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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE III.

THE MOTIVE AND METHOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.¹

BY THE REV. H. FRANCIS PERRY, PH.D.

It would not be difficult to prove that pre-Christian times had certain forms of charitable help for the destitute and the unfortunate. The religious motive, however perverted its accompanying worship may have been, manifested itself in almsgiving long before the supreme Christian motive of unselfish love was declared and illustrated by Jesus Christ. The Egyptians, the Hindus, the Persians, the Chinese, the Greeks, and the Romans,—all had some form of charity in connection with their religious systems. The motive was usually far from altruistic, and was largely a desire for personal advantage to be gained through benevolence. It was the same motive which was dominant in the mediæval church—reward for the giver, rather than blessing for the needy.¹

Christian charity in the ancient church received its dynamic from the personal teachings of Him who founded the new brotherhood of man on the new conception of the fatherhood of God, and who thus gave to benevolence a correspondingly new impulse. Divine favor was not to be secured by almsgiving, but was already vouchsafed to man in the love of God, which only waited for repentance of personal sin to enter into the life of the disciple as a regnant force. Men were to do the works of God because they possessed the love of God—a reversal of the ancient

¹ See, for a concise treatment of ancient benevolences, Crooker's *Problems in American Society*, chapter on "Scientific Charity."

idea of merit. Love to God and to man was the normal condition of renewed life. A guide of unusual intelligence and experience stands ready to conduct us through the mazes of the Roman Empire in its days of decadence, when the Old World was approaching its death-throes, and to show us the church which was unable to arrest the dissolution of the perishing world, "but sat at its death-bed with help and comfort, and lighted up its last hours with such an evening glory as the Old World had never known in the times of its greatest prosperity." Uhlhorn is the guide in his "Christian Charity in the Ancient Church." It was into a world without love that Christianity came with its message of love in Christ. The *liberalitas* of the heathen world was not the *caritas* of the Christian church. While almsgiving was certainly a custom among the Israelites in the time of Christ, its *caritas* was largely lost in its ostentatious display. Love in benevolence does not boast at street corners. It expects no reward of men. It thinks of the need of the unfortunate, and forgets itself.

THE FIRST PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

The Apostolic Age was a period of purest Christian charity, for it lived in personal fellowship with the ascended Christ. It is customary to say that primitive charity had, as its motive, love for man, rather than any desire for personal benefit to be derived from almsgiving. This is true, but there is a still deeper love than love for men working in the first days of the church. It was love for Christ that became the principle of charity, and the love for man resulted from the love for Christ. He made over to his poor brethren on earth the results of the love which his disciples had for him. At the very beginning of this period the so-called community of goods obtained in the Jerusalem church. Love was so great that this primitive church voluntarily expressed itself in a unique brotherliness. It was

repeated nowhere else among the apostolic churches in the same form of social oneness, but shone forth conspicuously as a sequel to Pentecost, a magnificent demonstration of special grace meeting conditions of special need. Membership in the Jerusalem church at this time meant ostracism, and persecution, and sometimes death. This common suffering led to a lessening of the grasp upon individual possessions, and the formation of the new brotherhood of social oneness. That spirit of love which exposed itself in Jerusalem in the community of goods declared itself elsewhere in other ways. It was the spirit of Christ finding fitting expression in conformity with the special requirements of the local community. In the Christian church none suffered want. Gentile churches sent aid to the mother church at Jerusalem.

The heathen also experienced the results of the new spirit, as well as the brotherhood of believers. Where there was distress, abounding love suggested the giving of aid. It was a simple love for the needy which was ready joyously to sacrifice much in an enthusiasm to be Christlike in service. Paul instituted in apostolic times an international and interracial charity which did much to break down the middle wall of partition between Jewish and Gentile sons of the Heavenly Father. The method of primitive charity was the direct care of the needy by the church through its own representative officers. The diaconate appointed to care for this matter were men "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." There could have been no benevolent establishments in the martyr church, for the inmates of such refuges would have been persecuted and slain. There was a personal administration of help. The amount of gifts was not small. While there is but little data to show exactly how much was collected, we know that Cyprian gathered a special collection in his church of \$4,250 for Numidian prisoners. Eusebius writes

that 1,500 widows and indigent persons were supported in Rome by the church. At first the sole purpose of the money collected by the church was the relieving of the poor. The first period of Christian charity extends from the ascension of Christ to the nominal triumph of the church under Constantine. Its chief principle was love, its method the congregational care of the poor rather than the institutional care. The congregation at its public worship and at the celebration of the Lord's Memorial made an offering for the poor, in singleness of purpose, controlled by love. The followers of Christ were taught that it was treason to their Lord to live in superfluous luxury when the poor were hungry. The primitive Christians lived as members of the Family of the Redeemed. The family was still relatively small and knew each other. The individual church through its appointed channels cared directly for the poor. In this first period the whole church assembled for worship, and all gave, and gave generously. If liberality consists in the spirit rather than the amount of the gift, the first period of the Christian church gave more liberally than did any succeeding time. The genuine strength of primitive charity could not be more strongly declared than by stating that Julian the Apostate sought to produce under the law of paganism a similar system of charity.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

The line of demarcation between the charity of the primitive church and the church of the Empire of necessity is not clear-cut and distinct. "Obscurations," to use Uhlhorn's expressive word, "of charity" were seen in the præ-Constantinian era. There was a tendency in the church, during the latter part of the first period, to accept in certain quarters the pernicious perversion that almsgiving is sin-atonement. In proportion as this doctrine became the

general belief, the earlier motive of simple, loving service for the needy was eclipsed, and a dangerous departure from the faith was accompanied by a declining delight in self-forgetfulness in God's service. Four changes in the post-Constantinian Age must be observed:—

1. The condition of the world.
2. The condition of the church.
3. The new motive.
4. The new method.

1. The Old World was perishing. The death-rattle was already heard in its shriveled throat. Morality was lowered, misery was increasing, taxes were oppressive, barbarity was but veneered by law, distress grew apace, the Northern barbarians became more insolent and powerful. Men grew weary of life, and poverty and want and desolation were universal. There was a horde of beggars, an army of wretched men and women, hungry, naked, sick, who besieged the only power which was willing to offer help. The state never attempted to alleviate in any generous, systematic way the needs of its despoiled citizens. It did, however, make over to the church donations and privileges, which aided the church in its great work of alleviating distress.

2. The condition of the church must also be observed before we can wisely estimate the new motive and the new method of benevolence. The cross has conquered the crown, and nominally the empire is Christian; but this unfortunate alliance of Christianity and paganism paganized Christianity as much as it Christianized paganism. Now spacious and beautiful churches were built, men of strength became leaders of the church; but religion was growing to be a more formal matter, and vital piety was waning. Only a part of the church was present at the public worship, and offerings were now obtained from worshipers by exhortation and command. Over against the decreasing

congregational gifts was the fact that the church treasury never was more abundantly supplied. Donations and legacies were made by emperors and the rich, so that the church rapidly increased in wealth. "In the fifth century the church was the greatest land-owner in the empire." Funds were safely invested, and the church derived a large income, which was used for the help of countless multitudes.

3. But a new motive is clearly discernible in this period. That which was already seen in the beginning in the first period has now become the ruling motive. Men were now giving not with the abounding love of the primitive church, but because of the benefits accruing to the giver through the gift. The larger the gift to the church, the safer their own souls would be in the time of judgment. A sure method of causing God to be propitious to them was to relieve the distress of others. Alms were given soon after the death of a friend, with the expectation that some merit might thereby accrue to the advantage of the deceased. Legacies and endowments were often given in remembrance of the departed. The earlier period gave a foreboding of the doctrine of merit through almsgiving, this period suggests the dangers of the doctrine of purgatory. A very strong motive for almsgiving is present in the belief that it delivers one from the torments of purgatory.

4. The new method of helping the poor in this epoch differs widely from the earlier, congregational method. When all the people gave and the church had no other income, it was administered by the officers—the deacons—of the church in the homes of the poor; but now it was chiefly administered by the bishops who had charge of the undivided church, and who kept a head manager of the church property—a steward. Wholesale alms from the church revenues were given to the deserving and the undeserving by the bishops, and the multitudes who had pre-

viously been cared for in their own homes were now transferred to the *xenodochias*, the poorhouses, the hospitals, and the monasteries, which were sustained by the church. The *xenodochium* was instituted for the eminent Christian virtue of hospitality. It was a house for strangers. The first hospitals received all who needed an asylum,—strangers, the poor, the needy, the sick, widows, orphans,—and not until later were they reserved for the sick and infirm. Great misery led to their formation. It was the age for institutional help. The monastery, the home of the ascetic believer who did not attempt to penetrate the life of the world with the spirit of Christ but fled from the dying old world, was another refuge for the wretched. The monastic was obliged to work for his own support, and to be able to give extensive benevolent aid. The poor and the stranger were received at the monastery, and were fed and cared for. The cloister sheltered the sick, and restored them to health again.

The second period of Christian charity extends from the time of Constantine to the dissolution of the old Roman Empire. Its chief principle was almsgiving for merit; and its methods, wholesale giving from church revenues through the bishop's steward, or the presidents and stewards of benevolent institutions. The fathers of the church kept themselves poor, in order that the needy might be helped. It was indeed a noble sight to see Basil waiting upon the sick, Chrysostom living modestly and daily feeding 7,000 poor, Augustine desiring no other garment than such as he could give to any poor brother, Gregory mourning for days upon hearing that a man had died of starvation in Rome and accusing himself of being his murderer. The church fathers declare that the relief of the poor was one of the main reasons for the payment of tithes, and say, "A man who does not pay his tithes will appear before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge, charged with the murder of all the

poor who have died of hunger in the place in which he lives; since he has kept back for his own uses the substance which God has assigned to the poor."

In these tumultuous times, when the Old World was breaking up and the New World was but yet in its swaddling-clothes, the church became the great center of blessing and help. In spite of the lesser motive, and by the use of the different method, the church did a marvelous amount of blessed work in the sunset days of the old empire and the sunrise hours of the new German world. Well does Guizot say: "From the fifth century we discover a powerful guarantee for the safety of society in the authority of the Christian priests. The municipal functions were performed by the bishops and clergy. In reality all that remained of the jurisprudence of the Roman Empire were some civil ordinances, which the magistrates and the heads of towns, discouraged by imperial restrictions and the ruin of cities, neglected to enforce. On the other hand, the bishops and priests, zealous and energetic, looked keenly to the interest of their people and directed their affairs. It would be unjust to charge them with usurpation. The natural course of events placed them in their new position. They were the only class possessed of intelligence and moral courage, and they alone were deserving of authority. Such is the law of the world. The church of that epoch earned unquestioned glory, the glory of powerfully contributing to the formation and development of modern civilization."

THE THIRD PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

The Germanic races had taken possession of the Roman land and government through successive waves of destruction, and now the fair-haired, blue-eyed men of the North were in turn to be conquered by the Roman religion, and customs, and languages. This double conquest had already

shown itself. In outward things the Germans were conquering the Romans; but in inner life the Romans were conquering the Germans, and teaching them to live in cities, to read and write, to become civilized in their form of life and in their tastes, and also that which is more important for our study, to accept their religion. It was these rude barbarians, brave in battle, faithful in family purity, whose blood was to infuse fresh vigor into the body politic, and whose labor should be the continuation of the world-life through the birth-pangs of the national spirit into modern civilization. Mediæval Europe in the dark ages appears at first sight to be an epoch of disaster and distortion and death, but in reality it is a time of beginnings, of preparation for the greater civilization that was yet to come.¹

The church of the Middle Ages was the Roman Catholic Church, with its iridescent dream of a world-church to which the state should be loyally subject. Was the Roman Empire established on a German basis only to be overcome in a great struggle by the Imperial Church under Gregory the Great, who saw a vision of Rome as the final arbiter of all earthly power? Such a vision was an impossibility even for those church-intoxicated days, and the Concordat of Worms, in 1122 A. D., was a compromise for both the church and the state.

The charitable motive of the mediæval church was a self-receiving rather than a self-sacrificing desire. The expiatory power of almsgiving, which had superseded the simple giving of help through love for Christ and the sufferer in the second period, has now reached its maturity and climax in the elaborately planned, meritorious results of benevolence, touching all forms of life.

The method of charity was in conformity with the general movement of the period, which was to sink individu-

¹See Emerson's Introduction to the Middle Ages, and his Mediæval Europe.

ality in corporate life. Everything which would tend to emphasize personal power or differentiation had the age tendency against it. Institutional life was everywhere regnant, and the strongest man was bidden to submerge himself in the interests of his class. All charity became in this period institutional, and was given to the church as a means of the giver's salvation, and was distributed by the church, and not by the individual. The important element of personal love was lost, and the indiscriminate giving by the church or the monastery fostered poverty and educated beggary. The indiscriminate almsgiving of the Middle Ages was not inculcated by the church. The fathers declare the necessity of investigating the cases of those who apply for help, and a celebrated mediæval theologian of Paris affirmed that to give to one who has no need is not only not a merit, but even a demerit. Thus in *theory* the church was not favorable to indiscriminate giving, but the preaching of discrimination in giving was overwhelmed in the insistence on giving as a meritorious deed. Historically considered, the theory was lost, and almsgiving was practically indiscriminate, all cases receiving help.¹ The man who gave to the poor in the first period of charity, with Christlike love for the needy in his heart, and who made sacrifices to give his gift without a thought of himself, is of a totally different type from the man in the Middle Ages who gives merely to obtain for himself or his deceased friends the clemency of the Great Accountant in the skies. Well does Uhlhorn say, "The transformation was complete." Benevolence became a source of corruption both for the giver and the receiver. The beggar felt that in giving one an opportunity to relieve his wants he was doing him a favor. Beggars looked upon begging as a profession through which they were ministering to the Christian growth of those whom they

¹ See Ashley's *English Economic History*, pp. 316, 339.

asked for aid. Men did not longer give to alleviate suffering or honor God.

The defects in the method of relief were many. No attempt was made by the state as a whole or by secular public authority to relieve distress. It could hardly have been expected that the help which came through endowments and personal almsgiving should have been wisely distributed to meet the highest needs of all the unfortunates. Whatever the theory may have been about the investigation of the cases of those who asked for help, the practical outcome was indiscriminate charity, which, instead of wisely relieving and checking poverty, created a pauper class, which found it unnecessary to work for a living. The charity of the time was not coördinated or distributed wisely. Often those who most needed help were left to suffer, while the professional beggar had an easy time. Certain districts of a given country might be flooded with charitable help through richly endowed foundations, while other parts of the same country would be starving. Thus relatively a small part of the population received much aid from charitable endowments, while other people received next to nothing. It even happened that some healthier districts of the country had many hospitals, while those parts constantly troubled with malaria had scarcely none. The severe indictment against the charity of this period, then, is that the deserving and the needy were often left to suffer, while the undeserving and professional beggars were thriving in their laziness.¹

One would, however, leave a wrong impression of this period if he said nothing about the beneficent results which followed even this imperfect motive and method of charity. While one regrets the loss of apostolic fervor and of congregational distribution, yet the compassion of the church counted for much in the dark ages which followed the

¹ See Ashley's *English Economic History*, Vol. ii. chap. v.

breaking-up of the empire. It was the light center of help for despoiled centuries. It would doubtless be going too far to say that there was no love in this period, but it was only an institutional love, which is cold and unsatisfying when compared with the love in the days before Constantine.

The third period of Christian charity extends from the overthrow of the Roman Empire to the time of the Reformation. During the mediæval period no attempt was made by the state as a whole, or by secular public authority, to relieve distress. The help all came from various forms of almsgiving. All the tendencies in the second period which were contrary to the simple, unselfish devotion of the first period, came to their full maturity. Almsgiving became a mere financial bargain, the benefits of giving to accrue to the giver. The doctrinal aspect of almsgiving was largely to blame for the shiftless methods of charity. If reward and merit were to be earned through almsgiving, the giver would not be likely to be overcareful in the distribution of his alms: for the whole proceeding was largely subjective, and the needy only an opportunity for the exercise of this grace. It would have been surprising, indeed, if there had been discrimination under such a doctrine of giving. The period was retrogressive in its relation to development, for the motive of almsgiving carried the mediæval church back to the old pagan idea of giving, which was essentially selfish. The Oriental giver under the sway of ethnic faiths, long before the Sun of Righteousness shone upon the earth, was somewhat charitable, but it was a charity essentially selfish. The same principle was powerful in the church of the Middle Ages. It was only self-seeking covered with a thin veneer of brotherliness which was seen in the apostate church. The Reformation period was to be a summons to sincere souls, kindled with the fire of a new love, to a new form of charity which was really the old form of primitive Christianity. Any kind of char-

ity was new to the fierce Germans, and doubtless counted for much in binding the new people to the charitable church. All the time this selfish charity was accomplishing one purpose, it was educating the community to believe that a large amount of work should be done, and that the needy should somehow be helped. This impulse when directed by scientific methods of modern charity is valuable indeed.

THE FOURTH PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

The Reformation period of Christian history gave the principles which would finally divorce the organic union between the church and the state, and in this separation an inevitable change was involved for the motive and method of charity. The Reformers taught that the government of the church was in the hands of the church itself, and was not the prerogative of a priestly class. They also declared that the church should not control the state, nor the state dominate the church. Let church and state cooperate in moral order. Another cardinal principle of the Reformation was that the individual had a right to judge for himself in religious matters, and that liberty of conscience and worship was his inherent right. The exaltation of the Scriptures and the dethronement of tradition brought men back to the old principles of love to God and love to one's brother. The doctrine of merit by works was sharply indicted, and thus forced upon the attention of the Reformers the current conception of almsgiving, and brought the condemnation of the new freedom upon the old method. The motive for giving by the Christian in the Protestant communions swung partly back to the primitive motive of love. Given an open Bible, an emerging individuality, an independent church and state, and the conditions for unselfish charity are again before the church. In this period the study of the method is

very important because it is the beginning of a radical change.

When the changes already noted took place, it was next to certain that there would come, sooner or later, a great change in the method of administering charity. Secular instead of ecclesiastical agencies might be expected to care for the needy, the defectives, and the delinquents. In proportion as civil affairs were separated from the church, charity would tend to become a secular duty. Since the Reformation, Protestant countries have seen that the care of the needy belongs primarily to the state. Different forces coöperate to bring about this radical change in the method of charity. It is first seen in Western Europe in the end of the fifteenth century. It had become very evident that the church had largely failed in the method of administering help; that pauperism was increasing through indiscriminate charity, and that only a stringent prohibition of begging would relieve the situation. The action of monasteries had been utterly ineffectual in the diminishing of pauperism, and their indiscriminate alms made a class of professional beggars. That this spirit pervaded all classes of public and private givers is seen in the words of Crowley in 1550, who described the tricks of beggars, and then says: "Yet cease not to give to all without any regard. Though the beggar be wicked, thou shalt have thy reward." Lecky is within the facts when he says, that Catholic charity has "created more misery than it has cured." When he sums up the work of monasteries he is not too radical in saying, "The poverty they have relieved has been insignificant compared with the poverty they have caused." Why not turn to the state for help? Three forces were coöperating to aid in this wise transition. Before scholasticism became effete, John Major, the Nominalist, sought to magnify the functions of the state. In 1515 he wrote: "If the Prince or Community should decree that

there should be no beggars in the country, and should provide for the impotent, the action would be praiseworthy and lawful." This became in later times an argument used by cities for the right to suppress public begging by law.

The Reformers were led, as we have just suggested, by a theological reason, to see that the doctrine of meritorious works in relation to charity was pernicious, and were constrained to seek some other method as well as motive for philanthropy. In 1520 Luther declared that one of the greatest needs of the time was the total abolition of mendicancy, by which he probably meant to include the mendicant orders. At the time of the Reformation the country swarmed with beggars. Luther says, "This caused no wonder, as the monks made a religious service out of begging." Luther sought to diminish the evil when the doctrine of justification by faith had taken away the doctrinal excuse for begging. Collections were taken, and people appointed, as in the early church, to attend to their distribution, and to see that only the worthy poor received aid. Luther was very generous in his gifts to the poor. The associates of Luther were untiring in their sacrifices for the needy. The sixteenth-century church went back to the personal method of the martyr church. Each town, Luther said, should discover those who were truly poor, and maintain its own poor. The church and the state should work together to destroy pauperism. In 1523 Luther drew up "The Regulation of a Common Chest," which became the basis of reform in Protestant Germany. This common chest was to give wise aid to the worthy poor, and was to be administered by elected citizens. The abolition of the monasteries and the confiscation of the property of the Romish Church came about in a most indefensible way, but the ultimate result was a blessing to the poor of England.

Its immediate result was the swelling of the full ranks of vagrants and mendicants, but out of the increased evil

came the ultimate result of the overthrow of many centers of pauperism, the stopping of the accustomed doles of the paupers, and the seeking for a relief for destitution which found form in the enactments of Elizabeth's reign. In England under Elizabeth the principle of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor was established in 1601. It was seen that earlier statutes which inflicted severe punishment were not enough to put down pauperism; that man must be kept from the kind of want that would make him break the law. The eminent statesmen of Elizabeth's reign decided to attack the problem squarely, and were forced to see that the relief of destitution must be undertaken by the state, and that taxation must prove the means for two things—for seeking to set to work those who could work, and to provide if necessary the material; and for relieving such poor people as could not work. The administrative work was to be done by overseers of the poor, "who were to be composed of four, three, or two substantial householders in every parish, who shall, under the hand and seal of one or more justices of the peace, be yearly nominated in Easter week, and that these, with the church wardens, shall be overseers of the poor." The chief part of this enactment was the compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor by the state, even though a part of the administrative force was from the church. This great event in English poor-law legislation is really the foundation of the English Poor Law.¹ And yet, against the scientific method of charity, the Roman Church, tenacious of the principles of the dark ages, in the person of William Cobb, says: "The Reformation is the cause of the misery, mendicancy, nakedness, famine, and the endless list of woes, which we see and which stun our eyes. England celebrated, when it was Catholic, as the land of hospitality, generosity, comfort, opulence, and serenity, has become,

¹ See Sir G. Nichols's *History of the English Poor Law*, Vol. i. chap. iv.

under the Protestant yoke, the theater of cold egotism, of the labor of beasts of burden, of extreme misery and rapacity."¹

In this modern period the state has not been guiltless in creating pauperism. Near the end of the eighteenth century in England, poor laws were so lax, and relief was so easy to secure, that it became more desirable for a shiftless man to become a pauper than an honest laborer. The poor rate became so oppressive that farmers offered to give up their lands, rather than pay such exorbitant taxes for maintaining able-bodied men in idleness. These same paupers refused to take such land, because they enjoyed the system of relief much better. This reminds one of the taxes levied about A. D. 400, in the decadent days of the Old World, when a large tract of land in the Campagna was allowed to become a desert, because its owners could not meet the enormous taxes levied upon it.² In some parishes in England the cultivation of the soil ceased, since the land could not produce enough to pay the taxes for pauperism. The evils of pauperism had become unendurable. Men felt no repugnance in taking the pauper's portion. Hard-working men were nearly killed with the burden of taxation. Their hard-earned money was given to the beer-shops, which were largely supported by the paupers. In 1834 an effort was made, by the abolition of outdoor relief for the able-bodied, to do away with this system. Excellent results followed, but even now only about one-ninth of the paupers enter almshouses.

The great cities were beginning to feel the sense of corporate life, and this led them to grapple with the burning question of poor relief. The evils of the old church system were felt in the cities, for the deserving and undeserving poor were alike attracted there by the lavish gifts from

¹ Letters of the Reformation.

² Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century*, pp. 11, 81, and 180 *seq.*

the rich endowments for the poor. These cities were forced in self-defense to create a civic organization to deal with relief and to forbid begging. These different movements led to the principle of the civil control of relief measures. The state soon found that it could not stop pauperism by mere repressive measures while the church controlled the aid, but that it must itself take charge of relief work. It was not transferred in Germany as quickly as it otherwise would have been, on account of the religious wars which followed the Reformation. It was done in England at the time of the English Reformation, in France at the time of the Revolution, but not in Italy till the last few years; for where the Romish Church holds power it strenuously objects to the relinquishing of the relief system for the poor. Legal charity is called by Romish writers a Protestant innovation, a poor substitute for the generous almsgiving and for the innumerable asylums created by the Papal church for the relief of every form of misery. True charity, according to this biased view, was extinguished by Luther and Calvin and the other leaders of the Reformation, because they denied the necessity of good works for attaining salvation. Cardinal Baluffi¹ laments that Protestant influence has closed the hand of charity in many instances, and brought disrepute upon the sovereign means of meriting a reward for the giver by almsgiving; but boasts that the divine virtue which secures to those who give most freely the largest measure of merit, still lives on the earth among the faithful. Baluffi holds that the declension of charity as a religious institution "is traceable in a large degree to the deadly exhalations of Protestantism, to the domination of an infidel and cruel philosophy, and to the baneful agency of secret societies." "The only true charity is Catholic charity."

The history already related answers without any com-

¹ *The Charity of the Church a Proof of her Divinity.*

ment the partisan attacks of writers like the Italian Cardinal.

It certainly was right that the state should accept its burden in the relief of the poor, but it also does well to allow that the impelling motive to charity in general exists because the church had taught the centuries the invaluable lesson of help for the needy and dependent.

The fourth period of Christian Charity, therefore, extends from the time of the Reformation to the beginning, say, of the eighteenth century. Its noteworthy characteristic was the transference of the administration of charity from the church to the state.

THE FIFTH PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

We have now reached our own period, which we will call the epoch of scientific charity. The transition which was being made in the fourth period from ecclesiastical to secular charity, in the fifth period has reached its culmination, and all students agree that the administration of general charity belongs to the state. Middle-Ages charity, with its motive of personal advantage, and its method of indiscriminate giving to relieve temporal wants, has given way to a truer benevolence in motive and a wiser method of administration.

Crooker in "Problems in American Society," in his chapter on Scientific Charity, gives three causes for the transition from ancient to modern charity, namely:—

1. The administration of charity was transferred from ecclesiastical to secular agencies. This point we do not need to consider further.

2. The rise of the humanitarian sentiment, which gave to the world a more exalted idea of man and society. The dignity and worth of man were emphasized.

3. The growth of the scientific spirit. Men began to inquire why there were so many in want? What could be

done to relieve this want, and to remove the sources of misery?

Such questions led to the beginnings of wise methods of amelioration. A scientific study of charity and its application to active conditions began in 1788 in Hamburg. In fact, as early as 1711 steps were taken in this Free City for some personal supervision of the poor which should attempt to cure the evils of pauperism. Proper organization of this purpose for such a great task developed from the principles of 1711 was made in 1788, and personal supervision, employment, medical help, and day nurseries were established, while coöperation between the various charitable agencies of the city was insisted upon. The funds came (1) from public taxes, (2) from one-half of what was collected in the poor-boxes of the churches, (3) from a subscription taken up annually by prominent citizens, (4) from weekly collections taken by the district visitors as they went from house to house, given by those who made no annual subscriptions, and (5) from three thousand poor-boxes kept in as many families. But, in the one hundred years and more which have been added to the world's life since 1788, few additions have been made to the Hamburg system. This institution of poor relief was initiated in twenty cities of Germany, while it also aroused great interest in foreign countries. It is very evident that the real origin of our own modern scientific method of charity did not originate in Elberfeld, but in Hamburg. Elberfeld borrowed from Hamburg, and in 1801 began work which remained unchanged until 1853, when this system of charity, which had not worked very well, was made more efficacious by a reorganization, without change of the fundamental principles. More enthusiasm and more overseers made the system successful. The plan of Thomas Chalmers to assign a small number of families to a Friendly Visitor was a contribution which he gave to the Elberfeld method, and it is

now a constituent part of the famous system. In 1869 the London Charity Organization Society was formed on the Elberfeld system. In 1877 the Charity Organization Society was formed at Buffalo on the basis of the societies in Elberfeld and London. Now there are about seventy American cities whose charitable work is modeled on the Elberfeld plan, but with this difference, that they are private institutions rather than a part of the municipal government like Hamburg and Elberfeld. Another difference is that the German form of government seems to be better fitted for honor officers, while the American system thus far has needed salaried officers. The principle, however, remains unchanged—personal supervision of the destitute, with the purpose of preventing pauperism and the coördinating of all charitable agencies.

Some of the principles of modern scientific charity may be stated thus: "Give no man a cent that he can earn"; "Have a personal supervision of the poor"; "Give immediate attention at the critical moment, and be sure that your care is both wise and friendly"; "Study the cause of pauperism"; "Investigate thoroughly all cases of need"; "Have coördination among the various charitable agencies"; "Well-meant charity may be a curse to the poor if it is unwisely given"; "Seek to prevent rather than to alleviate poverty"; "Part of the time of the wise friends of the poor is occupied with the undoing of the work of the unwise friends of the poor"; "There must be a heart back of the system, which yearns with true sympathy to assist the unfortunate"; "Purify the home, and thus help children to live up to their best instead of their worst heredity"; "You can do but little for the poor; you must work *with* the poor"; "Above all, do not wear patronizing airs in trying to aid the poor." All of these may be summed up in the present Elberfeld fundamental principles: "Poor relief must be individualized, so that the aid given to each

person must correspond in its character and its amount to the peculiar needs of the individual"; "Let there be a thorough examination of each individual dependent, continued careful guardianship during the period of dependence, and constant effort to help him to regain economic independence."

While we talk of the secular management as the administrative method of modern charity, it must be emphasized that the separation of work into sacred and secular does not mean that in voluntary charity the workers in the secular department are irreligious men. The real fact probably is that in American cities the voluntary charitable work of coördination, as well as the money for the immediate alleviation of distress, comes very largely from those who are the pledged followers of Christ. The time and attention and money necessary for this work of friendly visiting and helpful aid is often given by those who also give these same gifts to the poor and needy of their own churches. While, therefore, the important separation of the church from the state has made wise the care of the poor at large by men in the capacity of citizens rather than as churchmen, yet really the same men are largely instrumental in this work. The form of work which is done in the modern period by the state as an institution in the care given in almshouses, orphan asylums, hospitals, asylums for the insane, and in outdoor relief at home, is more consistently called the secular charitable work. That this work for men in general, and especially for the defective classes, belongs to the state we do not question. The ecclesiastical administration would doubtless be less satisfactory, but it is a testimony of no small value given to the church by Warner in "American Charties," "It was right that the state should undertake relief work, but that relief work and the great access of sympathy for our fellow-men which compelled it, would never have existed except for the in-

fluence of the church." This relief work by the state is under strictly secular officers, and should be kept so, with no influence attempted by the church, except the repeated affirmation that it should be honestly administered.

The seeming glory and triumph of the church in the days of Constantine, when a state church was created, was in reality a disaster of large proportions, the culmination of which was the selfish, corrupt papal system. In the present period the relation of the church and state in European countries is vastly different from that of the United States. The state supports the national church, but is tolerant of other forms of religious belief. The state church in Germany and England is constantly brought into comparison with the growing power of dissenting worship. France supports several church organizations on an equal footing, and permits a toleration under certain conditions, but in reality the Romish Church is still strongly enough entrenched to claim the allegiance of the country which was called the Eldest Daughter of the Church. While United Italy tells of the uprising of political freedom, yet Italy is also virtually a Roman Catholic state church. Other forms of worship are tolerated. In the United States there is no palsying alliance between the church and the state with its grudging toleration; but we have found a better way for the conduct of both church and state—freedom for both. Not toleration, but freedom of worship; not submission or patronage, but freedom of citizenship. This separation of church and state, and consequent freedom of worship, was not the matter of a day, even in our own land. The early history of our own colonies was virtually a union of church and state. Colonial history declares that the church and the state were at first intimately joined, and that the religious meeting corresponded with the town-meeting. Religion was supported by taxes. Ministers were generally chosen in open town-meeting. Attendance on worship was

compulsory. Marriage must be performed by a civil magistrate, and not by the minister. The rude altar was the center of all life,—religious, social, and political. The first town-meetings were held in the meeting-houses. We know too well the few pages of that early history, when the men who had themselves fled from intolerance, became intolerant, and persecuted and banished and imprisoned, by order of the Court, those who differed from the colonial church in matters of conscience. But that is long past; and in the United States to-day the church is free, and the state is free. The state now exists as the organized body for the performing of civic functions; the church exists as the organized body of Christian believers, under various forms of belief, each man through freedom of conscience voluntarily accepting the form of belief which appeals to his life.

In the days when birth into the state also gave one birth into the church without any required new birth from above or voluntary acceptance of any faith, it was very easy to see, that, if the church was to care for her own, she must care for all the people. We of the evangelical faith are more scriptural in our conception of the church as a body of voluntary believers who have confessed Christ. But the question remains to be answered, What is the obligation of the church to-day in wise charitable relief? What duty has the church, as a church, to the poor? There appears to be no dissenting voice to the statement that the church in the United States should care for its own members who may be in distress and suffering. With the exception of possible hypocrites who may be parasites upon the church life, these are the poor who through unavoidable circumstances have been brought to want. In a quiet, unostentatious way, having regard to the Lord's injunction that the left hand should not know what the right hand doeth, these people are helped usually in a genuinely sci-

entific manner. Investigation by competent persons is usually made in the spirit of brotherly love, and those assisted where real need actually exists. In my own church of 1,150 members, for instance, our charitable work is conducted on a thoroughly scientific method. The poor fund is under the judicious care of one of our deacons, who personally visits reported cases of distress, extends sympathy and aid, and is held responsible by the board of deacons for the administration of the fund. In special cases he asks for council and direction from the full board of deacons. But little money is paid directly into the hands of the needy. Every effort is made to prevent the loss of self-respect on the part of the recipient, and to see to it that no one is led toward pauperism. All of the other agencies for help in our church are coördinated with the central department, and move on in harmony, so that the same person is not being helped by various societies within the church. We also have those who assist with personal visits and counsel the needy families, and express to them the true love which is the only genuine motive of Christian helpfulness.

There may be a difference of opinion on the question whether it is the duty of the church as a church to undertake the care of a specific number of families outside its own membership.

Whatever may be the answer to the second question, it is perfectly evident that the church is called upon to undertake some work of relief for those outside its membership. The measures of relief must be largely that form of help known as outdoor relief, and all the benefits of this mooted system of relief can be seen at its best in private relief when this charity is scientific as well as religious and sympathetic. In addition to the financial help which is to be given, the church should undertake the more taxing and more productive work of friendly visiting, and by well-

planned friendliness open the door of a broader life to the people who have lived in the shadow of comparatively unnecessary degradation.

During this period in which the state has developed its interest in the care of the poor, either by state support or by voluntary secular societies, there has occurred a remarkable movement in Germany along the regenerated members of the State Church in behalf of the needy. No survey of the fifth period would be at all complete without showing something of the work of the Inner Mission of the German people. This is distinctively a religious movement, having its incentive in an evangelical love for the lost and the unfortunate. Its motive is love. In Protestant Germany the condition of church and state is not unlike that which was found in New England in early colonial days. Membership in the state presupposed baptism into church relationships and finally confirmation, whether one is regenerated or not. The community, therefore, is at one on civic and religious interests. The Lutheran churches are closely allied to the state, and must render their final reports to officers whom the state appoints. There are about twice as many Protestants as Romanists in Germany. The Emperor is at the same time head of the nation and of the church. Every minister is an officer of the government. The state builds churches. The local church is maintained by taxation. There are earnest regenerated men in the national church, and these men have combined in what is known as the Inner Mission for the needy at home. The primary work is to win nominal Christians to a spiritual life, the "saving of the heathen at home," the regeneration of lost men, and the helping of the poor to temporal and eternal salvation. It is to secure a regeneration in the Inner Life of the state, the church, and society. Its entire basis is spiritual love for men leading to a crusade against the devastation which sin and want

had wrought in the professed members of the church. Less than six per cent of the children of Protestant parents remain unbaptized, and most of those who are christened are later confirmed; so that to work for the people of Germany is largely to work for the members of the church.

The Inner Mission is a comprehensive work of voluntary associations. Its purpose is "to stretch a holy net of love, whose separate threads are already spun, but which waits upon this union for a well-ordered, closely connected whole." The central committee has an office in Berlin. Its functions are instruction, inspection, counsel, assistance, but not legislation. The term Inner Mission was used to designate all the works of rescue which grew out of Christian faith and love in response to social need. Many voluntary fraternities had been formed in different countries and in different branches of the church to respond to the call of suffering. There was one common foundation here—faith that Christ is the Redeemer of the perishing. "The Inner Mission does not mean this or that peculiar work, but the sum of labor which arises from loving faith in Christ, and which seeks to renew within and without the condition of those multitudes in Christendom upon whom has fallen the power of manifold external and internal evil which spring directly or indirectly from sin, so far as they are not reached by the usual Christian offices with the means necessary for their renewal. No form of evil or misery is to be neglected. No class is to be ignored." The City Mission does in a city that which the Inner Mission does in an empire. It is a local Inner Mission for the helping and saving of the people. The spiritual leaders of the church saw that through faith Jesus would free the souls of men from sin and death; through the works of kindness, on the part of regenerated men, he would free society from the evils of sin, from poverty, wretchedness, and ruin.¹

¹ See Williams' *Christian Life in Germany*.

The motive of the Inner Mission is evangelical love expressing itself in all forms of helpfulness. Active Christian love has been found to be the best agency for reaching men materially and spiritually. Most of its work appears to be work for the physical betterment of society; but, beneath its work of alleviating suffering, of changing social conditions, of rescuing the lost, of preventing woe, it soon becomes evident that the principle at work is love, and that the purpose of the work is to win those who are helped back to the church and to personal allegiance to Christ. This very work has led the state to be more careful and helpful in its care of the unfortunate.

THE AGENCIES OR METHODS OF THE INNER MISSION.

The orders of deacons and deaconesses have been revived. Nine thousand deaconesses are at work for the people of Germany in 730 hospitals, 168 homes for the poor and feeble, 125 orphan houses, 48 nurseries, 50 establishments for the training of servant girls, 451 schools for little children, and as pastors' assistants in 1,017 parishes, as well as in other ways. This force of deaconesses preach regeneration as the only permanent way of betterment to the classes of people with whom they come in contact.

The deacons, or brothers, were to care for the poor, to rescue the lost, to visit prisons, and to manage the inns where assistance is given to the poor. These deaconesses and deacons are carefully trained for their work. Evangelistic efforts go on in connection with nursing the sick and giving charity.

The fields of activity in which the Inner Mission works are varied and they have been summarized as seven:—

1. The education and instruction of children.
2. The education and preservation of youth.
3. The rescue of the lost.
4. The preservation of those who are in danger.
5. The distribution of Christian literature.

6. The care of cripples and the sick.

7. The removal of social wrongs.

These seven fields include nearly all forms of preventive and alleviative work which is done anywhere for the poor.

THE RELATION OF THE INNER MISSION TO THE STATE.¹

“In Germany, for many classes of sufferers, the state assumes the entire expense and looks to the church only to supply that personal sympathy which belongs to her very atmosphere.”

The interest which the church has taken in charity has led the state to improve its methods of help, and the scientific Elberfeld system has become the basis of our wise state help. The state, individuals, societies, disburse financial help to the needy, the church supplements this work with that which other agencies fail to meet. “Often it is enough that she give personal attendance, always in a Christian spirit, to the sick, or that she encourages, with hopeful and instructive words, the dependent and disheartened. It is this kind of work that the church seeks to do in cities by means of the city mission, in the country at large by means of the Inner Mission.”

In conclusion, when state charity cares for all those outside the church who need help, there will still be a work for the church to do. It will be to furnish that mysterious, sympathetic, loving touch which cannot be given by mechanical organization, but must come from the heart. The church when in fellowship with its Founder is an institution of the heart. Within the church itself we are largely back to the apostolic motive and method in the care of our own poor. The problem which now presses upon us for solution, is how to apply in conjunction with a scientific method this same motive and method to the care of the poor outside the church.

¹See Williams, p. 216 sq.