

**GOD'S RULE FOR CHRISTIAN  
GIVING: A PRACTICAL  
ESSAY ON THE SCIENCE OF  
CHRISTIAN ECONOMY**

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God's rule for Christian giving: a practical essay on the science of Christian economy by  
William Speer

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**WILLIAM SPEER**

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CHRISTIAN GIVING.  
A PRACTICAL ESSAY  
ON THE  
SCIENCE OF CHRISTIAN ECONOMY.

BY  
WILLIAM SPEER,  
SECRETARY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF EDUCATION.

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## PREFACE.

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This volume is the offspring of practical necessities, connected with the labors of a commission and ordination similar to that which Paul, when the time of his departure was at hand, bestowed upon Timothy: "Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry."

"To do the work of an evangelist," the writer was sent to China in the year 1848. He spent several years there amidst the protracted scenes of that horrible war by which Christian nations, for money, succeeded at length in compelling the government of a great and peaceful heathen empire to legalize a traffic which was deliberately poisoning with opium, year by year, millions of its people.

In the year 1852 he was sent to California, to preach Christ to the Chinese whom the power of money brought there, amidst the tens of thousands from all the nations of the habitable globe. He witnessed the strange, frantic intoxication of those multitudes; and saw the crimes which men were willing to commit for money. In 1857 he was obliged to leave his work, exhausted and expected to die, partly because, amidst the boundless and most important work to be done in that field, the Christians of our country enabled the Board of Foreign Missions to grant but a minor part of what the work demanded, and he was forced to add to his infinitely more important labors those of begging and working to get money, for building, for the printing of a newspaper in Chinese and English, and for supplies of medicine and books, and other evangelistic necessities.

In eight years spent in the great and most interesting home mission fields of the far South and of the upper Mississippi valley, and in the years since 1865, amidst the toils of an office whose end is to raise up and qualify laborers for all the immense harvests which have been referred to, the experience has been the same. The greater and more important work, the preaching of the gospel, and the increase and training of the men who are needed by hundreds



where the Church is supplying tens, is ever and ever dragged to the earth by the simple want of that which Christians in America have in abundance to give, but do not give: money.

It has been such necessities as these which have driven the writer first to study, with prayer, every text from the beginning to the end of the word of God which relates in any way to money; next, to inquire into the lessons of the history of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ since his ascension, to ascertain what have been its experiences as to money; then to look into questions of political economy, national finance, and commerce, which could throw light upon the subject of money.

By these means he has been led to the overwhelming conviction that God has, in his omniscient wisdom, and forethought, and grace through Christ Jesus, made known to the New Testament Church a sufficient Rule for Giving, and the principles which should regulate it. The preparations for it in the Old Testament, the preaching of John the Baptist, the personal teaching and example of the Son of God, the antecedent and succeeding instructions of the epistles and the book of Revelation, have given to this Rule—wonderfully brief as it is, and simple and easy to be remembered, and adapted to all life's way-faring men, so that though fools they need not err therein—a dignity and power which prove that it is divine.

To explain, to illustrate, to impress, and to put into effectual use, for the good of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the conversion of the world to him, GOD'S RULE FOR CHRISTIAN GIVING, is the one object of this volume.

In this earnest, practical, and hopeful era, men have sought out and made useful to them the great principles of many departments of physical science, of political economy, now made broader and nobler as "social science," and of moral science. The present seems to be a time for Christians to advance from the past hortatory way of treating the subject, to consider the great principles of religious and ecclesiastical finance, for which perhaps no more appropriate name can be found than that of the SCIENCE OF CHRISTIAN ECONOMY. Upon it depend many momentous questions related to that rapid and general advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which should now be the great aim and employment of his Church.

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