

THE GIVER MORE BLESSED THAN THE RECEIVER.

Samuel Stone's
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DISCOURSE,

Addressed

TO THE

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CONGREGATION IN FRANKLIN.

BY NATHANAEL EMMONS, D. D.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, *to wit* :

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the ninth day of November, in the thirty fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Ezekiel Rich of the said district, has deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor in the words following, *to wit* : "The Giver more blessed than the Receiver. A Discourse addressed to the Congregation in Franklin. By Nathanael Emmons. D. D." In Conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies, during the times therein mentioned ;" and also to an Act intituled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, intituled, An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies during the time therein mentioned ; and extending the Benefits thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching Historical, and other Prints."

WILLIAM S. SHAW, { *Clerk of the District*
{ *of Massachusetts.*

SERMON.

ACTS XX. 35.

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

OUR Saviour went about doing good. He sought opportunities of healing the sick, of relieving the distressed, and of supplying the wants of the needy. He laboured, he suffered, and even died for the benefit of mankind. And besides displaying such a bright example of beneficence, he abundantly inculcated this duty in both his public and private discourses. He said at one time, "Give to him that asketh thee." He said at another time, "Give alms of such things as ye have." He said to his apostles in particular, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Being invited to a certain house, he said to the master of it, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." He publicly applauded the poor widow, "who cast her two mites into the treasury." He also spake the parable of the good Samaritan, to illustrate the beauty and excellence of a beneficent spirit; to which he subjoined this perpetual precept, "Go, and do likewise." These sayings of Christ are alone sufficient to justify the exhortation in the text, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." But since we do not find these identical words in any of the Evangelists, we are led to conjecture, that the writer of the Acts refers to a certain expression, which Christ often used in free and familiar conversation with his disciples, and which they were still able to recollect. It is certain, however, that Christ taught the sentiment in the

text, whether he ever did or did not expressly say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This expression needs no comment, though it seems to contain a paradox. Many perhaps are ready to think, that Christ might have said with more propriety, "It is more blessed to receive than to give." But it will be the business of this discourse to make it appear, that his declaration is strictly true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To illustrate this practical truth, and impress it upon every mind, I would observe,

I. There is more real pleasure in giving than in receiving.

Solomon says, "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." There is always a pleasure in receiving a gift from the hands of a benefactor; and this pleasure is sometimes greatly heightened by the circumstances of the receiver, or the disposition of the giver. A seasonable gift is acceptable, because it is immediately beneficial to the receiver. A necessary gift is still more acceptable, because it comes in a time of want, and removes some pressing calamity or distress. A great gift excites greater joy, because it not only gratifies the natural desire of property, but throws the mind into a state of pleasing surprise and admiration. Indeed, any gift, whether great or small, never fails to afford a sensible pleasure to the receiver, when it comes as a mark of affection and esteem from the giver. But in these and all other cases, the giver is more blessed than the receiver. There is a higher and purer happiness in rejoicing in the good of others, than in rejoicing in our own good. The receiver rejoices in his own happiness; and let his joy rise ever so high, it still terminates in himself. But the giver has a nobler pleasure, which arises from a nobler source. Instead of rejoicing in his own good, he rejoices in the good of others. As he regards their good in giving, so he enjoys their happiness in receiving: and this is the purest affection and finest feeling of the human heart. It bears the nearest resemblance to the felicity of Him, who delighteth in mercy. Though giving and receiving may flow from the same benevolent spirit; yet the pleasure of giving as far sur-

passes the pleasure of receiving, as godly joy surpasses godly submission. In receiving gratefully there is a mixture of submission to our state of dependence ; but in giving freely there is a mixture of joy in being able to give. There is no deduction from the pleasure of giving ; but there is a deduction from the pleasure of receiving. The receiver is laid under obligation to the giver ; but the giver is laid under no obligation to the receiver. And who can doubt whether it be not more blessed to give, than to receive an obligation ? All the circumstances also, which have been mentioned, as enhancing the pleasure of receiving, equally enhance the pleasure of giving. The giver is gratified, when he finds the receiver benefitted. The giver is more gratified, when he finds the receiver is relieved from a burden or calamity. The giver feels a satisfaction in proportion to the magnitude and importance of the bounty he bestows. And he who gives to express his love and esteem of the receiver, gratifies the noblest feeling of his heart. In a word, let the giver's and the receiver's feelings be compared, and every one must acknowledge the truth of our Saviour's maxim : " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

II. There is more virtue in giving, than in receiving, and therefore the giver is more happy than the receiver.

The receiver may, indeed, exercise virtue in accepting a favour from the hand and heart of his benefactor. He may feel true gratitude to the person, who places his own happiness in doing him good. And as such gratitude is a branch of pure benevolence, so it is a virtuous exercise of heart. Hence the receiver may exercise virtue in some proportion to the kindness of the giver. But nevertheless there is more virtue in giving than in receiving. The virtue of the receiver principally consists in a suitable regard to himself ; but the virtue of the giver altogether consists in a proper regard to others. And surely there is more virtue in regarding the good of others, than in regarding merely our own good. There are many circumstances, which augment the virtue of giving, that do not enhance the virtue of receiving. The poverty, the distress, and even the un-

worthiness of the receiver, augments the virtue of the giver. The generality of mankind are more disposed to give to the rich than to the poor. This our Saviour remarked and condemned. But it is truly God like to bestow favours upon the evil and unthankful. Besides, the virtue of the giver is always equal to his design in giving. A man may give a Bible or some other good book to a poor and vicious person, with a sincere design to promote his spiritual and eternal benefit, but he may have a mean or wicked design in receiving it. And it is generally true, that the giver has much more noble and extensive views than the receiver. This our Saviour intimated in his observation upon the conduct of the poor widow. Her virtue was in proportion to her good intention in giving. She might have had a much greater good in view, than those who cast in of their abundance. The giver of two mites to promote the spread of the gospel and the salvation of sinners may be far more virtuous than one, who gives a thousand dollars for the promotion of a less benevolent and important design. The intention of the giver fixes the degree of his virtue, whether the design for which he gives be eventually obtained or defeated, or whatever be the consequence of his giving to an individual or to the publick. But there is another thing, which principally magnifies the virtue of the giver, and that is, his self-denial. There is more self-denial in giving than in receiving. He that gives diminishes his interest, but he that receives increases his property. The true giver never gives with a design or expectation of receiving. This our Saviour says is totally inconsistent with real charity. And the wise man suggests the same idea, when he compares giving to one's casting his bread upon the waters, without any present prospect of ever seeing it again. Real giving in all cases implies the parting with so much of our property, as we bestow upon others; and for this reason it is an act of self-denial, which is the essence of virtue and the infallible measure of it. Men always have just as much virtue as they have self-denial. And those who give may exercise more or less self-denial, according to their wealth

or poverty. The poor widow exercised great self-denial, because she gave all her living, or the whole of her temporal interest. The Israelites, who contributed so largely for the erecting of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, probably spared the most of the property which they brought out of Egypt. The Jews, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, spent a large portion of their treasure, in repairing the walls of Jerusalem, and in rebuilding and furnishing the Temple. The famous *Howard* of England, who died a few years ago, expended vast sums for the relief of the poor and distressed in his own, and other countries, besides all his labour, danger and pains in finding out objects of charity. It appears from these and innumerable other instances of liberality, that those who give may exercise very high degrees of self-denial, and of course very high degrees of true virtue. But we never read in the Bible, nor any where else, of the self-denial of receiving. The receiver has no natural bias, habit, or inclination to counteract; but the giver has all these natural obstacles to overcome. So that the giver stands far superior to the receiver in point of virtue, and consequently in point of blessedness. For virtue and happiness are naturally connected, and bear the intimate relation of cause and effect. Virtue always affords happiness, unless some incidental cause intervenes to prevent it, and therefore where no such cause occurs to obstruct the natural tendency of virtue, the giver is always more blessed than the receiver.

III. God promises to reward the giver, but not the receiver. This remarkable distinction plainly intimates, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. God promises to reward men for doing, but not for receiving acts of kindness and beneficence.

If we search the scripture upon this subject, we shall find more ample promises of both temporal and eternal rewards made to deeds of charity, than even to the duties of devotion. Here then let us consider first the temporal, and then the eternal rewards promised to beneficent actions.

There are but few things which God has promised to reward men for in this life. He more commonly encour-

ages them to activity and fidelity in his service, by directing them to wait for their recompense in a future state ; but he promises to reward acts of munificence, with special tokens of his favour in the present life. I will recite a number of his peculiar promises to those, who abound in deeds of charity. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor : the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth." "A good man sheweth favour and lendeth. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ; his horn shall be exalted with honour." The following sayings were confirmed by common observation in Israel. "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed : for he giveth of his bread to the poor. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet ; but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat : and he that watereth shall be watered. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase : so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." These are words of Solomon, who was the most critical and judicious observer of the ways of Providence. He discovered the peculiar smiles of Heaven upon those, who abounded in acts of kindness and charity to their fellow-men. The prophet Isaiah says, "The liberal deviseth liberal things ; and by liberal things shall he stand." The alms as well as the prayers of Cornelius were had in divine remembrance, and he was rewarded in his life time, with peculiar tokens of the divine favour. Thus God often approves and rewards men for their kind and compassionate deeds in the present life. But this is not all : he means to reward them more openly and fully at the great day of retribution. Hence our Saviour said to the alms-giver, "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : that thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father, who seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." He declared, that the smallest act of charity to one of his followers, should meet with a future recompense. "Who-

soever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." He likewise recommended general benevolence by the same motive. "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." And on a certain occasion he observed, that men would gain more by giving to the poor, than to the rich, because they would be more amply recompensed at the resurrection of the just. We are expressly told, "He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." It appears from the connexion of this passage, that it has a sole reference to the future reward of the bountiful giver. There is one passage more, which deserves particular attention, and that is in the twenty fifth of Matthew, where we have an account of the process of the general judgment, when both rewards and punishments shall be impartially dispensed to all mankind. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." According to this representation of the supreme and final Judge, it seems that no acts of justice, and no acts of worship, will be so much approved and rewarded at the last day, as acts of kindness and mercy to those in want and distress. It is, therefore, the dictate of both scripture and reason, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; yea, that it is more blessed to give, than do any thing else in the power of our hands.

It now remains to improve the subject.

I. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then we ought to entertain the most exalted ideas of the blessedness of the Supreme Being. He designed from eternity to promote his own felicity, in giving existence and happiness to his creatures. He has been con-

stantly pursuing his original purpose of benevolence, and dispensing his favours through every part of his wide dominions. And as he is the most liberal, so he is the most cheerful giver. He gives, because he delights in giving. He takes infinitely more pleasure in doing good to his creatures, than they ever do in doing good to one another. "If ye," says Christ to parents, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" God would have every one view him as the most cheerful giver, who enjoys the highest satisfaction in acts of mercy and beneficence. "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise *loving kindness*, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things *I delight*, saith the Lord." God perfectly enjoys all the good he bestows, and is infinitely more blessed in giving than all his creatures in receiving. This must give us the most exalted idea of the blessedness of the kind Parent of the universe, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works.

2. If it be more blessed to give than to receive; then we may see why charity or beneficence holds the highest rank among all the moral and christian virtues. It must be allowed, that charity or any species of generosity is much more admired and applauded by mankind, than justice, veracity, fidelity, or any of the virtues, which appear more essential to the order and support of civil society. This some very ingenious writers have considered as a paradox, and taken very different methods to explain it. One author, in particular, makes a distinction between the primary and secondary virtues. He represents justice, veracity, and all the primary virtues as resulting from the nature of things, and of course binding upon all mankind; but he considers charity, generosity, and all the secondary virtues, as arising from a different source, being mere voluntary actions, which men are under no moral obligation to perform. And he supposes it is for this reason alone, that the secondary virtues of charity, liberality, and benefi-

ence, are so much more admired and applauded, than justice, veracity, or any other primary virtues. But this opinion appears to have no solid foundation. Men are under the same moral obligation to be generous as to be just, and are as free and voluntary in doing justice, as in showing mercy. This leads us to look for some other reason for the universal opinion, that charity is a more amiable virtue, than even justice or veracity. And the subject we have been considering suggests the true reason of this opinion. It is because charity, or beneficence, has more true benevolence or moral excellence in it, than any of the primary virtues. There is more pure, disinterested love displayed in giving a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, than in speaking the truth, or in doing any act of mere justice. David discovered more true benevolence and virtue, in his generosity to Mephibosheth, the poor, feeble son of Jonathan, than in any of his most splendid actions in the field of battle. Those who are the most illustrious examples of charity and beneficence, justly deserve to have the highest place in the love, esteem, and gratitude of mankind, and they very seldom fail of receiving this due reward of their superior virtue. Job's generosity commanded the highest respect and applause of all who saw and felt the effects of his charity and beneficence. "When the young men saw him, they hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him, and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him : *because* he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him, and because he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Charity, liberality, and beneficence are the noblest traits in the moral and christian character, and will continue to command the highest respect of mankind, as long as they retain their moral discernment of moral excellence.

3. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then it is a great and peculiar favour to be made rich. Poverty is a real calamity in itself, and draws after it a long train of natural evils. It not only deprives men of the power and pleasure of giving, but subjects them to the

disagreeable necessity of receiving alms. This calamity, in a greater or less degree, prevails through the world. There are many more in a state of poverty, than in a state of mediocrity; and many more in a state of mediocrity, than in a state of wealth and affluence. It is only a few families in any place or in any nation, who are comparatively rich; and among these, there are many individuals, who, by misconduct or misfortune, are reduced to the most reproachful and painful poverty. God commonly dispenses wealth with a sparing hand, and of course highly distinguishes as well as favours those, upon whom he lavishes the bounties of providence. Accordingly we find, that he has given wealth as a peculiar token of his favour to his peculiar friends. He made Abraham, Job, and the patriarchs rich; and promised to bestow the same mark of his favour upon his ancient covenant people, so long as they continued dutiful and obedient. So that it became a proverb in Israel: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Wealth ought to be esteemed a peculiar favour, not merely as the source of private and personal benefit, but as a talent to be employed to the glory of God, and to the good of mankind. What benevolent man would not wish to be able to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the distressed, and promote every charitable and beneficent design? Who, that has the spirit of a man or of a christian, would not esteem it an honour and a privilege to be the steward of God, to dispense the blessings of his goodness to his indigent creatures? How happy was Job in doing good to the poor, the fatherless, and the widows? And how much happier still was Joseph in supplying the wants of millions, and saving whole nations from the fatal effects of famine? All men of opulence have abundant reason to be thankful, that God has given them the power of gratifying their own benevolent feelings, in promoting the happiness, and diminishing the miseries of the objects of charity.

4. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then we may learn what ought to be the supreme and governing motive of men, in pursuing their secular concerns,

and seeking to increase their worldly interest. The great mass of mankind are extremely attached to the world, and are willing to labour, and toil, and run every hazard to accumulate property, and acquire a large portion of the good things of life. But they are too generally prompted to gain the world from mean and mercenary motives. Some labour to be rich from the motive of avarice or a hoarding disposition; some labour to be rich from the motive of ambition, or a desire of rising to honour and influence; but many more, perhaps, are eager to enlarge their fortunes, for the sake of displaying grandeur, and gratifying the evil propensities of their carnal hearts. They wish to lay up goods for many years, that they may fare sumptuously every day, and live a life of indolence and dissipation. All these are men of the world, who choose their portion in this life, and who labour to be rich from selfish and forbidden motives. But there still remains one virtuous and laudable motive, which ought to induce all men to be laborious and industrious in getting the world, and increasing their earthly treasures. It is the motive of pure, disinterested benevolence, or an ardent desire to do good, and communicate of their abundance to those, whom providence has thrown into a state of poverty and distress. This is the noble motive to be active and industrious in gaining the world, which governed the conduct of the apostle Paul, and which ought to govern the conduct of all other ministers, and of all other men, in their worldly pursuits. "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel," says he to the Elders of Ephesus. "Yea, ye yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered unto my necessities, and to *them that were with me*. I have showed you all things, how that *so labouring ye ought to support the weak*, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." There is little danger of man's being too industrious and laborious to become rich, from the benevolent motive of ministering to the wants and necessities of the poor, and of promoting the cause and interest of Christ. The farmer and mechanick ought to labour with their hands, the soldier

and seaman ought to jeopard their lives, and all classes of men ought to use every lawful method, to enlarge their fortunes, that they may be more and more able to do deeds of charity and benevolence. It is the will of God, that every one should "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." This is the only virtuous and laudable motive, which ought to govern men in all their desires and exertions to abound in wealth and affluence.

5. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then none have any reason to think that they are real christians, who have never experienced this peculiar blessedness. All who have been partakers of the divine nature, have felt and expressed the spirit of beneficence, and enjoyed the pure pleasure of doing good. This is an infallible criterion by which all ought to try and determine their spiritual state.

The apostle Paul, after describing the marks of apostasy in the sixth of Hebrews, represents acts of beneficence as good evidence of christian sincerity. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, *and things that accompany salvation*, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget *your work and labour of love* which ye have shewed toward his name, in that *ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*" The apostle James will not allow any person to have the least spark of grace, who is destitute of kindness and compassion to the objects of charity. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." The benevolent apostle John makes beneficence essential to the christian character, without which no person has any ground to view himself as possessed of the love of God. "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? For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? By this same criterion, our Saviour tried the amiable young man in the gospel, and proved him to be entirely destitute of grace, notwithstanding his high pretensions to piety. "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Beneficence is the most infallible rule, by which the professors of religion ought to try their own sincerity, and by which others ought to regulate their opinion of their piety. This method of trial is founded on the well known principle, that a good tree will yield good fruit, a pure fountain will send forth pure streams, and a benevolent heart will produce beneficent actions. If those who profess to be better than others, would do more than others in acts of kindness and charity, they would exhibit that evidence of the reality, the beauty, and the importance of the christian religion, which none of the ungodly world can gainsay or resist.

6. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then the covetous and parsimonious defeat their own design, and take the direct method to diminish rather than to increase their temporal interest. There is not a few among men of easy and affluent circumstances, who endeavour to increase their fortunes and lay up goods for many years, not only by shutting their eyes and ears and hearts and hands against the objects of charity, but even by defrauding and oppressing the poor and necessitous. This course of conduct is extremely unwise, and may prove as injurious to themselves as it is unkind and unjust to others. If they would duly consult the dictates of their own reason and observation, and especially what God has said upon this subject, they would be fully convinced,

that this their way is their folly, which directly tends to deprive them of the good they are seeking after, and to bring upon them the evil which they so greatly dread and labour to avoid. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works." It is easy for God to blast the hopes and destroy the interests of such selfish, parsimonious, and hard hearted men, and they have great reason to fear, that, while they are shutting up their bowels of compassion from the proper objects of compassion, God will either take away the property which he has given them, or turn it into a curse both to themselves and to their posterity.

7. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then those who are able to give should esteem it a favour, when Providence presents them with opportunities of giving. Our Lord told his disciples, "Ye have the poor always with you." God has wisely ordained, that there should always be objects of charity in this world, and fair opportunities of trying the hearts of the selfish, and of gratifying the hearts of the pious and beneficent. This is the reason God gave to his own peculiar people, why there should be always some poor and needy ones among them, and why they should cheerfully contribute to their comfort and relief. "If there be among you a poor man of thy brethren,

within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother ; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand : and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest him : because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all thou puttest thine hand unto. *For the poor shall never cease out of the land.* Therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land." The rich and the affluent have always had opportunities of giving, but they were never more highly favoured with such opportunities, than at the present day. The great and interesting revolutions among both christian and heathen nations, have opened a wide door for the ample display of general benevolence and private charity. There never have been in any age of christianity, perhaps, so many benevolent designs formed, to diffuse temporal and spiritual blessings among mankind, as at the present time. The Missionary Societies, the Tract Societies, the Bible Societies, the Theological Societies, and the various species of Humane Societies, have greatly multiplied within these very few years. All these societies not only present opportunities of doing good, but loudly call upon all classes of men to contribute, in some mode or other, to the temporal and spiritual benefit of those who are suffering by a famine of bread, or a famine of knowledge, or a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. Let the rich and all who enjoy a competency of the good things of life, improve these precious opportunities of giving from the purest motives and for the noblest ends. Let them every where contribute according to their abilities, for the comfort and relief of the poor, for the private and public instruction of youth, for the main-

tenance of ministers at home, for the support of missionaries abroad, and for the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Let them cheerfully and unanimously enter into the wide field of benevolence and charity, which is now opened before them. Let them not think nor say, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest; but lift up their eyes, and look on the fields, which are white already to harvest. The time is come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. The time is come when christians of all denominations are praying for the prosperity of Zion, and expending their property for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. If you either refuse or neglect to open your hearts and your hands in aid to this most benevolent design of saving precious and immortal souls from endless misery, you will incur the highest displeasure of your final Judge. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" We do, therefore, agreeably to the apostle's direction, "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they lay hold on eternal life." A mere pang of compassion, or a solitary act of beneficence will not fulfil your christian obligations, nor establish your christian characters, nor afford you the blessedness of the bountiful giver. You must devise and pursue liberal things, and keep your hearts and hands continually open to deeds of charity. You must, in a word, live up to the spirit of our Saviour's command to all his followers: "Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

AN EXTRACT

From Dr. Griffin's Missionary Sermon, delivered before the general Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in Philadelphia, May 23, 1805.

WILL the government of God convert the heathens without the means of grace? What nation was ever so converted? It is contrary to the established method of divine grace. *How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* No, my brethren, missionaries *must* go among them; and they *must* be supported. Who then shall sustain the expense, if not the christian world? and what portion of the christian world, rather than the American churches? And what individuals of these churches, rather than ourselves? Heaven has given us the means; we are living in prosperity on the very lands, from which the "wretched pagans have been ejected. We will not shift this honourable burden upon others. We would sooner contend for it as a privilege. But we need not contend; it is ample enough to satisfy the desires of all. The expense of christianizing only the savages on our borders will be great, and every man is under bonds to God to bear his full proportion of this expense. For whom but for the Redeemer was your wealth created? Thus saith the Lord, *your silver and your gold is mine.* Should we sordidly close our hands against him, he can, with infinite ease, extort a hundred fold, by sending a blast into our fields, a disease into our families, or a fire into our dwellings. It is a maxim, that admits of general application, *Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake, the same shall save it.* By one shower of rain, by one restraint upon the winds, that would sink your ship, by one breeze sent to fan from your door the pestilential vapour, he can repay you. And he can bestow the blessings of eternity on you and your children. The best security for remuneration is offered. He tenders you his blessing to reward your charity. And now are you christians? The trial is to be made. The everlasting fates of men turn upon the ex-

istence of a temper to prefer the blessing of God to mammon. *To the merciful, he will show himself merciful.*

I have nothing to spare, is the plea of sordid reluctance. But a far different sentiment will be formed amidst the scenes of the last day. Men now persuade themselves that they have nothing to spare till they can support a certain style of luxury, and have provided for the establishment of children. But in the awful hour, when you, and I, and all the pagan nations, shall be called from our graves to stand before the bar of Christ, what comparison will these objects bear to the salvation of a single soul? Eternal mercy! let not the blood of heathen millions be found in our skirts! Standing as I now do, in sight of a dissolving universe, beholding the dead arise, the world in flames, the heavens fleeing away, all nations convulsed with terror, or wrapt in the vision of the Lamb, I pronounce the conversion of a single pagan of more value than all the wealth, that ever omnipotence produced. On such an awful subject it becomes me to speak with caution; but I solemnly own, that were there but one heathen in the world, and he in the remotest corner of Asia, if no greater duty confined us at home, it would be worth the pains for all the people in America to embark together to carry the gospel to him. Place your soul in his soul's stead. Or rather consent for a moment to change condition with the savages on our borders. Were you posting on to the judgment of the great day, in the darkness and pollution of the pagan idolatry, and were *they* living in wealth, in this very district of the church, how hard would it seem for your neighbours to neglect your misery! When you should open your eyes in the eternal world, and discover the ruin, in which they had suffered you to remain, how would you reproach them that they did not even sell their possessions, if no other means were sufficient, to send the gospel to you. My flesh trembles at the prospect! But they *shall not* reproach us. It shall be known, in heaven, that we could pity our brethren. We will send them all the relief in our power, and will enjoy the luxury of reflecting what happiness we may entail on generations yet unborn.

AN EXTRACT

From Mr. Worcester's Sermon, delivered before the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in Boston, May 30, 1809.

Brethren and friends, suffer me to ask, why are you here in these hallowed courts of Jehovah? Why are you come to mount Zion, the city of the living God? Why are you lifting your eyes and your hopes up to the high throne of divine mercy, in prospect through the one Mediator, of a holy, and glorious immortality? Why rather, are you not bowing in a temple of idols? Why are you not paying your blind devotions to the host of heaven, or to stocks and stones? Why are you not, with hideous orgies surrounding an altar to demons, reeking with the blood of your immolated children? Why are you not groping in the horrible darkness of Gentilism, utterly without God, and without hope in the world? It is because the Sun of righteousness has risen upon you. To the gospel, to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, you are indebted for all your knowledge of God, for all the benefits of his holy worship, for all your divine consolations in life, and for all your elevated hopes, for yourselves and your children, of everlasting felicity. Oh, the inestimable privilege you enjoy, and the immense obligations you are under? And can you then ever forget, or can you remember without deep concern, those of your fellow men, to whom the gospel is not preached? No, you cannot forget them; neither can you remember them but with the tenderest emotions. You view them with solicitude; you commiserate their deplorable condition; you long to impart to them the blessings you enjoy.

Well then, ye tender, generous spirits, you have now an opportunity suited to your noblest wishes. It is in behalf of our destitute brethren in the remote parts of our country, and our still more destitute brethren in yonder wilderness, that we are to cast our offerings into the treasury of the Lord. How affecting the scene! how interesting the object! God is present, Christ is present, angels are present, to witness our liberality for the salvation of our fellow men!

Does any one ask, 'How much shall I contribute?' Permit me to return the question to yourself. On a fair estimate of the things of this world, in relation to those of the world to come, how much, as an accountable steward of the Lord's bounty, can you afford to give? Is it a difficult question? Shall I then refer you to the apostles and primitive christians, who, in a similar case, held their whole substance and even their lives, sacredly devoted? Are you still in doubt? Go then, I beseech you, to Him, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes, became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Go to the summit of Calvary, and ask the dying Redeemer of the world how much you shall give. Are you yet unresolved? Go then, at last, to the tribunal of God, and attend the solemnities of the final day. Go, see the Saviour on the throne of judgment, in the glory of his Father, with his celestial retinue, and all the nations of the world summoned before him. See the earth on fire, the heavens rolled together as a scroll, and eternity opening in boundless prospect before you: hear the address of the Judge, first to them on his right hand, and then to those on his left; and while these are going away into everlasting punishment, and those into life eternal, listen to the shrieks of the one, and to the songs of the other. Admit to your mind the full impression of these amazing scenes; and then determine for yourself what you must give.

Standing in view of the great day of God, what to us is money? what is its highest use? Is it not to promote the grand design of Immanuel's death in contributing to the salvation of perishing men? Yes, the poor widow's two mites, thus laid up in that rising kingdom, which is to survive the conflagration of the world, is of more, incomparably more worth, than all the riches of the Indies invested in the best earthly stocks, or appropriated to the most splendid earthly purposes. Rather would I meet on the hill of Zion, one, to whose arrival there I had the felicity in the smallest degree to contribute, than be the possessor here of hoarded or funded millions. Rather,

infinitely rather would I have a part in the gracious address of the final Judge, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," than obtain for ages, on earth, the highest honours and praises of applauding millions.

AN EXTRACT,

With some variations, from Dr. Emmons' Sermon, delivered before the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in Boston, May, 1800.

CHRON. XV. 7. *BE ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded.* These words, by the influence of God's Spirit, were addressed to Asa, king of Judah, whose soul was fired with holy zeal, to revive the sinking cause of religion; a cause, which lay near his heart. And they naturally suggest this animating truth: That the friends of God have good ground for unshaken resolution in promoting the cause of religion. Resolution is the essence of that mental strength, which gives energy to all the powers and faculties of body and mind. It has always had a principal influence in effecting all the great things, that have ever been effected by men of the world. It is equally necessary for promoting the cause of religion. Hence, those whom God has employed as eminent instruments of building up his kingdom were men of a bold and persevering spirit. Moses, in pursuing the cause of God, feared not the wrath of the king, nor the frowns of his court, nor the murmurs of the false, and faint hearted Israelites. What invincible firmness did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego discover, when they maintained the worship and glory of the true God, before the mouth of the lion's den, and the flames of the fiery furnace! A bold and undaunted spirit was the most striking lineament in the character of John the Baptist. The meek and lowly Jesus was himself the *lion* of the tribe of Judah. And his holy apostles imbibed his bold and zealous spirit. Luther and Calvin were raised up to purge away the errors of the church of Rome, and to spread the pure truths of the gospel through many states and kingdoms. Their task was arduous, and dangerous; accordingly God inspired them with a bold, enterprising, and unquenchable spirit. Thus it appears, that a pious and persevering resolution is indispensably necessary, for propagating the gospel, and building up the Redeemer's kingdom. And the friends of God, in promoting this great and good design, have good ground for such resolution. For, 1. God has often succeeded their attempts to promote his glory in the conversion of sinners. Asa, Josiah, and Nehemiah were firm and faithful

friends of God ; and all their attempts to promote his cause were crowned with signal success. I might mention the apostles. Luther and Calvin, David Brainard, and many others, who have done much to spread the savour of Christ's name among both their own countrymen and the heathen. 2. The promotion of religion is such a noble and laudable design, that it is even glorious to fail in the attempt. 3. Those, who heartily espouse the cause of religion have reason to expect the peculiar presence and assistance of God. This is his cause. In it his heart is wholly engaged. He will therefore grant to all engaged with him in its advancement all needed protection and assistance. 4. They will enjoy the approbation and prayers of all good men. For they all desire the prosperity of Zion. This is a very animating consideration. 5. They are sure of the esteem and affection of all whom they have been instrumental of converting. Those, who become reconciled to God, never fail to feel a peculiar affection for those, whom they view as instrumental of their spiritual and eternal good. 6. All their pious endeavours, and extraordinary exertions in favour of religion shall finally meet a glorious recompense of reward. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, *and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.*" If the idea we have endeavoured to establish be just ; then it is not too late to attempt the spread of the gospel through this extensive country. Though we have neglected many favourable opportunities ; though an awful stupor has seized the minds of many of God's professed friends ; though the enemies of religion have greatly increased, and set in motion every engine to spread error and infidelity throughout our land ; though, I say, all these obstacles stare us in the face, and must be overcome in order to propagate the gospel among those, who are perishing for the want of it ; yet it may not be too late to effect the difficult and important design. Difficulties vanish before resolution. If the few friends of God in this country, therefore, were only awake, united, and possessed a proper zeal and fortitude, they might, under the divine direction and influence, check the progress of vice and infidelity, and extend the limits of the Redeemer's kingdom, where Satan is now reigning without control, and leading multitudes of poor deluded creatures to eternal destruction. Christianity is a cause which is destined to prevail ; and which is destined to prevail by the blessing of God on human exertions.
