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I. Literary.

THE PASSING OF USSHER'S CHRONOLOGY.

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JAMES USSHER (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, will always be held in honor for his high character, his great learning, and his decided Calvinism. He was twice appointed by the Long Parliament a member of the celebrated Westminster Assembly of Divines, but, on account of the opposition of the King, never took part in the proceedings. Cromwell respected him, though he was a steadfast royalist, and, at his death, honored him with a splendid funeral, his remains being interred at Westminster Abbey. Ussher's name, however, would never have become a household word but for his scheme of Biblical chronology, which, though only one of a hundred and eight different views of the same Biblical data (some of which differ from others by no less than two thousand years), had the extraordinary good fortune to be printed in the margin of the Common English Version of the Bible. It thus became fastened upon the popular mind, and was gradually invested with a reverence akin to that with which the people regarded the sacred text itself. For these dates were first placed in the margin in 1701, and the custom of printing them along with the text has continued to the present time, so that for fully two hundred years the people have been drilled in the habit of regarding them as authoritative. Being familiar and convenient, the scheme has been generally adopted by historians also, and has thus gained still wider currency. But its inaccuracy has been fully established, and the scheme is now obsolete. This has been generally recognized for some years as to certain parts, such as

GIVING, AN ORDINANCE OF WORSHIP.

BY REV. CLEMENT R. VAUGHAN, D. D.

THE question has been recently raised whether obedience to the revenue law of the kingdom is to be considered as an act of worship towards God, or a mere act of benevolence towards man. This question has been raised rather late; yet one of our Presbyteries in 1881 in its vote on the New Directory of Worship decided it to be the latter. If a mere act of benevolence, it is this and nothing more, and sustains no relation to God but that of an act of obedience to his general law of moral action. If it is an act of worship, it will still be in its effects and subsidiary design an act of benevolence towards man, for it seeks his benefit; but it will be more, for its primary purpose will be an act and expression of reverence towards God. The decision of a church court excluding the character of ordinance, and making giving a mere act of benevolence, places it in antagonism to the standards of the church for centuries past, to the judgment of the Westminster Assembly, and to the courts of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and America which have accepted the Westminster standards and lived under them since the promulgation of those celebrated articles. It is contrary to the general voice of the church of God under all its divisions; and what is still more important, to the teachings of the word of God in both of its divisions, the Old and New Testaments. We propose to examine the testimony of the Scriptures on the subject; to which all such issues must be referred. The question is, whether the giving of money to the support and extension of the kingdom of Christ is to be considered under the notion of an act of worship towards God, or a mere act of benevolence towards man?

1. In seeking a settlement of this question, the first thing to be done is to form a just conception of the difference between an ordinance of worship and an act of benevolence. The leading distinction appears on the very face of the statement. An ordinance of worship is an appointed action, whose main end is the expression of reverence towards God. An act of benevolence is an action done in compliance with the general law of moral action,

and its leading design and motive is sympathy with man. A moral act may be done in obedience to the will of God; but it will be an act of obedience to his will as expressed in his general law of moral action, and not to a specific and positive appointment ordered by his authority. The direct end and aim is in the interests of man. An ordinance of worship is a specific action appointed for a specific purpose. The ordinance expresses the spirit of obedience to the first table of the law: an act of benevolence expresses the spirit of obedience to the second. In the first table, the main end in view is to secure God's interests—to enforce his claim to the reverence and the service due unto his name, with incidental results on the well-being of man. In the second table, the main end in view is to secure the interests of man, with an important incidental regard to God's authority as involved in these legal provisions in the interests of man.

But all acts of reverence towards God are not ordinances of worship, so a further mark of discrimination must be set between acts of reverence which are also ordinances of worship, and those which are not. The observance of the Sabbath, and all acts of justice and purity of living may be done from a reverent regard to divine authority. But they are not ordinances of worship. An ordinance must be positively appointed by the statutory authority of God. Even earthly monarchs claim to settle the etiquette of their own courts—and the claim is a just one—for otherwise actions offensive to the king might be appointed to be observed by those who approach his presence. Still more clear is this necessity for a divine appointment, when an ordinance of worship is also to be a means of grace, for no one but himself can pledge God to bestow special benefits on the use of any specific action. The action must be appointed by himself, and by a statutory use of his authority. It is plain that the distinction sought is found in this broad discrimination. An act of benevolence is an act of reverent regard to God by conformity to his essential law of moral obligation which binds by the nature of its own quality, and not by virtue of a specific statutory enactment. The obligation of one class of acts of reverence is moral; the obligation of the other class appointed as ordinances is positive. A general moral duty may be specially ordered to be used as an ordinance, and its bond as ordinance becomes positive. If its character as ordinance is abolished when its end is served, such a

general moral duty will revert to its original position as general law. The praise of God for his own great and unchangeable excellencies is and always will be the general moral duty of his creatures; but its specific expression in psalms and hymns appointed to be used in the worship of the Christian church as one of its ordinances is a positive statutory law which may be changed by the same authority which appointed it for that particular purpose. The change of the special character of ordinance will not change its character as unchangeable duty. An ordinance of worship which is at the same time a means of grace must be a specific and commanded act. God only has the right to appoint ordinances and means of grace; or, in other words, to define acts by which he will be worshipped, and the acts which carry with them a promise of his blessing. All will-worship—that is, worship dictated by human authority on the suggestion of human wisdom and taste, is an offence. Such presumptuous acts leave the worshipper without any assurance of their acceptability and their consequent value. Divine appointment is absolutely indispensable to the acceptability of the worship and the comfort of the worshipper. Without that appointment, he could never be sure in what way or by what acts he could come acceptably before God. It is clear that every ordinance of worship, and every means of grace, must be determined as such by positive appointment, and cannot be inferred from the general principles of moral law, construed by human faculty.

A third distinction grows out of this second feature of difference. An act of benevolence not only may, but must take a variety of forms, as determined by the nature of the wants it aims to supply; while an ordinance of worship is a single definite action, defined by the law, and unsusceptible of change. If the object of the benevolent act is hungry, he is to be fed; if naked, but not hungry, he is not to be fed, but clothed; if sick, he is to be ministered to as sick, not as well. It is clear of benevolent acts that they may and must be varied. On the contrary, as an act of worship is a definite and prescribed act, it admits of no variation: it is a particular thing to be done, and cannot be substituted. It must be marked by certain characteristics in order to enable all its uses to be served. It must be capable of use by one person or by any number of persons conjoined in the same act. It must be an act appealing to the senses. It

must be an act capable of employment in a certain place and at a certain time. It must be adjusted to produce one or more specific effects in breaking up some one or more of the particular evils in the depraved heart, and in developing the opposite virtue.

A fourth distinction lies in the nature and source of the beneficial effects which result to the actor in the benevolent action, or in the use of the ordinance. An act of benevolence will react with a healthful influence on the feelings and character of the doer of it, as the natural result of a good moral action. An ordinance of worship will benefit the soul of the worshipper by the gracious connection established by promise and appointment between the ordinance and its blessing. The benefit of the moral act springs from its own nature; the benefit of the ordinance from the energy of the Holy Ghost accompanying the use of an appointed means or instrument. The benefit of an ordinance springs in subordinate part from obedience to God's authority, commanding a certain act of worship to be employed, and thus opening the way for the divine energy to work; but exclusively from that energy as the efficient cause of the benefit. The value of all ordinances in themselves considered is logically in their instituted connection with the covenant of grace, and efficiently in the concurrent influence of the Holy Spirit attending the use of them. The doctrine of what is called "sacramental grace"—that is, that the ordinances carry grace as fire carries heat or ice carries cold—is a most dangerous fiction; and so to construe the appointed ordinances is a subtle attempt to poison the fountain of life, and to make the mere means and instruments of grace supersede all regard to a living Saviour, and thus to become the instruments of death, instead of the means of grace unto eternal life. The beneficial energy of ordinances is concurrent with them, not inherent in them: it is to be found in the will and energy of God sovereignly accompanying their use, securing their right use, and still sovereignly making that right use effectual. But while we are thus taught to look beyond ordinances, and to seek with the eye of faith for a living Saviour back of the ordinances, we are led to see where the power of the ordinances comes from, and how it is explained. The benefits, then, of truly appointed ordinances, rightly used, are not only equally certain of effect, but when really accompanied by the influences of efficacious grace, are far more powerful than the natural reaction of

an act of benevolence, or any other form of moral obedience under the second table of the law.

Without assuming to have exhausted the distinctions between them, enough has been developed to show the radical nature of the difference between an act of benevolence and an ordinance of worship, and the far-reaching consequences of construing a given action as one or the other. If giving under the revenue laws of the kingdom is to be relegated to the category of simple acts of benevolence, it will take its place exclusively among such acts, and its beneficial results will be similar, and nothing more, to the beneficial effects of that class of acts. But if it is to be construed as an ordinance of divine worship, its beneficial results will be measured by the higher species of blessing to be derived from the right and efficacious use of a means of grace, instituted by God, to be employed in the administration of his covenant and to inbreed in the soul the graces of holiness.

2. Having drawn the distinctions vital to the just settlement of the question, let us now consult the testimony. First, of the Old Testament Scriptures on the subject. We would remark, as preliminary, that so far as we are informed, in all the forms of religion known in the history of the human race, the offering of wealth in some form has been one of the recognized modes of appeal for the favor of deity. Not only the necessary expense of maintaining the recognized worship, but the distinct conception of a persuasive force in the offering of valuables demanded this peculiar method of worship. Even in expiatory sacrifices, and under the most enlightened constrution of their purpose as expiatory, the values offered have been an important element in their acceptability. The notion of sacrifice, compounded of the two conceptions of something costly to the offerer, and something made sacred to God—*sacri-facium*—is thus seen to blend both notions of wealth and worship in the unity of the sacrificial idea. In other forms of offering besides expiatory sacrifices, the same conception of value inheres. In thank-offerings, the grant of wealth as an expression of gratitude for mercies already received, and in votive offerings, as a form of petition for mercies yet to be given, both involve this element of value in the offering, as being the only suitable expression of the feelings of the heart. However false, or self-righteous, or mercenary may have been the sentiments connected with this offering of wealth in worship, it

is clear on the point which we are using the practice to illustrate, that the offering of valuables as an act of worship towards God has always been accepted as a suitable action or ordinance in the worship of God. So much by way of introduction. As a matter of course, the universal practice of all forms of religion among all classes of mankind has no binding effect on us who only acknowledge the bond of the religion of the Bible; but it does vindicate the intrinsic rationality of giving as an ordinance of worship; and protects the appointment of it as an ordinance from all impeachment by the universal example of human usage, if we should happen to find it so appointed in the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament system, the most cursory glance at the laws enacted on the subject will show that all the offerings required were to be made to God, and under the character of worship to him. All the offerings which were strictly expiatory were not only to be offered to God; but the value in the sacrifice was an element, a subordinate, but a real element in its acceptability. The law prescribed the offering of animals without blemish, not only to preserve the typical signification of the sacrifice, but to express the earnestness of feeling in the worshipper. No blemished animal was to be offered, although in times of religious declension, the selfishness of an indifferent worshipper sought economy in his worship by just such insulting presentations. "Offer it now unto thy governor," exclaims an indignant prophet, rebuking the practice. This careful exclusion of a blemished animal was due to the fact that while the chief element of the expiatory sacrifice was the shedding of the blood of the victim, and the shedding of the blood of a blemished animal would have as truly symbolized the great idea of atonement as the blood of an animal without a blemish, yet the want of that perfection would not only have marred the symbolism of the perfect nature of the coming Redeemer, and revealed a censurable feeling in the heart of the worshipper, but it would have degraded the dignity of the divine King to whom the blemished offering was made below the dignity of mere earthly rulers. Such was the idea of the prophet Malachi when he denounced the offerings of recusant Israel. In the Levitical thank-offering there was a grateful gift to God, and the energy of the grateful sentiment was measured by the value of the gift as relative to the ability of the giver. In the law of the wave-offerings, they were required to be waved before the

Lord. The heave-offerings were required to be brought and heaved before the Lord before they were turned over to the use of those for whom they were designed. Though these offerings constituted the official revenue of the ministerial classes, that fact did not at all impair the primary and leading character of these offerings as an offering to the Lord. The benevolent use of such parts of these offerings in divine worship as were given to the poor did not deprive them of their character as worship to God. It is not necessary to multiply the quotations which show that the various classes of offerings under the Old Dispensation bore the emphatic character of acts of worship to Jehovah; a single specimen of each will be sufficient.

1 Chron. xvi. 29: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Numbers xviii. 24-28: "But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering unto the Lord, I have given the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. Thus ye also shall offer a heave-offering unto the Lord of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel: and ye shall give thereof to Aaron the priest."

Leviticus v. 6: "He shall bring his trespass-offering to the Lord."

Exodus xxix. 24: "And wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord."

Proverbs iii. 9: "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase."

Malachi iii. 8, 9: "Ye have robbed me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

See also Psalm xcvi. 8; Deut. xvi. 10.

From these testimonies touching the various classes of offerings ordered by the Levitical law, there can be no doubt that the grants of wealth for the uses of the kingdom of God under the Old Dispensation were required to be rendered formally under the notion of the worship of Jehovah. God was judged to be robbed when the Levitical tithes were not paid as the law directed. The official remuneration of the ministerial classes was required first to be offered before the Lord, and then distributed to those who were fed upon the Lord's bounty. No matter to what uses

this wealth was subjected afterwards, it was first employed in grateful worship of the Great Giver. The ordinance of giving under the Old Testament dispensation was unquestionably an ordinance of worship.

Let us now turn to the New Testament records. In the first place, we remark, as preliminary, that it is generally conceded that in the change of the old forms of administering the covenant nothing was abolished except what was purely formal and typical: all that was moral and all that was essential to the administration of the covenant and the salvation of souls was retained. The covenant of grace, the covenant of the church, the moral law remained the same; for all that was moral was essential law, and could not be abrogated. The idea of sacrifice and atonement in its highest and only really effective form was carried over to the reorganized worship of the kingdom; and while the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats was no longer authorized, every gospel worshipper was required to approach God with the blood of Christ, shed once for all, borne on the uplifted hands of a living faith in the necessity and the efficacy of that blood. The same covenant was to be administered, for the same great ends, down to the end of the world. The same sin was to be taken away, the same misery to be removed, the same guilt to be cancelled, the same depravity to be purified under the new as under the old administration. The same ordinances which were essential to attain these ends under the old were equally essential under the new arrangements, and were therefore transferred from the one to the other. Prayer was still needful to obtain grace for the transgressor, and to cultivate the spirit of devotion in the saint. The praise of God was still due for his personal excellencies and for his goodness to men. Instruction in the law of the Lord and in the exposition of his grace was still all-important, and still required. The Supper took the place of the Passover, and baptism of many others of the manifold and oppressive symbolic cleansings of the old law. Every ordinance under both dispensations was designed to break down some specific evil in the depraved human heart and to infuse the opposite virtue. To abandon the use of any one ordinance was to forfeit the blessing it was designed to impart. To cease to pray was to forfeit all expectations of answers to prayer, and to leave the spirit of devotion to die out of the heart. To

refuse to bring the mind systematically under the influence of the truth, whether from the lips of the public teacher or the pages of the written word when attainable, was to lose all its enlightening and sanctifying power. Now if all that was essential in the administration of the covenant, in order to the attainment of its glorious ends, was carried over to the new worship of the kingdom, by what less than a clear and positive prohibition can we be warranted in supposing that the ordinance character of the offering of wealth was changed in the transfer, and what was worship under the Old ceased to be worship under the New Dispensation? It is undisputed that giving was still required in the new arrangements. The evil in the human heart which the old ordinance was designed to combat—the undue love of money as the representative and procurer of worldly goods—was still a master passion of human nature. Covetousness was still idolatry. The necessity for the opposite temper to be bred in the soul was still absolute and inexorable in any plan for the purification of human character. The necessity for an ordinance to break down this vice was essential to the ends of the covenant of grace; and unless we are to suppose that what was absolutely essential to the redemption of the covenant promises of salvation from sin was left out of the ordinances of the New Dispensation—a supposition too absurd to be seriously entertained—we are compelled to infer that the old ordinance of giving was transferred to the reorganized worship of the church without change in its essential character and relations to the covenant. This conclusion is further confirmed by the moral as well as by the essential covenant character of this species of service. A moral duty was made an ordinance of worship by a positive appointment. If the statutory character of an ordinance should ever terminate, the moral duty would still remain. Now, it is certain and undisputed that the moral law was transferred without change; and the moral obligation of a grateful recognition of the giver of all mercies is as clear under the new order of things as it was in the offering of the first fruits and the tithes under the old law. The moral propriety of acknowledging God in this way of material offerings is, to say the least of it, fully as clear as the propriety of distributing a portion of it in acts of benevolence towards men. In fact, the moral obligation to do it is the stronger of the two. If the offering of wealth to God be an

obvious moral propriety, *per se*—if such an offering seems to be essential in the administration of the covenant in order to break down a master evil passion of the carnal heart, and in redeeming the promise, “sin shall not have dominion over you,”—if the same moral and spiritual necessities exist for it under the New, as under the Old Dispensation, we shall go to the testimony of the New Testament prepared to be infinitely surprised if we do not find the same character of giving as an ordinance of worship.

We proceed but a short distance in the first of the gospels before we encounter a positive instance of Christ as the King of the Jews receiving adoration by the offering of wealth, as well as by acts of visible worship and verbal expressions of profoundest reverence. We are told that when the wise men of the East were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gold, frankincense and myrrh. If the question be raised whether this was religious worship, or anything more than the Oriental mode of doing honor to a person of high or royal rank, this may be said in probable explanation. These wise men of the East may possibly have been learned Jews of that vast body of the Jewish race which had refused to return from Babylon on the restoration under Cyrus. If so, they knew the prophecies of the sacred books. But if not Jews, as is most probable, they were evidently not only acquainted with Jewish ideas concerning the great coming Messiah, but they were also firm believers in those ideas, and hopeful of a share in the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. According to those old Jewish conceptions as expressed by the Prophet Isaiah, the Messiah was to be “Emanuel, God with us,” “the mighty God,” “the everlasting Father,” “the Prince of Peace.” These were the conceptions which filled the minds of these eastern sages; and under such conceptions it is plain enough that their worship of the infant Christ was the worship of an incarnate God, and not merely the demonstrative Oriental reverence for a mere earthly sovereign. Yet it was a worship by the offering of wealth, in part at least. It was not a mere act of benevolence—if, indeed, it was so in any sense—towards the infant or the parents. It is said “they worshipped him”: their reverence was an act of worship, and a worship by the offering of wealth.

Another New Testament idea bears less directly, but with great force, on the conception of giving under New Testament law as an ordinance of the kingdom and an act of its appointed worship. This is the emphatic character of the Church of Christ as the visible kingdom of God on earth. Like all other kingdoms, it has its revenue laws and its revenue officers. There would be no need for either unless this revenue was to be raised in the kingdom itself and as a part of its own functions. It is absurd to suppose that the root of this revenue was to be found, not in the legal claim of the government, but in the charity of its members. Revenue is essential to the support and extension of the kingdom of God, just as it is to the interests of any other kingdom: it can neither live nor spread according to its commission without it. To suppose this necessary revenue to be sought, not in the kingdom and in obedience to its laws, but is left to mere benevolence outside of it, is absurd. Giving is obedience to revenue law as an act of reverence to the Law-giver; and while the revenue laws of the kingdom of Christ differ in several marked respects from the revenue laws of other kingdoms, they are still laws, and compliance with them is in one of its leading significances, obedience to law, respect for government, and reverence for the Law-giver. The benevolent purposes to be gained by this revenue when raised are altogether secondary in their relation to the act of giving it as an act of obedience to law and of reverential worship towards the Law-giver.

It is true that obedience to law is not necessarily an act of worship in the use of an ordinance. A law may be obeyed, though not under the character of an ordinance appointed by statute as a vehicle of worship. Let us examine further into the New Testament conceptions of the act, and see whether it construes obedience to revenue law as rendered through a specific ordinance of worship. In making this examination, we are at once struck with Paul's command to the Corinthian church, that the work of providing a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem should be made a part of Sabbath service. Each member of the church was directed to lay by him in store on the first day of the week. It was to be made Sabbath work. The sanctity of that day was as fully maintained under the New Testament, as under the Old Testament law. The moral law, of which the obligation of the holy day was a part, was equally binding under

both. It was emphatically the "Lord's Day" in New Testament usage, and all service rendered on that day was to be rendered to him in a peculiar sense. All true obedience to him is service to him, whether rendered on the sacred day or any other day. But the peculiar nature of the service rendered on the Sabbath was that it was to be rendered under the notion of worship. Such is the construction of the Sabbath law by the Westminster Assembly in the present standards of the church. The whole time is to be spent in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. That the raising of revenue is not to be construed under the works of necessity and mercy in the sense of the standards is clear from two facts: first, revenue might have been raised on any other day as well as on the Sabbath; and, second, the demand for works of necessity and mercy is altogether fortuitous and uncertain. The demand for the relief of necessity or mercy may not happen on one out of a dozen Sabbaths. But the provision of revenue is made by Paul the work of the sacred day. Another circumstance which shows that this requirement of the apostle is to be classed among the public or private acts of worship, and not among the works of necessity or mercy, is that the grant of revenue is relegated to Sabbath service by a positive statute; while no law, whether positive or essential, makes any act of mere benevolence, either exclusively or peculiarly appropriate on the Sabbath day. There is no limitation of acts of benevolence to any specified time: the wants of the needy may make them more obligatory on a week day than on the Sabbath. While unquestionably God may be lawfully worshipped on a week day by the offering of money, or by prayer or preaching, this very fact gives peculiar significance to the positive requirement of revenue on the Sabbath, as holding the same special relation to the chief business of that day as that held by the administration of the word and sacraments—in other words, that it is a part of the worship of God. All acts of worship on a week day are either voluntary or the result of special obligation, and are not made the subjects of a universal law. But the regular worship of the church is prescribed by a universal law. The one time is left discretionary: the other is prescribed, and the ordinances of its regular worship are appointed. Now if all acts done lawfully on that day were to be acts of public or private worship,

except such limited and fortuitous acts as the unforeseen exigencies of necessity or mercy might require, by what logic can the grant of revenue, long recognized as an act of worship, and still essential in the administration of the covenant in order to accomplish its purposes—an action specifically relegated to the Sabbath as a part of its services—be deprived of its peculiar character as an ordinance of worship and an act of gratitude and reverence towards God, reduced to the mere category of business or benevolence towards men? Unless it can be proved to be nothing but an act of necessity or mercy, it must be construed as belonging to the acts of public or private worship required in the sacred time. To make the Sabbath a mere convenience for doing what might as well be done on any other day, and as such no act of imperative necessity or mercy, is altogether inadmissible.

Once more: the testimony of the New Testament is expressed in its doctrine of the "*koinonia*," or fellowship of the saints, in ministering to the wants of the needy among them. Almost all the collections specially alluded to in the New Testament were for the relief of the poor saints. The reason why it is called the "*koinania*" is, that the love of the brethren which is the necessary determination of the regenerate heart, just like the love of natural brothers, will take the shape of pecuniary relief to want when that want exists. That love of the brethren, that fellowship and community of feeling which distinguishes the true believers in Christ, was rooted in their common interest in a common Saviour. So that the expression of this feeling of communion, whether in the Supper or in these grants of money, was at the same time an expression of worshipping gratitude and trust towards their divine Redeemer. The want of this love of the brethren, and the failure of this peculiar mode of expressing it by the relief of want, was construed as a want of love to God himself. "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" The grand office of the deacon—the peculiar glory of our Presbyterian system, and that character in the organized Church of God, represented and implied in this office as being an institute for taking care of the poor and the widows and orphans of Christ, as truly as if this were the only object of its organization—this noble office, fruitful of immeasurable blessing, is emptied of all significance if the

koinonia of the saints is not a binding part of Christian service, to be rendered as a part of Sabbath service and through an ordinance for the purpose.

Yet further, the testimony of the New Testament is also developed in its doctrine that the inward spirit which leads to the discharge of this duty of giving, is a grace—a gift and grace of the Holy Spirit. "See," says Paul, "that ye abound in this grace also." Under the covenant of God, his grace is given in the use of ordinances which he has appointed for the purpose. If these ordinances are abandoned, no substituted acts of benevolence can take their place and develop the graces of a holy heart. All these graces are imparted and developed in the use of the appointed ordinances, and in no other way. To abandon the ordinance of prayer is to wither the spirit of devotion. To abandon the ordinances of instruction is to extinguish the influence of the truth. Are we to suppose an exception in the case of giving, and infer the grace of giving without an ordinance of giving? If the graces of the regenerate soul are implanted and developed into vigorous growth, by means of the ordinances appointed for the purpose, it is at once useless and presumptuous to expect them apart from their ordinances. A real grace, then, implies and certifies an adjusted ordinance. It is therefore legitimate—nay, it is compulsory—reasoning, from a grace of giving to infer an ordinance through which it is conferred. To deny this is to violate the analogy of the faith and the fundamental laws of the covenant. Those laws prescribe grace to be given in the right use of appointed ordinances and means, and not as the result of general obedience to essential moral law.

The last circumstance which we shall employ in illustration of the true notion of giving under the new administration of the covenant, is that it is of vast practical importance. The spirit in which a thing is done is universally recognized in the Scriptures as conditioning to a profound extent every act of service to God. If a thing good in itself is done in a bad spirit, its value and its virtue are sadly discounted. Now, if giving is an act of worship of Almighty God, the spirit of worship must pervade its performance to make it what it ought to be. This spirit of adoring worship towards God is a higher and more sanctifying power than the spirit of benevolence towards men, admirable as that spirit is in itself. The conception of giving as worship

tends strongly to quicken the conscience and increase the liberality of the worshipper. All the ordinances are adjusted to test the desires of the soul. A languid prayer brings the censure of conscience; a careless handling of the word of God does the same thing, because both reveal indifference to the favor of God: they indicate the low temperature of the desires of the heart. Money affords a stringent test of desire, and especially of desire towards God and his grace. Many a loud expression of desire in prayer and praise discloses its true character when asked to express itself in giving. Liberal expenditures for the cause of God is often a prelude to a glorious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, not because he is to be bought with money, but because the desire of the soul is thus energetically expressed. To worship God with an offering signally below the real ability of the worshipper is similar to a languid prayer, or an idle handling of the word of God or any other ordinance of the divine worship.

It is of vast practical importance to the worshipper himself, emphasizing the fact that in these regular and systematic solicitations of grants to the revenue of the kingdom, his own personal spiritual profit is one of the main ends sought. The ordinances of worship are also appointed as means of grace: they are established to honor God and to benefit the worshipper. The grand interest of every man is to have the dominion of sin over him broken up. Covetousness is idolatry; and no idolater shall enter within the gates of the city which the apocalyptical seer saw descending **from** God out of heaven. All evil and all good feelings grow by exercise. The only way to break down any evil feeling is, by the help of the sanctifying Spirit, to deny and resist its impulses. The feeling which underlies the desire of wealth—a feeling proper under proper limitations—will grow into a sinful covetousness unless properly counter-checked. The only way to limit the love of money within sinless bounds is to spend it in right and suitable ways. To break down that love of money which is a root of all evil, the grace of giving is imparted by the ordinance of giving. God has no need of our wealth: the world is his and the fulness thereof; he knows where the veins of silver and gold thread the earth, and the diamond hides its brilliant fires. He can make the tulip bloom gold, and our orchards hang heavy with a fruitage richer than that of the fabled Hesperides. He has only to will it, and boundless wealth

would lie at his feet. But he does not choose this: he chooses to tax our hard-earned money, just to do us good—to grant us graces of spirit now and rewards hereafter which we could never possess in any other way. He has appointed to give us the grace of giving in the same general way in which he gives all other graces—by means of an ordinance for that very end. To abandon giving as an act of worship and a means of grace, is not only to violate the right of God to establish the ordinances of his own worship, but to ignore him as the giver of wealth and to paralyze spiritual interests of inestimable value.