

## **CHRIST THE FRIEND AND SURETY OF HIS POOR**

A Sermon Preached on Wednesday Evening, July 8, 1840, by J. C. Philpot at Artillery Street Chapel, Bishopsgate Street, on behalf of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society

"For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul. "Psalm 109:31

The grand truths of the Gospel are revealed as with a ray of light in God's holy word. For instance, the Godhead of Jesus is revealed in the plainest and most express terms; so that they who deny it are left without excuse. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," will condemn to an eternity of misery all blasphemers against that blessed and holy name. But God has not merely revealed these great and glorious truths, in express terms, throughout his holy word, in terms so express that nothing but the most infernal sophistry can ever elude or deny them; but he has scattered up and down in various parts of his blessed word of truth these very same doctrines, and yet **(if I may use the expression)** has thrown over them a thin transparent veil, which the blessed Spirit, from time to time, lifts up, and discovers what is contained beneath it to the eyes and hearts of God's heaven-taught family. So that the grand and glorious doctrines of the Gospel are not merely revealed in express terms, for the consolation of the Church and for the condemnation of all blasphemers and opposers, but they are also incidentally scattered up and down the pages of the word; and when the blessed Spirit is pleased to cause a ray of light to shine upon a text, which at first seemed obscure, but then is opened up to the soul, he fulfils that promise, that he will "give it the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places."

"For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Who, then, would expect in this text to find the Godhead and the manhood of Jesus blessedly set forth? And yet this verse plainly testifies to the Godhead and the manhood in one glorious person. For who is this "He?" "**He** shall stand." What is said in the verse preceding? "I will greatly praise the LORD" (**in capital letters, signifying "Jehovah"**),—"I will greatly praise Jehovah with my month; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For **He** shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." But can Jehovah "**stand** at the right hand of the poor?" He fills all time and all space; "the heaven of heavens cannot contain him," said Solomon, "much less this house that I have built." He can only "**stand**," then, by being brought into a finite compass; God as God only cannot **stand**. He can only "stand at the right hand of the poor," therefore, by having a human body, in which that glorious Godhead is lodged. So that the expression, "He shall stand at the right hand of the poor," can only be explained in this way; that while "He" signifies Jehovah (**as is clear from the preceding verse**), the circumstance of his "standing at the right hand of the poor," implies that Jehovah must be in human form.

We thus gather, then, who it is that "stands." Not Jehovah abstractedly, not Jehovah simply, as filling all time and space; but the second person of the glorious Godhead in human flesh, tabernacling in human form. It is he, that "stands at the right hand of the poor"—Jehovah Jesus—Immanuel, God with us—the God-Man, that is, at one and the same time, and in one and the same glorious person, "God over all, blessed for ever," and having a perfect human body and a perfect human soul.

But now let us look a little at the character, at whose right hand he stands; and then we shall see the occasion and circumstances, wherefore he stands there. "He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

The character, then, at whose right hand he stands, is said to be "poor." The word "poor" occurs much in the Word of God, and it is almost invariably **(I might say invariably)** used with reference to God's own family. Of course, there are passages in the Proverbs, which speak of the poor temporally; but still even these will bear a spiritual sense; and in all cases where the word is used in a spiritual sense, it betokens and points out God's own quickened family.

But how comes it to pass that they are poor? "I am poor and needy," says the Psalmist, "and my heart is wounded within me." How come they to be poor? Do they make themselves so? To say this, contradicts the Word of the Lord, for we read in the prayer **(or rather the thanksgiving)** of Hannah, "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low and lifteth up." Therefore, they do not **make themselves** poor. There are a great many professors in the **(so-called)** religious world who make themselves poor; that is to say, they put on the appearance of poverty whereas, they have never been stripped by the hand of God; and their poverty consists for the most part, of expressions. Nothing is easier than to put on the garb, and to use the expressions of a poor man; but this is only a more crafty device of Satan. A man whose heart is full of pride, will not come before you as a proud man; he knows that stinks in your nostrils, and therefore he will come with feigned humility. A man who has never been stripped nor emptied of creature righteousness, and yet has a profession of religion will not come boasting of his own righteousness; he will come with the language of

poverty in his mouth. But what matters the garb—the rough garment which he wears to deceive? What matters it, if the widow of Tekoah comes in widow's weeds?—her weeds make her no widow. The rough garment makes no prophet; and the language of poverty does not make a man poor, but may be only a covering of deceit and hypocrisy. None are really poor, but those whom the hand of God has stripped, whom he has brought down, and made to abhor themselves in dust and ashes, and to see and feel themselves destitute of everything good, holy, heavenly, and pleasing in his pure and heart-searching eyes.

Now how does the Lord strip them? He strips them by taking from them every thing which they depend upon, everything upon which they can hang, and everything to which they can look. When the Lord begins to work upon a sinner's conscience, he for the most part, brings against him the open transgressions of his life (**from which none of us probably were exempt**), and these sink him low; he is thus made to feel, that unless his sins are pardoned, or in some way or other he is enabled to amend his life, so as no longer to go on in these reprobate ways, he must sink forever under the wrath of God. But no sooner does this work begin in the conscience, than the subject of it, being quite ignorant of the work of God upon his soul, or rather ignorant to what God means to bring him thereby, immediately sets to work to gather together some riches—something which shall stand him in good stead—as much righteousness as he can possibly amass. This conviction is deeply lodged in his heart, that he has to deal with a righteous God, a holy God, a pure God, who "requires truth in the inward parts," and hates sin with a perfect hatred; and the immediate operation of this conviction upon his conscience is to set him to amass some riches, to get together some treasure, to procure something whereby he shall please God. We have all done this—

whoever of us have been convinced of sin; we have broken off old habits, old connexions, old sins, and made a thorough amendment. But this was only to substitute our righteousness for our sins; it was only to put one deceit in the room of another; it was only to prop up our souls with another buttress, when God had thrown down that on which we were previously resting and hanging—such, for instance, as a general hope in God's mercy. But when the Lord takes a soul in hand really and effectually, he strips away all this righteousness; he will not leave him a single rag, not a particle, no, not an atom. His eyes, "which are a flame of fire," look into the sinner's heart, and as they look, they burn up all the hay, and straw, and stubble, and chaff that are in it. As a burning glass, when brought to a focus, burns up the wood against which it is directed, so when he, "whose eyes" **(spoken of in the Revelation)** "are as a flame of fire," looks into the soul, searches it through and through, and directs his piercing glance into the secret corners and sinuous recesses of our hearts, he burns up and destroys the chaff, and straw, and hay, and stubble, and rubbish, which we had been amassing with infinite pains.

But there is something else yet to be burnt; a man's false religion has to be taken away from him, as well as his legal righteousness. For there is a great deal of false religion abroad, dressed up by the craft and subtlety of Satan, and imposed upon a living soul, as though it came from heaven's mint. There are many Birmingham counterfeits abroad, which may even impose upon God's children for a time, as though they were stamped in heaven's courts and bore the Kings image, though they are nothing but "potsherds covered with silver dross," as Solomon says, nothing but a little silver thinly plated over the base metal. And thus our prayers and our attainments, and our knowledge, and our reading the Scriptures, and our acquaintance with the doctrines of grace,

which are in themselves good (**as the silver is good which is plated over the base metal**), are used (**like the silver**) only to cover that which is counterfeit, and thus only add to the deceit of the counterfeit instead of giving it value. So that really all this dry Calvinism, and all these correct views of the doctrines of grace, and all this preferring a pure preached Gospel, and all this esteeming highly God's sent servants, and all this reading religious books, and those of the soundest character, unless the heart has been previously brought down into the dust of death, unless it has been emptied that the pure gold may run out of the crucible into it, so as to fill it up with sound metal, unless it has been stripped and laid bare, and a place as it were made for the gold to flow into, are only a little plating, a little silver put over it to hide the base metal within. It is like the case of a man, who has a scar or a scab that covers a deep ulcer; the ulcer must be healed from the very bottom (**for there the granulations must always commence**), and all the pus and matter brought away; for if only the surface of the wound is healed, the original disease will work into the constitution, or break out again in the same, or some other place, with greater virulence. And so the heart must be stripped and emptied, and laid bare effectually by a work of grace that goes to the very bottom, and penetrates into the recesses of the soul, so as to detect all the corruption that lurks and festers within. Nay, many of God's children, when they have come to die, and have had the silver plating burnt off, have found they had then to seek for that work of grace, in its height, and length, and breadth and depth, in its purity and power, that they thought they possessed. They had indeed some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, like the child of Jeroboam; but they had not that faith, that confidence, that firm hold of God, that standing in the Divine life, which they thought they had. There are many of God's children, who are much farther in doctrinal knowledge than

they are in Divine teaching and experience. Now, with all that are thus partially deceived (**I will not say totally, because there is often at the bottom a real work of grace, and they are restless and uneasy at times in spite of their vain confidence**), all this must sooner or later fall to pieces, and the heart must be taken down even to its foundations, that the pure genuine work of the Holy Ghost may be carried on in power within. Mr. Hart, you will find, describes this to have been his experience; he says, "All this while the fountains of the great deep were not broken up." And that is the case with many. The wound has been partially and superficially healed; and it must break out again. Now, the really "poor" man is one who has had **everything** taken from him; who has had not merely his dim views of a merciful God (**such as natural men have**) taken from him, not merely his legal righteousness stripped away, but all that kind of notional, traditionary religion, which is so rife in the present day, taken from him also; and who has been brought in guilty before God, naked, in the dust, having nothing whereby to conciliate him, or gain his favour, and only "a step between him and death." This is a "poor" man; and none else are really poor, in the strict sense of the word, who have not had, more or less (**for there are degrees even here**), something of this stripping work in their heart and conscience.

Now, against this stripping work all professors fight; and I will tell you why. Because it condemns them. They know they have not gone through it, they know that it has not been wrought with power in their souls; and therefore all professors, whether Arminians or Calvinists, fight against the stripping hand of God. But they fight to no purpose; for "the Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he

bringeth low and lifteth up," and if they are "vessels of mercy," they will know it to be so sooner or latter.

But this "poor" man has "those that condemn his soul." "For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

This "poor" man, you see, has a tender conscience; for he has that in him which feels condemnation. It is not a man's natural conscience that feels spiritual condemnation. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." It is a new conscience that feels condemnation; what the Apostle Paul speaks of as "a good conscience." Now that which springs from nature can never be "good," for it is infected and polluted with nature's evil; "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;" and therefore this tender conscience, that feels spiritual impressions, is the gift of God. It is the new heart, which the Holy Ghost breathes into the soul, and which he communicates, when he quickens it into eternal life. It is this new heart, this tender, this good, this pure, this spiritual conscience, that feels condemnation. Natural men feel condemnation according to those words in the Romans, "Their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." The natural conscience of the heathen felt natural condemnation; but in order to feel **spiritual** condemnation, a man must have a spiritual conscience, which is a new conscience, a tender conscience, implanted by the Holy Ghost in the soul. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This poor man has that; and from the very circumstance of his having that, he has "those that condemn his soul."

The law, then, is one of those things that "condemn his soul." The law in its righteous precepts, in its holy requirements, in



its terrible sanctions, in its devouring flame, in its awful curse—this "condemns his soul," and brings him in guilty before God; according to the work described by the apostle—"That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Again, the evil workings of his own heart also "condemn his soul." Let us look specifically and individually at some of these. One of them is **unbelief**. Whenever the blessed Spirit takes a soul in hand, he convinces that soul of unbelief. "He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not in me." The Holy Ghost, in his work upon the heart of a sinner, in bringing him in poor and empty, convinces him of his unbelief, and makes him feel and know in the depth of his soul, that he has no power whatever to create faith—no, not a spark of it no, not a grain of it. The Holy Ghost shows a quickened sinner the difference betwixt letter faith and spiritual faith, betwixt the faith which is of the operation of the flesh and that which is of the operation of God. He shows every quickened vessel of mercy, that that faith, which is not of the operation of God, is "a bed too short, and a covering too narrow." He teaches him that he has no power whatever to raise up an atom of living faith in his own soul, and that all the natural faith which he has in the letter of the Word of God leaves him short of that rest, and that hope, and that peace, which alone can calm the raging storm within. Now, this unbelief "condemns his soul." He does not bring forward Antinomian excuses, and say, "If I am saved, I am saved, and if I am damned, I am damned;" he does not say, "As to this unbelief, it is in me by nature, and I cannot get rid of it, and therefore I need not trouble myself about it; if I am to be saved, God will give me faith sometime or other." A living soul, that has "the beginning of wisdom," and is exercised by the tender feelings which the Spirit of God implants, never can fall into such self-

justifying language, but he feels, he mourns, he sighs, he groans, he cries, under the weight of unbelief, and says,

Oh! could I but believe,  
Then all would easy be;  
I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve;  
My help must come from thee.

But further, the dreadful workings up of his carnal mind against God "condemn his soul." He opens the Word of God; he reads there what the saints are—how they say, "Thy will be done"—how they submit to the hand of God—how they sit at the feet of Jesus, and hear his word—how they "wash his feet with their tears, and wipe them with the hairs of their head;" he reads all that Paul and the other apostles have spoken in the way of precept, as to "rejoice in the Lord always," to "be clothed with humility," and the various directions given in the New Testament to the Church of God. But instead of finding in his own mind the counterpart of this, he feels enmity, rebellion, peevishness, hardness, fretfulness, inability to submit himself to the will and wisdom of God, and that he is "like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke;" like Ephraim, he is "bemoaning himself," and yet is unable to submit, and cast himself simply and believingly at the feet of the Redeemer. This enmity, and peevishness, and rebellion, condemn his soul. And then again his impotency and spiritual helplessness, his utter inability to deliver himself from these evil workings, the miserable weakness and destitution under which he groans, being burdened, so that do what he will, sin is mixed up with all his actions, think what he will, he cannot raise up his thoughts to God, so as to enter within the veil, and speak what he will, evil streams forth with all his words—this deep destitution of the creature, this inability to do good, or think good, or speak good, or to deliver himself from these exercises and burdens, condemns

his soul. But, further, his own backslidings condemn him. The Lord, perhaps, at times, has given him deliverances, bowed down his ear and heard his cry in some providential strait, in some marked and signal manner, brought him up when he thought he must go down into the pit, raised him up from sickness, delivered him from the very jaws of temporal death, and has at times given him a taste and a drop and a sip, so as to stay, and calm, and cheer his troubled mind; and he has forgotten it all, and slipped aside from it all, and started back like a broken bow, and gone after some filthy idol. These backslidings condemn his soul, wound his tender heart, and make him sigh and cry, like one well nigh in despair.

But these things condemn him **justly**; he is obliged to plead guilty to them; he can offer no defence, he can bring forward no plea to arrest judgment, he cannot say anything in his own favour that sentence should not be passed.

Other things, however, there are, that condemn him **unjustly**; and these he feels perhaps almost as keenly as those that condemn him justly. For instance, false professors, that heap up slanderous charges against him, malign his character, undermine his fair fame, impute to him false motives, misrepresent his actions, and go about the country seeking in every way to injure him. These condemn him; but **unjustly**. What keen wounds some of us have felt from professing friends! Have you never in the openness of your heart told something to one whom you esteemed your friend—perhaps broke to him some temptation that your soul was exercised with—acquainted him with some secret transgression which lay as a heavy burden upon your conscience—whispered to him something of the deep working of your depraved heart; and you thought he was your friend, and with his smooth tongue and holy countenance, he

inveigled and entrapped you to open up to him the secrets of your soul, as Samson's wife enticed him to tell her where his great strength lay? And this false friend, this Judas, when he has wormed the secret out of you, has made use of it to misrepresent you, and to hold you up perhaps as having spoken or committed that in reality to which you were only tempted, and has thus magnified temptation into transgression. It has wounded you; it has cut you deeply; it has made sad havoc in your heart. This is an **unjust** condemnation. Or perhaps professors of religion may have picked up what you may have spoken inadvertently, carried it about the country, spread it through the Churches, and whispered one to another (**as "the children of his people talked against" Ezekiel**) that which perhaps has fallen from you in a thoughtless moment, and then it comes back upon you with redoubled weight, and your soul is condemned thereby. These are **unjust** condemnations. So, again, Satan also often accuses this poor man, that he has sinned against the Holy Ghost, that he has committed the unpardonable transgression, that his name is not in the book of life, that he is nothing but a reprobate, that all his religion is in the flesh, that he began in hypocrisy and has gone on in hypocrisy, and will have his portion with the hypocrites. With all these fearful suggestions Satan sets in like a powerful flood upon the soul; and these condemn him unjustly. When Satan then tells us we have backslidden beyond recovery, it is an unjust condemnation; when he tells us we have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, it is an unjust charge. And when our professing friends, but deceitful foes, and those who hate us on account of the Lord's dealings with our souls, spread their malicious lies, these are unjust accusations; but they wound and cut deeply a tender heart.

Here, then, is the "poor" man, whose soul is condemned; condemned by some things justly, by others unjustly, but

feeling most acutely that to which he pleads guilty. Oh! it is the feeling of guilt that presses down a man's soul; when he has not a word to say, nor a plea to bring forward, nor anything whereby he can extenuate the charge. But "he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul," be their condemnations just or unjust.

"**He** shall stand." And who is this? As I noticed in the beginning of this discourse, it is the God-Man, who alone can "stand"—being God in human form.

The expression, "He shall **stand** at the right hand of the poor," implies, first, that he appears there as a **friend**. How cheering, how comforting it is, to have a friend to stand by us when we are in trouble! Such a friend is Jesus. In the hour of necessity, he comes as a friend to stand by the right hand of the poor creature, whose soul is condemned by guilt and accusations. But he stands in a far higher relation than that of a friend; he stands too, as a **surety and a deliverer**. He goes, as it were, into the court; and when the prisoner stands at the bar, he comes forward and stands at his right hand as his surety and bondsman; he brings out of his bosom the acquittance of the debt, signed and sealed with his own blood, he produces it to the eyes of the court, and claims and demands the acquittal and ablution of the prisoner at whose right hand he stands. He stands there, then, that the prisoner may be freely pardoned, and completely justified from those accusations that "condemn his soul." sweet standing!—blessed appearance!—when this God-Man, this mediator betwixt God and man, Christ Jesus—this Immanuel, God with us—"stands at the right hand of the poor;" when he comes forward in behalf of the poor trembling sinner, takes his station at his right hand, and "saves him from those that condemn his soul!" The law

brings in its charge; this God-man "stands at the right hand of the poor," and produces his own fulfilment of that law, which brings in its heavy charge against the guilty criminal. Unbelief, and the workings of a desperately wicked heart, and the stirrings up of that pool of all that is filthy and polluted, and the fearful suggestions of the great adversary of our souls, come forward to condemn us; but he "stands at the right hand of the poor," and produces his own glorious righteousness. Are we pressed down with unbelief? He communicates faith. Is our mind sinking into despair? He breathes into it hope. Is the heart restless and agitated with the billows and waves of enmity? He pours oil upon those waves by "shedding abroad love." Is the soul bowed down with guilt, at a distance from God, unable to approach him on account of its heavy temptations? He puts his own arm under this poor dejected soul, and lifts up his bowed down head, and as he lifts it up, the soul looks upwards, and instead of wrath sees the countenance of the Father beaming mercy and love, because the surety is "standing at the right hand of the poor." Jesus himself has stood at the bar, he himself has been arraigned, he himself has been condemned as a criminal, and has died the death of a criminal **(though he was not buried in the grave of a criminal, and he rose with glory and power to sit at God's right hand, until he hath put all enemies under his feet)**; and therefore he can sympathise and feel for the criminal, for he "was in all points tempted like as we are," and "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

But "he stands often **invisibly** at the right of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Does the law condemn you? He "stands at your right hand," even though you perceive him not, to save you from the curse. Does guilt condemn you? He "stands **(unseen)** at your right hand" to save you from these feelings of guilt. Does sin condemn you?

He "stands at your right hand," undiscerned, perhaps, yet not less really, to save you from the power of sin. Does Satan condemn you? He "stands at your right hand," although you behold him not, as he stood before Joshua, and repelled Satan, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." And as to those unjust accusations which are brought against you under which your soul is cut and wounded, when false charges have been laid, and when professors have maligned your character, he secretly "stands at your right hand," to save you from their charges, and will bring you forth one day to the light, that, you may behold his righteousness. When men misrepresent your motives, pervert your words, and prove your enemies, he will "stand at your right hand to save you from those that condemn your soul," by not merely pouring his blessed consolations into your heart, but also bringing you out clearly, and so that none can lay a single charge against you of those accusations that have been your grief and burden.

"He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

Now, there are poor naturally, as well as poor spiritually. There are pilgrims of God, who are poor in an earthly, as well as a spiritual sense. And these often have "those that condemn their soul." Perhaps some of these are obliged, merely for the sake of keeping body and soul together, to run into debt for the common necessaries of life; and these debts "condemn their soul." Perhaps they are obliged to depend upon the bounty of others, from whom, instead of getting smiles, they only receive frowns; and instead of encouragements only meet with repulses; and this condemns their soul. Oh! to be a beggar—to be a child of God, and yet to be brought down so low in poverty as to have to go to a Christian brother and ask him for an alms, and perhaps get a

repulse, or **(if not)** an excuse, or to have a trifle given with a cold heartless frown!—it "condemns the soul" of many of God's poor pilgrims. But God will "stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul;" from unfeeling wretches, who never were in the same state themselves, who, perhaps, cast in his teeth the debts he has been entangled in by necessity, and make them an excuse for shutting up their bowels of compassion against him. "To save him from such as these that condemn his soul." And how? By appearing providentially—perhaps in marvellous ways—perhaps by stirring up some of your hearts, who have worldly substance, to impart to their poverty.

I have to plead for some of these poor this evening. They may have many of these things "to condemn their souls;" and what a mercy, if the Lord should make use of you and me as his instruments to save them from those condemnations. It is a high honour to be thus employed; it is a great privilege if the Lord should use my hand and yours to feed his poor and needy ones; if he has promised not to pass by unheeded "a cup of cold water," that hand which he thus uses to minister to the wants of his poor and needy children, he will one day abundantly acknowledge.

I will read to you a paper put into my hands by the Secretary of the Society. "The following is a brief account of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, in reference to the number of persons now on that Society, and also the amount of its income and expenditure. There are 48 pensioners, who receive ten guineas per annum, or 17s. 6d. per month; 83 ditto, who receive five guineas per annum, or 8s. 9d. per month; 207 approved candidates, who receive 4s. per month; making a total of 338 poor aged members of the mystical body of Christ, of various denominations, from sixty years of age and upwards, among whom are distributed



monthly £120. The Committee regret to say, that the permanent income arising from annual subscriptions does not exceed £1, , whilst the amount of expenditure is upwards of £1,700, leaving a deficiency of more than £700 to be made up by donations and collection sermons, wherever they can be obtained. Every department is filled gratuitously."

Now, this is the only religious Society that I belong to; the only Society that I can conscientiously support; the only Society I ever feel inclined to preach for. I look upon this Society as having greater good and fewer evils than any other. In bestowing upon it that which the Lord shall enable us, we are fulfilling a clear command of God, to "do good unto all men, specially unto them that are of the household of faith." We have no express precept to form Societies, and raise money to send abroad Missionaries and Bibles; but we have a positive precept to do good to the household of faith, and therefore we go upon sure ground, and stand upon a scriptural foundation, when we plead for them, or give our bounty to them. And who can need it so much? They have three claims to recommend them. There is, first, their age; there is, secondly, their poverty, the income from other sources being very limited, of all who receive anything from the Society; and there is **(so far as their experience is known)**, thirdly, the grace of God in their hearts—their belonging to the family of God.

But I am well convinced that the Lord must open a man's heart; and where he opens a man's heart to feel for the poor and needy of his flock, he will, more or less, open that man's pocket. Our carnal nature, our lustful covetous heart, can easily find money for our own gratifications; but when the cause of God and the claims of the people of God come before us, then our hear begins to shrink. If anything that pleases the flesh comes before our carnal mind, our hand

very readily finds its way to our pocket; but when it is some destitute pilgrim, some poor cause of God, some needy minister of Jesus, something that does not gratify nor benefit ourselves, old nature begins immediately to contract itself, to put in a veto, to draw a chain round the purse, and whisper in our ears not to spend too much, or we may be poor ourselves one day, that we do not know that these are the people of God, or that tomorrow we may want the money ourselves. So all that a man really gives aright is drawn out of his hand and out of his heart by the grace of God in him. But though I have spent in my time a good deal of money, and have deeply regretted all that I ever wasted on the vanities of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, I never yet repented of having my heart opened to communicate to the necessities of God's family; I never went to bed with a heavy heart or rose up with a burdened conscience, because, in a moment of sympathy, I had given more than I meant to give. Of all experience I never had that yet; and therefore I must leave other ministers to preach that experience; my experience is, that I have been thankful to God that I have done anything, and ashamed of myself that I have not done more. And I must now leave the matter with him. If he opens your hearts, he will have the glory; if he opens your hands, it will be for the consolation of his poor aged pilgrims. The money is not to be wasted upon platforms; it is not to be thrown away upon secretaries making expensive journies; it is not to be spent in providing nicely furnished seats for a parcel of people to clap at speeches; it is not to be wasted upon show and glitter. All the officers of the Society acting gratuitously, whatever is contributed goes directly into the pockets of God's people. You are not sending abroad unconverted missionaries to convert unconverted heathen; you are not thrusting out raw youths that know neither God nor themselves, to change natural heathenism into Christian hypocrisy; you are not

sending out Socinian translations of the Scriptures, or mangled religious works; you are not scattering abroad tracts, half full of the grace of God, and half of the blind will of man; what you give, you give simply and solely for those who **(we may hope)** are God's people. Here is a large sum to be raised—£700; and perhaps some of these poor people are anticipating their little income, and saying, "On such a day such a person will call on me, and I shall have such a sum of money;" if the money is not raised, how will they be disappointed! what fretting, and trouble, and grief, and anguish of mind, may be obviated, by the people of God giving to the utmost of their power to communicate to their wants.

If the claims of the aged of God's family never touch your heart, I believe you have no heart at all. But may God open your heart, show you that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and sweetly constrain you to say, "I would rather tomorrow go without my dinner, or put aside till next year having a garment **(a bonnet, or a coat, or a pair of shoes)**, or some other comfort, than that any of God's family should be so distressed." The way to give is to forego something; and that which you forego will gladden and rejoice some child of God. But I might stand here till midnight; unless God is pleased to open your heart, all my pleading will not do it, and therefore I leave it simply in his hand. May he blessedly constrain you to do that which shall be for his glory, and for the good of his poor and needy children!