

CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS

by Anthony Norris Groves

Groves' influential pamphlet calling Christians to radical generosity and complete devotion to God's purposes, arguing that believers should live simply and give liberally. This work deeply influenced the early Plymouth Brethren and missionary movements.

6 Chapters

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Christian Devotedness

PREFACE

In sending a second impression of the following little work into the world after a lapse of four years from the publication of the former edition, it may be right to state, that my views on the subject of it, have undergone no change in the way of relinquishment; but on the contrary the experience of every day in my own history, -- every observation I have been able to make on the history of those with whom I have come into the closest contact, and who have either received or rejected the view, and in whatever degree, has tended exceedingly to strengthen the conviction on my mind, of the infinitely deep knowledge of the human heart, and springs of human actions which these injunctions of our Blessed Lord manifest: and that he means simply what he says in "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," etc. There is an eye-salve in this doctrine, when received by faith, that wonderfully clears the field of our spiritual perceptions; therefore, he that can receive it, let him receive it. Many more, certainly, have been influenced by it, and some to a much greater extent than I had expected; and the clusters that have adorned their branches seem to be of the true Eschol grapes; however, of these, and many other things, time will be the manifester, and the Lord the judge. The principal objections urged, seem to arrange themselves under three heads: -- The influence of which this principle would rob the Church; -- the children it would leave without a provision; -- and that it would require those having estates to sell them, and would not be satisfied with the dedication of the interest or profits arising out of such property. My business, however, is not with the consequences of the precept, but with the precept itself. Yet still I would say, there is in this reasoning as deistical a disregard of the Lord's especial government of his Church and people, as could be expected from an infidel. I purpose publishing, the Lord sparing me, a few remarks separately, in relation to the first of these subjects -- that of Influence; -- the nature of that which is Christian, and its distinction from that which is worldly, and which operates either upon worldly men, or that worldliness which still adheres to every one of us. And I shall endeavour to show, that a grain of the pure gold of Christian influence, which is the exhibition, in truth, of the mind of Christ, springing from the love of Christ in the soul, is no wise increased in value by being beaten out into plates as thin as imagination can conceive, and employed to gild the brassy admixture of earthly influence, -- the titles, honours, rank, wealth, learning and secular power of this world. It looks indeed like a mighty globe of gold; and the eyes of the inexperienced may be caught by it; but the least scratch proves its brassy character. If this simple principle had been perceived, how differently would many public religious bodies have been constituted for the purpose of extending the influence of Christ's Kingdom. With regard to the other two points, I feel they may be disposed of under one general argument, which is this: That the principle of God's government is paternal; and therefore its primary object is the development in us of the character of dear children, the essential feature of which is unlimited dependence. But, of course, this relation implies its co-relative, the Fatherly character of God; and the least entrenchment upon daily dependence for daily provision, either for temporal or spiritual supplies, affects God's honour in this character. Then, as to our children, David knew that they shall not beg their bread -- at least, that he, who had been young and then was old, had not seen such a thing; and to suspect such a thing, is to suspect the perfection of the Fatherly character of God; of whom our blessed Lord said,

"Your Father knoweth you have need of all these things," and, therefore, "all these things shall be added unto you." As to capital and estates, after knowing that our loving Father will supply us in every need, the sooner we are disencumbered by disbursement, for His honour, and His service, the better; for then we shall have the happiness of seeing it spent for the glory of Him chose it is, and for whom we are only stewards; whereas were we to die to-morrow, we do not know whether the capital and estates may fall into the hands of a wise man or a fools so that we may be cut of after spending part of a year's income for God -- say one hundred, out of a thousand pounds, and this, I think, would be called Christian devotedness by many -- and the fool comes in and spends the whole residue, twenty thousand pounds perhaps, for Satan and the corruption of the world. But some may say, Are not all things given us richly to enjoy? Yes; but it would be degrading indeed to the members of the Kingdom of Christ, to make their rich enjoyment appear in consuming on their own lusts like the members of the kingdom of Satan, those things which they are permitted to apply to the exaltation of their Lord and Redeemer. Be assured, my dear friends, the sooner we can see it appropriated to God's service and glory the better. For then it is gone for the Lord; and the world, the flesh, and the devil, cannot, though combined bring it back, and the Lord will not allow us to wish it were, so graciously will He receive our weak services and so kindly and overwhelmingly repay them with the light of His countenance, and the secret assurance in our own souls, that our dedication has been acceptable at our hand. A. N. G. London, May 16, 1829.

CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS, ETC.

The writer of the following pages has been deeply affected, by the consideration of the strange and melancholy fact -- that Christianity has made little or no progress for fifteen successive centuries: and having, as he trusts, perceived, in an attentive perusal of the Gospel History,[1] that primitive Christianity owed much of its irresistible energy to the open and public manifestation by the early disciples, of their love to their Redeemer and King, and to one another, by the evidence which they gave of it in their conduct, and being moreover convinced that the exhibition of this love tends directly and most powerfully to augment the prosperity of the Church of Christ within its own bosom, and to extend its influence throughout the world in all ages; he ventures to lay the result of his reflections open to the candid consideration of the sincere disciples of that Saviour, "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor.8.9). This manifestation of love he believes to have been made by the entire and real (not figurations) devotion of themselves, their property, time and talents to Christ, their Lord and King. The subsequent remarks, however, more especially relate to the bestowment of property, and that whether of capital already possessed, or of income to be acquired by industry. The object proposed by the writer is to prove that such a Dedication is invariably enforced by the commands of our Saviour, and that it is illustrated by the practice of his Apostles and their immediate contemporaries[2]: and he entreats of all the sincere disciples of Christ, that they will weigh what is written in the balance of the Sanctuary, and not in the balances of this world;-that they will pray earnestly to the "Father of lights" to have, in their search after truth, a single eye to the glory of Him whose they are and whom they ought to serve, and to the extension of His Kingdom -- that they will, while they search and pray, have a tender regard both to their own souls; and to those of the Millions of "Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics", whose ignorance and wretchedness they profess to deplore. If in our enquiry into the meaning and extent of our Saviour's words -- "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," -- we should be led to the persuasion that he meant them, and that the Apostles and their companions received them, in their most unrestricted sense; may the Holy Spirit of God enable us to lay firm hold on the most comfortable and consolatory permission thence arising -- to cast all our cares upon Him, because we know that He careth for us. All that is, or that can fairly be, claimed, in investigating the question before us, is, that the various precepts and arguments, along with the uniform practice, of our Saviour and his Apostles, be allowed to explain his meaning in this particular instance. I shall, therefore, consider in the first place, the direct Scriptural account of the Principle, to which we have alluded, as it is enforced by precept and illustrated by example; and I shall next consider its important bearing upon other momentous commands, which, without it, are rendered exceedingly difficult, nay, impossible, to be understood and received. I shall then conclude with a few arguments to prove that, if the extension of the spirit of Christ's Kingdom be the proper object of the churches' pursuit, these views are as consonant with reason as they are with revelation. I. I shall begin with the passage from which the motto is taken. "Lay not up for yourselves" says our Saviour, in his Sermon on the Mount, "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do

not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying -- What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Mat.6.19, etc.).[3] The principal points to be attended to, in the above passage, are, -- The importance attached to a "single eye" and the clear declaration of our Saviour, that riches disturb the clearness and simplicity of its vision; -- God's care of the lowest of his creatures, and his provision for those which have neither storehouse nor barn; -- the inference thence deduced by our Saviour, that he will much more care and provide for those who singly and earnestly seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, though they have neither store-house nor barn; -- and the source of all our distrust and doubt, clearly intimated in the expression -- "O ye of little faith." The parallel passage in St. Luke is almost verbally the same. It is, however, more striking, as it is introduced by a practical warning derived from the conduct of the "rich man",[4] who cries out, on the contemplation of his security from want, -- "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years", and to whom God replies... -- "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided" (Luke 12.13-14). It also concludes with an exhortation somewhat different from that in St. Matthew. In the latter it is said -- "Lay not up"; whereas in St. Luke it is said, -- "Sell all that thou hast, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." To all arguments drawn from passages of this description, the usual answer is, That the exhortations contained in them are not to be taken literally, but are to be considered merely as loose general statements, strongly, and only in appearance absolutely, made, with a view of producing greater effect. In endeavouring, therefore, to ascertain their true meaning, let us examine the evidence supplied by the remarks and conduct of our Blessed Lord and his Apostles, in those cases which bear upon the point in question. When the young man came to enquire what good thing he could do to inherit eternal life, after having mentioned several duties, our Lord says, -- "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, -- 'How hardly shall they, that have riches, enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a

rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God!' And they that heard it said, -- 'Who then can be saved?' And he said, -- 'The things, that are impossible with men, are possible with God.' Then Peter said: 'Lo, we have left all and followed thee.' And he said unto them, -- 'Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting'" (Luke 18.22-30). If then this is the judgment of him in whom we believe to be "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge", -- who "Knew what was in man" -- who was acquainted with all the secret influences by which his heart is governed; shall we, in opposition to his solemnly recorded judgment, -- that if it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God" -- strive, by the amassing of wealth, effectually, as far as in us lies, to stop our own heavenward course, as well as that of those dear little ones, whom our heavenly Father may have committed to our peculiar and tender care? We may, without anxiety, contemplate the circumstance (I shall not say the misfortunes of dying and leaving our families to struggle with many seeming difficulties in this world) should obedience to the Divine Commands bring us and them into such a situation; because our faith could lay hold, for support and consolation, on the well-known declarations and the acknowledged truth -- that the Captain of our Salvation was made "perfect through sufferings", and "learned obedience by the things that he suffered" (Heb.2.10, and 5.8); -- that the Apostle "gloried in tribulations, knowing that tribulation workers patience, and patience experience, and experience hope -- even a hope which maketh not ashamed" (Rom.5.5); -- that he could describe himself "as sorrowful -- yet always rejoicing; as poor -- yet making many rich; as having nothing -- and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor.6.10). But a Family left, by our labour and contrivance, in a situation in which, as our Blessed Lord himself declares, it is all but impossible that they should be saved,[5] presents an object of contemplation widely different. Faith can only lay hold of the fearful declaration; -- "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God"; and if the situation of such a family is irretrievably fixed, and that by our exertions, the contemplation of it may well bring alarm and sadness and distress upon the last hours of a Christian Parent. And these feelings may well rise to anguish, if he is conscious that his system of accumulation was carried on in defiance of solemn admonitions; and if he is persuaded that the wealth he has amassed -- as it were to shut out heaven from the hopes and prospects of his children -- if it had been dedicated day by day, as God had prospered him, as a manifestation of his love, and a tribute of his gratitude to his Lord and King, might have been the means of feeding with the bread of life some of the hundreds of millions who lie in darkness, hopelessness, and sin, because the Son of Righteousness has not arisen on them with healing in his wings. Such are the views and feelings which an unbiassed consideration of the words of our Saviour is calculated to produce. Some, however, may be prepared to assert that his words give no encouragement or allowance to any such conclusions; and this assertion they may support by another -- that a love of riches was the peculiar failing of the young man, whose conduct suggested the observations of our Saviour. It ought, however, to be remarked that he does not say, How hardly shall this rich man enter into the Kingdom of God! -- but in the most general terms, -- to "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" -- it may be desirable for those who consider the expression... -- "Trust in riches" -- used in the parallel passage of St. Mark (10.24) as mitigating considerably the severity of our Saviour's declaration to view the connection of the several parts of the passage in which the expression is found.²³ "Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his

disciples -- 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God.' 24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again and saith unto them, -- 'Children, how hardly shall they that trust in riches enter into the Kingdom of God!' 25. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.' 26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?'" Our Lord, in the 23rd verse, asserts it to be almost impossible for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God. When he observes the astonishment of his disciples, he explains to them the reason of his passing a judgment so severe, by stating the cause of that difficulty, of which he spoke as amounting almost to an impossibility. It is next to Impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, because he trusts in his riches. So that the expression is not introduced with a view of making riches appear less dangerous to the possessor, but rather with a view of explaining why they are so dangerous. The repetition of the general declaration in the strongest terms as it is found in the 25th verse, shows that this is the meaning of our Lord; and the increased astonishment of the Disciples plainly gives the same intimation. It is evident that they were not led, by this explanation, to consider the case of the rich less hopeless or deplorable; for they cry out: "Who then can be saved? " -- evidently the expression of men whose difficulties were confirmed, not removed, by the answer they had received. The simple meaning, therefore, of the passage seems to be this; The danger of riches is their being trusted in; and the difficulty of possessing them, and not trusting in them for happiness and protection, is as the difficulty of a camel's going through the eye of a needle: therefore, "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". But the man whose soul the love of Christ has touched, does not look on the question as one merely involving danger to himself: he looks on wealth, as well as every other gift, as an instrument of bringing glory to his Lord, by feeding the little ones of his kingdom, or in some way extending the savour of his name. It is not a matter of law, but a golden opportunity on which affection seizes, to bring a leaf to the wreath of praise and honour, that crowns Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father, who has won the hearts, and is entitled to the uncontrolled dominion of his own saints. From the observations suggested by the conduct of the "young man" let us pass on to the memorable comment of our Lord on the charity of the poor Widow, as recorded by St. Mark (12.41, etc.). "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, -- 'Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.'" In the world's estimation nothing could be more improvident or more improper than her conduct; and I fear that few of us would have the heart to commend one who should go and do likewise. But how does our Blessed Lord judge, who judges not according to appearance, but righteous judgment? Observing that she acts quite according to his precept of giving up all, He does not call his disciples round him, to warn them, by her example, not to take his words literally, as he did Peter on the use of the sword; but, on the contrary, points out carefully the peculiarity and unequalled greatness of her sacrifice, and holds her up to admiration on account of it. The rich cast in of their abundance, much; she, of her penury, cast in a little; but it was all that she had, even all her living. We have now only to go one step farther in order to ascertain in what sense the Apostles understood that command of our Saviour now under consideration. The conduct of them and their adherents is

thus recorded by St. Luke (Acts 2.44, etc., and 4.32, 34 and 35.) "All that believed were together and had all things common: and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things that he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for 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 Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." By what arguments can it be shown that such a "union of heart and of soul", as is here described, is not just as important to us now, as it was to the primitive Christians? If this community of hearts and possessions was according to the mind of the Spirit then, why not now? We have the general precept enforcing the conduct of our Blessed Lord himself; -- a particular exhortation to it in his conversation with the "young man"; and a most pointed approbation of it in the case of the poor widow. We have, moreover, to encourage and urge it, not only the example of the Apostles, but that of all those who believed in Jerusalem. The former truly said, "Lo we have left all and followed thee"; and of the latter it was also truly written, -- "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own". I would just remark that such conduct does not essentially involve the institution of a common stock, but will be effectually secured by each individual blending himself with the whole household of faith, feeling their wants, and rejoicing in their welfare, as his own. This sympathy of the members of the holy family toward each other, is strongly enforced, and beautifully illustrated by St. Paul. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. I mean not that other men may be eased, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality; as It is written: "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack" (2 Cor.8.9, 13, 14, 15). As then here, the superabundance of him, who had gathered much, ministered to the deficiency of him who had gathered little; so now, whatever the bounty of God may bestow upon us, above a sufficiency for our present necessities, is to be esteemed a blessing in proportion as it is distributed to relieve the temporal and spiritual wants of others. Again I ask -- How do we evade the application of all these precepts and arguments and exhortations and warnings and examples to our own times? Is there in the Holy Scriptures any limitation as to the time when the love which distinguished the primitive church was to be in exercise? Is not humiliation and suffering, the very character of this dispensation, as of the life of Him who introduced it? Are there no farther ends to be obtained by the crucifixion of self and selfish interests, and manifesting the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Let the disputes and divisions in the Church of God, and the 600,000,000 who have never heard the name of salvation by the blood of Jesus declare. Let the Agents of our Societies declare, who travel from one end of the land to the other, to gather a scanty pittance from half-reluctant Christians -- nay, who are often led to sharpen their goads at the Philistines' grind-stones, to the dishonour of the cause of God. What then is the ground of evasion? Why, that those were apostolic times and apostolic men. Could there be a stronger reason urged for following their steps? Their having supernatural aids, in addition to moral, makes the obligation to use moral more imperative on our part, if possible, than on theirs; for we have now only the silent and unobserved influences of the Spirit of God operating

by them. Those, who may be inclined to ask -- Were not the miraculous powers, entrusted to the Apostles for the advancement of Christianity, also subservient to their personal comfort, amidst their want and pain and distress? We would refer those who enquire to the words of the Apostle Paul. "Even unto this present hour," says he (1 Cor.4.11 and 2 Cor.11.27), "we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. I have been in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." It was, indeed, the very ground of the Apostles' glorying and rejoicing -- that they were counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Him who had died for them; and it was these very sufferings which they endured, and sacrifices which they made, that proved most effectual in converting others to the faith, by drawing their attention to Him whom they loved, and for whom they suffered gladly the loss of all things. They felt the beneficial effects of suffering on their own souls, and they saw it blessed to the conversion of the souls of others: and, looking beyond things which are seen and temporal, they beheld that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which their sufferings were working out (2 Cor.4.17); -- they knew that, if they suffered with their master, they should also reign with him. Considering the preceding remarks to establish the sense, in which the Apostles received the command of our Saviour in regard to giving up all, as well as the meaning of our Saviour Himself; it may appear superfluous to state anything farther; particularly as my only desire is, to open the eyes of those who love their Lord and Master with a pure heart, fervently to the understanding of his mind on the subject of this little book; for it is not money, time, and talents, that I desire to see brought into the external service of Christ, as such; but only as the incense of praise and thanksgiving to Him "who has loved us, and washed [properly "loosed"] us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God the Father", from His own redeemed, yea, the ransomed of the Lord, not the extorted, but voluntary homage from those hearts which would crown Him Lord of all. And certainly, any farther statement would be superfluous, if we were called upon to sit in judgment on the meaning of writers, whose opinions laid us under no practical obligation, or whose sentiments were in unison with our whole nature. Here however, the case is widely different; we have an old nature for this earth, as well as a new nature for heaven; and therefore, things require to be stated as fully as may be, that Satan may be stopped at every turn by "it is written". To admit an opinion -- is to admit a truth; and to admit a truth -- is to admit the obligation to act upon it, against our earthly constitution. And as the admission and reception of the particular truth now under consideration, strikes at the very root of many of nature's most fondly cherished feelings, and of many apparently so amiable, that we scarcely allow ourselves to doubt that they are of God; it may be necessary to enlarge still more upon the subject, and show that the reception of this truth prepared the way for the success of the Apostles, by leaving them free to follow Him who had called them to be soldiers, and that it will, by the grace of God, -- promised to us as well as to them; -- accomplish as great things in our days as it did in theirs, springing, as it did, and ever will, from this one source, Christ in us the hope of Glory, dwelling in us richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; yea: in those cases where the world think we fail, as well as those in which we seem to succeed: for if Christ and the spirit of His Kingdom be manifested, we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, whether they receive our testimony or reject it; yea, though we preach as Noah did, an hundred and twenty years, and no man regard us. II. I come, therefore, secondly, to consider the important bearing of the Principle, I have endeavoured to establish and illustrate, on several momentous commands which, without the reception of it, are rendered exceedingly difficult, nay, impossible, to be understood and

received; notwithstanding that the import and object of these commands are abundantly obvious, and the performance of them tends most directly and most powerfully to promote the highest good which the church is capable of enjoying. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16.15), -- was the parting command of our Blessed Saviour; and it was on the literal reception of this command that the momentous alternative hung of our knowledge, or ignorance of the only Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved; for "how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?", still is the order of God's government. Had there been the same doubt of the meaning and obligation of this precept in the infancy of Christianity, which these last ages have exhibited, it would scarcely have extended its influence beyond the confines of Judea. But, thanks be to God, the first Christians felt the gospel, committed to their trust, to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"; and they felt it to be the mind of Him who had loved them with an everlasting love, and given Himself for them, that this great act of surpassing love should be published to every creature, for His own glory, and for salvation to the ends of the earth; and therefore they counted all things but loss, that they might fulfil His will, and advance His Kingdom. Why has this spirit for so many centuries been slumbering? Because men have been seeking, every one his own things, and not the things of Christ. Let any one ask his own heart, as in the presence of God, in which state he should feel most disposed to embrace the command, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" -- whether, when he is labouring for, and enjoying the comforts and conveniences of life, and providing against the future possible wants of himself and his family; or when, like the Apostles and first Christians, he has laid aside every earthly encumbrance, and waits ready to go or to stay, as the Spirit of God may appoint. To the enquiry -- "Who will go for us?" -- can there be a doubt whose heart would be most ready to reply "Here am I, send me"? (Isa.6.8). The one, having the eye single, since to glorify his Lord is the only object of his life, will be ready to answer -- "Here am I "; while those who are surrounded by the cares and comforts of this world, have so many earthly claims and relations to adjust, that the general result will be that of standing still, and the enquiry, -- "Who will go for us? " -- will sound unwelcome to the ear, will chill, not animate, the noblest sympathies of the heart, and set the seal of silence on the lips. It is not meant absolutely to say that every man should become a Missionary, in the proper sense of the term. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord" (1 Cor.12.4). While one has that ministration of the Spirit which leads him to go and preach the gospel in person, another shows that he is guided by the same Spirit in carefully supplying the wants of him who thus goes "taking nothing of the Heathen" (3 John 7), from the abundance yielded by devoted diligence in his honest vocation, and by rigid habits of self-denial.[6] Again, consider the important command, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19.18). Can we, with any truth, be said to love that neighbour as ourselves, whom we suffer to starve, whilst we have enough and to spare? May I not appeal to any, who have experienced the Joy of knowing the unspeakable gift of God, and ask -- Would you exchange this knowledge, with all the comforts and blessings it has been the means of imparting, for a hundred worlds, were they offered? Let us not then withhold the means by which others may obtain this sanctifying knowledge and heavenly consolation. Is it a profitable employment of our wealth, to raise it as a bulwark against those difficulties, which, if they meet even the children's children of the servants of God, are sent as especial proofs of their Father's love -- for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? -- and are designed to work out for them a far more exceeding and

eternal weight of glory? Are not these very difficulties, dangers, and afflictions, against which we so anxiously desire to provide, the very marks by which Jesus Christ himself, his Apostles and Prophets, and all the chosen servants of God, have ever been distinguished, and the means by which they have been perfected.[7] Can then our wealth be so beneficially employed, either with reference to our own advantage or that of others, in removing from our Christian course these means of advancement, and characteristics of our profession, as in helping on the Kingdom of Christ with all that energy which a single eye can impart to the most limited powers, when directed and sustained by the Spirit of God? It has been remarked that some pious men have, from their imprudence, left their children a burden upon the Christian public, and thus disgraced their profession. If, however, the unprovided state of these children was owing to an enlarged view of devotedness to God on the part of these Parents, accompanied by frugal appropriations to themselves, and that strict honour and honesty, which must ever precede beneficence to others; all the disgrace, and ultimately all the loss, must rest on those that survive, who are so dead to the privileges of the Gospel, as either to forget that it was ever said, -- "Whosoever receives one such little one in my name, receives me" (Matthew 18.5), or to neglect the opportunity, despise the honour, and spurn away the blessing, of entertaining such a guest. Oh! if we really believed our Saviour's declaration, how dearly should we value, and how warmly embrace, such an opportunity of glorifying our Master, of blessing ourselves, and of showing again to the world "how these Christians love one another"![8] All our misconceptions on this subject seem to arise from one deeply rooted opinion, learnt of Satan and the world over which he presides, that riches and comforts are better for our children, than poverty and dependence. The whole tenor of the New Testament, however, pronounces the opinion to be false; and were a hundred individuals appointed to the once of choosing a portion for their children, in accordance with the obvious principles of Christianity, and with the declarations of its Author and his Apostles -- such a portion as bore the most favourable aspect on the acquisition of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and were they conscientiously to perform their office, they would all unite in choosing a portion poor and dependent.[9] Yet whilst our Lord says: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! " -- we act just as though he had said -- How hardly shall they enter in, who are without them! Here I would leave the sovereignty of the Lord unlimited. It is doubtless the same thing to Him to work by many or by few -- by the rich or the poor: but still "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven" must stand. If there had been an unerring physician of the body sent to a consumptive family who left it as his prescription: "How hardly shall they survive the climate of the North; it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than your children escape destruction in the blasts of the North"; if after this you saw the parents struggling for northern climates, you must say they either did not believe the physician, or they were deliberately doing what they could to destroy their children. Again I say, let me not be misunderstood, as though I wished to make all Christianity consist in giving up money, time, and talents, unless they are the expressions of love to the Lord, and flow from a desire to meet His mind and promote his glory, they are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Yet surely, they are the natural external expressions of internal love; and although they be insincerely assumed by Hypocrisy, it is her homage to truth; and although the self-righteous Pharisee may present the semblance of devotion, as a vain and hateful barter for heaven, yet it requires very little spirituality of mind to discern that this arises in a different source and terminates in a different object: the one begins in self and ends in self; the other begins in Christ, and ends in Christ. When, therefore, the

Lord requires his Church to be careful for nothing, it is only that He might display his watchfulness and carefulness over her. Surely it is a most unspeakable privilege to be allowed to cast all our cares upon God; and to feel that we are thereby delivered from the slavery of earthly expectations, and made free to speak the truth in love, without fear or apprehension? What is the glorious liberty of the children of God, but to be dependent only upon One, "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not," -- who says, -- "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." God, in pity to our weakness and unbelief, condescends to reason with us thus: -- "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7.7, etc.). Let us therefore do the will of such a Father to the utmost of our ability now, and trust him for the future: "for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'; so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear, what man shall do unto me'" (Heb.13.6). "Trust therefore in the Lord, and do good; and verily thou shalt be fed" (Ps.37.3). Oh! if every one, who believed himself ransomed by the precious blood of Christ, felt himself so entirely the purchased possession of Him, who thus so dearly bought him, as to determine henceforth to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified; nor to labour for anything, but that the unspeakably glad tidings of salvation through Him might be spread throughout the world, till every heart of the ransomed family drank of the same overflowing cup of consolation; how soon would the wants of the whole habitable earth be answered by thousands crying out, -- "Here am I, send me"; while those sheep to whom the glad tidings would be borne, would discern the shepherd's voice, receive with thankfulness such messengers of peace, seeing by their fruits "that God was in them of a truth". Think not that this is carrying things too far. Our blessed Lord says, -- "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. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15.12). Here our Blessed Lord tells us to love one another, as He has loved us; and then points to the laying down his life, as the most exalted proof of that love which could be given. If then, as the example of our Saviour and the exhortation of the Apostle testify, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"[10] how much more ought we to impart to them our substance. We all know what a persuasive power the deaths of the Martyrs exerted on the minds of those who witnessed them; and, in its just measure and proportion, would the dedication of property, time and talents, have a similar effect at the present day. It would convince those, whom we are anxious to convince, of the reality of our faith in that Redeemer and that inheritance, which they now think only a name, in consequence of the secular spirit that disfigures the Christianity of too many of its professors. How differently would the Heathen look on our endeavours to publish the mercy of our glorified Lord, if the hardy and suffering spirit of primitive times were to descend again on the silken age into which we are fallen! and if they perceived in us that love which led them to endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Example is a far more fruitful source of self-denial than the influence exerted on the mind by precept. If we call on those, who know nothing of the savour of that Name which is as ointment poured forth, to give up all for Christ, and this you literally do to every Hindoo and Mahomedan; let us, who thus call, and who profess to know much of the power of His Name, do so likewise; that they may catch a kindred spirit from a living exhibition. Let us

evidence, in very deed, that we love not the world, neither the things of the world, but that the love of the Father is in us. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he, that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever" (1 John 2.15).III. I shall now conclude with a few arguments to prove, that if the extension of the spirit of Christ's Kingdom be the proper object of the Church's pursuit -- which is, on earth, essentially a spirit of self-denial for others' good -- the entire surrender contended for, is as consonant with reason as it is with revelation; and consequently the great end of our existence should be the extension of this spirit; and the most important enquiry, in which we can be engaged, is, -- how this may be most effectually accomplished. Let us, therefore, begin with the consideration of our children, as it regards their apprehension of this spirit of our Lord's kingdom. There is no one calling himself a Christian, who does not profess to desire, and there is no one really a Christian, who does not in earnest desire for his children, both the apprehension and attainment of this blessing. The lips of all, and the hearts of the saints continually declare it as their wish that their children may receive the word of truth, "not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God"; -- that they may esteem and receive it as "a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their paths"; -- that they may prize it as the greatest and best gift of God, next to Him of whom it bears testimony and to whom it owes its preciousness. How then is a Christian to direct most powerfully and practically, the opening and susceptible minds of his children towards this Word of Truth? Is it to be done by exhibiting to them a life devoted to the study of that word, as revealing the will of Him whom he loves, and Him of whom it testifies, so that they may attach true ideas to true words, following simply its precepts as judging them concerning all things, to be right for himself, and promoting the extension of this knowledge as equally essential to others; -- by a dedication of time and talents to this end; -- by habits of continued self-denial, having for their object the acquisition of greater means towards the accomplishment of a work for which he would have them to believe that Jesus their Lord left the bosom of his Father and descended to earth, and for the furtherance of which Apostles and Martyrs regarded all; -- temporal advantages as loss, and were ready to suffer the privation of them all? Or is it to be done by speaking, in very high terms, of the excellence and importance of the work; -- by accompanying the words with a gift of one, five, fifty, or a hundred pounds a year for the promotion of it, but, in other respects, providing for temporal conveniences and enjoyments like the world? As long as the human mind is capable of being influenced by example, the first of these two exhibitions must exert the most powerful influence on the youthful mind. It must have a direct and almost invincible tendency to impress that mind with a conviction of the sincerity of our love of the Truth, of the reality of our devotion towards its great Author, of our deep feeling of its necessity as the only guide to purity and happiness, and of our ardent desire that all men may know and receive and embrace it. And although all this is infinitely removed from a work of grace on the soul, the almighty work of the Spirit of God; yet they may be, and continually are, the instruments he uses for arresting the sinner, and turning his attention to Jesus, and leading beyond the apprehension of the truth -- in the understanding, to the Author and Finisher of faith for the realization of it in the heart. But, on the contrary, every appropriation towards providing temporal comforts, and conveniences, and pleasures, either for them or for ourselves, has a tendency directly the reverse. It shows that there is, in this value for the world, a rival interest in the heart; it weakens their conviction of our sincerity; and lessens, in exact proportion to its amount, the practical conviction on their minds -- that there is but "one thing needful" in our estimation. The

true servant of God knows, better than any man, the real value of money, the value of time, the value of talent of whatever order. He is accordingly the most assiduous in his vocation, the most parsimonious of his time, the most anxious to improve his talents so far as they are subservient to the interests of Christ's Kingdom.[11] He knows that the mysterious dealings of God have most intimately connected us in the ways of his providence, with the salvation of one another. He knows also that there is no means, humbly laid at the foot of the cross, which He, who hung there, does not bless, and send forth, with the blessing resting on it, to accomplish purposes of mercy. As to laying up for children,[12] believing it to be contrary to the letter and spirit of the Gospel, and therefore to the best interests of the children themselves, I have no hesitation in saying that, on these grounds, I am persuaded it ought to be relinquished -- as much so, as spending our means on the selfish indulgence of our own inclinations. The reason indeed of the commands, exhortations, and encouragements to abstain from all such provision, appears as obvious, from every day's experience, as that of any single command in the Scripture; so that it manifestly would be the happiness of a child of God to pursue the conduct thus enjoined by his Lord, even if revelation was far less explicit on the subject, than it clearly and undeniably is. A "single eye" can alone secure our fidelity in the discharge of a stewardship so peculiarly trying as that with which the wealthy[13] among us are entrusted. The circumstances of such a stewardship have a remarkable power in directing and drawing our affections toward improper objects; in fixing them upon others in an inordinate degree; in leading us to misapprehend the nature of true happiness, and to estimate things by a standard entirely at variance with the plainest, and most frequently reiterated declarations of the Gospel. If, therefore, under such circumstances, personal conveniences and indulgences, the elevation of self in the world, under the thousand alluring masks which Satan provides for those who wish to wear them, as means, he tells them, of influence, be allowed any weight in the argument, we may easily determine the judgment which will go forth; you will see every man looking on his own things, not on the things of others. Nay, is not this now the aspect, even of the professing Church of Christ? Should any one rise, and say, However this may be with others, it does not apply to me. I give a guinea to this, and a guinea to that, and a guinea to another; I might say, Yes, and as many hundreds, it may be thousands to Self, whose desires were to be mortified and solicitations curtailed. How much would the judgment of the Christian World be modified with regard to the Leadings of Providence, if the eye had always the glory of God as the single object on which it rested! If that glory were our only aim, we should be all led to press forward, in the path to affluence and honours, with a more fluttering step and chastened energy. How slowly would a servant of Christ, who profitably labours among many thousand souls with a bare subsistence, be led to interpret the possibility of obtaining a more abundant provision (if with a less extensive sphere of usefulness) into a leading of providence which encourages and demands his removal. He might, on the other hand, be led sometimes even to suspect the possibility of its being only a temptation of Satan, laid in his way, with a view of limiting the held of his usefulness. That malicious and powerful Spirit doubtless now tempts the servant, as he once did his Lord, by saying, -- "All this power will I give thee and this glory: for that is delivered unto me: and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4.6). We should never forget that this power of Satan over the world and the things of the world, is acknowledged by our Saviour himself, when he calls him "the prince of this world" (John 14.30). With the solicitations of this "Prince of Darkness" coming, as he often does, in the form of "an angel of light" there concur affections of our nature, called tender and amiable. The

whole heart is misled; the judgment is biased; and the understanding darkened. He, on the contrary, who considers and uses an increase of means only as a sacred deposit, committed to him for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, and not for individual aggrandizement, is liable to no such deception with respect to the Leadings of Providence. He has no personal interest in the pecuniary advantages attendant on any situation; and his only question is -- whether it be one in which he may best serve and glorify his Master. When his heavenly Father sends him prosperity beyond what is sufficient for his immediate wants, he does not ask himself -- May not I possibly need this superabundance at some future period? or, if I never require it myself, may not my Wife, or Children, or Relatives? He dares not to ask a question so full of unbelief, nor presumes to turn the very abundance of the past mercies of God into an argument against trusting Him for the future. He knows that the best security for all spiritual blessings and all temporal mercies, both to himself and to his friends, lies in doing the will, and trusting unreservedly in the promises: of that God who hath said: -- "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will not I forget thee" (Isaiah 49.15). What, therefore, he has freely received, he freely gives; and trusts for the future the promises of his Heavenly Father, with a sincere, filial, and ingenuous confidence. The view here taken may naturally lead the minds of many inquirers after the truth to ask, -- 'Is not this tempting God?' To this difficulty Scripture supplies us with many very interesting and striking answers; from which I shall select a few. When Abraham was called to quit his kindred and country and to put his trust under the shadow of the Almighty's wing, -- his going, notwithstanding that he knew not whither, and that he was perfectly unacquainted in what manner or to what extent he was to be provided for, constitutes that peculiar feature in his obedience, which all Christians feel and appreciate, and the spirit of which they profess to desire to have animating their own. The same is also observable in the sacrifice of his son. Compliance in this case seems the death-blow to his fondest hopes; and to trust that, notwithstanding his compliance, the promises which God had made to him would be fulfilled, was a confidence resting on somewhat beyond the bounds of all human probability. Yet he does not hesitate to obey (and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us why), because he believed that God was able to raise his son up from the dead. Was this then tempting God? What says his Word? "The Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said, 'By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice'" (Gen.22.15, etc.). Again, in the 34th Chapter of Exodus it is written, -- "Thrice in the year shall all your men -- children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." Now, would obedience to this precept be tempting God? Doubtless not. Yet surely there is a much greater natural difficulty in the way of protecting the defenceless wives and families of a whole people during the absence of all the males at Jerusalem, than there is in providing subsistence sufficient for those who daily labour; for by this means the great mass of mankind are, and ever have been provided for. The institution of the sabbatical year appears to afford another very apt illustration. Let us therefore for a moment consider the commands and promises annexed to its observance, as well as the threatenings pronounced, and the punishments inflicted, in case of disobedience. "Six years thou shalt sow thy

field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the Land, a sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy held, nor prune thy vineyard. And if ye shall say, -- 'What shall we eat the seventh year? behold we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase': -- then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store. If ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me, I will bring your land into desolation, and I will scatter you among the heathen: and your lands shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land: even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest: because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it" (Lev.25.3, 4, 20; and C.26.). We see afterwards the execution of this threat: -- "Them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to the King and his sons until the reign of the Kingdom of Persia; to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (2 Chron.36.20).[14] Now these illustrations of the nature of the divine government are very instructive, whether we contemplate Abraham's obedience and reward, or the disobedience and punishment of his posterity. Abraham appears to pursue a line of conduct, which must end in the loss of everything dear to him; yet in the way of obedience, unimagined mercies and favours meet him. His posterity, by neglecting to go thrice in the year to Jerusalem, or to obey the command respecting the observance of the sabbatical year, seem to the natural eye to be in the way of safety and abundance; yet their enemies brought famine and desolation on their land, and they themselves, their wives, and their little ones, were carried away into captivity. Now the anxieties which led the Jews to ask, -- "What will become of our wives and our children during our absence at Jerusalem?" or, "What will become of our households during the seventh year?" -- are natural anxieties, as strong and as amiable as can influence the decision of the human heart. Yet these very anxieties were the immediate cause of their doubts, their distrust, and their disobedience. If then the following even these strong dictates of the heart, against a command of God, has proved perfect foolishness to those who have presumed so to do, let us take warning by their example; for to this end were these things written. There is one inference which, guided by the analogy of faith I would draw from the preceding observations. If trusting against the natural appearance of things, was demanded under the comparatively dim light of the Old Testament, -- a dispensation which, considered nationally, had peculiar respect to temporal prosperity; much more might we expect it to be required under the bright light of the Gospel, -- a dispensation in which temporal prosperity and all temporal distinctions are cast entirely into the shade: and as the disobedience of the Jews cut them off -- not only from the direct blessings promised to obedience, but also from the striking manifestations of the divine providence over them, which the three years' corn in one year, and the protection of their families and possessions during their absence at Jerusalem, would have afforded them; so we, by our want of confidence in God, lose those endearing evidences of His love, which a simple trust in His promises is the appointed means of drawing down from His open and bountiful hand. What preachers of righteousness would these Jews have been, had they obeyed the commands of their God! What a sermon on God's providence over His chosen, would the three years' provision in one year, and the miraculous protection of their coasts, have been to the Heathen around! It may be of importance for us to remember, that it is God alone whom we are

afraid to trust. Where we have no doubt of the integrity or ability of man, we fearlessly trust. If one of the Princes of this world has an arduous undertaking to accomplish, which requires the undivided care and attention of those to whom it is committed; and if he says to his servants, -- "Pursue steadily and singly the business entrusted to you, without distraction about personal provision, of which I will take sufficient care"; how many are the candidates, how eager the contention, how secure the confidence! Nay more, the obvious tendency of such a plan toward the attainment of the end in view, is seen, and its wisdom appreciated. Yet when the King of Heaven, after manifesting his unspeakable love toward us, in the sacrifice of his Son, demands of us a similar confidence, we make no scruple to withhold it. When our Blessed Lord says, -- "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," that your eye may be single in my service, -- that your whole body may be full of light to discern between good and evil: when He expressly says, -- "Take no thought saying, -- 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or, 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed;' but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"; -- we see neither the wisdom nor goodness of His design. We begin to explain away His instructions concerning it; we hesitate about the meaning of His promises; we put far from us the privilege of believing that He, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, hatchets over us. Whence then this confidence in man, whose breath is in his nostrils, who is absent in the moment of calamity; yet diffidence in God[15] who is the Omnipotent, the very present, help in every time of trouble? Does it not arise from a fear -- lest, if we trust him with our provision, he might choose for us and ours the portion he chose for the Son of his love? Does it not arise from a secret desire that our own wills may be done, and not His? Yet we may rest assured that, as it is not for the interest of a wayward child to be independent of the salutary control of an excellent Father, neither is it for ours to be able to say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." So intensely am I convinced of this truth, that I can, with my whole heart, pray for myself and all who are nearest and dearest to me, that we may be so circumstanced in life, as to be compelled to live by faith on the divine promises day by day.[16] "Godliness with contentment," says the Apostle, "is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil (a root of all evils, Revised Version); which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim.6.6-11). Let us therefore "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ", knowing that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim.2.3). Now that all this may not appear irresistible to many, I am fully aware; and having been myself, in times past, led to wish that a few passages, such as 1 Tim.5.8: 2 Cor.12.14, had admitted of clearer explanation, or, rather, required none, I shall now, in a few words, endeavour to explain what appears to me to be the principle of the New Testament revelation, which is not to supply the logician with an irresistible chain of premises and conclusions, but the child with a light to his Father's mind; therefore, on the divinity of our Blessed Lord, the Lord's day, the principle of communion, of church discipline, and of literally giving up all -- if a man wishes to be disputatious and escape the easy and blessed yoke of Christ's love he may, and therefore will walk in darkness, whilst the child is, in his simplicity, surrounded by a food of light. I shall, therefore, briefly recapitulate the reasons why it appears to

me that our Saviour spoke literal truth, and meant to be understood as so speaking, when he used such expressions as these -- "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth", and, "Sell all that thou hast": -- 1. Because he commanded the young man to do so; 2. Because he commended the poor widow for doing so; 3. Because the Apostles and all who believed at Jerusalem, did so, by selling their goods, houses, and lands; 4. Because without this Dedication, it is impossible to receive the command, -- "Love thy neighbour as thyself"; 5. Because, while it obviously tends to the general extension of Christ's Kingdom upon earth, it does also, in an equal measure contribute to the happiness and usefulness of the individual, by extirpating carefulness and sloth, and causing to grow in abundance[17] the peaceable fruits of righteousness and love. Should I be asked, what I understand by giving up all for Christ, my reply would be that I believe this surrender to be made, when any individual, following whatever lawful vocation he may, labours and contrives therein, with all the assiduity and indefatigable diligence of which he is capable, to accomplish the known -- the recorded will of his Lord and Saviour. If that will requires that he should labour for the souls, as well as the bodies of men; that he should strive to make his fellows happy in time, and in eternity; that he should impart to them the knowledge of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life"; he will labour with time, talents, means, and prayers, for the attainment of these ends, as diligently as others labour from motives of simple covetousness, or with a view of making provision against future contingencies for themselves or for their families. If any object to selling "houses or lands" it remains for themselves to distinguish[18] between the motives, which induce them to retain their property, and those which induced the "young man" to retain his. If they retain it from any private affection unsupported by the word of truth, and if it is not their own full conviction -- that, in so doing, they are pursuing the path most directly tending to fulfil the mind of Christ; neither the myriads of those who embrace their views and follow their plans, nor the learning and authority by which they are supported, will prove them to be wise, or true, or eligible, in that day when the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened. The principle I have here endeavoured to establish from the sacred volume, demands of no man the relinquishment of a present sphere of usefulness, till he is himself conscientiously convinced that he is called to another, where he may accomplish more for the great cause for which he lives -- the exaltation of Jesus, and the gathering his sheep. But though it does not require a relinquishment of present occupations, it is most uncompromising as to the end to which they must be directed.[19] That the hearty reception of this principle may be connected, by natural consequence, with many and great difficulties in this life -- no one, who knows any thing of human nature, as opposed to the nature of Christ's kingdom, or the Gospel History, can doubt. In this world's history, great things are not accomplished but by great sacrifices. A life free from sufferings and sacrifices our Lord has not promised, and the Apostles did not enjoy. Such a portion they did not even expect, but were always prepared to live on the remembrance of the "faithful saying -- If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him". It should therefore be no question of ours whether, in literally fulfilling our Saviour's command, we shall be subjected to many sufferings and privations, or not. The question is -- Is it the command of Him, who loved us too well to enjoin any thing but for our good; and whether in his sovereign arrangement, the embracing of it may not be connected with the advancement of His Kingdom, and promotion of His glory? It would at least elevate the church from the disgraceful position in which she now stands, striking hands with Geshem and Sanballat, to raise up the walls of Jerusalem. She would then rejoice to say: "We will do the Lord's work ourselves." Another question is, whether the gathering in the sheep of Christ out of a lost world, or even of a single

one, be not worthy of all the sacrifices we are called upon to make; and whether the means we have pointed out have not, in the appointment of the Lord, a tendency to the accomplishment of this end? If, from the word of truth, we can answer -- "Indisputably"; troubles, dangers, and difficulties, should be as nothing. "Not my will but thine be done." If the world esteem this madness, we must say with the Apostle, -- "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead [therefore all died]: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor.5.13). Thus I leave the question to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; who desire that his name may be a praise in the earth; and who, seeing that the harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers few, are constant in prayer to the Lord of the Harvest that he would send forth more labourers into it and that he would more abundantly pour out his Holy Spirit upon his Church, that it may more fervently desire, and more assiduously labour for, the coming of that day, when the Lord shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. And may the Lord direct all our hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for Christ, that if we should be alive and remain at his coming, we may be caught up to join the saints who are to come with their Lord in the clouds; and so be ever with the Lord; or if we go before, may we come with Him in the day of His glory. Amen.

APPENDIX (referred to in note 1)

It may be necessary to notice the only preceptive passage in the New Testament which apparently bears a different aspect. This we shall do for two reasons: 1st. -- to meet the readiness with which it is pleaded as a counterpoise to the otherwise clearly universal doctrine of the New Testament; and 2ndly -- , to prove that, far from its being in opposition to the principle for which we contend, it is another illustration of it. The text alluded to is contained in I Tim.5.8; where St. Paul is giving general directions relative to the provision to be made for widows, making a distinction at the same time between such as are to be relieved by the Church, and such as are to be relieved by their relatives. In reference to the latter he says, "He that provident not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel [unbeliever]"; which Hammond thus paraphrases, "But if any man or woman do not maintain those that belong to them, especially those of their family (as their Parents clearly are, having a right to live in their house, and a propriety to be maintained by them (or that they take care and relieve them) supposing that they are able to it,) that man or woman doth quite contrary to the command of Christ, and indeed performs not that duty to Parents that even infidels think themselves obliged to do". And in his note he adds, "To provide here does not signify laying up by way of careful, thoughtful providence beforehand, but only taking care of for the present, as we are able, relieving, maintaining, giving to them that want." -- Whitby in his annotation on the same verse says, "Some here are guilty of a great mistake, scraping together great fortunes, and hoarding them up for their children, with a scandalous neglect of that charity to their Christian brethren which alone can sanctify those enjoyments to them, and enable them to lay up a good foundation against the time to come; pleading these words to excuse their sordid parsimony and want of charity; that 'he that provident not for his own household, hath denied the faiths and is worse than an infidel'; whereas these words plainly respect the provision which children should make for their parents, and not that which parents should make for their children." See also Doddridge, Scott, and Pole's Synopsis, in loco. -- The meaning of the text then is simply this: -- he who ministers not to the necessities of his aged relatives, having the means so to do, is to be esteemed worse than an infidel; for even the heathen acknowledged this to be a duty. The precept, therefore, is to give and not to lay up, and consequently is in perfect accordance with the commando "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." For the meaning of the passage -- "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12.17) (which some for want of more efficient support, are anxious to press into their service) see the above authorities; where it will be seen to have reference only to the beauty of character becoming and attractive in a Christian. See, as a Scripture comment, Phil.4.8.2; Ch.8 and 21. [There appears a mistake in the reference here.] I shall now make a few remarks on the passage contained in II Cor.12.14, that I may bring under one point of view all the evidence the New Testament seems to me to afford, either in fact or by possible construction, against the view taken in this Essay. And this passage we more particularly notice, as it really appears to present some difficulty. "Behold," says the Apostle, "the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burthensome to you; for the children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the children." Now the difficulty alluded to consists in determining the meaning of the Apostle in this

illustration. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, just before the dose of it, he gives the Corinthian Church a precept, similar to the one he had given all the other Churches he established; -- that they should lay by every Lord's Day, as God had prospered them, for the relief of the poor Saints. It appears, by the Apostle's remarks in the second Epistle to the same Church that there were some who desired to impute base motives to him as though he wished to share in this bounty. He accordingly evinces his disinterestedness, by declining all provision for himself. He tells them, however, that he did not decline receiving any thing from them because he loved them less than other Churches by whose liberality he had been once and again supplied, but that he might cut off occasion from those who desired occasion to malign his motives. And he once more excuses himself, in the next Chapter, from being a participator of the bounty which they had laid up, and to which he had encouraged them for the purpose of supplying the wants of the poor Saints in Judea; and he employs an illustration drawn from the common practice of mankind. "The Children," says he, "ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children." And this illustration he employs as he does many others; just, for example, as he illustrates the Christian Race by circumstances and practices attendant on the Olympic games. It is essential to the illustration of this passage to consider that the whole argument of St. Paul does not refer to the providing against his future possible wants, with which alone this Essay has to do, but to the relief of his present actual necessities. It is evident indeed that the words cannot be taken strictly. The Apostle begins with asserting that Children ought not to lay up for their Parents, that is, ought not to provide for their present necessities; for, if this be not his meaning, the words have no reference to the question between the Apostle and the Corinthians, and therefore cease to be an illustration at all; since that question referred to present necessity on the one hand and to present supply on the other. His simple object appears to be to decline their bounty without giving pain; for it is clear from this very epistle that he was in the habit of receiving assistance from other Churches, of which he was as much the Spiritual Parent as of the Church of Corinth. The former he highly commends for the anxiety which they felt and the assistance which they afforded: from the latter he declines receiving any pecuniary aid, as if it were not incumbent on them to give, and would be improper for him to receive. He seems unwilling to recall to their minds the special reason of his refusing to accept of their bounty, and endeavours to find one in the general relation in which he stood to them, as their Spiritual Father. -- Let any one read from the eighth Chapter to the end of the Epistle, and he will be fully satisfied that the idea of laying up in store for future and possible wants never entered into the mind of the Apostle. Let him read especially that part of the eighth Chapter beginning with -- "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor," -- and ending with -- "As it is written, He, that had gathered much, had nothing over; and he, that had gathered little, had no lack."

Footnotes:

[1] The texts which seem to give another aspect to this question, such as, "He that provident not for his own, etc." -- "The parents ought to lay up for the children, etc." -- "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," are considered together in a note at the end of the Pamphlet. [see APPENDIX] [2] [It should be remembered that in this passage the words "take no thought" should have been rendered "Be not anxious". See the Revised Version.] [3] "He could not tell into whose hands his wealth would pass; nor would it be any comfort to him, even for his children or friends to possess it, when he was torn from all which he loved and idolized, and plunged into the pit of destruction; and perhaps they too were preparing by it for the same dreadful end" -- (Scott). "Though possessions are useful to sustain life, yet no man is able to prolong life, and to make it any thing more happy and comfortable to him, by possessing more than he needs or uses, that is, by any superfluity of wealth. The only way to be the better for the wealth of the world, is to dispose and distribute it to the service of God, and benefit and comfort of others"-[Hammond]. [4] [The argument is not distinctly affected, but it is to be observed that the Lord did not here speak of being "saved", but of entering the Kingdom. That the disciples at that time thought the two ideas were the same does not establish it, for prior to the gift of the indwelling Spirit of truth they misunderstood other things that the Lord said. Matt.16.22: Luke 22.36: Acts 1.6. For the same thought compare Mat.5.20; 18.1-3: 1 Cor.6.9, 10) Gal.5.19, 21: Eph.5.5; all addressed to persons already "saved".] [5] Although this Essay seems to have respect rather to those who have much to bestow, than those who have little, yet what the Apostle says as an encouragement to labour, may be applied to every man however humble. -- "Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph.4.28). "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 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'" (Acts 20.33-35). [6] "What shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; -- of David also, and Samuel, and of the Prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb.11.32-38). [7] [In 1842 Mr. and Mrs. Groves adopted a child of eight as daughter, "an orphan who was commended to their care by her father on his death-bed. This charge was a source of great comfort to them: they undertook it as unto the Lord, who truly gave them their hire. The child, being early converted to God, grew up to be a very efficient help in their mission work, when other labourers were

withdrawn; and she became to them, in every way, as a beloved daughter" (400).] [8] "I see here Parents who are toiling night and day. 'What are you doing?' 'I have a large family of children; and I am endeavouring to lay up a portion for them.' 'Why then do you not in truth lay up a portion for them! What! will you lay up a little dust, and call that a portion? Is that a portion for an immortal soul? You are rather hanging a millstone about the necks of your children which may sink them deeper into ruin. You may thereby tempt them to plunge into the world: and there they may scatter what you have treasured up, and called a portion! 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul,' -- is the declaration of David; and till you lead your children to this portion, you are making no real provision for them'" (Cecil). [9] "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and teeth his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3.16, 17). And "how dwelleth the love of God in him" who can behold his fellows, by millions, perishing with ignorance -- that hunger of the soul -- , without putting forth every effort, and making every sacrifice, that they may receive the bread of life. [10] The Christian Motto should be -- Labour hard, consume little, give much, and all to Christ. [11] "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about? [Revised Version "iniquity at my heels", that is, enemies who would work iniquity.] They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth [faileth] for ever;) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This, their way, is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. -- The upright shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 49.5-13; and 37.19 and 25) -- "God hath fed me," says Scott, "all my life long. I die, but God can provide for my children, and children's children without me; I cannot without Him. I have not, since I came here, allowing for my house, cleared L100 a year: yet the Lord hath provided; and I live in plenty, and can give something, and, if more money were good for me, he would give it." -- What he farther says, in speaking of the "carnal" anxiety of Parents for the temporal welfare of their children, though applied by himself to the clergy in particular, is equally applicable to the laity. "I often think what St. Paul would say to ministers in our days, on this ground; when of those in his days he says, -- All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ -- (see my note on the passage.) I have long lamented that we cannot serve God by the day, and leave it to him to provide day by day for us and ours" (Scott's Letters -- London-1824; pages 296-7).[12] By wealthy, I mean those who have large incomes, as contrasted with those who have a bare subsistence from their labours, or those who have inheritances entailed upon them, so that they cannot enjoy the privilege of disencumbering themselves.[13] Now many may say, these commands are so clear that none could misunderstand them, but not so these under consideration; perhaps if we were to analyze a little deeper our hearts, we should find that the one owes its clearness to our freedom from any consequent burden on finding them clear; the other its indistinctness from the reverse, not having yet learnt the glorious liberty of depending on and yielding all to Christ. In heaven they are seen to be, I have no doubt, equally

clear, equally commands, or rather privileges, of the saints of God.[14] How different the spirit and conduct of our Blessed Lord! Did he fear to leave, without temporal Provision, his widowed Mother to the promises and providence of God? No; he left her unprovided to an unprovided (Acts 3.1 and 6) disciple: and this he did, not at a time when probabilities were greatly in favour of a comfortable competence being easily procured, but when he knew that difficulties and dangers would beset them at every step. Surely had laying up beforehand been the duty of a child, our Saviour would have exhibited this virtue among that constellation of virtues which shone forth from his character; for he knew that we were to follow his example. Why then did he act thus, whilst we hesitate to follow his steps? Because he knew the truth, nature, and extent, of the promises of God, which we doubt or deny. Some will say -- "But this was a provision!" Yes, -- the very provision which God will ever make for those that trust in Him, -- a provision at the moment of necessity.[15] "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. They shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zeph.3.12 and 13).[16] "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that administereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness:) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; (whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men:) and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you" (II Cor.9.6-14). [17] [I cannot refrain from inviting any candid and careful reader to compare the rendering of this passage as given with the rendering in the Revised Version, as an instance of the real need there was for a revision of the English version. Especially is this seen from verse 10 and onward. Let him notice the words -- ministereth and administration, experiment, professed; the change from "both" -- expressing a desire, to "shall" -- making a promise or assurance. And if he can compare the Greek he will notice the opening of verse 10, where the construction of the Greek was missed, "bread for food" being connected wrongly with the words following instead of with the words preceding, and "your" was inserted; and then the last clause quoted (verse 14) made clear and emphatic in the Revised Version.][18] It might be an examination of not less importance, to ascertain why provision for future possible wants is almost the only point, in which the Christian and the man of the world stand on the same ground, pursue the same ends, and govern themselves by the same maxims; and how it happens that this part of our duty, if it indeed be such, coincides so exactly with our natural propensities.[19] What is here meant is -- that the principle, contended for, by no means precludes the carrying on such pursuits as require a large stock. But, as he, who had ten talents, used them as a servant, and brought the interest to his Master, so the Christian Merchant lives and labours as a servant purchased by his Lord, and considers his gains, as designed for his Master's service, not his private emolument. If he so arts, whatever his station may be, he has given up all for Christ. He remains where he is, not for his own private advantage, but that, as a faithful steward, he may pour forth the rich abundance, which God grants to his

labours, to nourish and build up the Church, and enlarge the confines of his Master's kingdom, and the only personal advantage he has above his poorer brother is, he has more anxieties (but for Christ, who sweetens them) every step he advances up, and therefore would have no personal inducement to get up but the sense of duty, that he may have more abundantly to give to him who needeth, and the guinea dedications and speeches from the rich, would pass out together as no longer needed; for one action of real dedication would contain more argument than a thousand speeches about it, from those who are laving in all the luxuries of life, and yield more help than a thousand guineas, and there would be left for the poorer, and the poorest would bring in their blessed two mites.

Transcribers notes:

The source for this etext is Chapter 5 of Lang, G. H. 1939. Anthony Norris Groves, Saint and Pioneer. London: Thynne & Co. Footnotes have been renumbered. [Footnotes enclosed in brackets are comments made by Lang rather than Groves. This explains what otherwise would be anachronous references to the Revised Version of the Bible which was published in 1881.] The first edition of "Christian Devotedness" was published by Hatchard 1825.

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