

# **THE DIVINE LAW OF BENEFICENCE**

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The divine law of beneficence by Parsons Cooke

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**PARSONS COOKE**

**THE DIVINE LAW  
OF BENEFICENCE**



THE  
DIVINE LAW OF BENEFICENCE ;  
ZACCHEUS,  
OR  
THE SCRIPTURAL PLAN OF BENEVOLENCE ;  
AND  
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH,  
OR  
SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.



THE DIVINE  
LAW OF BENEFICENCE.

BY REV. PARSONS COOKE,  
LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed  
to give than to receive.—ACTS 20:35.

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## LAW OF BENEFICENCE.

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### I. GOD'S DESIGN IN REQUIRING BENE- FICENCE.

God is not dependent on us for the support of his poor. He could have so diffused the gifts of his providence as to have had no poor. Or he could so have fitted our frames to the world, and the world to them, that all the elements of human life and comfort would have been as abundant and free as air and water, so that, like the lilies of the field, the whole human race might meet every want without toil or spinning; and he might have published his gospel to every creature without our aid. He might have made his angels, in another sense, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." Or he might have written out the whole on the face of the heavens, and made them in a higher sense "declare the glory of God;" and made it in a higher sense true, that "their line is gone out through all the earth." He does not ask us to do this work or that, because of any dependence on us. He says, "Every beast of

the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine and the fulness thereof."

Whatever necessity there is of our agency he has purposely laid, in the present arrangement of things, *for our good*. His benevolence could have reached its object without our concurrence, if it had not made us also its object, and formed the design of blessing us in its course by enlisting us as coworkers. He knew that it was "more blessed to give than to receive." And when he put in motion the broad mechanism of his mercy, he put upon it laws of action and reaction, and made the work of heavenly charity, in all its branches, twice blessed—blessing him that gives, and him that takes. He laid on us a necessity of cultivating benevolent affections. If we could so arrange one's circumstances, and throw around him such influences, as to keep him habitually and constantly giving to the poor—if we could attach to him dependent relatives, or in some other way bring to act upon him a constant succession of calls that he would not resist, we should bring him under the best means of cultivating benevolent dispositions; and this is what God does with us, in laying on us this necessity of giving alms.

The fact that he could have published the gospel and fed his poor without us, while he could not, without our concurrence in giving, secure to us the blessedness which attaches to those that give, indicates

that his main design in laying on us the necessity of giving, was *to give scope to our benevolent affections*. For this end he has ordained that we shall have the poor with us always, in so many forms of human distress besetting our path, pleading at the bar of our conscience for the forth-puttings of that charity which is the high excellence of our nature. Yea, he has placed all the interest which we have in evangelizing the world on such a footing, that it will advance no further than his redeemed people pour forth the means of its advance; that in that forth-pouring the church may take in those riches of grace in which the whole work of redemption has its termination. In other words, he will not have the evangelizing of the world advance faster than the sanctifying of his church; and will sustain a reciprocal action between the two, advancing together.

Nor do we exaggerate in presenting this as the *main* ground of what necessity there is for almsgiving; for all the ends of redemption accomplished upon man are comprehended in his renovation from a state of supreme selfishness to that of perfect benevolence; and if we should say that all these occasions for benevolent action were created for the sole purpose of furnishing means of exercising men to benevolence, we should not make the means disproportionate to the end. The whole work of Christ, his humiliation, ministry, death, resurrection, and mediatorial government, the whole work of his gospel and