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THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD WISER THAN THE WISDOM OF MEN:

A LETTER TO ABRAHAM SCOTT,

In answer to his Pamphlet entitled, "Common Sense in the Business of Life, is not all at once to be totally discarded."

BY WILLIAM TROTTER.

“ O who shall warn this generation of vipers, to flee from the wrath to come ! Not those who lie at their gate, or cringe at their feet, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fall from their tables. Not those who court their favour or fear their frown ; none of those who mind earthly things. But if there be a Christian upon earth, if there be a man who hath overcome the world, who desires nothing but God, and fears none but him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell : thou, O Man of God, speak and spare not ; lift up thy voice like a trumpet. Cry aloud, and show these honourable sinners the desperate condition wherein they stand. It may be, one in a thousand may have ears to hear, may arise and shake himself from the dust, may break loose from these chains that bind him to the earth, and at length lay up treasures in heaven.”—**WESLEY.**

ESTEEMED FRIEND—

That declaration of the Apostle, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ;” seems to apply to the preceptive as well as to the doctrinal portions of the Gospel. Strict and full obedience to God’s commands, it seems, appears to be as great “foolishness” to the natural man, as the cordial belief of some peculiar doctrines of the Gospel did to the ancient Greek philosophers. And even some whose minds are on the whole spiritual, by hearkening in some particulars to the dictates of worldly wisdom, come to regard the requirements of the Gospel as so strict, that they need to be modified and softened down ; and they are even led to represent strict, faithful submission to these requirements as a departure from “common sense.” Of my first observation we have a notable illustration recorded in the writings of John Wesley ; of the latter, I fear, the pamphlet you have lately issued, furnishes melancholy proof. The founder of Methodism says, “Two as sensible men as most in England sat down together some time since, to read over and consider that plain discourse on ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.’ After much deep consideration, one of them broke out, ‘Positively I cannot understand it. Pray do *you* understand it Mr L.’ Mr L. honestly replied, ‘Indeed, not I, I cannot conceive what Mr W. means. I can make nothing at all of it.’ So utterly blind is our natural understanding touching the truth of God.” In answer to several tracts illustrating and enforcing the above Divine command, *you* publish a pamphlet, entitled, “Common sense, in the business of life, is not all at once to be totally discarded.” It may however be found that what Mr L. and his companion regarded as so mysterious, is one of the plainest doctrines of revealed religion ; and that what *you* represent as “common sense,” is pronounced by Jehovah to be egregious folly. To prove that in this matter, as in a thousand others, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,” and

the "foolishness of God wiser than the wisdom of men," is the object of the following pages.

I need say little, if any thing, of the attempts you make at the commencement of your work, to create a prejudice against your opponent. In this part of your publication you so far over-shoot your mark, that your statements are more likely to injure your own reputation, than the reputation of him whose character they seem to have been intended to disparage. It is well known that Joseph Barker both thinks and acts differently from most of his brethren in some particulars, and it is also well known that he assigns powerful reasons for this difference from others in sentiment and practice. Some of your statements respecting him however are utterly without foundation; while the whole of them are so expressed as to convey a false impression to the mind. But on this point I need not enlarge; those who know Joseph Barker will know how to appreciate your statements respecting him; and I need only now repeat in public what I have already stated privately to you, that I think that the seriousness and importance of the subject, the sanction given to the sentiments you oppose by *some* passages in Wesley's writings, according to your own account, and the respect due to one who has always cherished and manifested a spirit of kindness and friendship towards yourself, should have led you to avoid those censures and sarcasms upon his general character, with which your publication so much abounds; as well as to treat his views on the particular subject in debate, with less of ridicule and contempt. I regret that you have adopted such a method of opposing what you think Joseph Barker's errors, not from any fear of injury to him, or to the cause he advocates; but because the spirit and style of your pamphlet are calculated to awaken unkind and unchristian feelings in the breasts of your readers, as well as to prejudice your own reputation.

To your statement of the question between you and Joseph Barker and one or two more, I make no great objection; though to have done those persons justice, you should have employed terms not quite so unqualified and unmeasured. That it is contrary alike to the spirit and letter of the New Testament to make any *private, personal* provision for a time of sickness and old age; that it is equally opposed to the requirements of the Gospel, to make such a provision for widows and orphans, as to supersede the necessity for personal exertions on their part, has unquestionably been maintained by Joseph Barker, Thomas Smith, and myself. The works in which this general question is argued most at length, however, are those on which you have chosen, for reasons best known to yourself, to bestow scarcely any notice; and that which you have selected for special observation, is one in which the great principle in question is not so much argued as assumed, and its application to certain particular institutions discussed. Let us see, however, what you have to urge against the proposition as stated by yourself.

You say "that portion of scripture on which they make their principal stand, and on the explication of which the force of many others must depend, is this command of Christ, ' Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.' " If you had read but one of the publications referred to, you might, perhaps, without either inattention or perversion, have supposed this. As I have already observed, this subject is not discussed at length in friend Barker's tract: consequently more than a hasty, brief allusion to the evidence on which the proposition rests, could not be expected from him. But you have read "The rule for Christians," &c. by Thomas Smith, for you quote that work in your publication. And were you not aware when you wrote the sentence just cited, that in that work the author does not make his "principal stand" on any isolated passage of Scripture; but infers the doctrine from an extended survey of the whole analogy of faith? I put it to any man who has read that able work, whether it be a just account of it, to say that the writer makes his "*principal stand*" on any particular passage of Scripture? So far from this, he brings together nearly all the passages of Scripture which treat of the subject; discusses each of them separately first, and then shows the bearing that they have on each other, and on the subject in hand. The conclusions to which he comes are not drawn from any isolated portion of the Word of God; and do not necessarily stand or fall with any given interpretation of any particular passage. I deem it right to make these observations, to show, that if you could succeed in explaining away the three passages you refer to, there are yet many others that would have to be similarly dealt with, before you can overturn the proposition in support of which they are adduced. You have also read the Lecture on the Use of Money; and were you not aware that the question is argued there by a direct appeal to the great principles which should guide our conduct in all the affairs of life? principles which do not at all "depend on the explication" of the passage on which you say we take our "principal stand;" I mean the great principles of human duty, supreme love to God, and universal love to man. The writer of that lecture might be unworthy of your notice; but surely the great principles to which he appeals, and on which he rests his argument, are so important and fundamental, that an appeal to them on such a subject was worthy of some attention, by whomsoever that appeal was made.

You proceed to give your views of the interpretation put upon the passage you quote by the writers whose sentiments you oppose. "But can any rational being suppose," you ask, "that the meaning of these words is, that all distinction between rich and poor is to cease, and that all subordination is to be destroyed? That the industrious and the indolent, the frugal and the wasteful, are to be put on the same footing? That no man on earth should have one day's provision beforehand? That no healthy labouring man is to have as much by him as would sup-

port him one day in sickness? Unless these words of our Saviour prove all these things, they do not prove the point for which these writers produce them." So that it seems if the passage will not admit of the limitations for which you contend, it will admit of no limitations at all! That if we reject the interpretation which you think proper to put upon it, no other interpretation can be devised that will be received by any "rational being." This may not be as readily believed by your readers, as affirmed by yourself. Many who peruse your pamphlet will perceive, that the real question between you and us, is not whether this passage shall be understood in a limited or in an unlimited sense, but whether all limitations of it are alike? Whether there be not plainly expressed divine commands to limit it to a certain extent, while there is nothing to limit it beyond this extent, but the dictates of worldly policy, of earthly, selfish prudence? The limits which are elsewhere fixed to this command by the Saviour himself, and by his inspired apostles, may be received and recognized, while the limits assigned to it without such authority, and with no higher warrant than what fallible men please to call "common sense," may be "at once and totally discarded."

But you say further, "those who suppose all this to be the meaning of these words (but who does?) in order to be consistent, must maintain that it is sinful to follow any worldly employment; because Christ has said, 'Labour not for the meat that perishes.' Yet, notwithstanding this positive and explicit command, we suppose they will allow, that it will not do for all men to give over working. Then let them show how any man can work without violating this precept of Christ." This may be very easily done; for the precept "Labour not, &c." has no reference at all to employment in those occupations, by which men earn their livelihood. Jesus Christ had been miraculously feeding a great multitude of people, with five barley loaves and two small fishes. The day following, some of those who had partaken of the repast, came again to Jesus, as though they were anxious to hear him, and to behold his wondrous works. "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles (and were thereby convinced of the divinity of my mission), but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you." Who does not see that the Saviour means, Do not follow me for the loaves and fishes, but for the spiritual blessings that I came from heaven to impart? And who does not see that while it is prohibited as wrong, to make any earthly advantage our object in religious exercises, it is enjoined as right and our bounden duty to "labour to provide things honest in the sight of all men?"

The reader will now be able to appreciate what you say next: "When they have done this (shown how any man can work without violating the above precept) they will have furnished a

rule of interpretation that will equally apply to the former passage." Have I not done this? Have I not shown that a man may follow his earthly calling without violating the command, Labour not for the meat which perisheth? Have I not shown that that command has no reference to such a subject? Have I not shown that, without violence to the connexion in which it stands, as well as to every rule of just interpretation, no such sense can be fixed upon it? But have I hereby "furnished a rule of interpretation" for the other passage, viz. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth? The rule of interpretation by which I have explained the Saviour's precept, Labour not for the meat that perisheth, will just as much apply to the law that was given on Sinai, as to that passage in the sermon on the Mount, which forbids us to lay up treasures on earth. In the one case the Saviour is addressing himself to individuals for their reproof and correction; and what he says, cannot be fairly applied to any but such as pursue a similar course to those whom he addressed. In the other case, as the great Law-giver of the church and of the world, he addresses himself to assembled multitudes, and furnishes a code of laws that is to be the standard of morality in all ages and in all lands. On Sinai God legislated for the Jewish nation; in the sermon on the Mount the Saviour legislated for the world. I ask again, whether what he said on such an occasion, can be compared with what he said on a private occasion, in reference to the conduct of certain individuals whom he addressed? And whether the same interpretation of faith will apply to both cases? Of course, if what I have said be just, your conclusion falls to the ground, that "if a man may follow his daily labour without violating one of these commands, then he may acquire wealth without violating the other." I have shown that a man "may follow his daily labour without violating one of these commands," and whether he may "acquire wealth," *and lay it up for himself*, "without violating the other," remains to be discussed.

You say, "General declarations of Scripture are to be expounded by such as are more specific; and then it will be found that a man may innocently acquire wealth." Your rule of interpretation I admit to be a just one; but in its application we shall not agree. I say, general declarations of Scripture are to be expounded by such as are more specific; and, hence, I would endeavour to ascertain the meaning of, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," by a reference to such passages as these,— "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." Luke iii. 11. "But godliness with contentment 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 (have *more*, and thus) be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 Tim. vi. 6-9. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need,

and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John iii. 17. "Give us this day our daily bread." Matt. vi. 11. All these passages are sufficiently "specific;" they all treat of the same subject with the passage which they are adduced to illustrate; and they every one confirm the sense put upon that passage, in the writings that you oppose. It is a remark deserving of some attention, too, that they are all found in the New Testament, in which the deficiencies of the Old are supplied, and the system of truth and duty intended by Heaven for men fully developed. Instead of appealing to passages like these, you refer to such as either have no proper relation to the subject in hand, or are only to be found in the Old Testament, which reveals but an imperfect system either of worship or morality. The first passage you quote is, 2 Cor. xii. 14. But if the verses connected with this passage are referred to, it will plainly appear, that the Apostle is there speaking merely of a provision for present necessities, not for the future. His previous words are—"The third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burthensome to you, for I seek not your's but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." Now, what was it that the Apostle here declined to receive of his children in the gospel at Corinth? Was it a provision against future times of need? or a provision for his present necessities? Plainly the latter. And of course, his illustration must be understood in connection with the point to be illustrated. When thus understood, the sense of the passage is sufficiently clear, that it is not generally the province of children to provide for their parents, but of parents to provide for their children. And what light this throws on the Saviour's prohibition, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," it requires something more than "*common sense*" to discern.

The next passage you refer to is Psalm lxii. 10: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." "This shows," you say, "that the possession of riches is not prohibited; and that a man may have them, and not set his heart upon them." This has never been disputed. It is not disputed in any one of the pamphlets to which you reply. The whole of your reply is written so as to convey the impression to one's mind that this *has* been denied; and it is thus calculated to mislead unwary minds. But there is nothing either in J. Barker's or T. Smith's publications, or in my own, that can be fairly construed to mean any such thing. We do all of us maintain, that to retain possession of property *for any purpose but that of doing good*, is forbidden; and we all maintain that to make *private, personal* provision for sickness and old age, and to lay up fortunes for children, are not divinely-authorized modes of doing good; that though in the eye of *worldly wisdom*, or, if you please, of "*common sense*," either of these may seem to be doing good; yet, in the eye of infinite wisdom, they are otherwise regarded, and, therefore, prohibited, in the word of God. **All**

this we maintain and teach ; but we have never either maintained or taught that the bare possession of property is wrong : so far from this, in each of the works you oppose, it is distinctly stated, that to retain possession of property for certain specified purposes is allowable, and to be commended. And, first, with regard to friend Barker's work. On the fifteenth page he says,—“ And though Christ taught that the salvation of the rich is possible, yet he mentions no way in which it is possible, but that of disposing of their riches, or of employing them exclusively in deeds of charity. If they love their riches, or trust in their riches, their salvation is impossible ; and it is impossible to avoid loving them, if they retain them in their possession for any other purpose than doing good.” Does not this plainly imply, that it is possible to retain riches in our possession for the purpose of doing good ? It is laying up treasures *for ourselves* that is forbidden, not the laying up of treasure for the purpose of promoting the glory of God, and the salvation and happiness of mankind. A man may employ a missionary, and in order to give him at the end of the year, or quarter of a year, what is requisite for his maintenance, it may be necessary for him to lay by something every week. *He* lays up treasure ; but he does not lay it up *for himself*. A man may intend to publish a book ; not to make gain, but to enlighten the minds and improve the characters of men. The publication of this book may require a hundred pounds. In order to raise that sum, it may be requisite to lay up continually, until the cost of the book is due. Such a man *lays up treasure*, but he does not lay up treasure *for himself*. Nay more ; his riches increase. His publications are sold, and at the end of the sale, he finds himself possessed of more money than he had before. And he is thus entrusted with enlarged means of doing good. A hundred or a thousand cases of this kind might be described. This is what Joseph Barker means by “ retaining them (riches) in their possession for the purpose of doing good.” Is not the distinction sufficiently plain between such a retention of riches as this, and the retention of them to provide for uncertain sickness and old age, or to provide fortunes for children ? Is not the distinction sufficiently plain between laying up *for ourselves* treasures on earth, and laying up treasures to enable us to perform some act of private or of public beneficence, which we could not perform without them ? And does not this explain the passage you quote, “ If riches increase, set not your heart upon them ?” If we set our heart upon them, we shall reserve or lay them up *for ourselves* : but if we set *not* our heart upon them, we shall be disposed to give them away, if that seems most for the glory of God and the happiness of mankind ; or if these objects can be better accomplished by retaining them, we shall be willing to retain them *for* these objects, and for these only.

In like manner Thomas Smith, another of the writers whom you oppose, maintains that “ The receiving or taking possession of any amount of property is not forbidden, but only the purpose-

ly labouring for, or retaining of, *more than is necessary for the purposes specified.*" p. 36, *Rule for Christians*. One of the purposes specified is, to "provide things honest in the sight of all men, and, as we have *opportunity, for him that needeth.*" p. 35. Now it is plain that if we are to conduct our trade or occupation with a view to provide for him that needeth, whether it be temporal good, or spiritual illumination that he needs, we are warranted in retaining so much property as will enable us in the most effective manner to accomplish this end. But is there not a wide difference between this and retaining our property as a provision for ourselves,—as a protection against future and uncertain calamities?

In my own lecture, on the use of money, I maintain that we are 1. To provide the necessaries of life for ourselves and our families. 2. That we are to relieve our needy fellow-christians. 3. That we are to relieve the temporal distresses of our fellow-men generally. And 4. That we are to assist in spreading the blessings of knowledge and religion through the earth. But then how are the means of effecting all this to be obtained? You have the answer on page 6. "Some work at a calling, others conduct a business, and others again cultivate the ground. The mechanic must therefore save sufficient to procure him the implements of his calling; the tradesman must save sufficient to form a capital wherewith to conduct his business; and the husbandman must save from the proceeds of one year's harvest enough to procure seed from which to raise the next year's crop." Thus you see that in all the three publications you oppose, it is distinctly maintained that the possession of property to a certain extent, and for certain purposes, is right; but it is also maintained that the retention of property for any purpose but that of doing good in the ways above described, and the retention of it to any extent beyond what is necessary for the attainment of these ends, are both wrong, and are plainly prohibited in the Gospel.

But it may be inquired by some, What authority we have for thus limiting the prohibition,—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," while we reject those *other* limitations which would allow of making provision for sickness and age, and laying up fortunes for our children? After quoting from Thomas Smith, on page 17 of your pamphlet, a passage in which he expresses sentiments similar to those just now expressed above, you yourself inquire, "But how does this writer come to this conclusion?" i. e. how does he come to the conclusion that we are allowed to have money for those benevolent purposes above laid down? And you answer: "Not from the words of Scripture, but from the dictates of his own reason. And if reason be allowed to give the rule of interpretation, will it not equally prove that it is a man's duty to provide for his widow and orphans?" I answer: You do not state the matter fairly: it is from the *words of Scripture* that this writer draws his conclusion that property may be retained for benevolent and pious uses, and not from any

reason apart from Scripture. Are not these the words of Scripture? "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Romans xii. 17. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. v. 8.* "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10. Are not all these the words of Scripture? And do not all these passages themselves limit the prohibition of the Saviour, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth?" Nay, does not that prohibition limit itself? Is it any thing more that is prohibited there than laying up *for ourselves* treasures on earth? Give us equal authority for any other limitations of the passage in discussion, and we shall with equal readiness admit them. Show us equally plain and express commands to provide against seasons of sickness and age, or to lay up fortunes for our children, and we shall cheerfully admit that these practices are scriptural and right. But though the Saviour may be allowed to limit his commands by *others equally plain*, we are not at liberty to limit one of them by the dictates of *selfish prudence*, or what men may please to call "*common sense*."

But to return to the arguments you advance to prove that we understand the passage so often quoted already in too extended a sense. After quoting the two passages already considered, you proceed to speak of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job and David, who were very rich; and you infer from this fact, that men may lay up for themselves treasures on earth in the present day. But unhappily for your conclusion, the conduct of these great and good men was never intended to be a perfect example to us. Compared with their contemporaries, and considering the darkness of the times in which they lived, those individuals were both great and good men, and they deserve to be remembered with honour. But many things were permitted to them, which are not allowed to us. Abraham dissembled, and the historian expresses no disapprobation of his conduct. But for dissembling under the gospel dispensation, Ananias and Sapphira were both of them struck dead. Several of those you mention had more wives than one; but that would be regarded as adultery now. So that if you should succeed in showing that all the worthies who lived under former dispensations laid up treasures for themselves on earth, you would prove nothing to the point, unless you could also show that such a course is permitted by Jesus Christ and his inspired Apostles. You refer to a passage in the Book of Proverbs, in which Solomon says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise," &c. Excellent advice to a *sluggard* too: but altogether inapplicable to the case before us. It is the *sluggard's idleness* which the wise man reproves; and the *diligence* of the ant that he commends. But to apply it to a man who diligently

* Those who read the whole passage will see that this refers to provision for present wants, not for contingencies.

labours in his calling, not only that he may provide for his own necessities, but also that he may minister to the necessities of others, is taking a liberty with Scripture that cannot be allowed, and is in fact the reprobated custom of "making Scripture comparisons go upon all four." To the description of a virtuous woman, in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, you appeal with as little effect. Whoever maintained that it is wrong either to purchase a field, or to plant a vineyard, if such a step be necessary to provide the means of maintenance for ourselves and our families? But this is a very different thing from another practice which was condemned, even under the Jewish dispensation, in such words as these,— "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" Isaiah v. 8. Even under that imperfect economy it seems that such accumulation of wealth as *this* was forbidden and denounced. The assumption that the "New Testament leaves the subject where it found it," needs no remark from me. It is a perfect begging of the question; a taking for granted that which it was your place to prove. Do you suppose that the New Testament leaves every branch of morality where it found it? You say that "it (the New Testament) prescribes the duties of rich and poor, of masters and servants; so as to show that such characters are to continue in the Christian Church." But this has never been disputed; the only one of the writers whom you oppose, that has adverted to the subject at all, has expressed himself very clearly on this point. He says—"If such a rule were now observed in the Church, there would still be both rich and poor. Those who had 'food and raiment,' and something 'over,' would be, in the scriptural sense of the term, *rich*; and those to whom their abundance was given—that is, those who had not the necessaries of life, would be termed *poor*." *Rule for Christians*, p. 46. As to the relation between "masters and servants," it has no connection with the question before us; and I cannot conceive what reason there could be for introducing it into the discussion: its only tendency, like that of some other passages in your pamphlet, is to mislead your readers, as to the character of the sentiments held by your opponents. It tends to convey an impression to the mind, that we are opposed to all distinctions in civil society, which you knew is not the case.

The next paragraph contains a mis-statement of the most extraordinary character. You say, "But it is now urged, that Christians, *instead of holding any private property*, should have all things common; because such a state of things is described in the Acts of the Apostles; where it is stated, that all who believed were together, and had all things common." Compare this with the following passages from the "Rule for Christians," and say, whether you have correctly represented our views. With regard to the meaning of the phrase "they had all things common," the author says, "This being understood to signify that there was

among the Christians at Jerusalem an absolute *community of goods*, has led many to the conclusion, that they acted thus on account of some peculiar circumstances in which the Church was then placed, and not in obedience to any general rule of the Church at large. This conclusion, however, should not be adopted, unless the other parts of the account render such an interpretation of the passage necessary; for an absolute community of goods, *is evidently opposed to the tenor of the Bible, which recognizes and sanctions the right of private property throughout.*" He then proceeds to show that no such absolute community of goods existed in the primitive Church, but that the right of private property was maintained inviolate. Amongst other reasons that he assigned for this opinion, is the following:—"4th. We are told that 'none said that aught of the things that he possessed was his own.' It is evident, then, *they still possessed property of their own*; only no one said that any of the things he so possessed was '*idion*', his peculiar, as it is in the original."

On the next page, he says, "The learned Mosheim, in a treatise on the True Nature of the Community of Goods which existed at Jerusalem, has most satisfactorily proved that it never was absolute, *i. e.*, that it did not divest the disciples of Christ of the right of all private property." After reading such passages as these, how could you, my friend, declare in print, that "It is now urged, that Christians, instead of holding any private property, should have all things common?" If I did not know you as well as I do, I should be strongly tempted to say, that this passage betrays an awful lack either of "common sense" or common honesty. But no, I believe better things concerning you. I am satisfied, that except in the heat of controversy, you could not have so misrepresented the opinions of any man, much less the opinions of your friends, and of your brethren in the ministry.

Neither is it true that the reason why we believe that Christians should act on the principles we plead for, is "*because*" the primitive Christians did so. We only refer to the history of the Church at Jerusalem, as furnishing evidence that the members of that Church understood the commands of Christ, in the same sense as that in which we understand them. The reason why we believe that Christians in the present day should be content with "food and coverings," and use the property they possess, after procuring these, in works of beneficence, is "*because*" we believe that *Christ commands* us to do so. We believe that no community of goods, but that which I have just described, existed among the primitive Christians; and we appeal to their conduct, not as a warrant for ours, but to show that they understood the requirements of the Gospel just as we understand them. We would not do any thing "*because*" any man or number of men do so; we would do every thing "*because*" Christ commands us to do it.

In answer to what you say respecting the testimony of the ancient Fathers, as if the Fathers when they speak of the churches

having all things common, refer only to what took place at the commencement of christianity, I should, if addressing you privately, only refer you to that part of the "Rule for Christians," in which this subject is treated. But as I am addressing you publicly, I shall, for the sake of my readers, transcribe that portion of the work, though rather long, satisfied that by every considerate, unprejudiced person, it will be deemed a sufficient answer to your remarks.

"Irenæus, who wrote about 140, says, 'Whereas the Jews consecrated a tenth; they who live under the liberty of the Gospel give *all* to the Lord's use.' Justin Martyr, in his first Apology for the Christians, whilst describing the change which had been effected by the Gospel, says, 'We who loved nothing like our possessions, now produce all we have in common, and spread our whole stock before our indigent brethren.' This Apology is supposed to have been written about the year 150. In the Apology of Tertullian, which was written about 50 years later (about A. D. 200), we have another testimony to the same effect. In a chapter on 'The Discipline of Christians, and their Employments and Ways of Living,' he thus writes, 'Our brotherly love extends even to the division of our estates, which is a test few brotherhoods will bear, and which commonly divides the dearest unions amongst you. But we Christians look upon ourselves as one body, informed as it were by one soul, and being thus incorporated by love, we can never dispute what we are to bestow upon our members. Accordingly, among us all things are in common, except wives; in this alone we reject communion.' (I can easily conceive why you thought that Tertullian's words "needed not be quoted.") Whoever reads these testimonies must be reminded by them of the account given in the Acts of the Apostles, respecting the church at Jerusalem. There are the same facts, related in the same phraseology, and if any dependence may be placed on the word of these celebrated men, here is substantial proof that the same state of things continued throughout the Catholic church during the second century. And when it is remembered that the statements made in those Apologies were subject to the scrutiny of the enemies of Christianity, who would not have failed to expose any falsehoods, if such had been found in them; and also that the Apologies themselves were written in defence of their religion, there will be little reason to doubt their veracity. But these testimonies of the Christians are remarkably confirmed by the following account, by a heathen writer, about A. D. 150. Lucian says, 'The legislator of the Christians persuades them that they are all brethren. They adore their crucified teacher, and *conform their lives to his laws. They despise riches; every thing amongst them is in common.*' (Will you say that he also "only alludes to what was done at the commencement of christianity?") These proofs of the universality of the practice might be multiplied to a great extent, but it is unnecessary to do it here.

From these writings we also gain additional light respecting the meaning of the expression, 'they had all things common,' and it plainly appears that, in this age of the church at least, it was understood in a limited sense. Justin Martyr, in the latter part of his *Apology*, says, 'the wealthy and the willing, for every one is at liberty, contribute as they think fitting, and this collection is deposited with the Bishop, and out of this he relieves the orphan and the widow, and such as are reduced to want by sickness or any other cause.' Now, he had previously written in the same *Apology*—'We produce all we have in common,' &c., and as he certainly would not contradict himself, we must understand him to mean merely a liberality of the most extensive kind; that though in order to membership it was not required that any should give a stipulated sum, yet *the wealthy*—those who could give any thing, did so, even to the parting with *their whole superfluous stock*: that it was a general practice of the members of the church to 'produce all they had in common,' but still it was left for each to decide whether he had any thing to produce or not, whether he had any thing *over*, which he could spare for him that *lacked*. To the same effect is the following extract from Tertullian. It is taken from the same chapter as, and occurs but a few lines before, the quotation previously made from his *Apology*. He says—'That kind of treasury which we have, is not filled with any dishonourable sums as the price of a purchased religion; every one puts a little into the public stock, commonly once a month, or when he pleases, and only on condition that he is both able and willing, for there is no compulsion upon any.' Now, in the very next paragraph, he says, 'Our brotherly love extends even to the division of our estates—among us all things are in common.' Nothing is more evident than that there was no absolute community of goods here. Each member of the church possessed his own private property. Who then can deny that such was the case in the church at Jerusalem? The same extensive rule seems to have been followed, but each person applied that rule to his own circumstances, and this indeed was the Scripture method. The Apostle, after he enjoins on the Corinthians to give 'so that there might be equality,' says, after a few verses, 'every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.' The general rule here was binding on all, but the application of it was left to each individual.

" We shall now give another extract from Justin, to show the reason which induced the Christians of his day to such an extensive benevolence. After giving the sketch of the internal state of the church to which we have already referred, he proceeds,— " It will not be amiss to give you a taste of the very doctrines delivered by Christ himself. * * * I shall leave it to you to examine, as princes who are well able, whether this is not the very doctrine of Christ, and the same we preach to the world. His discourses are short and sententious, for he was no trifling so-

phister." He then gives the commands of our Lord respecting chastity and universal love, and proceeds,—“concerning giving alms to the poor, &c., he thus teaches—Give to every one that asketh, &c.—Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, &c.—For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,” &c. We have omitted some of the passages adduced by Justin, for the sake of brevity, but the extract given is sufficient for our purpose. We have here proof that the early Christians acted in the way already described, *in obedience to the commands of Christ*, which in their opinion enjoined such a line of conduct upon them. But when once the scriptural standard was deserted, corruption and covetousness speedily followed.

“There is reason, indeed, to believe, that even in Tertullian’s time the church was fast declining from its original purity, though he doubtless affirmed with truth what he did affirm respecting the conduct of the Christians in general. The fact that the weekly collections instituted by St. Paul, were, in Tertullian’s time, commonly once a month, affords proof that charity was growing cold. St. Paul says, ‘Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every man lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.’ Justin testifies that in his time these weekly contributions were continued; but fifty years afterwards we find they had declined to once a month.

“From St. Cyprian, who wrote only fifty years later than Tertullian (about A.D. 250), we have a very different account. He says, ‘But now amongst us the spirit of unity is very much broken, and with it that of charity is much weakened also. Formerly they sold their lands and houses, and purchased for themselves a treasure in heaven, giving the price of them to be disposed of by the apostles for the use of the poor. The case at present is so far altered that we do not so much as expend upon these occasions the tithe of our possessions, but instead of selling what we have as our Lord hath directed, we enlarge our estates by continual purchases.’ Again he writes, ‘All were set upon an immeasurable increase of gain, and forgetting how the first converts of our holy religion had behaved under the personal direction and care of our Lord’s apostles, or how all ought in after times to carry themselves, the love of money was their darling passion.’”

I need say nothing in addition to this long extract, in answer to your statements with regard to the testimony of the ancient fathers. It is manifest that your supposition that the ancient Fathers speak only of what had formerly taken place at the commencement of christianity, has no foundation at all.

Adopting the opinion that an absolute community of goods existed at Jerusalem, you endeavour to account for this fact by the peculiar circumstances in which the members of that church were placed. Your arguments are all anticipated and answered in the “Rule to Christians,” &c., but you do not so much as condescend to notice any thing that is there said on the

subject. For a full answer to your arguments, I refer the reader to that work: a very brief notice of them shall suffice here. You suppose that the disciples had all things common on account of the persecutions to which they were exposed. But if this was a good reason for commencing such a state of things, it was as good a reason for continuing it. Every body knows that Christians were always exposed to the most violent persecutions for the first three centuries. If then they began to have all things common as a protection against loss by persecution, will you please to tell us why they changed their plan before persecution ceased? You say they *did* so. Will you tell us *why* they did so? The approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state is another circumstance by which you suppose them to have been influenced. But it would not say much for their understandings to sell their houses and lands, lest they should be confiscated *forty years* afterwards? The security that they had from imposition is the third circumstance you mention, as furnishing an inducement to have all things in common. This security from imposition you represent as two-fold: arising from persecution, in the first place, and from the ability of the apostles to detect false profession, in the second. With regard to the first security, there are indications enough in the present aspect of affairs, that if a number of persons in the present day should attempt honestly to carry out the principles of the Gospel into practice, to their legitimate extent, they would no more be exempt from persecution than the primitive Christians. And as to the second, I see no reason to suppose that if the church should return to the simplicity and devotedness of primitive times, God would withhold from it anything that was requisite to its defence from the impositions of designing men. So that if we understand the phrase, "having all things in common," in its true and sober sense; not as implying an absolute community of goods, subversive of the rights of private property; but as a faithful reduction to practice of the precepts of the Gospel, "to be content with food and coverings," to use what we have beyond in "ministering to the necessities of saints, and in efforts of general beneficence," and thus to avoid "laying up for ourselves treasures on earth"—understanding the phrase, I say, in this sober, scriptural sense, it may not seem so "preposterous" to your readers as it appears to do to you, for what was done in the primitive church, to be done at the present time. Nay, more; some of your readers may so far prefer the wisdom of God to what frequently passes for wisdom or "common sense" among mankind, as to think that the conduct of the church at Jerusalem, thus understood, furnishes an example that it would be well for all the churches of the Redeemer to imitate it without delay.

On page 6 of your pamphlet you say, "At the time they had all things common, it was a voluntary act." Yes, and so is every act of service to God. The man who performs any act, from compulsion, and not of a willing, cheerful mind, does not serve

God therein, but those persons, or that law or usage, by which he is compelled. Might not a minister of the Gospel address any false professor now as Peter addressed Ananias? "Why, (might he not say) hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Who constrained thee to profess religion? Was it not in thy power to avoid making such a profession, if thou couldst not do it sincerely? And after thou hadst made a profession of religion, was it not possible to renounce that profession? Why, by freely and voluntarily making, and continuing to make, a false profession of religion, hast thou lied unto the Holy Ghost?" But would all this prove that it is not incumbent on Christians to profess religion? No, and the fact that the liberality of the primitive Christians was free and unconstrained, does not prove that such liberality was not incumbent on them. It was their duty to give all they did give, and it was their duty to give it *freely* too.

The whole of the reasoning that fills the remainder of your sixth page, is founded on two misapprehensions or misrepresentations of the sentiments of your opponents. Both of these I have already corrected. I have shown that *we do not* teach that men should relinquish the right of private property; and that *we do not* wish all distinctions in civil society to be done away. We do not suppose that such was the state of things in the infant church at Jerusalem; but we both believe and teach the opposite of all this. To conduct your argument, therefore, as though we denied the right of private property; as though we were opposed to all distinctions between rich and poor, between masters and servants; and as though we believed that that right, and those distinctions, were done away with in the church at Jerusalem, is not fair; and yet you thus argue through the whole of the sixth page. Of course when you oppose sentiments that neither I nor my friends believe or teach, we are under no obligation whatever to answer you; and should your reasoning on those points be ever so convincing and successful, it no more affects the principles we advocate, then it affects the doctrines of Mahomet.

On page 8, you represent us as teaching that "he who laboured only one hour a day should have no lack at night; and he that laboured twelve hours should have nothing over." How is it that you made this statement? Did you really believe that such were our sentiments, and our *published* sentiments too, when you wrote these words? On page 43, of the Rule for Christians, the author is answering the objection that the principles we advocate form a "levelling system." He is comparing the influence and tendencies of the "levelling system" with the influence that would be exerted by the adoption of those principles which *we* advocate. He says—"It (the levelling system) would give encouragement to both these dispositions, idleness and dissipation, and the greatest they can receive. *This* objection also is inapplicable to the rule now maintained. The only persons receiving from the funds of the Christian Church, would be *the deserving*. —The idle and the dissipated would be subject to the Apostolic

injunction,—‘*If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.*’ After reading this, with what fairness you can express yourself in the language quoted above, I am quite at a loss to imagine.

With regard to the passage on *Equality* which you say we so often quote, its meaning is sufficiently obvious. I am aware that it is *not* an “equality among individuals, but among churches,” to which 2 Cor. viii. 14 and 15 refers. But churches are composed of individuals ; and it would require reasoning of a very extraordinary character to prove, that one church collectively, is bound to show greater kindness to another church collectively, than one individual is bound to show to another individual in the same church. What would you think of Huddersfield Circuit being required to make a collection for our poor members in this circuit, while at the same time the rich members at Huddersfield were allowed to leave their own poor members unrelieved ? The “equality spoken of” might not be such as to imply, that the church at Jerusalem and the church at Corinth were to possess an equal amount of property : but it was to be such an equality as to secure this object, viz., that “those who had gathered little,” the poor saints at Jerusalem, should “have no lack ;” and, if it was necessary in order to this, that “those who had gathered much,” the richer brethren at Corinth, should give till “they had nothing over” or beyond a provision for their own wants left, still they were to do it ; “That there might be equality ; as it is written, he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.” You may think indeed that it was well enough for the Israelites to act on this plan “with respect to the manna in the wilderness, but that it would not answer in reference to such as eat their bread in the sweat of their brow :” but when I find you asserting one thing, and an inspired Apostle asserting another, directly opposite, however highly I may esteem your judgment in other matters, I must beg leave to take part with the Apostle ; and though my “common sense” may be questioned in consequence, I must still comfort myself with the reflection, that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ; and the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

You again either mistake or misrepresent our sentiments in the next paragraph. Speaking of the passage 1 Tim. vi. 18, paraphrased by A. Clarke, thus, ‘bringing every poor person into a state of *fellowship* with themselves,’ you say, “The Apostle uses the (same) word in the former chapter, where he says, *neither be partaker of other men’s sins.* But this a person may be, without running to the same extent in wickedness. So he may partake of another man’s wealth, without any thing like an equal share.” Unquestionably he may ; but then no one of those authors whom you oppose has ever maintained the contrary. A man may have a weekly income of three pounds, and be able to live on one. A Christian brother with as large a family as his, receives but ten shillings a week. The wealthier brother gives him ten shillings a week to enable him to live as comfortably as

he does himself. But after thus expending twenty shillings in the supply of his own wants, and ten shillings in assisting his needy brother, he has thirty shillings left, to dispose of in any act of beneficence that may present the strongest claims, and thereby "lay up for himself (additional) treasures in heaven." Now who can say that those two are equal? The one is rich, though he uses his riches according to his Lord's command; and he has besides the peculiar blessedness of *giving*; according to that saying of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

With reference to Adam Clarke and what he said and did, I do not know that it has anything to do with the discussion. It has never been intimated, that I am aware of, that Adam Clarke held the principles which we defend, and consequently it is no wonder if he did not act on those principles. All for which Adam Clarke has been referred to by us is, to show that he renders 1 Tim. vi. 18, in accordance with those principles. And in referring to page 19 of the Rule for Christians, &c., I find there stated, just what you state yourself; that "Dr. A. Clarke paraphrases the sentence, 'bringing every poor person into a state of *fellowship* with themselves.'" As to what the Doctor means, and whether he acted consistently with the sense he puts upon this passage, I leave those questions to be settled between yourself and him.

You say, page 8, "The authors whom we now oppose, appeal to the writings of John Wesley; and state, in substance, that he has incontestibly proved it to be sinful to lay up treasure on earth: and on *this account* they cannot in conscience have anything to do with the preachers fund." I answer; That we have referred to the writings of John Wesley, is correct; that we have stated, in substance, that he has proved it to be wrong, to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, is also correct: but when did we say that on "*this account*" we cannot, in conscience, have anything to do with the preachers' fund? Why do you charge us so groundlessly? The truth is this: we believe, with you, that if we were to contribute to that fund, *under its existing arrangements*, we should be laying up for ourselves treasures on earth. Unlike you, we believe that to do so would be wrong; and it is on *that account* that we cannot in conscience do it. But to represent us as withdrawing from the fund "*on account*" of John Wesley's disapproval of the practice of laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, is to represent us as paying a deference, and rendering a submission to human authority, which we cannot render, which we cannot pay. Could we submit to human authority in matters of religion, or call any man master on earth, we should not (some of us at least) be in the position we at present occupy. I trust that we have so learned Christ as to render to his wise, faithful, and laborious servants the respect which their character, intelligence, and works demand, *without* putting them in our Master's place, and submitting our consciences to them.

"It must also be admitted," you say, "that Mr. Wesley has gone very deeply into this subject, and has used strong language

in its discussion ; and whatever this good and great man has said, is worthy of serious consideration." But highly as you esteem "this good and great man," it appears that you cannot afford to render him more justice than you render us. You immediately add, "In one of his sermons he says, 'If you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, give all you can, otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than for that of Judas Iscariot.' But certainly he cannot do this," you add, "if he keep any property in his own possession, unless he cannot find any person willing to receive it." Now, if John Wesley had put no limitation on the meaning of the phrase, "Give all you can," you might justly have charged such absurd conclusions upon him : but he *has* limited the meaning of that expression. In his sermon on "The Use of Money," he says, "The directions which God hath given us touching the use of our worldly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars:—If you desire to be a faithful and wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which he *has* for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases him,—first, provide things needful for yourself—food to eat, raiment to put on—whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength.—Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, 'do good to them that are of the household of faith.' If there be an overplus still, 'as you have opportunity, do good unto all men.' In so doing, you give all you can ; nay, in a sound sense, all you have ; for all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God—'you render unto God the things that are God's,' not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household." I ask you now, my dear friend, whether the conclusion you draw, necessarily follows, when the phrase "Give all you can" is thus limited and explained ? Might not one retain in his possession all the property essential to the accomplishment of the purposes specified in the last quotation ? And would he not still be "giving all he could" in the sense in which John Wesley used the phrase ?

Yes, we have appealed to John Wesley, and we appeal to John Wesley again ; not because we suppose his writings to be an authoritative standard of appeal, or test of orthodoxy ; but because we believe John Wesley to have been a wise and holy man, and because we believe that though his sermons and other works are not free from all error, he has left us in them a mass of invaluable religious information. On the subject in hand, his testimony is plain, express, and solemn. In his sermon on the "Inefficacy of Christianity," the following passages occur :—"Who regards those solemn words, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth?' Of the three rules which are laid down on this head in the sermon on 'The Mammon of Unrighteousness,' you may find many that observe the first rule,

namely, ‘Gain all you can.’ You may find a few that observe the second, ‘Save all you can;’ but how many have you found that observe the third rule, ‘Give all you can?’ Have you reason to believe, that five hundred of these are to be found among fifty thousand Methodists? And yet nothing can be more plain, than that all who observe the first two rules without the third, will be two-fold more the children of hell, than ever they were before.”

“O that God would enable me once more,” says the holy man, “before I go hence, and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet, to those who *gain* and *save* all they can, but do not *give* all they can. Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and in a great measure stop his gracious influence from descending on our assemblies.—Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their heads. And why are they thus distressed? Because *you* impiously, unjustly, and cruelly, detain from them what your Master and theirs, lodges in *your* hands, on purpose to supply *their* wants!”

“But is it possible,” he supposes some one to ask, “to supply all the poor in our societies with the necessaries of life?” “It was possible,” he answers, “once to do this, in a larger society than this. In the first church at Jerusalem, ‘there was not any among them that lacked, but distribution was made to every one as he had need.’ And we have full proof that it may be so still. It is so among the people called Quakers. Yea, and among the Moravians so called. And why should it not be so with *us*?—‘Because they are ten times richer than we.’ Perhaps, fifty times. And yet we are able enough, if we be equally willing, to do this.”

A little further on, he says, “With two thousand pounds, and not much less, we could supply the present wants of all our poor, and put them in a way of supplying their own wants for some time to come. Now, suppose this could be done, are we clear before God, while it is not done? Is not the neglect of it one cause why so many are still sick and weak among you? and that both in soul and body? That they still grieve the Holy Spirit, by preferring the fashions of the world to the commands of God? And, I many times doubt, whether we preachers are not in some measure partakers of their sin. I am in doubt whether it is not a kind of partiality. I doubt, whether it is not a great sin to keep them in our society. May it not hurt their souls, by encouraging them to persevere in walking contrary to the Bible? And may it not, in some measure, intercept the salutary influence of the blessed Spirit upon the whole community?”

“I am distressed,” he continues, “I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, ‘Here I am; I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not vary from this book, either in great things or small. I

have no power [to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost, but altogether. Who will meet us on this ground? Join me on this, or not at all.'.....But, alas! the time is now past. And what I can do now, I cannot tell."

In the same sermon he says, "But how astonishing a thing is this! How can we understand it? Does it not seem, and yet it cannot be, that Christianity,—true, scriptural Christianity, has a tendency, in process of time, to undermine and destroy itself? For, wherever true Christianity spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, must beget riches; and riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity. Now, if there be no way to prevent this, Christianity is inconsistent with itself, and, of consequence, cannot stand, cannot continue long among any people, since, whenever it generally prevails, it saps its own foundation."

"But is there no way to prevent this? To continue Christianity among a people? Allowing that diligence and frugality must produce riches, is there no means to hinder riches from destroying the religion of those that possess them? I can see only one possible way: find out another who can? Do you gain all you can, and save all you can? Then you must, in the nature of things, grow rich. Then, if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, *give all you can*, otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation than of that of Judas Iscariot."

I shall trouble you with but one more extract from Wesley at present. It is an account of his own conduct. You will find it in his sermon on "The Danger of Riches." "Permit me," says the venerable man, "to speak as freely of myself, as I would of another man. *I gain all I can* (namely, by writing,) without hurting either my soul or body. *I save all I can*, not willingly wasting any thing, not even a sheet of paper, not a cup of water. I do not lay out any thing, not a shilling, unless as a sacrifice to God. Yet, by *giving all I can*, I am effectually secured from "laying up treasures upon earth." Yea, and I am secured from either desiring or endeavouring it, as long as I *give all I can*. And that I do this, I call all that know me, both friends and foes, to testify."

But then you represent John Wesley as not consistent with himself. You refer to the sermon in which he says, "This is the part of a faithful and wise steward: not to sell either his houses or lands, or principal stock, be it more or less; and not to desire or endeavour to increase it." If John Wesley had laid it down as an absolute rule to be applied in all cases, that it is wrong for a man to sell his houses, or lands, or principal stock, then I should have admitted his inconsistency; but you have not quoted the whole of the passage, at least if it be the passage I suppose it to be. The passage I suppose you to quote is in the eighth discourse in the Sermon on the Mount. "This is the part

of a *faithful and wise steward*. Not to sell either his houses or lands, or principal stock, be it more or less, *unless some peculiar circumstances should require it*; and not to desire or endeavour to increase it, any more than to squander it away in vanity: but to employ it wholly to those wise and reasonable purposes, for which his Lord has lodged it in his hands." Now the clause which you omit reconciles the seeming inconsistency, and unravels the whole affair. To show this, I solicit your attention, and the attention of the reader, to the following observations:—

1. In this passage John Wesley states, that it is the part of a faithful and wise steward to employ his property "wholly to those wise and reasonable purposes for which his Lord has lodged it in his hands." What he understood those purposes to be, has been sufficiently explained already in preceding quotations.

2. He states his conviction that, as a general rule, these objects may be accomplished by retaining the principal stock in his possession. There is nothing here contrary to the sentiments elsewhere expressed, and there is nothing here contrary to the principles for which we plead. We have all along admitted that a man is entitled to retain as much as will provide him and his family with the necessaries of life, and enable him to conduct those benevolent enterprizes to which he may be called by God.

3. He supposes that there may sometimes be peculiar circumstances, not only warranting but *requiring* a departure from this general rule. For instance, a man may inherit from his fore-
athers an overgrown estate, in consequence of which he possesses almost unbounded influence over the whole population of the district. He has no disposition himself to use that influence for any thing but good; but he does not know for what purpose his descendants might use it, and, in consequence, he cannot, with a good conscience, transmit such influence to his posterity. Perhaps this might be *one* of the cases in which John Wesley would suppose that "peculiar circumstances required" a departure from his general rule. Again, a man receives from the hands of his father an immense business. He finds that he cannot conduct it without seriously interfering with his spiritual interests; hence he deems it his duty to curtail his business, in order that his soul may not be destroyed. I suppose, in this case likewise, Wesley would say that "peculiar circumstances" require the man to "sell a part of his principal stock." Again, a man, naturally of a covetous disposition, and very rich, embraces the religion of the Saviour. Soon after his conversion he is sorely tried by his old besetting sin. He finds that to employ the *interest* of his property in doing good, is not sufficient to preserve him from being ensnared. That, in fact, as long as he retains possession of his property, he can scarcely persuade himself faithfully to employ the *interest*; and that nothing but a literal fulfilment of the Saviour's command to the young man, to sell what he has, and give it to the poor, will save him from destruction. This, I suppose, would form another case in which "peculiar cir-

“circumstances” would require a deviation from the general rule. Once more; a man possessed of considerable wealth finds himself surrounded by a number of famishing fellow-creatures. He has been accustomed to give away the annual profits of his business, or the rents of his estate, or the interest of his capital, beyond what was requisite for the supply of his own wants; but if he gives no more than this on the occasion in question, several of his needy brethren will be where relief would be unavailing, before he receives the next year’s income. What is he to do? Shall he see them perish, or sell a portion of his principal stock? He must do either one or the other. If he leaves his possessions untouched, his brethren must perish; if he relieves their necessities, he must dispose of a portion of his principal stock. Perhaps this also might be an instance in which John Wesley would allow that “peculiar circumstances required” an individual to sell a part of his principal stock.

4. If it should come to pass, that circumstances of this urgent kind should not be “peculiar,” would they not still “require” a man to pursue the course which we have just described? If circumstances of this urgent kind should ever become *common* instead of “peculiar,” will that alter their character and requirements? Is it because they are “peculiar,” that Wesley supposes it possible that they may require a different course from that which in general he recommends? Is it because they are “peculiar?” or because they are of such a character as to render that different course expedient and necessary? And if this be their character, must not their requirements be the same, whether they be the circumstances of many individuals, or only of a few?

If the passage itself, when fairly quoted, and the observations on the passage which I have just made be calmly considered, I think it will be pretty plain, that John Wesley is not quite so inconsistent with himself as you represent him to be. And even suppose his testimony on this subject had not been perfectly consistent, what then? Those sentiments which are in accordance with the word of God, would not be a whit the less valuable than they are; and as to those in which he might deviate from that word, they would but show us the necessity there is for a perpetual recurrence to the sacred oracles as the *only* perfect exhibition of Christian truth and duty.

You would have it to be supposed, however, that John Wesley was not unfriendly to the practice of “laying up treasures” for our children. The passage from which you quote is as follows; “Every man ought to provide the plain necessaries of life, both for his own wife and children; and to put them into a capacity of providing for themselves, when he has gone hence and is no more seen. I say, of providing them the plain necessaries of life, not delicacies, not superfluities; and that by their diligent labour; for it is no man’s duty to furnish them, any more than himself, with the means either of luxury or idleness. But if a man provide not thus for his own children, (as well as for the widows of his own house;

of which St. Paul is speaking in those well known words to Timothy,) he hath practically denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel or heathen. We are not forbidden then, to lay up from time to time, what is needful for the carrying on of our worldly business, in such a measure as first, to owe no man anything; 2ndly, to procure for ourselves the necessaries of life; and thirdly, to furnish those of our own house with them while we live, and with the means of procuring them when we are gone to God." I hope that both you and the reader will do me the kindness just to look back to the words printed in italics, and consider, for a moment, the following remarks on them.

1. It appears that John Wesley did not consider it to be "any man's duty to furnish" either "himself" or his children with the means of "idleness." This will throw a little additional light on the matter we have just discussed. It seems that if a man is prevented by the possession of wealth from following some useful occupation, he would have considered that a case in which "peculiar circumstances" require a man to sell the whole or part of his principal stock. And how many cases of this kind there are in the church! And with respect to the subject in hand, what John Wesley deems it a man's duty to do for his children is, to put them into a situation in which they may earn their livelihood.

2. It is not necessary in order to this, that a man should lay up a sum of money sufficient to furnish an annuity to each of his children for the whole of their future life, be it long, or be it short, whether they do any thing to maintain themselves or not. This would be providing the means of *partial* if not of *total* "idleness."

3. All that he can be fairly regarded as meaning is this; that a man should teach his children some useful calling, and furnish them with the means of following it. But this a man may generally do in his own life time. And if a man teaches his son some useful occupation, and when he has learnt it, provides him with the implements of his calling; or if he teaches him some branch of commerce, and gives him wherewith to commence business for himself, he does all for his son that John Wesley declared to be his duty, though he should not leave him a penny when he dies, nor be in the possession of a penny to leave him.

But then all this is maintained by the writers whom you oppose, as well as by John Wesley. Witness the following passage:—"Provide for the wants of your children, as long as they are dependent upon you; train them up to know, and fear, and love, and obey God: teach them some honest and useful calling, (and of course, give the means of following it,) and leave the rest to themselves and God."—*Lecture on the Use of Money*, p. 4.

You would have us, however, to interpret the above quotation from Wesley's writings, by referring to a clause in his last will. You say, "But we may know what his sentiments were on that point; for by one item in his last will, he bequeathed to his

brother's widow the sum of eighty-five pounds per annum." The fact I do not dispute ; but if you mean to infer from it, that John Wesley had laid up treasures in order that he might thus dispose of them, then I deny the justice of your conclusion, and appeal to his own words in reply. In his sermon on "The more excellent Way," he expresses himself as follows. Speaking of the young men at Oxford, who were called Methodists, and modestly referring to himself as one of them, he says, "One of them had thirty pounds a-year. He lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived as before, on twenty-eight ; and gave to the poor ninety-two. Was not this a more excellent way ?" But, then, I think I hear my reader say, "If he acted on this plan, how did he acquire the means of leaving his brother's widow eighty-five pounds a-year ?" Let him answer the question for himself. In his sermon on the Danger of Riches he says, "But some may say, 'Whether you endeavour it or not, you are undeniably rich. You have more than the necessaries of life.' I have. But the Apostle does not fix the charge barely on possessing any quantity of goods, but on possessing more than we employ according to the will of the Donor."

"Two and forty years ago, having a desire to furnish poor people, with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a piece ; and afterwards several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of ; and by this means, I, unawares, became rich. But I never desired or endeavoured after it. And now that it has come upon me unawares, I lay up no treasures upon earth : I lay up nothing at all. My desire and endeavour in this respect, is to "wind my bottom round the year." *I cannot help leaving my books behind me whenever God calls me hence. But in every other respect, my own hands will be my executors.*" His books, however, he had to dispose of by will ; and having confidence in his brother's widow, that she knew the proper use of money, and was disposed to use it right, it seems that he directed the above-named sum to be left to her. And now, with reference to this subject, I think I have satisfactorily proved, 1. That John Wesley inculcates nothing more than that we should teach our children some useful calling, and place them in a situation to follow it to advantage. 2. That he himself intentionally accumulated no property. 3. That his legacy to his brother's widow, was paid out of property that had unexpectedly come into his possession by his efforts to do good. Whether you or we have appealed to Wesley with the greatest success, I will leave it to the candid reader to determine.

You say, p. 10, "These writers tell us, that we should make no provision for future wants, either for ourselves or families, but

trust in the Lord. But for what reason may we not do both?" I answer; for this plain reason: one, as we have seen, is distinctly forbidden; the other is solemnly enjoined. You refer to Satan tempting Christ to cast himself down, that angels might bear him up, and to the Saviour's reply, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." But if Jesus had been as plainly commanded by his Father to cast himself down, as we are commanded by Jesus not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, he would have obeyed his Father's command, and furnished another display of confidence in his Father's protection. Between the commands of Christ and the suggestions of the devil, there is the widest possible difference. To expect protection and help from God while yielding to the temptations of the wicked one, would be presumption; but to expect His protection and blessing while obeying His commands, is an authorised and commendable confidence in God.

In the next paragraph you endeavour to show that friend Barker is very unskilful in the management of an argument. This I might safely leave to the judgment of those who are acquainted with his reasoning powers, but for the circumstance that you omit the most important clause in his argument. You say, that "He first objects, that 'if the world will take care of their own, we cannot expect them to take care of the followers of Christ.'" The words, as they stand in Joseph Barker's tract, are as follows:—"If the world will take care of its own, so and good; but I can never expect them to take care of the *thorough-going* followers of Christ. The world may tolerate the *name* of Christ, and even pay some respect to it; but it is not prepared to tolerate the men that *act* like Christ, and attempt, by the faithful application of his doctrines, to reform its customs, and to regenerate its institutions." To prove any inconsistency here, it would have to be shown that those of whom you speak, as having been admitted into poor-houses, and well treated there, are persons of the stamp described by my friend.

That "poor rates are a just and lawful" demand I believe has never been questioned; nor am I aware that the poor laws, as a national provision for national distress, have ever been objected to by the writers whom you oppose. If you turn to the 22nd page of my Lecture on the Use of Money, you will find sentiments expressed of a very different character from this. But the question is, whether it be kind, whether it be brotherly, whether it be Christian in us, to leave the members of our churches to be maintained as parish paupers. I hope I would be content with such a maintenance myself, but I certainly could not be content to allow my father or my sister to be maintained, if I had the means of providing for them myself. And if there be any truth or justice in those passages of Scripture in which Christians are represented as brethren, of which the Gospel is full; if love to our Christian brethren be the great proof that we have passed from death unto life; and if the measure of our love to the brethren be, that we are to love them as Christ has

loved us ; then I cannot see how the conclusion can be avoided, that as far as our ability extends, we should make as ample and comfortable provision for our Christian brethren as we should wish to do for our natural relations. The question is not whether there should be a poor law or not ; but whether it be consistant with brotherly love for us to leave our Christian brethren to be supported by parish relief, when we have the means of relieving them ourselves.

With respect to benefit societies, and Joseph Barker's objections to them, and your answers to those objections, I wish to submit to you the following remarks :—

1. The question at issue is not whether benefit societies are productive of any good. I believe it is admitted in all the publications opposed by you, that they may be productive of good to a certain extent.

2. Neither is it the question whether it is well for worldly men to be united together in such associations. If you turn to the 20th page of my lecture, you will find the following words :—"If these institutions were supported by none but ungodly men, I might then be disposed to say, that it is a far better way of spending their money to lay it up as a provision for sickness and old age, than to waste it in extravagance and profusion." When ungodly persons take a step towards that which is good, we rejoice therein ; but this is not the question in debate between us.

3. The question is simply this,

1. Ought Christian churches to leave their poor members to seek relief from these societies, or ought they to relieve their poor members themselves.

2. Ought Christians individually to be connected with such institutions ? I beg to lay before you a few remarks on these questions. And—

1. Ought Christian churches to leave their poor members to seek relief from those societies, or ought they to relieve their poor members themselves ? Friend Barker contends that Christian churches should themselves provide for the relief of their poor members, and that they ought not to leave them to depend for relief on benefit societies. That Christian churches should themselves provide for the relief of their poor members, he proves by arguments so numerous and so strong, that you do not appear to have thought it possible to shake them. That Christian churches should not leave their poor members to seek relief from benefit societies he proves by the fifteen or sixteen arguments to which you refer. And these arguments fully and unanswerably prove this point. They may not prove that benefit societies are bad things ; Friend Barker never brought them forward to prove any such thing. He never proposes to prove benefit societies bad things. What therefore you give as an *answer* to his arguments, is no answer at all. To have answered Friend Barker's arguments, you ought to have proved, that if the poor members of Christian churches were left to benefit societies, they would be

provided for in a truly kind and Christian manner. You should have proved, in opposition to the arguments in Friend Barker's pamphlet,—

1. That benefit societies provide not only for cases of sickness and death, but for cases of distress of all kinds.

2. That they allow all to be members, whether they be diseased or healthy, whether they be young or old, whether they be seamen, pitmen, or what else.

3. That nothing is required by the rules of those societies as a condition of membership, but what every poor and afflicted Christian might be able to perform: and that nothing is required to entitle the members to relief, but that they should be truly needy and deserving.

4. You should have further proved that Christian people could join in such societies, and conform to the rules, and secure the help which their necessities might require, without in any case transgressing the precepts of the Gospel of Christ. These things you have not proved; these things you have not *attempted* to prove; and in consequence, the whole of your arguing falls dead to the ground. For a full refutation of your reply to Joseph Barker on this point, a person need do nothing more than give his pamphlet a second attentive perusal. With thoughtful and ~~honest~~ readers, the pamphlet will defend itself.

To assist in settling the second question, Whether Christians individually ought to be connected with Benefit Societies? I beg to propose for your serious consideration, and for the consideration of every unprejudiced Christian's mind, a number of other questions.

1. Is it not desirable that Christian churches should provide for their own poor and deserving members?

2. Can this be done while the rich lay up for themselves treasures upon earth, and while those reputed poor, provide for seasons of sickness and old age by means of benefit societies?

3. Would not all the good that results to Christians from their connection with these societies, be effected with far less admixture of evil, by such an arrangement as the first of these questions contemplates?

4. Is it not the duty of Christians, not only to do good, but to do the *most* good within their power? And is it not wrong deliberately to prefer a lesser to a greater good?

5. Is the conduct of those persons to be commended, who, by their continuance in benefit societies, &c., secure the lesser, but prevent the accomplishment of the greater good?

I believe that in the foregoing questions and observations will be found a full vindication of our views on benefit societies; as well as a complete answer to the reasonings whereby you attempt to set aside friend Barker's objections to Christian churches leaving their needy members to seek relief from them, as well as to individual Christians connecting themselves with these societies. For,

1. The plan which we propose, and which seems to us to be laid down in the New Testament, would provide for "distress generally, as well as for cases of sickness and death."

2. This plan would not exclude from its benefits those who are "known to have some bodily disease, or who are forty, fifty, or sixty years of age." It would not provide relief for those who need it least, and leave the most destitute individuals unprovided for.

3. This plan would shut out no class of men that were deemed eligible on other grounds to be members of the Christian church.

4. This plan would *give* relief instead of *selling* it; it would not exclude those who are unable to pay a certain weekly or monthly contribution.

5. This plan would administer relief according to men's necessities; not by one fixed, unalterable rule, regardless of their necessities.

6. This plan would secure all the advantages of benefit societies, and many more, without exposing Christians to contamination from worldly, selfish, ungodly men.

7. This plan would take all pretences for laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, founded on the necessity of providing for sickness, old age, and funeral expences. It would leave Christians free to employ the whole of their superfluous property in works of beneficence, assured that they themselves would be provided for if ever they should come to be in need.

Now I ask, is not this plan free from the imperfections attendant on benefit societies, &c.? Does it not savour more of the spirit, and seem more like a fulfilment of the requirements of the Gospel? If so, I ask whether it is not our duty at once to attempt its introduction? Is not its introduction prevented, or delayed, at least, by the continuance of Christian men in benefit societies, and other institutions of the kind? And are not such persons chargeable with preferring the lesser to the greater good? The Gospel is a perfect system, and would have us to aim at perfection in all things. And never, till its pure and heavenly principles are thoroughly understood, cordially received, and faithfully reduced to practice, will the imperfections of the church be done away, the claims of a perishing world be discharged, the wants of suffering humanity be supplied, and the benevolent purposes of Jehovah be accomplished. Before the Gospel can exert its full power on the hearts of men, and bestow its full harvest of blessings on the nations of the earth, *expediency* must give way to Christian *principle*; Christians must do what is *right*, and what is *best*, not what is *easiest*, or what is barely sufficient to serve their own turn.

For an answer to what you say respecting the preachers' fund, I refer you to a pamphlet issued by Joseph Barker, entitled "Both Sides of the Question," &c., in which he vindicates at length the views which he has published on that subject. I have

but two remarks to make on this part of your work. First, you do not correctly represent our sentiments on this point. You speak of us as though we were enemies to the fund, and as though we thought that no provision should be made for aged and disabled preachers, and for preachers' widows and orphans. On pages 23 and 24 of my lecture, I state—"I think it wrong for preachers to lay up for themselves treasures on earth; but I think it is right for the churches to subscribe to maintain their aged and disabled ministers. Supposing all the while, that this is a free-will offering, and that none but the needy and deserving are relieved by it." How you can represent us as opposed to any provision being made for aged ministers, and their widows and orphans, after reading this passage, I confess I cannot understand. For a full account of the objections we feel to the institution in question, I again refer you to the above-named principles, by my friend Joseph Barker. Secondly, you seem to suppose that you have satisfactorily proved that it is not wrong for a man to lay up for himself treasures on earth, for you say, page 17, "It is true we have not in this place mentioned the principal objection, which is, laying up treasure on earth: for we supposed this had been sufficiently answered in the former part of this treatise." Those who have read the preceding pages will be able to determine whether the principal objection had been sufficiently answered in the former part of your pamphlet or not. Some, doubtless, and perhaps not a few, may suppose that that objection has not been touched, and that it continues as formidable as ever.

You say, page 18, "But now it is proposed to do away with the fund, and provide for our survivors by a bag of moonshine; for what else can we call the scheme of having all things in common?" I answer, our plan would deserve no better name, if by having all things in common, we meant an absolute community of goods. I believe such community of goods to be utterly impracticable and absurd; but then, such a scheme has never been suggested by the writers whom you oppose. The plan that we propose has been explained in the preceding pages, and whether it deserves to be termed "a bag of moonshine," let candid and intelligent readers judge.

But you ask, "by what measures we propose to succeed?" I answer,—1. We purpose by the help of God to act ourselves on the principles which we profess, and which we believe to be the principles of the Gospel. 2. We intend, as God shall give us strength and opportunity, to explain, and defend those principles; privately, amongst our friends; publicly, in the pulpit and by means of the press: showing the requirements of the Gospel, proving the wisdom, justice, and excellence of those requirements; exposing the emptiness of all pretensions to piety which are not attested by the manifestations of a spirit of active benevolence; and thus commanding ourselves to the reason and consciences of mankind in the sight of God. 3. We purpose to do all this, relying on the help of God, in a meek and quiet spirit; not

quarrelling with those who differ from us, and imputing to them improper motives; showing all meekness unto all men; and even if we should be reviled and persecuted, endeavouring to imitate our Lord's example, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed his cause into the hands of Him that judgeth righteously. 4. Conscious as we are of our inadequacy for the great work to which God has called us, we hope to be instant in prayer, supplicating the throne of God for that aid, and for those powerful influences, without which we are aware that we never can succeed. Such is a brief outline of "the measures by which we hope to succeed." And our hopes are strong and vigorous. We have confidence in the power of truth and love, and we have confidence in the promises of God. We believe that truth is mightier than error, and that love is more powerful than selfishness. We believe that though unscriptural error may be disguised and sent forth into the world under the reputable names of "prudence" and "common sense," that truth will tear off its disguises, and exhibit it in all its frightful deformities, to the reprobation and loathing of all people. We believe that the truth clearly explained, and kindly urged on the attention of mankind, will succeed in convincing multitudes that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

With regard to what you say of the trust in Providence, which my friend declares he is enabled to exercise, I have very little to urge in reply. I believe that the doctrine of an all-wise, all-kind, all-powerful, superintending Providence is a sober reality. And while I regard it as rank enthusiasm for a man to neglect his duty under pretence of trust in Providence, I believe that the man who, regardless of consequences, performs his duty with a single eye to the glory of God, has a right to rely on the promised guidance and protection of the Almighty. He may indeed have to pass through scenes of sorrow and of trial; such has been the lot of God's most favoured ones in every age. But no trouble will be permitted to overtake him, without a corresponding amount of strong consolation; nor will a pang be suffered to rend his heart, without preparing him for more extensive usefulness and happiness on earth, or for more abundant glory in heaven. And I cannot conceive for what reason so many interpositions of God's providence on behalf of his people are recorded in Holy Writ, if not to encourage us to obey God's commands, and trust in him for every thing that we need. Whether to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth is obedience or disobedience to God, I trust has been sufficiently discussed in the foregoing pages, and it is now for the reader to draw his own conclusions in the case, and to be fully persuaded in his own mind. Of one thing I am fully assured; that whether the "common sense" of mankind concur in the statements or not, there is a day coming when faithful obedience to God will be seen to be the only true wisdom; and every departure from the path of obedience, in

submission to prevailing notions and habits, will be seen to be an act of the greatest folly.

“Common sense!” How various have been its decisions! The “common sense” of Peter once determined that it was foolish for the Saviour to talk of sufferings and of death, and said, “That be far from thee, Master!” But when Peter’s understanding was illuminated, and when his heart was regenerated, he exclaimed, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” When the common sense of mankind beheld in their respective ages, the Apostles, and the Reformers, and the early Methodists, labouring to spread abroad the simple, and powerful, and affecting truths of the Gospel, it pronounced them madmen; and the generations in which those worthies lived declared the verdict just. But succeeding generations, rejoicing in the success of their labours, and exulting in the blessed effects of their sacrifices, and toils, and sufferings, have set their seal to the truth, that the “wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” And through the views that have been propounded by my friends and by myself, may appear to you and to others too as subversive of “common sense,” I am persuaded that such will not be the verdict of future generations. *Good sense* has generally to be singular, before it is common; and when it has once become common, we wonder how ever it could be otherwise. When the minds of men shall honestly and thoroughly consider the subject discussed in these pages, I have no doubt that the “sense” for which we plead shall become “common;” and it will then be matter of astonishment that it should not always have been “common sense.” That the eyes of men’s understandings should have been closed so long, and that professors and preachers of the Gospel of Christ should have erred so strangely as to deride the plain and palpable revelations of heaven as the vagaries of a wild imagination, will then seem almost unaccountable. And that such a period will arrive, I cannot entertain a doubt. In the words of the venerable Wesley, I would express my expectations of that glorious era: “Then shall the times of universal refreshment come from the presence of the Lord. The grand Pentecost shall fully come; and devout men, in every nation under heaven, however distant in place from each other, shall all be filled with the Holy Ghost. And they will continue steadfast in the Apostle’s doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. They will eat their meat, and do all that they have to do, with gladness and singleness of heart. Great grace will be upon them all; and they will be all of one heart and of one soul. The natural necessary consequence of this will be the same as it was in the beginning of the Christian Church. None of them will say, that aught of the things which he possesses is his own, but they will have all things common.” My heart’s desire and prayer to God is, that the present discussions may accelerate the arrival of that joyful period.

In conclusion, I would just furnish you and your readers with a brief summary of our views on the important subject under consideration : that if you or others should feel disposed again to controvert our sentiments, you may not beat the air, by opposing principles which we hold in abhorrence.

1. We believe that the possession of riches exposes a man's spiritual interests to peculiar danger : that 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.

2. We believe that the only way for a rich man to escape this danger, and to secure the salvation of his soul, is to employ the whole of his property according to the will of God. We believe that God's will on this subject is, that we should, First, honestly provide ourselves and our families with food and coverings. Second, that we should administer to the necessities of saints, and third, that, as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men.

3. We believe that to accumulate or retain property for any purposes but these, or to any greater extent than is requisite for the accomplishment of these purposes, is to lay up *for ourselves* treasures on earth ; and that to lay up *for ourselves* treasures on earth is unscriptural and wrong.

4. It is our conviction that if these principles were reduced to practice, the churches of the Redeemer would provide for their own poor and deserving members, and thus take away all excuse for Christians connecting themselves with Benefit Societies or any other institution of the kind.

5. We believe that the departure of the church from these principles, is one main cause of its present sad forlorn condition, and one principle obstacle to the conversion of the world.

6. That hence it is the duty of all Christians to examine this subject fairly, with unprejudiced minds ; and that it is the duty of as many as are convinced of the truth of these principles, to act upon them themselves, and to labour to promulgate them amongst their brethren.

Such are our views. Some of the reasonings by which they are defended, have now been laid before you. My only motive for engaging in this discussion is, I believe, an intense desire, enkindled in my breast by the spirit of God, to promote the salvation and happiness of a fallen, ruined world. I can hope for no earthly gain or earthly honours by the advocacy of views like these. It gives me great pain to controvert the sentiments of one whom I so highly esteem as yourself : nothing but an imperative sense of duty could have impelled me to do it. When duty calls, however, I hope to be enabled, at all times, to merge every other consideration. If there be any thing in these pages which seems harsh, disrespectful, or unkind, I hope you will attribute it to the haste with which I am compelled to write. Nothing of this kind, I assure you, is intended. That God may preserve us all from error and from sin ; that he may lead us into the know-

ledge of all truth and duty ; and that, after having accomplished the purposes of our Heavenly Father on earth, we may all be permitted to share the endless felicities of one common heaven, is, my highly esteemed friend, the sincere and earnest prayer of

Your's, most respectfully and affectionately,

WILLIAM TROTTER.

Bradford, May 24th, 1841.

The following corrections were omitted in a part of this impression :—

Page 1, line 13, for my observation, read my *first* observation.

Page 3, 4th line from top, for if you had read one, read if you had read *but* one.

Page 3, 4th line from bottom, for *insubordination*, read *subordination*.

Page 5, 26th line from top, read *interpretation* in place of *faith*.

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