



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

THE ORIGIN AND OBJECTS
OF THE
SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE
SOCIETY.

PAPER READ AT A CONVERSAZIONE IN BELFAST,
THE LORD BISHOP OF DOWN & CONNOR & DROMORE IN THE CHAIR.

BY
ROBERT G. CATHER, LL.D., M.R.I.A.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
M.DCCC.LXII.

PREFACE.

THE earlier part of this paper was read before the meeting in London, at which Sir Culling E. Eardley presided, and at which the resolution to form the Systematic Beneficence Society was unanimously and prayerfully formed.

It is designed as a handbook to those who wish to understand and co-operate with us; and it is earnestly hoped that further information may, if desired, be sought from the Secretary.

THE ORIGIN AND OBJECTS
OF THE
SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE SOCIETY.

I.—ORIGIN AND OBJECTS.

How often has it been said, and how truly, that “necessity is the mother of invention,” and that “when things come to the worst, they must mend.” So it was with the discovery and application of the principles of scriptural economics—of *systematic beneficence* in this country in the year 1847, when the ordinary difficulties of maintaining the work of God were so fearfully augmented by the pressure of the Irish famine. Never was demonstration more complete than that of the efficiency of those principles, in every case, whether of individuals or Churches, where they were tried, and where the amount of their contributions were on the average increased fivefold in amount and tenfold in cheerfulness.*

More than ten years afterwards—in 1860—it was felt that although, by the publication of “Gold and the Gospel,” and “Arthur’s Lecture,” &c., &c., a literature had been created on the question, and much progress had been made in calling the attention of the

* See Appendix A.

public to their duty; still, the more rapid diffusion of the conviction and habit of devoting a stated proportion of income in weekly offerings as a part of worship to God, and as a means of extending His kingdom in the world, could only be hoped for as the result of the Divine blessing on some special agency, entirely devoted to that single object.

It should be stated here, that the Rev. John Ross had for several years been most extensively teaching weekly offerings, and that he is still so engaged, with increasing success. Also that in 1856 an organisation had been formed in America, immediately after the repetition of Mr Arthur's Lecture there, where the attention of the Churches had been aroused by a series of prize essays, very similar to "Gold and the Gospel." It was called the "American Systematic Beneficence Society," and was warmly supported by the leading clergy and laity of all Churches, and regarded as a hopeful sign of better times at hand. It is an interesting fact, that those who were prominent in that Society were also the leading agents of the blessed revival which has since visited and refreshed the Churches of America. The Secretary of the promoters of the Ulster Prize Essays, "Gold and the Gospel," had the joy of assisting at the inauguration of the American Systematic Beneficence Society in Philadelphia; and, to encourage those engaging in it, ventured to promise that, one day, a similar agency would be established in England. After waiting for several years, and rejoicing in the gracious revival which God had vouchsafed to us in Ulster, it seemed that the time had come, if ever, to attempt the establishment of such an Institution; and, after consultation at the Liverpool Missionary Conference, in

March 1860, with brethren from all parts of the United Kingdom, and afterwards in London, in April of the same year, with the most experienced conductors of the great religious societies, the British Systematic Beneficence Society was prayerfully and deliberately constituted.*

In reviewing the objects and reasons which led to its establishment, all of them only appear the more solid and conclusive after the severe toil and trial of many years. These were—the sad neglect of those parts of Scripture which contain the science and system of economics; the glaring disproportion between the well-ascertained income of the professing Christians of this country and the amount of their contributions to all religious and charitable purposes; the vast superiority in all cases of proportionate and systematic over merely impulsive giving; the great blessing which had crowned the labours already bestowed on the subject, and the progress thus made; the obvious necessity of the sustained and persistent advocacy of our principles, if they were ever to become, as they ought to be, *part of the common law of Christian society*; the immense advantage of an organisation over the most zealous efforts of individuals; the generous offer of pecuniary indemnity by a few gentlemen who undertook, in the first instance, the entire expenses of the experiment; and the incalculable benefits, in increased resources for all good purposes, in the enlarged activity of the Christian Church, and, above all, in its heightened spirituality, which would be sure to follow such a crucifixion of self, and consecration of substance to Christ and the glory of God, as our principles are designed to produce.

* See Appendix B.

II.—FIRST PRINCIPLES OF SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

The diffusion of right principles as to the stewardship of substance being the single aim of the movement, it will be expected that a statement of these principles, which we regard as scriptural, shall be here introduced.

The first of these is, that our moral accountability is based upon an original divine constitution, which has always existed, and is made up of four parts, viz., (1.) that which has regard to our *bodies*, or physical nature; (2.) to our *souls*, or spiritual nature; (3.) to our *time*, or occupations in life; and (4.) to our *property* or substance.

The second principle is, that each of these parts of moral government has been provided with a distinct institution which is fundamental to it, and is assumed in all legislation with regard to it, and that these four underlie and secure the whole moral duty of man. These institutions are the *family*, for the guidance and welfare of our physical nature; *worship*, for those of our spiritual nature; the *week*, for those of our time and labours in life; and *stewardship*, for our property.

The third principle is, that each of these institutions is sanctioned by God in such a way as to make its observance a matter of direct and everlasting obligation to Himself. For example, the family by *marriage*, worship by *mediation and sacrifice*, the week by the *sabbath*, and stewardship by the *tithe*. Each and every one of these four are of original divine appointment, universal application, and perpetual and everlasting obligation.

The fourth principle is, that the moral legislation

of the Jewish Scriptures was but the development of these four institutes into the tribe-life—the sacrificial worship—the sabbatarian observances—and the three-fold tithing of the people of God,—and as such constituted a perfect and complete moral discipline for them.

The fifth principle is, that as these institutions underlaid the peculiar and temporary requirements upon the Jews, so the former continue in full force after the latter have been finally done away. The moral obligation of the *family*, of *sacrifice* or *atonement*, of a *weekly sabbath*, and of a *stewardship tithe* remains. This is not a matter of precept so much as of principle—not of *statute* so much as of *common law*—under the perfect dispensation of Christianity.

The sixth principle is, that the offering of an ethical and scriptural proportion of our property, as indicated above, is still a part of the worship and service we owe to God, and that, as such, it is enjoined and pleaded for in the New Testament, as one of the duties to be performed by every Christian on the Lord's-day: "On the first day of the week let each of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come," (1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

The seventh principle is, that all truth and duty are one, and that the too general denial of their equal responsibility for the scriptural use of their property, as of their bodies, souls, and time, is a sad and serious injury to mankind, and that the restoration of this part of moral obligation to its due relation to those more generally acknowledged, will complete the arch of moral truth and duty, and immensely strengthen the moral sense of the whole Church of God.

We do not attempt to prove these positions, inasmuch as our object is nothing more than a statement of them here, but would refer our readers, for the proof of them, to "Gold and the Gospel," and "Arthur's Lecture," and "Candlish's Analysis."*

III.—ORGANISATION.

The first point in our organisation was to secure that it should be as *catholic*, as *representative*, and as *real* as possible, so that no *sectarian jealousy*, *personal hostility*, or *heartless help* should mar our hope of success. In all this the Committee have succeeded beyond their highest hopes. All denominations are working with us; noble and acceptable representatives of all Churches are on its staff; and their steady and fearless advocacy and support of our principles and labours have proved how sincere and cordial is the adhesion of our friends. We need only refer to the presidency of the Lord-Lieutenant; the vice-presidency of the Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore; Sir Culling Eardley (President of the Evangelical Alliance); Sir Hugh M'C. Cairns, M.P.; R. Barbour, Esq., Manchester; John Crossley, Esq., Halifax; the late Thomas Farmer, Esq., London; and Brown Douglas, Esq. (Lord Provost of Edinburgh);—gentlemen whose influence is great in their respective denominations, and some of whose names are household words in all Churches;—and the connexion with us as Honorary Secretaries or Members of Committee of Rev. Messrs Minton and Fox, of the Established Church; of Dr Cumming and Dr Hamilton, of the English Presbyterians; of Rev. Thomas Binney, Rev. John Graham, and Rev. John Ross, of the Noncon-

* Appendix C.

formists; of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, Rev. Dr Tres-trail, and Rev. W. Landels, of the Baptists; and of Rev. Dr Hannah and Rev. William Arthur and Rev. W. M. Punshon, of the Wesleyans; together with Drs Candlish, Eadie, Guthrie, Buchanan, Begg, and Robson, in Scotland; and of Revs. Drs Drew and Miller, Cooke, Edgar, and Morgan, Dr Urwick and Dr Appelbe, and Rev. R. Carson, of the Irish leading Churches. What movement, may we not ask with confidence, has in its infancy ever had such names to sanction it, and such influence to insure its success?

The constitution of the Society requires that there should be a meeting of the Committee *quarterly*, or oftener, and we are happy to state that no society has a more steady working committee than that which has met regularly in 7 Adam Street, London. There the minutes of its proceedings are regularly kept, the report of the Secretary's labours for the quarter is recorded, and the accounts are carefully reviewed and provided for. The Committee are much gratified at having just secured as their London and General Treasurers two of the most valuable helpers of the cause, the Rev. William Arthur, M.A., and James Watson, Esq., who is the senior partner of the firm of Messrs Nisbet & Co., to whom we are so much indebted for the generous publication of "Gold and the Gospel," and "Arthur's Lecture," at little more than cost price. The Committee never were more devoted to the cause than now, and have just secured Exeter Hall and Freemasons' Hall for our Conference and Annual Meeting, on the 12th and 13th May of this year.

IV.—THE FUNDS.

The organisation of the Society, with its Treasurers, implies of course an expenditure and an income, so that although we do not collect public moneys in order to distribute them, as other societies do, still we cannot carry on our simple agency without some, however moderate, expenditure. The cost of the books and other publications which have been distributed by the efforts of the founders of the Society cannot be much under *ten thousand pounds*, and would have been three times that amount if sold in the ordinary way. All this has been scattered as seed-money throughout the field of the world. The expenses of travelling for the advancement of this question during the last fourteen years cannot have been less than from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds, *and these sums have all been provided by those who felt a deep interest in the question, without once appealing to the public at large.*

The outlay during the past year for the Society cannot be much less than one thousand pounds, as follows:—Secretary's salary, £350; offices in London and Belfast, £50; travelling expenses, £200; stationery, books for presentation, &c., £50; expenses of anniversaries, £200—viz., London, £100; Manchester, £50; Edinburgh and Glasgow, £25; Newcastle, Cork, Dublin, and Belfast, in all, £25. The foregoing, with the hospitalities and personal expenditure of gentlemen attending our anniversaries, brings the outlay near to one thousand pounds, so that it will be interesting to know how this has been provided for. *The ordinary expenditure of the Society*, which is arranged at £650 for the pre-

sent, has been provided by the large subscriptions of a few gentlemen, as follows:—

Robert Barbour, Esq., Manchester, . . .	£100	0	0
Robert A. Macfie, Esq., Liverpool, . . .	100	0	0
James Barlow, Esq., Bolton, . . .	50	0	0
Thomas Farmer, Esq., (The late,) Acton, Middlesex, . . .	50	0	0
Francis Lycett, Esq., London, . . .	25	0	0
James Duncan, Esq., London, . . .	25	0	0
W. W. Pocock, Esq., London, . . .	25	0	0
A. Hall, Esq., Dublin, . . .	25	0	0
Theodore Cronhelm, Esq., Dublin, . . .	25	0	0
James Swanton, Esq., J.P., Skibbereen, . . .	25	0	0
Henry Todd, Esq., Dublin, . . .	25	0	0
Messrs Davis, Son, & Latimer, Drogheda, . . .	25	0	0
Rev. Dr Cather, Belfast, . . .	25	0	0
Friends, per Rev. Dr Cather, . . .	25	0	0
Alderman Carlisle and Friends, Belfast, . . .	25	0	0
J. W. Paul and Friends, Portadown, . . .	25	0	0
Messrs Nisbet & Co., . . .	50	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£650	0	0

The additional expenditure of the anniversaries has amounted to £204, and been met in each case separately, as below:—

LONDON.....	R. A. Macfie, Esq., . . .	£30	0	0	
”	Robert Barbour, Esq., . . .	20	0	0	
”	Rev. Wm. Arthur, . . .	5	0	0	
”	Rev. Dr Morgan, . . .	5	0	0	
”	Rev. Dr Cather, . . .	5	0	0	
”	Small Subscriptions, . . .	17	0	0	
”	Public Collections, . . .	18	0	0	
		<hr/>			
			£100	0	0
MANCHESTER...	R. Barbour, Esq., . . .	21	0	0	
”	B. B. Brierley, Esq., . . .	5	0	0	
”	W. Jackson, Esq., . . .	5	0	0	
”	T. Briggs, Esq., . . .	5	0	0	
”	Others, . . .	6	0	0	
”	Collections, . . .	8	0	0	
		<hr/>			
			50	0	0
NEWCASTLE.....	Collection, . . .	6	0	0	
”	Friends, . . .	4	0	0	
		<hr/>			
			10	0	0
GLASGOW	R. Ewing, Esq., . . .	15	0	0	
”	Subscribers of less amount, . . .	5	0	0	
		<hr/>			
			20	0	0
		<hr/>			
	Carried forward,		£180	0	0

		Brought forward,	£180	0	0
CORK.....	Subscribers,		2	0	0
BELFAST.....	Thos. Sinclair, Esq.,	£5	0	0	
„	Chas. Finlay and others,	6	0	0	
„	Balance,	4	0	0	
„	Collections,	1	0	0	
			16	0	0
DUBLIN.....	Subscriptions,		6	0	0
	Total expense of Meetings,		£204	0	0
	Balance, £4.				

It will be clearly seen that, in order to work the Society efficiently, this amount, in addition to the ordinary income, should be provided for by subscriptions and donations. And further, that, in order to have a margin or small surplus to meet failure of subscriptions, or to extend our operations, it is desirable that the income of the Society should if possible be not less than one thousand pounds. This sum would be amply sufficient to work one of the most important and remunerating fields of usefulness in the Christian Church.

The Committee have had the subject of the permanent support of the Society under careful and repeated consideration, and respectfully recommend that the basis of the Society's support be extended, and that subscriptions of less amount be sought from a larger though limited number. They suggest that a hundred subscribers of £10 per annum, or two hundred subscribers of £5, might be easily found; and that probably one-fourth of these might be obtained in Ireland; that a like number might be had in Scotland; and that the remainder might be gotten in England. The nature of the subject is likely to limit for the present the number of the supporters of the Society, not only to the liberal, but to those who are thoughtful and far-seeing amongst these; and it is

therefore necessary not to spread the contributions over too large a number. Surely amongst those who really desire to see the principles of proportion and system generally adopted, and who know how immense the funds that would be thereby secured for all Christian purposes, there will be a hearty readiness to appropriate a portion of what they give to God on principle to the wider spread of their own "more blessed" views and ways.

V.—THE OPERATIONS.

The sphere of the Society's operations is so wide, that it will not be possible to do more than glance at the various points, and to dwell for an instant on those which are most important and influential. The Secretary's labours during the year have not only reached the remotest portions of the United Kingdom, but have been extended by a rapid run to France, Switzerland, and Italy, in each of which he has had most favourable opportunities of promoting the principles of scriptural giving to God.

1. IN IRELAND—where the Society originated, and where its principles are steadily working a mighty change in the thoughts and habits of the people of Christ in all Churches—by meetings, lectures, and sermons, the public have been appealed to in nearly all the principal cities and towns of the kingdom. For example, in the south of Ireland services have been held in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Cork, Bandon, and Skibbereen; and in the north the Secretary has preached, lectured, and held meetings in Belfast, Drogheda, Cavan, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Lisburn, Londonderry, Enniskillen, Strabane, Portadown, Larne, Ballymena, Hyde Park, Ballyclare, Donagha-

dee, and Newtonards. In all these places the Society has been received with favour, whilst the newspapers in Belfast, Dublin, and Cork have rendered us invaluable service by the reports of our various meetings. It is not too much to say, therefore, that there are very few of the intelligent Protestants of this country who have not had their attention in some degree turned to the question—“*Am I a faithful steward of my Master's goods? How much do I owe scripturally to Him, and to the poor for His sake?*” One clergyman in Belfast, not long since, assured the Secretary “*that the need of the Society did not appear to him, as the principle of it was so generally admitted here; indeed, no one that he met questioned the obligation of giving a tenth at least to God.*” Another gentleman in Belfast told him “*that there was a great deal of prejudice against the Society, as it was regarded as forging chains for them, or preparing an engine to extract a tenth from them.*” Now, I suppose the truth is between these contrary statements, and that while the better disposed admit, the less generous resent, the power and progress of our principles. Several cases of an encouraging kind it may be well to state. One is that of a venerable gentleman, of some eighty years, who attended the last conversazione, and who immediately set about the ordering of his affairs, so as to give his tenth at least in future; but, alas! before a month, he was called away. Another was that of a gentleman who, convinced at one of our meetings, has since several times given, unasked, sums of £5 for the poor, stating “*he cannot get rid of his sacred money now.*” Another is that of a gentleman who met Dr Cather in the train, and

said, "Some years ago I was led to adopt the principle of a tenth, and my first was £3, my second £10, my next £30, and my last tenth was £200 a year." He had also gotten his soul converted, and was now an earnest and happy Christian. Another gentleman said he had found it simple and easy to give the tenth, and thereby to meet all claims upon him, since he had adopted the plan of tithing LAST year's income, and paying his contributions on that scale for the current year. Another gentleman assured us that "*scores of Belfast merchants regularly tithed their profits for Christ, and that he had no doubt it would yet become universal in all Churches.*"

2. IN SCOTLAND a most congenial soil has been found. There the people are trained to refer everything "to the law and the testimony," and they therefore listen with absorbing attention to anything which claims to be part of scriptural truth and duty. In addition to this, the competition of Churches is so great, that their financial resources are a matter of vital importance to all denominations. One leading mind amongst the Churches said—"We have here tried pretty nearly what the *external screw* can do, and we are at a dead stand; we can do no more, and yet we need money for all home purposes, and have scarcely yet begun to do anything worthily for the heathen. Now you come to shew us what the *internal spring* can do, and you are most heartily welcome. You never came to a better place, and you could not have come at a better time." This in substance was the resolution come to at a meeting for consultation of all denominations, held in the Bible Society House in Edinburgh in October 1860. Dr Guthrie presided, and declared he believed "*these*

principles would soon double all their contributions to every good work." In compliance with the request of this meeting, the Secretary returned in December 1860, and after a fortnight's work in Edinburgh, was asked to address the Sustentation Fund Committee of the Free Church. The Committee, which represents the largest income of any voluntary organisation amongst the Churches of the United Kingdom, requested him to visit and address meetings and preach in the principal Free Church congregations in Scotland, which he did in March 1861, including Edinburgh, Ayr, Dumfries, Kilmarnock, Greenock, Paisley, Glasgow, Stirling, Perth, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, and Aberdeen. In this long and arduous tour he was accompanied by the Rev. John Ross, and by the vigorous and practised help of that devoted and successful fellow-labourer, was able to stir the communities he visited in a most remarkable and cheering way. The result of this visit was a most gratifying and pressing invitation to Mr Ross and the Secretary to address the General Assembly of the Free Church in May last. Never, in the humble labours of his life, did your Secretary feel so honoured and humbled as when Mr Ross and he stood before the venerable Assembly of that Church which Chalmers so dearly loved and so well instructed in economics, in order to place before them the old and mighty claims of God upon the substance of His Church and people, for His service, and for the extension of His fear and His salvation in a lost and ruined world. He can never be too thankful to God for His help on that occasion, and for the favour which He gave us in the eyes of His honoured servants, many of whom, in 1843, had taken joyfully what they

regarded as the spoiling of their goods, and gladly suffered what seemed to be the loss of all things for His name's sake. The Moderator, in his closing address, was pleased to speak "*of our Society as destined, he believed, to work a mighty revolution in the ideas and habits of all Christian people in regard to the use of their property; and of its principles as safe and sound and scriptural, and, when properly considered, as calculated not to interfere with, but to promote the true spirit of gospel liberty—the blended spirit of law and love.*"* The Assembly requested us to revise the report of our speeches for the press, and have since published them in a pamphlet, and distributed them by thousands throughout Scotland; and in addition to this, a committee was formed, which has secured the services of the Rev. John Ross to visit the remainder of their churches, they finding all the expenses of salary, travelling, &c., during six months of the year.

One effect of the noble manner in which the Free Church has taken up our Society has been seen in the increased attention which other denominations are paying to its teachings. The Secretary has recently been requested to address a meeting in Glasgow of some six hundred elders and principal members, twenty from each of the thirty congregations of the United Presbyterians in Glasgow; and a similar proposition has been made to him from Edinburgh, where three hundred elders and others are expected to assemble. He is also invited to attend the Synod of the same respected Church in May next, and to address their great missionary anniversary, in the Music Hall, on Systematic Beneficence. Finally,

* Appendix D.

there has just recently been forwarded, at the instance of our Society, to a gifted orator a requisition from the leading clergy of all Churches in Glasgow, to deliver in the City Hall, at his convenience, a lecture on "Weekly Offerings for Christ and the Poor;" and when it is mentioned that the signatures to it include those of Drs Norman Macleod and Caird of the Established Church of Scotland; Dr Robert Buchanan and Rev. William Arnot of the Free; Drs Robson and Eadie of the United Presbyterian Church; Rev. Mr Batchelor of the Independents; Rev. Mr Flindt of the Episcopal Church; and Rev. Mr Lambert of the Wesleyans, together with those of Messrs Burns, Sir James Anderson, M.P., &c., &c., besides the Lord Provost, who promises to preside, it will be seen that the question has commanded the attention and earnest co-operation of the noblest men in that great and flourishing city of the west.

3. IN ENGLAND our labours have not been yet bestowed in any proportion to the numbers, wealth, or worth of its inhabitants. In fact, the field there is so immense, and the impossibility of any amount of work shewing upon it, has led us, in the first instance at least, to give our chief attention to Ireland and Scotland. This is not unusual in campaigning, so that after lesser battles the great decisive fields are fought. A noble preparation has been made in England for our labours by the distribution among 5000 ministers, some years ago, of "Gold and the Gospel," and by the presentation to every clergyman (20,000) in England of the tract "What is Mine, and What is God's."

It is true that in *Cornwall* we did attempt to grapple with English work, and a noble opportunity

we had, in November 1860, of spreading our principles. For twenty-one days successively in that county (where the vast majority are miners, and belong to the Methodist body) we addressed enthusiastic meetings, and left, after forming, at a meeting in the Court-house at Camborne, a county association for Cornwall.*

In May last we had also sermons in London by Rev. S. Minton, M.A.; Rev. Dr Candlish, Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, Rev. Dr Morgan, Rev. J. Ross, and others, and several nobly influential public meetings, as our inaugural services in London. Sir Hugh Cairns, M.P., made a beautiful and impressive speech at the public breakfast in the Freemasons' Hall; and the meeting in St James's Hall (at which the Lord Bishop of Down was prevented from presiding by family affliction) was all we could have hoped for; while the reports in the religious newspapers, including the *Record*, *Watchman*, *Patriot*, *Freeman*, *Non-conformist*, and *Wesleyan Times*, were of the utmost value as a means of diffusing our principles.†

Since that time we have had services in *Carlisle*, at which Dean Close ably presided; in *Rochdale*, where ministers of most denominations have joined our Society; in *Sheffield*, where Rev. Dr Sale, the vicar; Rev. Dr Waddy, President of Wesley College; Rev. J. H. James, and other ministers, have cordially united with us; and an auxiliary is just formed, (two thousand of "Arthur's Lecture" being at once distributed by the local committee;) in *Newcastle*, where a most influential meeting was held, that was largely attended by the ministers of the English Wesleyan Conference, which was in session there at the time;

* See Appendix E.

† See Appendix F.

in *Huddersfield*, where 1000 of "Arthur's Lecture" have been ordered; in *Crewe* and *Nantwich* also; and lastly, in *Manchester*, where just lately there has been a glorious meeting in the Free-Trade Hall, the Mayor presiding, some two thousand five hundred present, and such telling addresses having been delivered as have made the deepest impression on the public mind. The *Guardian*, *Examiner*, *Courier*, and *Weekly Press* all nobly helped us by admirable reports, and the London and provincial religious papers have generally copied the account of the meeting. From letters since received, I learn that they are ripe, and asking for the formation of a committee there: so that the great capital of the manufacturing districts may be said to have been won, in some measure at least, to our views.*

Still the invitations and openings for labour in England are multiplying—for example, to Leeds, Liverpool, London, &c. &c.; so that, ere long, it will be necessary to employ an additional agent, or the centre of our operations will have to be transferred to London, where our approaching anniversary promises to be of still greater interest and importance than the last. The Rev. G. T. Fox, M.A., Durham; the Rev. Thomas Binney, the Rev. John Rattenbury, (President of the Wesleyan Conference,) the Rev. William Arthur, M.A.; the Rev. Dr Cumming, the Rev. Dr Hamilton, the Rev. Dr Cooke, the Rev. W. Landels, and the Rev. W. M. Punshon, M.A., have kindly engaged to preach our annual sermons, or take part at our meetings.

* Appendix G.

4. THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, &c.—A word in conclusion as to the opening for our views and labours on the Continent and abroad. The Secretary, being invited by the Committee of the Conference of Christians of all Nations at Geneva to address the Conference in the Cathedral on Systematic Beneficence, held a meeting there, which served to interest many in our operations. Dr D'Aubigné, in particular, asked us to return, and promised to aid us in organising a society for Switzerland. Amongst the Waldenses at Turin, La Tour, and Florence, we also preached and spoke—the Rev. Dr Revel, Professor of Theology at Florence, interpreting; and both going and returning through Paris, we had favourable opportunities of enlisting the sympathy and co-operation of leading French and other Christians. By sending to these our publications and reports of our meetings, as they take place, we are preparing them to take up the question for themselves ere long.

It should also be stated that we have had earnest inquiries and pledges from *Canada* and *Australia* and *India*, which shew the attention we are, under God, awakening to the truth, and that in those great countries Branch Societies will ere long be formed.*

VI.—RESULTS.

And now, after fourteen years' work, in preparing the ground for the Society, the expenditure of much money, and travelling perhaps some forty to fifty thousand miles, (twenty thousand of them during this

* Appendix H.

year,) the question of results is one which is sure to force itself upon the mind. And yet there are several circumstances which make it not so easy to answer. For example, the Society does not collect the contributions of those it instructs or persuades to give a due proportion of their income; and cannot therefore publish the amounts. Then it does not exact pledges or enroll members, so as to be able to shew the number of its adherents or disciples. Then, further, there are so many agencies in operation to stimulate and increase liberality, that it is difficult for any single one of them to claim the credit of the combined result. Besides, there is often in the best-constituted minds an instinctive and even morbid reluctance to acknowledge the amount or scale of their contributions; so that it will be evident we must be satisfied without those palpable and even direct results which thoughtlessness might prompt us to demand.

Still it is impossible to labour on without due encouragement, and it is certainly given us in no small measure, but yet in forms appropriate to the nature and object of our labours. For example,—our access and welcome in the various places we visit—the freedom of the pulpits of all denominations—the attention and approval of the numerous and often large congregations we address—the declared adhesion of ministers and leading Christians, in every place to which we go—their readiness to share the responsibility of our principles, and join in committees to promote their adoption, and widely to scatter our publications at their own cost—their earnest entreaties to repeat our visits—their encouragement to us to proceed—their fervent prayers for the Divine blessing on the Society and its agents,—all these have resulted

in the deepest conviction, that "the best of all is, God is with us" in our work, and that it must, and will, at length, most gloriously prevail.

But although this be our conviction who witness and feel all the encouragement referred to, still it is desirable to refer — with extreme care and delicacy — to some more striking and practical evidences that all "our labour has not been in vain in the Lord."

IN IRELAND, where some fourteen years ago the work began, while we do not ascribe the following results directly to our labours, yet its influence may be traced in the Wesleyan body, *whose ministerial scale of support has been raised to double its former standard throughout the whole kingdom, and whose noble increase of Agency Fund has increased the working capital of the body by little short of fifty thousand pounds.* It may also be seen in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, *in the improved stipends of their ministers generally, and in the great Church and Manse Fund, which cannot have increased their working capital as a Church by much less than one hundred thousand pounds.* And may it not still further be seen in the rapid and generous erection, at the cost of gentlemen of large means, of such beautiful churches as are springing up on all sides of our noble town, and in the spirited proposal by the members of the Established Church to expend £100,000 on their new Cathedral?* Let us hope that this spirit of growing generosity will still more widely extend, and that, as in America it has been already followed by that blessed revival of religion with which our native land has been also signally favoured, the Lord

* Appendix I.

may “open the windows of heaven,” and again and again “pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

IN ENGLAND there are, even in our own time, many examples of the noble elevation of character and public usefulness which are the result of our principles, if not of our advocacy of them. The late Thomas Farmer, Esq., began life by giving a tenth, and prospering, gave two-tenths, three-tenths, four-tenths, and five-tenths, till at length he continued in business only to be able to give it all away. The Messrs — have prospered by this principle, and are amongst the largest givers and most honoured Christian men in England, (one of them having lately given, it is said, £100,000, as the value of a park to the people of —.) T—— T——, Esq. of B——, lately gave away £12,000 to catholic objects, being the tenth of a property he had been left by one who had observed his liberal habits with his own smaller means. Thirteen of the mill-owners of B——, who act on our principles, lately originated the erection of additional churches for the workers in their town, at the cost of £30,000, as the result of their tithing their mill property for Christ. A scheme, involving an outlay of £100,000 for additional metropolitan chapel accommodation, has just been set on foot by two subscriptions of £3000 each, from two self-tithers—one of them a distinguished pupil and advocate of our Society. Surely, then, in view of these and many other cases that happen to be known, we may fairly conclude that vast benefit is silently resulting from our labours, which the great day alone will declare, and we may well “thank God, and take courage.”*

* Appendix J.

CONCLUSION.

The design of this paper is to diffuse a deep and general conviction that this movement is of God, and that the indications of His favour towards it are so wide and strong, as to justify its promoters in earnestly but respectfully calling upon those who mark the signs of the times to take the principles advocated into their immediate consideration.

Hitherto our readers may have remained ignorant and indifferent with regard to them; but though "the times of this ignorance God has winked at," it will be quite another matter wilfully to disregard the evidence of truth and the conviction of duty when it is providentially presented to them.

If difficulties and objections arise at the outset of your inquiries, let us intreat you to persevere in the study of the *principles* till you have mastered them. Then give them an honest trial, and their advantage and blessedness will be so realised, that all minor difficulties will gradually but certainly disappear "as clouds before the rising sun." *

RESOLUTIONS.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted after the reading of the foregoing paper; and they are subjoined here, as embodying the latest judgment of those who have now for fifteen years been united in promoting Systematic Beneficence:—

I. That the success with which it has pleased God to crown the labours of the Systematic Beneficence Society is cause for devout thanksgiving, and for abundant

* Appendix K.

encouragement in the further prosecution of its great and catholic mission to the Church and the world.

II. That the best thanks of the friends and promoters of Systematic Beneficence are justly due to those gentlemen who have originated, and, with noble generosity, heretofore supported the Society; but that it is only reasonable and right that this good work should henceforth be shared by all those who are able and willing to contribute to its support.*

III. That it is desirable to form an Auxiliary to the British Systematic Beneficence Society in Ulster; that a public meeting should be held every year in Belfast; and that the following gentlemen, with power to add to their number, be requested to act as the Officers and Committee for the Ulster Auxiliary:—

President—The Lord Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore.

Vice-Presidents—Rev. P. S. Henry, D.D., President, Queen's College;
Rev. H. Cooke, D.D., LL.D., Principal, Presbyterian College;
Thomas Sinclair, Esq., J.P., Ald.

Honorary Secretaries—Rev. Dr Miller, Vicar of Belfast;
Rev. Dr Morgan; Rev. Daniel Macafee.

Secretary—Rev. R. G. Cather, LL.D., M.R.I.A.

Committee—

W. Ewart, jun., Esq., Ald.	Rev. John Edgar, D.D., LL.D.
William Mullan, Esq., Ald.	Rev. R. J. Bryce, LL.D.
James Carlisle, Esq., Ald.	Rev. W. Johnston.
John Workman, Esq.	Rev. Charles Seaver.
Jonathan Cordukes, Esq.	Rev. R. Wallace.
Thomas G. Lindsay, Esq.	Rev. T. T. N. Hull.
Charles Finlay, Esq.	Rev. C. L. Grant.
William L. Finlay, Esq.	Rev. E. Best.
Alexander Moore, Esq.	Rev. W. Gorman.
David Johnston, Esq.	Rev. J. Bagley.
J. Cassidy, Esq., LL.D.	Rev. R. H. Henry.
J. G. M'Ghee, Esq.	Rev. J. Turnock.
W. Girdwood, Esq.	Rev. W. Craig.
J. M'Calder, Esq.	Rev. J. Killen.
John Getty, Esq.	Rev. W. Moore.
J. Spotten, Esq.	Rev. H. Hanna.
	Rev. J. Moran.

* Appendix L.

APPENDIX.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A.—Examples of Early Success,	52
B.—Prospectus of the Society,	52
C.—Synopsis of Principles and Arguments,	5
D.—Testimonies of Dr Candlish, <i>Free Church Magazine</i> , <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , and <i>Irish Evangelist</i> ,	56
E.—Speech of George Smith, Esq., LL.D., F.R.A.S., of Cam- borne,	57
F.—Speeches of Sir Hugh M'C. Cairns, M.P., &c., in London,	58
G.—Progress of Systematic Beneficence in Manchester,	62
H.—Growth of Scriptural Views of Giving Abroad,	62
I.—Probable Pecuniary Result of our Principles in Ulster already,	62
J.—Estimate of Tenth of Whole Income of People of the United Kingdom,	63
K.—Analysis and Scheme of Expenditure,	63
L.—New Subscriptions towards Systematic Beneficence Society,	63

APPENDIX.

A.

Examples of Early Success in Promoting a Higher Scale of Christian Giving.

1. In *Drogheda*, the immediate result of the public teaching of the truth was an increase of nearly 200 per cent. The gross local contributions had been before but £60 per annum, but became at once £160 per annum.

2. In *Carlow*, a similar rate of increase took place.

3. In *Londonderry*, a still larger increase—quite 300 per cent. ; and in this place, eight years after, a very large increase was on the same principles obtained.

4. In numerous other places very striking additions are made to the previous scale of giving, as in *Coleraine*, *Belfast*, and *Portadown*, while a general increase has been gradually taking place as convictions of the duty increased.

5. The most remarkable example, however, was in *Magherafelt*, which was formerly regarded as a proverb of poverty as a charge. The figures will furnish the most exact idea of the result of the experiment in this case. In the year 1852, the entire funds were but £37, 15s., whereas, in the following year, they became £159, being more than four times the former rate of giving. As evidence that all this was done on principle, rather than impulse or solicitation, extra contributions of upwards of £1000 were made for chapel and other purposes ; and the improved scale has continued ever since. This is regarded by all who knew it as a *perfect demonstration* of our success.

B.

Prospectus of the Society.

Objects.—1. To encourage professing Christians to set apart a stated proportion, say not less than a tenth, of their means and income for religious and charitable purposes. 2. To induce them to adopt generally the system of “Weekly Offerings,” as suggested by the Apostle of the Gentiles :—“On the

first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." 3. To inculcate a sense of individual responsibility with regard to the wise and effectual application of our voluntary offerings to God.

Organisation.—1. The Society to consist of Christians of various evangelical denominations who approve of its objects. 2. Its affairs to be managed by a president, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, and committee, consisting of not less than fifteen members. 3. The Committee to meet early in January, April, July, and October, five to form a quorum; and an annual conference of the subscribers and friends to be held during the month of April in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Belfast, or such other central place as may be convenient, at which the report of the Society shall be submitted, and its officers elected.

Operations.—1. To advocate, by means of the platform, press, and pulpit, the principles of the Society, and promote their practical adoption. 2. To conduct, from a central office, the correspondence of the Society, and seek to increase its influence throughout the empire. 3. To employ such other agency as the Committee may deem expedient, and enlist the co-operation of all who may be disposed to forward its objects.

C.

Synopsis of Principles of the Society.

I. THE GENERAL POSITIONS IT MAINTAINS.

1. That the Scriptures, as all-sufficient, contain not only evidences, doctrines, ethics, and institutions, but also a system of economics. 2. That while all the others are admitted, this also, although generally overlooked, is revealed with sufficient clearness in the Word of God. 3. That the leading axioms of Scriptural economics are as follow:—(1.) That man is but a steward—a servant who is intrusted with, accountable for, and bound to glorify God with, all he *is* and *has*. (2.) That three classes of objects have been devolved by God on His servants, for each of which they are required to provide in due proportion, viz. :—the cause of Christ, and the poor; their own and their family's present support; their old age, sickness, and dependent relatives. (3.) That the proportion which we dedicate to God as a first-fruit of our income, shall not be less in general than what is inferrible from the standard and examples of Holy Scripture. 4. That providential circumstances are now pressing these convictions on the universal Church of Christ. (1.) A large portion of the churches are unendowed. (2.) The charities of the country are very vast. (3.) The mission-field is now open to the whole world, with its 1,200,000,000 of inhabitants, which it is utterly in vain to

hope to overtake without the exercise of the highest Christian *principles*, as well as motives. 5. These principles, if generally carried out, would supply ample resources for all good purposes. They are universally applicable, and when duly considered, are very acceptable to Christians in general ; and it is evidently "the time" in this respect to "favour Zion," for her people "take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof."

II. THE PARTICULAR TESTIMONY IT BEARS.

"To encourage professing Christians to set apart a stated proportion, say not less than a tenth, of their means and income for religious and charitable purposes."

1. *Facts on which the Evidence of this Claim is Based.*—

1. Traces of the existence of the dedication of the tenth amongst the most ancient nations. (See Selden, Adam Clarke, &c., &c.) 2. The patriarchs Abraham and Jacob are spoken of as familiar with it ; and the patriarch Job is represented as exercising a large beneficence. 3. It was formerly embodied with the Jewish system of economics, and became the basis of the large and exceptional claim of not less than a fifth of their means which was made upon them, whilst not inconsistent with the freewill-offerings which they were encouraged to present to God. 4. There is nothing in the New Testament which relaxes the right and claim of God to the original minimum of *one-tenth*, which, as it existed before the Jewish system, cannot by its removal be displaced from the sure foundation on which it has ever rested. 5. There are reasons which explain the absence of any injunctions with regard to it during the continuance of the Jewish dispensation ; but when these were removed, it was adopted by the Christian Church, and the general recognition of it by the natural conscience and common sense of mankind has proved the main support of Christianity in the world. 6. The want of its full operation on the consciences of individual Christians explains their reluctance to contribute largely of their substance, leaves them without a guide for their givings, or a test of covetousness, and cripples the Church in her benevolent missions in the world. 7. The progress already made in the diffusion of these principles within the last ten years encourages the hope that the Divine blessing rests upon their advocacy, and that their general adoption will ere long abundantly repay the efforts required to secure it.

2. *Arguments inferrible from these Premises.*—1. From the *analogy* of the tenth to marriage, sacrifices, and Sabbath. 2. From the *rationale* of the tenth, as it recognises God's sovereignty and man's stewardship, and provides securely for Divine ordinances. 3. From its *requirement*, in all

dispensations, by God as part of His worship. 4. From its *adaptation*, as compared with Jewish claims, to Christianity. 5. From its *strong hold on the common sense* and conscience of mankind. 6. From its continued *necessity* for the service of God.

3. *Objections to the General Claim of a Minimum Tenth.*—1. It is legal ; 2. Jewish ; 3. Dictatorial ; 4. Oppressive ; 5. Too little ; 6. Men will stop at it ; 7. It is arithmetical.

4. *Recommendations of the Dedication of a Tenth.*—1. Its antiquity ; 2. Honesty ; 3. Humbling influence ; 4. Effectiveness ; 5. Excellence ; 6. Its scripturalness ; 7. Its reflex advantages.

III. THE PRACTICAL MODE WHICH IT RECOMMENDS.

“The habit of weekly storing for God is an important part of Sabbath homage to Christ.” 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

1. *Facts on which the Authenticity of this Method rests.*—1. The distribution of human life into *weekly portions*, alike for work, worship, and beneficence, by the Divine Word. 2. The property of men is the result of their six days’ work out of seven ; and it is out of the gains of those six days that all their offerings must be made. 3. The apostle embodied these principles in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, and primitive Christians adopted them. 4. The neglect of them lessens the gifts of the Church, and increases the difficulty of their augmentation.

2. *Arguments in Support of Weekly Storing.*—1. Its harmony with the habits of society ; 2. Its convenience for the masses and for all others ; 3. Its immense productiveness ; 4. Its excellent moral discipline ; 5. Its reflex economical advantages ; 6. Its scriptural authority ; 7. Its apostolical examples.

3. *Objections.*—1. Paltry ; 2. Artificial ; 3. Mechanical ; 4. Secularising ; 5. Troublesome ; 6. Distasteful ; 7. Novel.

4. *Recommendations.*—1. Simple ; 2. New Testament character ; 3. Spiritualising ; 4. Excellent.

IV. THE APPORTIONMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH IT SUGGESTS.

“Each of the objects which Scripture requires us to sustain should, in due proportion, be considered and provided for as part of the duty of stewardship.”

1. *Objects.*—1. *The support of ordinances* ; including ministry, sanctuaries, and books, viz., Bibles and religious periodicals, &c. 2. *The relief of distress*, by physical, educational, and moral benefactions. 3. *The extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom in the world*, by home, foreign, and international missions.

2. *These afford full opportunity for all our gifts.*

3. *Their several claims are all consistent with, and their interests inseparable from, each other.*—And on their due main-

tenance is suspended the fulfilment of all God's promises for the salvation of the human race.

D.

Estimate of our Principles by the Free Church Assembly.

In May 1861, the Sustentation Committee of the Free Church of Scotland invited the Rev. John Ross of Hackney, and the Rev. Dr Cather, to address the Assembly on Systematic Beneficence, and thus to complete the important labours which they had been engaged in at the request of the committee during the previous winter and spring. In his closing address to the Assembly, the distinguished Moderator, Dr Candlish, gave expression to the general sentiments of the Assembly as follows:—

“I may be allowed also to express the high satisfaction with which I heard the Sustentation Fund of our Church associated with the assertion of a principle of Christian liberality—(cheers)—new, I fear, to most of us, but really, I believe, old as Christianity itself. I cannot do justice to the feelings of intense delight with which, in common with all of you, I listened to the simple and noble eloquence of the friends who then addressed us. The more important point, however, is the doctrine taught by them as to the duty of systematic giving. That doctrine, as I am persuaded, is fitted to revolutionise, to a large extent, the habits of the Christian community. To give by fits and starts—to give upon casual or occasional impulses—to give in reply to special and urgent solicitations—to give as if giving were a pain to the giver, and a favour to the asker, is too much the present practice. What it is proposed to substitute is the practice of giving out of a consecrated store, laid up by God's people from week to week as God may prosper them. I say from week to week, because that is the rule suggested. The principle, however, is not restricted to that rule, but is compatible with any fixed periodical rule of consecration, provided only it be real, and not nominal. *What is wanted is, that there shall be the setting apart, with due consideration and earnest prayer, the portion of income as it comes in, that ought to be regarded as the Lord's—not merely in the sense in which all a Christian's substance is the Lord's, but in the further sense of its being a fund to be used for the Lord's immediate service, and not ordinarily available for any other purpose.* Rightly explained, and guarded against all risk of the Pharisaic abuse of the commandment of God being made void by the pretence of *Corban*, or a gift to him, and inspired and baptized with the true spirit of free Christian love, the principle seems to be not only safe and sound, but fruitful of incalculable benefit in all Christian enterprises. I hold it to be a good omen, as regards our Sustentation Fund, that it is the first to which it is attempted to apply the principle. I hope that the application of it in that line will be complete and prompt. And if it be so, I would anticipate, not only the elevation of this great central and staple institute of our Church to a far higher platform than it has hitherto

occupied, but a far wider reform pervading the whole range of the Church's action, and breathing into it Heaven's own spirit of blended law and love, the secret of true benevolence, as of all true liberty."

"The general adoption of the principle before us would change the condition of the Church and the world. The discovery of the law of gravitation, and the application of steam to its manifold uses in modern society, have not produced a greater change in the philosophy and physical condition of mankind, than the practice of the views of pecuniary contribution here submitted to the public would effect on the life, energy, and usefulness of the Church of Christ."—*Testimony of the Free Church of Scotland Magazine.*

"One of the very best and most procreative of all modern societies. The 'Systematic Benevolence Society' took its rise in Ireland after the Irish famine, and now has for its president a Christian layman—the Earl of Carlisle, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. It assiduously advocates the stately setting apart of *at least one-tenth* of a man's income, as well as the revival of the weekly offertory according to plainest scriptural injunction and primitive practice."—*Extract from the Liverpool Courier.*

"Now, the Systematic Society says in effect, 'If you will have religious ordinances maintained in efficiency at home; if you will have the sick attended to, the ignorant educated, and the destitute relieved; and if you will have the gospel preached throughout all nations of the world—you must adopt our principles.' And is this the language of sober truth? or, is it the language of mere bombast, or of wild fanaticism, or of evanescent, though well-meaning enthusiasm? We solemnly believe it to be the language of simple untarnished truth, and because we thus believe, we cannot refrain from speaking."—*Extract from Rev. James Bass's Letter in Irish Evangelist.*

E.

Extract from the Address of George Smith, LL.D., F.R.A.S., &c., &c., as Chairman of a Public Meeting on Systematic Benevolence, in Camborne, Cornwall.

"I have devoted much of my life to the study of such questions, and confess to a feeling of increasing perplexity and discouragement as to the prospect of the speedy conversion of the world. The increase of the population of the world seems to be more rapid than the ratio of increase of conversions to Christianity; so that there are more heathens in the world at this day than there perhaps ever were before. I do not say this to depreciate the efforts of the Churches in regard to missions; for I regard them as having been characterised by vigour and wisdom, and, through the Divine blessing, most cheering success, considering the scale of their operations and the amount of their agency.

"But there are two great problems which I have never been able to solve, and which have been only increasingly

perplexing to me. These are—‘*How, without a miracle, the pecuniary resources necessary for the conversion of the world can ever be obtained?*’ And, ‘*How the life and spirituality of the Church could sustain and survive the pressure of solicitation, which would be required to extract them, according to the present ideas and habits on this subject?*’

“*To both these questions I acknowledge that I have to-night received a scriptural, and, therefore, perfectly conclusive answer. And I am most grateful for it.*”

As chairman of the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Exeter Hall, Dr Smith has just now said, “that an entirely new scale of giving must be adopted.” He recommended Systematic Beneficence strongly.

F.

Speeches at Inaugural Services.

In our last we reported the First Anniversary of this Society, which was held in St James’s Hall on the evening before our publication. On the previous Monday morning a breakfast meeting was held at the Freemasons’ Tavern. Sir Hugh M’C. Cairns, M.P., presided, and was surrounded, amongst others, by the Revs. Dr M’Crie, T. Nolan, W. M. Bunting, J. Ross, Dr Candlish, Dr Hamilton, W. Arthur, Dr Cather, Dr Morgan, J. Graham, A. M. Henderson, J. W. Borland, G. Cullen, T. B. Whiting, W. Cardall, J. Davis, S. Minton, J. S. Hamilton; Messrs R. A. M’Fie of Liverpool, J. Henderson of Glasgow, Willans of Huddersfield, Garland of Redruth, Hawkins of London, and Dr Junot of Switzerland.

The CHAIRMAN (Sir Hugh Cairns, M.P.) said he had given a cheerful assent to the request which had been made to him to preside at the inauguration breakfast of the Systematic Beneficence Society, for two reasons,—the first a personal, the second a local one. The personal reason was, that he always entertained a strong conviction that the principles enunciated by that Society were sound and true, and that it was on these principles alone that they could look hopefully for the sustained and vigorous maintenance of the charitable institutions of the land. The local reason was, that it was in the neighbourhood of the town which he had the honour to represent in Parliament that the proceedings which led to the institution of that Society had been originated. About ten years ago, a number of gentlemen in the north of Ireland, who were of opinion that steps should be taken to bring before the Christian public the duty of contributing to charitable objects in proportion to their means, joined together, and offered certain prizes for the best essays upon that subject. Fifty essays were sent in for competition, to five of which prizes were awarded. It was also in the town of Belfast that at a public meeting, presided over by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, a lecture had been delivered by

the Rev. William Arthur upon the same subject,—a lecture of which he might say that, for sustained argument, felicity of expression, and the insight which it gave into the subject, had never been surpassed. (Cheers.) In explaining the objects of the Society, he might say, in the first place, that it addressed those who already admitted the Christian obligation of contributing to charitable purposes, and that it endeavoured to give form and distinctness to what was an admitted duty. *The argument upon which the Society rested was quite irresistible.* The duty of devoting a portion of one's income to works of charity and benevolence being admitted, how ought the Christian to set about the fulfilment of that duty? Clearly in the same manner as a wise man would proceed with regard to the other expenditure of the year. A prudent person could generally estimate, with a near approach to accuracy, what the receipts of the year would be, and to what purposes they would be devoted; and unless the claims of charity were included in that estimate, they were very likely to be either neglected, or only imperfectly met. (Hear, hear.) The probability would be that those claims would be dealt with as those for which no actual fund had been provided, and which must therefore be left to the impulse of the moment. *The Society, in specifying one-tenth as the proportion to be devoted to God, must not be understood as fixing the maximum amount. It was thought necessary to fix a minimum proportion, and he thought the Society, in naming the tenth part, had proceeded upon very safe, just, and scriptural ground. Any person who examined the Scriptures with sincerity and candour, could not fail to arrive at the conclusion that, wholly independent of, and anterior to, that which was called the Mosaic law and the Jewish economy, just as Christians were called upon to devote a seventh part of their time, so men were required, upon scriptural precedent, to devote a tenth part of their means to the glory of God.* (Cheers.) There was another circumstance in connexion with the Society which ought not to be forgotten. In the present day, there was a great number of charitable institutions of all kinds urging their claims upon the public, and they were to a certain extent rivals of one another. There was always a danger when the claims of one institution were warmly advocated in any neighbourhood, that other charitable societies should suffer in consequence. A striking example of that was shewn during the late severe winter. He had been told that, in consequence of the very warm and liberal response to the urgent appeals then made to relieve temporal distress, some of the well-known and established societies had suffered to a considerable extent. *But one thing could be said of this Society, which could be affirmed of none other in the land, namely, that it was the rival of none, but the auxiliary of all.* (Cheers.) *They did not seek to turn aside any part of the great stream of charity, but, on the contrary, to enlarge that stream, and to open up others, from which every charitable institution in the kingdom would derive benefit. On this consideration, he claimed for that Society the support and good-will of those who were interested in every good work.* (Cheers.)

The Rev. R. G. CATHER, LL.D., the Secretary, then read a state-

ment of the origin, history, and objects of the Society, together with what it had been the means of accomplishing up to the present time.

The Rev. S. MINTON, M.A., of Percy Chapel, said that the question most generally put to the promoters of the Society was, What need is there for a Society to insist upon the moral duty of giving, more than upon any other moral and Christian duty? His reply was, that other moral and Christian duties were taught by Christian ministers from every pulpit in the land; but upon the subject of giving in a stated proportion to income, ministers themselves needed conversion. (Cheers and laughter.) The Church at large was asleep upon the subject, and he believed nothing but organisation would awaken her to a sense of her duty and responsibility. He did not think any one man could do this, nor that isolated efforts would succeed in producing the desired result. He confessed that he had at first shrunk from the idea of the weekly offering as savouring of High-Churchism; but after giving to the plan the most earnest consideration, and after seeing it in operation both in Liverpool and in London, he had become greatly impressed in its favour. Though the plan of weekly offerings was new to him, he had always felt the duty of giving in direct proportion to income. But in this respect he had been undeceived; for at the conference held last Saturday, two gentlemen—one a leading minister, and the other a barrister of eminence—had said, that until the Society had brought the subject before their minds, that idea had not presented itself before them. He believed also that it had never occurred to tens of thousands of Christian men, and on these grounds he warmly supported the Society. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. ARTHUR said he could not agree that Christians were generally awake to the duty of giving according to a stated proportion of their income. To many, he had no doubt, that idea had occurred, but they had not carried it out into practice. Most persons adopted what good men taught, though they often took it in a vague and most unsatisfactory sense. They were told that, under the Christian dispensation, the law was love. That was perfectly true. No man was bound to give away what was required for the support of his family, or the payment of his debts. The general and vague idea was, that, after satisfying all these demands, a man must give away what he could afford; but that was not the scriptural rule. The scriptural principle was that which was so beautifully laid down in the Levitical dispensation,—“The land is mine,” saith the Lord. (Hear, hear.) We ought to regard our property as the Lord's, with the privilege of charging that property with the support of ourselves and families; and the first duty a Christian had with regard to any property which came into his hands, was to conserve in his own soul the principle of acknowledging God by consecrating the first-fruits of it to Him. The difference of doing this at random and at rule, no man could fail to perceive. The benevolence which was worthy of appreciation, was that which was regulated by a due sense of the value of money; but men were very apt, unless they were benevolent upon system, to think they were giving away a great deal when it was but little. Giving by rule

was one of the shortest ways of making a man happy, as well as of giving him self-command in one of the great matters of life. The fact that Christians were to be guided by the law of love, surely should not be urged as an excuse for their giving less than they would have been called to do under the Levitical law. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr CANDLISH said, that the great difficulty ministers had to contend against in pleading for money was, that they appeared to be asking people to sacrifice that which they would otherwise expend on their own comforts and luxuries. What a relief it would be to feel that they were only asking people to consider how much they would give from a special fund which they did not hold to be their own, but the Lord's! (Cheers.) Of course, in saying that the fund thus set apart was not to be touched for private purposes, exception must be made in cases of emergency or misfortune. (Hear, hear.) It was important, however, that they should understand that this fund was the minimum amount which was to be consecrated to pious purposes; and that when Providence sent extraordinary claims, such as those which arose out of the Indian famine, or the distress during the winter months, an extraordinary amount should be appropriated to charitable purposes to meet those claims, without entrenching upon the sum originally set aside. (Hear, hear.) He felt that Christian churches and ministers were under deep obligations to the originators of this movement. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr HAMILTON thought that the objection to any systematic plan in giving would equally apply to the setting apart of stated periods for devotion. It was felt, however, by all Christians that private devotion would be very likely to become neglected, were it not for the system of setting aside regular periods for its exercise. Organisation was not necessarily antagonistic to vitality, but the reverse. The Evangelical Alliance had not diminished the love of brethren one towards another, and neither, in his opinion, would this Society tend to the promotion of mere formalism in benevolence. Great service would be rendered by placing the matter fairly before the Christian public, for he believed there was wealth enough in the Church for all the work which God had for the Church to do. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. J. GRAHAM expressed his warm approval of the Society, and his adhesion to the principle which it sought to establish. He did not think, however, it would be well to insist too strongly upon a tenth part of the income as the proportion which ought to be given away. The true ground which they should take, appeared to him to be that they were stewards of Christ, and on that principle ought not to devote less of their property to pious uses than the Jews of old. He thought the organisation would do a great deal of good, if it did not depreciate what the Christian Church and ministry had already done. (Cheers.)

The meeting was then addressed by Mr J. M. HAWKINS, of the India House, and by Mr T. GARLAND, of Redruth; and a vote of thanks having been passed to the Chairman, the benediction was pronounced, and the assembly broke up.—*Record*, May 1861.

G.

Progress of Public Attention to Systematic Beneficence in Manchester.

Since our great meeting in the Free-Trade Hall, the *clergy of Manchester* have had a series of sermons, in the central church of the city, St Anne's Square, on "*Regulated and Proportionate Giving.*"

The *Wesleyans* have also had a most influential public meeting in Oldham Street Chapel, at which the Revs. Dr Hannah, W. Arthur, M.A., James H. Rigg, John Bedford, and Messrs Napier, G. Knowles, and James Barlow; and C. J. Baines, Burslem, took part. The students of the Wesleyan Theological College at Didsbury requested an address, and expressed their hearty concurrence in our principles.

Dr M'Kerrow's church has been placed at the service of the Society, and his warm and great influence kindly exerted to promote the spread of scriptural views on the subject. Dr Munro and the Rev. A. M'Laren have also helped us.

H.

Progress in Canada, Australia, &c.

Sixteen hundred evangelical ministers in *Canada* were supplied with "*Gold and the Gospel,*" in 1856. We have recently been invited to visit Canada again, and form a Systematic Beneficence Society there.

In *Australia*, large numbers of our publications have prepared the Churches there to organise a society too.

In *India*, and all through the mission stations of all the Churches elsewhere, a similar process of leavening is going on. We were recently applied to for a grant of "*Arthur's Lecture,*" for native churches in India.

I.

Probable Pecuniary Result of our Principles in Ulster already.

Since the agitation of these principles began, there has been a general augmentation of contributions in all churches in *Ulster*, as well as amongst the Protestants of Ireland at large. And there is data to shew that this does not fall short of some twenty thousand a year, which is equal to the interest, at four per cent., of a capital sum of half a million sterling. This may be fairly regarded, therefore, as an instalment of that vast increase of means, for all Christian purposes, which will be the result of a general adoption amongst us of scriptural principles.

J.

Estimate of the Tenth of the Whole Income of the People of the United Kingdom.

The gross income of the people of the United Kingdom is estimated to be, at least, ten times the amount of the taxation, both imperial and local, to which it is subject, so that it cannot be less than *one thousand millions sterling*. Now, if the average tenth of this be due, and were paid to Christ, for His service, it would give *King Jesus* a larger revenue for His kingdom than that of Queen Victoria. *So that, after doing away with compulsory poor-rates, and applying medical and moral remedies to all the physical and social evils of the nation, such a measure would employ and support as many missionary agents as now form the military and naval service of the British crown, and soon, under God, subdue the world to the faith of Christ.*

K.

Analysis and Scheme of Expenditure to assist Families of Limited Means to Provide a First Tenth for Religious and Charitable Uses.

Laid Up.—1. Tenth for Christ. 2. Tenth for insurance. 3. Tenth for education.

Laid In.—4. Tenth for rent. 5. Tenth for taxes, wages, coal, and gas.

Laid Out.—7. Tenth for dietary. 8. Tenth for dietary. 9. Tenth for dietary. 10. Tenth for margin for recreation, medicine, &c.

Suggestions.—1. It is earnestly suggested that, your annual income being ascertained, either by the year, or by an average of years, this sum shall then be divided by fifty-two, to ascertain the *weekly* income.

2. Let the tenth of this amount, or the fifty-second of whole income, be offered as a part of family worship to Christ every first day of the week; and let each member of the family have something to offer.

3. Let the sentiment be cherished that this is an acceptable and important part of scriptural worship to Christ, and a sure way of training our houses for His service.

L.

New Subscriptions already received towards the proposed Income of One Thousand Pounds for the Systematic Beneficence Society.

Sir Hugh M'C. Cairns, M.P.,	£10 0 0
W. M'Cormick, Esq., M.P., Londonderry,	10 0 0

Messrs John and Thomas Sinclair, Belfast,	£10	0	0
Jonathan Cordukes, Esq., Belfast,	10	0	0
John Getty, Esq., Belfast,	5	0	0
Messrs C. and W. Finlay, Esq.,	5	0	0
John G. M'Gee, Esq., Belfast,	5	0	0
J. M. Calder, Esq., Belfast,	5	0	0
W. Masaroon, Esq., London,	5	0	0
Dunbar & Co., Belfast,	5	0	0
W. Adamson, Esq., Aberdeen,	5	0	0
C. J. Baines, Esq., Burslem,	5	0	0

The Treasurers, the Rev. W. Arthur, M.A., and James Watson, Esq., will thankfully acknowledge any subscriptions sent to them at 21 Berners Street; and subscriptions may also be sent to the Ulster Bank, Belfast, for Rev. Dr Cather, the General Secretary, who will procure and send the Treasurer's receipt for all sums kindly forwarded.

Orders for the publications of the Society may be sent to Messrs Nisbet & Co., 21 Berners Street, W.C., London; the Secretary, at 3 Queen's Elms, Belfast; and in all cases the amount must accompany the order.