

MISCELLANIES

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ADDRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.¹

IT cannot have failed to strike you, even in a cursory perusal of the New Testament, that very great importance is attached to this whole matter of contributions to the cause of God, and a closer reflection upon the subject, we are persuaded, will satisfy you that the Assembly were justified in taking the high ground presented in the foregoing resolutions, viz.: that the contribution of funds to pious uses is not simply an ecclesiastical measure, but a divine ordinance; not simply an act of philanthropy, but an act of religious worship; not prompted by an occasional impulse of generosity, but uniformly by devotional feeling; not done under pressure of special agency, but under the ordinary and stated use of the means of grace, as declared in the *Directory for*

¹This address was delivered to the Presbytery of Baltimore in 1854. The General Assembly, O. S., of that year had passed the following resolutions, viz.:

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly hereby enjoin upon the pastors of our churches to give greater prominence, in the ministration of the word, to the doctrine of the Scripture as interpreted and set forth in our standards (more particularly in Chapter XXVI., Section 2, of the *Confession of Faith*; in Question 141 of the *Larger Catechism*; in Chapter VII. of the *Form of Government*; and in Chapter VI., Section 5, of the *Directory for Worship*), viz.: that "Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities, which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Lord Jesus," "giving and lending freely according to their abilities"; and in conformity to this doctrine, recognizing as one of the ordinances established by Christ, in connection with the sermon, prayer and praise, a "collection raised for the poor and other purposes of the church."

2. *Resolved*, That the Presbyteries which have not anticipated the provisions of this action of the Assembly are most earnestly and affectionately

Worship, Chapter VI., Section 5, which thus directs the minister: "The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray and return thanks to Almighty God; then let a psalm be sung; A COLLECTION RAISED for the poor, or other purposes of the church, and the assembly dismissed with the apostolic benediction."

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" was the animated exclamation of the great Apostle of the Gentiles when he contemplated the relief afforded by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to the necessities of the poor saints in Judea. The gift was doubtless small in itself, the gospel having been preached mainly to the poor and achieved its greatest triumphs in that, as in all subsequent generations, among the children of toil, sorrow and self-denial; but con-

enjoined, 1st. At their meetings following the rising of this Assembly to take order that the ministers and church sessions in their bounds shall be directed to adopt some practical method by which an opportunity shall be afforded and an invitation given to all the members of their congregations to contribute regularly to the objects of Christian benevolence recognized by the Assembly in the organization of the boards of the church, and to such other institutions as to them may seem right. 2d. And at every spring meeting to institute a proper inquiry into the diligence of ministers and church sessions in executing the provisions of such method.

3. *Resolved*, That the Presbyteries are further enjoined to enter on record, and report to the next Assembly, their action on the first part of the foregoing resolution, and also to record at their next and all subsequent spring meetings the result of the inquiry prescribed, and report the same to the General Assembly with the usual Annual Presbyterial Report, stating the delinquencies and diligence of pastors and church sessions.

Whereupon the Rev. Messrs. Thomas E. Peck and Stuart Robinson were appointed a Committee of the Presbytery of Baltimore to prepare an address explanatory of the foregoing resolutions, and of the action of the Presbytery touching the subject of Systematic Beneficence, with a view of calling more particular attention to it. Agreeably to their instructions an address was prepared, and "submitted, along with the resolutions upon which it is based, to the candid consideration of all whom it might concern."

The address was the work of Mr. Peck. It was published at the time in pamphlet form, from which it is now reprinted.—Ed.

sidered in its causes, relations, and results, it was well entitled to the designation of "an *unspeakable* gift."

First, It was one of the fruits of the Spirit and of righteousness, "which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." "We do you to wit of the *grace* of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality," etc. (2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, etc.) Their living union with Christ was the spring of all, for "they first gave their own selves to the Lord," and after such a surrender they could not refuse to give their substance. They gave but a mite, but it was the "*widow's* mite," that is, "all their living." *Second*, It was a fruit of their union with one another as members of the same body. The same law of love which binds all the members of the system to the centre binds them to one another. The same law of gravity which keeps the stones in the living temple upon the foundation keeps them united to each other. And so in the natural body all the members have the same life; and if one member suffer, all the other members suffer with it. (1 Cor. xii.) Hence this contribution is called a "fellowship": "praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and the *fellowship* of the ministering to the saints" (2 Cor. viii. 4), the same word which is rendered "communion" in 1 Cor. x. 16, and is there intended to express the common participation of the body and blood of the Redeemer by all believers. How beautiful the exhibition of the communion of saints! "One body, one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all!" (Eph. iv. 3-6.) This communion is particularly striking and beautiful as being a communion of *Jews and Gentiles*; a glorious proof that the middle wall of partition had been broken down in Christ the son of Adam as well as the son of Abraham, and that true

“sodality” and brotherhood of nations established, which, even in the defective and distorted image of it, has inspired the imaginations and quickened the energies of the modern patriots of Europe. The first exhibition of Christian fellowship in this form recorded in the New Testament was confined to the Hebrews (see the first six chapters of the Acts); it was reserved for Antioch (where the followers of the Nazarene first received the honorable denomination of “Christians” (Acts xi. 26), a *Jewish* name formed according to the analogies of a *Gentile* tongue) to signalize the reconciliation which the Saviour had achieved between man and man, nation and nation (Eph. ii. 11-22), by a collection for the saints in Judea. (Acts xi. 29, 30.) *Third*, The motive by which they were impelled was love and gratitude to Christ: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 9.) *Fourth*, The grand result, the giving of glory to God in the thanksgiving of the saints, which is his “will in Christ Jesus concerning them.” “For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by *many thanksgivings unto God*; while by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for *your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ*, and for your liberal distribution unto them and unto all men; and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.” (2 Cor. ix. 12-14.) “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!”

It is obviously impossible, within the limits of an address like this, to illustrate at length the foregoing points, or even to present a full statement of all the relations of this interesting subject as brought out in the eighth and ninth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; and we therefore leave them to your prayerful study, reminding you only that the same principles hold in regard to contributions for

the support of the gospel and its diffusion as in regard to aid given to saints in poverty. (Phil iv. 15, &c.) We proceed now to call your attention more particularly to the doctrine of the first resolution of the General Assembly, above cited. You will observe that they assert, not merely that the communion or fellowship is *a duty*, but that it is the special kind of duty called "*worship*." It is not only an "ordinance," but an ordinance of the same general nature and design with "*the sermon, prayer and praise*." That this doctrine is true may be shown from an examination of the nature of worship, and from express testimonies of Scripture:

First, From the nature of worship. The fundamental element of worship is a sense of dependence upon God; a physical dependence, as living, moving and having our being in him; and a moral dependence, involved in the other, as subject to his law, as consecrated to his service, and as finding in him alone a satisfying portion for the soul. It is a dependence upon him as "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." This sentiment of dependence and inferiority was, probably, the occasion of the old English application of the word "worship" to a feeling, or expression of feeling, of one man toward another; an instance of which we have in our Authorized Version of the New Testament at Luke xiv. 10. This sentiment of dependence has many other emotions accompanying or flowing from it, such as reverence, love, faith, humility, and thankfulness. Now God has established certain ordinances by which these and such like emotions are to be formally expressed; and the observance of these ordinances is what is called worship, external worship, in which the body, as the instrument and servitor of the soul within, is called in to aid. There is formal prayer, for instance, in which we express our adoration and reverence for the majesty and glory

of our Maker, our sense of guilt and pollution in ourselves, our need of all things, our petitions that this need may be supplied, our thanksgiving for what he has already done for us and for what he has promised to do, and our intercession for others, involving like confessions, petitions and thanksgivings. So with praise by singing, the main elements of which are adoration and thanksgiving. The sermon, also, though often regarded as an interlude in the worship, is really a part of it, as much as meditation upon the word by ourselves: "it is a musing, that the fire may burn" (Psalm xxxix. 3), making our hearts "hot within us," and kindling the sacrifice. Baptism and the Lord's supper are parts of worship more symbolical in their nature, but still expressing the same sentiments.

Now it must be observed in regard to all these parts of worship, that so far as there is any *advantage* to be derived from performing them, it accrues altogether to the worshipper. It is eminently proper that we should acknowledge God, and he commands us to do it; but he is no gainer if we do it, and no loser if we fail. Our refusal only recoils upon our own heads by exposing our insensibility to all that is noble and august in moral perfections, and our shameless destitution of thankful emotions. It is for our good we are required to worship. This good is twofold: first, of instruction, and, then, of moral improvement, the exercise of the graces of the Christian character, and the consequent development and invigoration of them. No man, for example, can pray sincerely without knowing more of his own heart and more of God than he knew before, and having his faith and love increased. He rises from his knees with a clearer knowledge and a deeper sense of the great comprehensive truth that he is nothing and God is all in all.

There is no space for more extended illustration, but these hints are perhaps enough to show that "contributions to the poor and to the general purposes of the church" possess the

essential elements of worship. They express our dependence upon God, our thankfulness for his temporal mercies (compare Luke xi. 41 with 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5), and his universal and perfect propriety in us and in all that belongs to us; that we are not our own, that none of us liveth to himself, that we are stewards of his goodness, and as such are bound to be faithful. Further, as has been shown of other parts of worship, so it may be affirmed of this, that there is an eminent propriety in our thus recognizing God as our sovereign Lord and Benefactor; but that there is no profit to the Almighty in our so doing. He has no need of our money; the silver and the gold are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills. If he were hungry he would not tell *us*, for the world is his and the fulness thereof. It is for our good that he commands us "to offer unto him thanksgiving," "to do good and to communicate," assuring us that "with such sacrifices he is well pleased." (Compare Ps. l. 7-15 with Heb. xiii. 15, 16, and the provisions of the law of Moses touching "free-will offerings," noticed subsequently in this paper.) A cheerful giving to the Lord is the instrument of instruction and of growth in grace, like the visible symbols, the elements and actions, of the Lord's supper. It appears, then, that there is a very complete analogy between contributions to pious uses and the ordinary parts of worship.

But we are not compelled to rely upon general considerations like these and the precarious support of analogy. Nor ought we to rely upon them. No form of worship is acceptable to God which he has not prescribed. He hates will-worship, and classes it with idolatry. He rebukes his people for doing what he has *not* commanded, as well as for not doing what he *has* commanded. (Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5; xxiii. 32.) Let us look, then, at the argument from Scripture.

First, Under the Old Testament we find it was a part of the instituted worship of God that his people should give of their worldly substance to his cause. 1. Beside the stated

offerings of animals and the meat offerings in the daily and annual solemn services of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, there were also "free-will offerings" of the same kind which the Lord intimated to his people would be acceptable to him, and of which we have a full account in the Book of Leviticus. Among these great prominence is given to the thank offerings; and in the history of the Israelites we meet with frequent examples of extraordinary sacrifices, both for number and costliness, offered in token of gratitude for signal benefits received. Indeed, the great idea of thanksgiving seems to have been associated with all the offerings of the law, not excepting even those offered in expiation of sin: "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: and there shall ye eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall *rejoice* in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." (Deut. xii. 5-7.) In other parts of the same chapter it is expressly stated that the Levites, the officers of religion, are to share in this joy and blessing of the Lord, because "they have no inheritance" among the tribes; and in the fifteenth chapter a like provision for the poor generally is enjoined in connection with the "blessing" of the Lord. Now, it is important for you to observe that, although these sacrifices of thanksgiving, *in form*, have passed away, the essence of the duty still remains, as you will find by comparing with the foregoing statements Heb. xiii. 15, 16. In this passage the apostle, after showing that, from the nature of the case, no distinctions of clean and unclean meats could exist under the gospel (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 3-5; Rom. xiv. 17), adds the exhorta-

tion couched in the terms of the ceremonial law: "By him, therefore, let us offer the *sacrifice* of praise to God continually, that is, the *fruit* of our lips ('*calves* of our lips,' in Hos. xiv. 2), giving *thanks* unto his name. But to *do good*, and to *communicate*, forget not: for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Almsgiving is, therefore, the offering of sacrifice, and if that is not worship, nothing is. It is a thank offering, not *expiatory* in any case, as the enemies of the gospel assert.

2. Beside the offerings above mentioned were the "tithes," or "tenths," still offerings "in kind"; but as it does not appear that they were free-will offerings at all, but rather a regular tax for the support of the Jewish theocracy levied *pro rata* (see 1 Sam. viii. 15-18), they furnish no rule, whatever may be asserted to the contrary, for those who enjoy the liberty of Christ. As expressions of the dependence of the people upon God, and of their obligation to love and serve him, they were, unquestionably, parts of the worship of the old law; but they are no longer binding upon the church, because they possessed a civil as well as an ecclesiastical character; and since the Jewish commonwealth has passed away, and God has now ordained civil government in general (Rom. xiii.), we may regard the payment of our civil dues and customs as a full discharge of corresponding obligations.

3. Again, over and above these offerings in *kind* were offerings in *money*. "And Jehoshaphat said to the priests, all the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord, even the money of every one that *passeth the account*; the money that *every man is set at*, and all the money that *cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord*," etc. (2 Kings xii. 4.) The first kind of contribution in money here mentioned is doubtless the capitation tax provided for in Exod. xxx. 11-16, the "atonement money." It was levied for the support of the temple ser-

vice, as our Saviour's argument in regard to it (Matt. xvii. 24-27) implies, and was symbolical in its design. We may, therefore, pass it over, as also the second sort mentioned, "the money that every man is set at," which is, doubtless, the "estimation money" of Lev. xxvii. 1, etc. What has been said in regard to the "tenths in kind" applies to these as well. The third sort of money contributions, to-wit, those "which come into any man's heart to bring to the Lord," are permanent, and will continue so long as there are any "breaches in the Lord's house" to be "repaired." The ninth verse informs us how the collection was made: "Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it *beside the altar*, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord." The *temple*, the *altar* and the *priest* are the Jewish elements in this description, and have ceased to exist in the church on earth, since Jesus, the Son of God, has become all three; but the rest is worthy of our imitation.

Second, Under the New Testament the true significance of such voluntary sacrifices comes out more clearly. In the sixth chapter of Matthew, which is a part of the Sermon on the Mount, our Saviour, after having vindicated the *second* table of the law, mainly, from the perverse constructions of the scribes and Pharisees (see chap. v.), proceeds to rebuke some practices which were in violation of the *first* table, and to point out the manner in which God should be worshipped in the three particulars of "almsgiving," "prayer," and "fasting." It seems evident that almsgiving is associated with the exercises of prayer and fasting in this place, not by a fortuitous juxtaposition, but upon the ground of its possessing the same general nature and design. And it is worthy of notice, that in many manuscripts the reading "*righteousness*"¹ occurs in the first verse instead of "alms," and is

¹ Adopted by the Revision of 1881.

placed in the margin by our translators. According to this reading, the first verse might be considered as a general direction in regard to the manner of worshipping God, and then the general direction is illustrated by the specification of three particulars, "almsgiving," "prayer," and "fasting"; "almsgiving" being put first, perhaps, in consequence of its natural connection with the close of the last chapter. In this passage the *private* worship of God seems to be particularly in the Lord's view. But if contributions to pious uses really belong to the worship of God at all, we might expect to find them in the public and social exercises of the saints also. Accordingly, in Acts ii. 42 we read: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." That this is a description of the church as it appeared before the eyes of men, or in its social and public capacity, is evident from the mention of the "breaking of bread" (exclusively a social ordinance), and from the use of the term "*fellowship*," which, on its face, conveys the idea of *joint*-worship, and is oftener used to denote the *Lord's supper* and *contributions* than any other parts of worship. In this case there is special reference had, in the use of the term, to contributions for the poor, as is evident from the forty-fourth and forty-fifth verses lower down: "And all that believed were together, and had all things *common* (or as "fellows," or in "fellowship"), and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Compare chapter iv. 31-37 and chapter v. 1-11.) The sin of Ananias and Sapphira may be called "a lying to the Holy Ghost," because it was a false pretension to that worship which is a worship "in the Spirit." (Phil. iii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 3; John iv. 23, 24.) Again, at First Corinthians xvi. 2 you meet with the following exhortation: "Upon the *first day of the week* let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Why is this "laying

by in store" ordered to be done specially on the "first day of the week," if it be not an act of worship? The Sabbath is consecrated to the worship of God, and it must be because contributions to his cause are formal exercises of worship that there is a peculiar propriety in their being made on that day. In addition to the foregoing passages, permit us to call your attention once more to the whole of the eighth and ninth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

To this view of the subject and to these interpretations of Scripture it may be said, *First*, That the worship of God is not left optional with man; that it is not a matter of "free-will," but of imperative obligation. But these contributions are "free-will offerings"; therefore, they are not of the nature of worship. To this we answer, that the "free-will offerings" of the law were of the nature of worship, being in other respects of the same kind with those which were, in number and character, expressly prescribed. All that was necessary was an intimation from God that they would be acceptable to him, it being left to the ability and love of the worshippers to determine the amount or costliness of the offering. So, under the gospel, the point upon which our "free will" is to be exercised is, not as to the *giving*, but as to the *amount*. God has not said, "Give me a tenth, or a twentieth, or a hundredth, or a millionth"; and it is presumption for any man to say to another, or for a church court to say to the members under its care, "You must give such and such a proportion." It is a matter between God and the man's own conscience. He must "give as God hath prospered him," and of the measure of his prosperity another man has no right to judge, as he cannot know the condition of his affairs, nor how much has been already given, or is habitually given, under the solemn injunction that "the left hand shall not know what the right hand doeth." But there is a very clear expression of the will of God in the matter, and the

very form in which he signifies his pleasure is, to those who love him, the strongest command. (See Second Corinthians viii., and especially the eighth and ninth verses: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to *prove the sincerity of your love,*" etc.) *Second,* It may be said that the collections recorded in the Scriptures were *occasional*, and, therefore, are no rule for us. We answer, Many of them were, but not all. But, granting that all of them were occasional, it must be granted, also, that as often as the occasions, or their like, recur, the same principles will operate. When we have the poor no longer with us; when there shall be no longer any need of preaching the gospel at home and in foreign parts; when the dawn of the millennial glory shall chase away the shadows of the night and fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, there will be no more *occasion* for collections. But even then, we are told (Rev. xxi. 24, 25, and compare Isa. lx. 6-11), the nations shall bring their glory and honor, their gold and silver, into the New Jerusalem, in acknowledgment of the sovereign propriety of her King.

We have not been able to do more than throw out hints and suggestions; but we earnestly beseech you, beloved brethren in the Lord, to pursue them. Search the Scriptures whether these things be so. Allow us, however, to remind you that whatever may be your judgment of these statements, arguments, and interpretations, the main question is not an open one in the Presbyterian Church. This doctrine is not *new*, it is not *ours*. Not to repeat again the passage from the *Directory for Worship*, cited in the opening of this address, which takes for granted the truth of the doctrine that contributions for pious uses are of the nature of worship, and may properly accompany preaching, prayer, and singing, we ask your attention to the following additional passages: *Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXVI., Section 2: "Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellow-

ship and *communion* in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." *Form of Government*, Chapter II.: "The ordinances established by Christ, the Head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted with its proper officers, are prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding, and preaching the word of God; administering baptism and the Lord's supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving, catechising, *making collections for the poor and other pious purposes*, exercising discipline, and blessing the people."

It will be seen, by examining our standards, that the whole work of the church is provided for, not only as to the *what*, but the *how*. "The ordinances in a particular church, regularly constituted with its *proper officers*, are," etc. If we take the work of Missions, for example, we find the contribution of funds made an ordinance of the church, the distribution of these funds entrusted to officers called deacons (the very nature and uses of whose office have been almost forgotten); and the General Assembly seems to have been created, in a great degree, with a view to the conduct and support of Missions. No extra constitutional agencies, therefore, are needed, and we are happy to inform you that the Board of Foreign Missions have thrown themselves upon the faith and love of the people of God, and risked their noble cause upon the truth and energy of these great principles, by dispensing with all agents other than the officers of the churches in the regular and ordinary discharge of their duties.

We will detain you now with a short statement (without enlarging) of some consequences of this doctrine which we have endeavored to explain and defend:

First, There is nothing unnatural or inconsistent with the exercises of the day or the place in taking up collections for pious uses in our Sabbath assemblies. It is one form in which our love and gratitude to God, and our communion with one another as members of the same body, are expressed. It is an ordinance of God as much as prayer, or preaching, or singing. This caution seems to be necessary, on account of the growing tendency in some portions of the church to separate their giving from their worship, and thus to lose sight of the nature of that act. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

Second, It is the duty of every man to contribute. (Acts xi. 29.) An unconverted man may not say that he cannot do it aright, and, therefore, ought not to do it at all. Upon the same ground, he might excuse himself from the worship of God altogether, and turn atheist. Let him do it as well as he can, and seek to be found in Christ, to have his Spirit, that he may do it aright. A Christian may not say that he has very little to give, and, therefore, "it is not worth while." It is always worth while to obey the commandments of God; and until the Lord shall say that he will accept nothing under a certain amount, you cannot refuse. What human arithmetic can calculate the amount which has been brought into the treasury of the Lord by the "widow's mite"? Only let your prayers accompany your alms (Acts x. 2, 4), and be assured they will both be "a memorial before God."

Third, These things being so, the General Assembly have not transcended their powers in adopting the second and third resolutions, which *require* the lower courts to attend to this business, and to see to it that in every "particular" church this ordinance of God's house be observed.

This Presbytery has accordingly resolved that at their next spring meeting they will institute an inquiry to ascertain whether and how far the ministers and sessions have complied with the injunction of the highest court; and it may be proper to say of the Presbytery also, that in adopting this

resolution they have been guilty of no usurpation of power. If, according to our standards, this contribution is directed to be made whenever and wherever they require the sermon, prayer, and singing, it is just as competent for the Presbytery to call ministers and sessions to account for neglecting this ordinance of the house of God as it is for neglecting the reading of Scripture, prayer, singing, and the blessing of the people. The Presbytery may judge an annual or monthly collection to be equivalent to the collection every Sabbath, but they have no authority to dispense with both.

“Now, the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and we pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” *Amen.*