must they who ought to be fed with meat, be again nourished with milk?

Fellow Christians, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Have you discovered the fatal defects of your past experience? Have you entered anew into the covenant with God? Stand fast, then. Do not return to the beggarly elements of the world. Do not slide back into former apathy. Do not lose that lively sense of divine things which you have just acquired. Keep yourself in the love of God. Is it not worth an effort? Will you not be paid for the cross-bearing? Does not communion with God more than compensate for those worldly pleasures which you have resolved to give up? To feel that you are prepared to die—is this less to you than present ease? Will you not then stand fast in your new position, and thus adorn the gospel, while you save yourself?

Have you as a parent resolved to withstand the persuasions of youthful frivolity, and to do your duty in your family? It is painful, perhaps, and you must endure the strife of tongues from children too long indulged, or from their mother, who fails to support your decision. Stand fast! Hold on to the helm!

You are acting under a solemn trust. Fear not murmurings. They are but the penalty of your past neglect. It is high time you took your stand. Decide what is safe for your children, and let them enjoy it. Decide what is dissipating and hurtful to the soul, and then carry out your convictions of duty. You cannot be unstable without the most serious consequences. God, and angels, and your sainted kindred watch your conduct with solicitude. Behold the cloud of witnesses! Would you have the blessing of your sire descend upon your seed? Then you must be firm. You must command your children and your household after you.

Has God called you to tread a thorny path? Or like Ezekiel to dwell among scorpions?—Does duty lead you to confront the face of opposition or scorn? Do worldly connections hinder your piety, or embarrass your religious efforts? Does the love of Christ seem to draw a line between those who should be one? Does it bring variance between father and child, or between sister and brother? Yet stand fast to duty, to principle, to the high course of obeying God. Fear not the consequences of doing right. They will in the end be happy. Whatever your avocation or condition, or temptation, write on the tablet of your heart, this cogent dictate of reason and religion:

Stand fast! Only be in the right; there stand, if the heavens fall!

Fiat justitia ruat cælum.—N. Y. Observer.

### The Mark of God's People.

One distinguishing mark of God's people is, that they grieve on account of prevailing iniquity. Lot vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked inhabitants of Sodom. David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved because they kept not God's law. "Rivers of water run down mine eyes," said he, "because they keep not thy law." Jeremiah wept in secret places because of the pride and stubbornness of the children of Israel. And when God would destroy Jerusalem for its abounding wicked-

ness, he sent his recording angel through the city to "set a mark on the foreheads of them that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof;" and when the destroyers went forth, they were forbidden to go near any one upon whom was the mark. Thus, the people of God are distinguished by their grief for the open disregard of his law by the community in which they live.

This being so, the day in which we live calls for grief and sadness. The Sabbath is openly and boldly trampled under foot. No man in this city or its vicinity can walk to the house of God, or even look out of his window, without the painful consciousness that the multitude are without the Sabbath, and without God. Nor can any one pass through any of our thoroughfares, without hearing the name of God most shamefully profaned by multitudes whose only recognition of Him is expressed in oaths and blasphemy. These are among those heaven-daring sins which called down the terrible judgments of heaven upon ancient Israel, that "the land might enjoy her Sabbaths." But to these are added, among us, to a fearful extent, the sins of drunkenness, gaming, licentiousness, and all the kindred train of vice and crime; and the fuel that feeds the flame is openly sold, for purposes of gain, at every corner of our streets.

But, beyond all this, what a vast amount of impenitence, unbelief, prayerless and godless living the all-seeing eye must look upon, in this great city and throughout the land.

How can the true child of God look upon these things "without sighing and crying," without weeping and lamentation? This "sighing and crying" of God's people is the very first step towards a reformation. One of the heaviest charges which the Lord brought against his ancient church, in a time of abounding iniquity, was, that his people loved to have it so. But, when the enemy cometh in like a flood, and the godly sigh and cry over the abominations that are done in the land, the "Spirit of God will lift up a standard against him;" and they will at least deliver their own souls. We wish seriously to press the inquiry, Are the Christians of this land maintaining this attitude before God? or have they taken the more comfortable position of indifference, satisfied to take care of their own souls, and leave the world to dishonour God and perish in its own corruptions?—N. Y. Observer.

### A Will and A Way.

A poor woman who was ardently pious, on hearing some benevolent object presented, had a strong desire to contribute to it at least the widow's mite. She went home and searched the house, but could find nothing. She was greatly distressed. She knew not how to be denied the privilege of casting a little into the treasury of the Lord. She entered her closet and prayed earnestly that God would make her submissive, if it was clearly his will that she should give nothing. On leaving her closet, she went into a back apartment, and spying a little bag of dried seeds, she took them down and thought to herself that perhaps some one might purchase them. Just at this moment her minister came in. She disclosed to him her feelings and showed him the seeds. He took them, and observed that he was going over the river, and perhaps he might sell them. On his way he met a brother in the ministry who invited him to address a missionary meeting that evening. He consented to do so; and in the midst of his address, he told the touching story of the poor woman, and presented her bag of seeds to the audience. A gentleman arose and offered five dollars for them. He took the seeds and offered them for sale again. Another person offered five dollars for them; and thus they proceeded until they obtained twenty dollars for the bag of seeds. The minister took the money, and, carrying it to the woman, spread out four five dollar bills before her as the avails of her seeds. She was overwhelmed under a sense of divine goodness, and most cheerfully gave the whole to the Lord.—Morning Star.

### Prayer and Action.

We often attempt to separate what God has joined together. In so doing, we evade the established order of things, and of course meet with disappointment. Why should we wonder then, that Christians, in the discharge of their duties, are so frequently unsuccessful? They separate action from prayer, and then conclude that God has forgotten to be gracious. But he has never promised to hear that prayer which is unaccompanied with corres-

ponding effort. When, therefore, you pray for an increase of knowledge, how do you act? You are sensible that knowledge is not to be obtained without persevering exertion. Your conduct on all worldly subjects proves this.—You investigate principles, gather together facts, and store the memory with illustrations. But is it so in relation to spiritual objects?—Do you frequently study the Word of God, compare one portion with another, and search for the truth as for hid treasures? If you really desire to grow in knowledge, this would certainly be your course. Some portion of your time would be consecrated to this noble pursuit, and your profiting would appear unto all men. Now, if you will not or cannot devote the necessary time and effort to this object, ought you not to cease praying for it? Be consistent. If you will not cultivate the powers of your mind, why make it a subject of prayer? Your knowledge is not to be obtained by miracles but by the blessing of God upon the ordinary means. Where these means are wanting, there is nothing for him to bless, and of course you cannot consistently ask for the Divine blessing.—Genesee Evan.

### Beautiful Figure.

Two painters were employed to fresco the walls of a magnificent cathedral; both stood on a rude scaffolding constructed for the purpose some forty feet from the floor. One of them was so intent upon his work that he became wholly absorbed, and in admiration, stood off from the picture, gazing at it with intense delight. Forgetting where he was, he moved backwards slowly, surveying critically the work of his pencil, until he had neared the very edge of the plank upon which he stood.

At this critical moment, his companion turned suddenly, and, almost frozen with horror, beheld his imminent peril; another instant, and the enthusiast would be precipitated upon the pavement beneath; if he spoke to him, it was certain death—if he held his peace, death was equally sure. Suddenly he regained his presence of mind, and seized a wet brush, flung it against the wall, splattering the beautiful picture with unsightly blotches of coloring. The painter flew forward, and turned upon his friend with fierce imprecations; but startled at his ghastly face, he listened to the recital of danger, looked shudderingly over the dread space below, and with tears of gratitude blessed the hand that saved him.

So, said a preacher, we sometimes get absorbed in looking upon the pictures of this world, and in contemplating them, step backwards, unconscious of our peril; when the Almighty dashes out the beautiful images, and we spring forward to lament their destruction,—into the outstretched arms of mercy, and are saved.

### Dark Hours.

There are dark hours, dark hours, that mark the history of the brightest year. For not a whole month in any of the millions of the past, has the sun shone brilliantly all the time. And there have been cold and stormy days in every year. And yet the mists and shadows of the darkest hours were dissipated and fluted heedlessly away. The cruelties of the ice fetters have been broken and dissolved, and the most furious storm loses its power to harm.

And what a parable is all this of human life of our inside world, where the heart works at its destined labor. Here, too, we have the overshadowing of dark hours, and many a cold blast chills the heart to its core. But what matters it? Man is born a hero, and it is only by darkness and storms that heroism gains its greatest and best development and illustration—that it kindles the black cloud into a blaze of glory, and the storm bears it more rapidly to its destiny. Despair not, then. Disappointment will be realized. Mortifying failure may attend this effort and that one—but only be honest, and struggle on, and it will all work well.

BLESSEDNESS OF A LOWLY MIND.—The greater the submission, the more the grace.—If there be one hollow in the valley lower than another, thither do the waters gather. The more lowly we are in our own eyes, the more lovely we are in the sight of God. When to ourselves we are despicable, to him, through Christ, we are accepted. We are unworthy; let us be lowly. Job was coming near to the blessing when he said, "I am vile; what shall I answer thee?"