

**PROPERTY CONSECRATED;
OR, HONORING GOD
WITH OUR SUBSTANCE. A
PRIZE ESSAY, PP. 1-123**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649682478

Property Consecrated; Or, Honoring God with Our Substance. A Prize Essay, pp. 1-123 by Benjamin St. James Fry

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BENJAMIN ST. JAMES FRY

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE WILL OF GOD IN RELATION TO
PROPERTY, AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEM-
PORAL AND SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES ARISING
FROM ITS RIGHT USE.

A Prize Essay.

By Rev. BENJAMIN ST. JAMES FRY,
OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE.

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PHILLIPS.

TRACT SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
200 MULBERRY-STREET.

1856.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1886, by
CARLTON & PHILLIPS,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District
of New-York.

Estab'd
19-3-42

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE following Treatise is one of the three Prize Essays on Systematic Beneficence sent out under the auspices of the Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We feel great pleasure in submitting it to the Christian public. It is full of strong thoughts, clearly and forcibly expressed. Its appropriate title appeals to the soundest convictions and purest desires of the true Christian.

"Property consecrated." What reflecting man does not realize that he has received his earthly possessions from God! He cannot supply one particle of the material, or of the mental and muscular energy, or of the mechanical skill or power upon which the production of wealth depends.

These are all gifts from his heavenly Father. And what honor is conferred upon him in being constituted an agent in the practical exercises of divine benevolence! The goods are entrusted to him that he may share with God the holy delights of charity, and the invaluable blessings of Christian enterprise. He is made a beneficiary that he may be a benefactor. How, then, is he to hold the treasures committed to his care? As exclusively his own? As devoted to selfish ends? No. With pious gratitude it should all be consecrated to the service of God, so that everything demanded by the exigencies of the Church and the wants of humanity should be deemed sacred to the purposes of Christian beneficence. Who can describe the results of "Property consecrated"—the property of the whole Church, of each individual of the Church, so set apart to the service of God as that no unjust proportion of it shall be used upon self, none whatever squandered in worldly extravagance, and all that is requisite for the purposes of benevolence shall be ready at a moment's notice!

“Honoring God.” To this the good man is solemnly devoted. He often regrets that he does not better succeed in accomplishing it. He asks with deep concern, “How shall I honor God?” Especially, “How shall I honor him with my earthly possessions?” These are too often a snare to him. He finds himself unduly attached to them. His conscience not unfrequently rebukes him for the reluctance he feels in parting with them, even for the noblest purposes of Christian benevolence. He mourns over this weakness, if not evidence of remaining depravity. He would desire, we assume, to be relieved from these embarrassments—to learn how he can make all his worldly employments subserve his spiritual interests—how he can become happy in giving all due support to the claims of God—how he may, so far as his responsibility extends, remove all temporal embarrassments from the Church, and secure the greatest possible efficiency for all her enterprises. Let him read this little book. It will conduct him to God’s own method of solving all

these problems, and at the same time secure the richest returns of true satisfaction, business prosperity, and spiritual enlargement.

To many this essay will be a welcome messenger. It will confirm them in principles already adopted, and strengthen their noble purposes for the future. It will reach multitudes of others who have been by no means deficient in liberality, but whose methods of giving have been without system. To such, we trust, it will be a word in season, which will bring order out of chaos. Under its genial teachings and persuasions their Christian benevolence will assume a regularity and consistency most efficient and reliable for the demands of humanity and religion.

JESSE T. PROCK.

New-York, Dec. 20, 1853.

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