

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN CONSIDERED IN A MORMON POLITICAL CONTEXT

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"Let no man count himself righteous who permits a wrong he could avert."

—N. N. Riddell

Though the Bible may have generated its share of scholarly disagreement, the New Testament's message about the need for human understanding remains clear and unambiguous. Christians may be divided on various points of doctrine, but at least there is no disagreement that helping someone else in need has always been considered an act of Christian virtue.

The disciples of the Master, as they assembled to receive their final instructions, were told to "go . . . and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Their field of labor was to be not just Israel or Rome, but the *world*. They had previously been instructed that their "neighbor" included anyone in distress (Luke 10:30-37). Their commission was to minister to his total needs, material as well as spiritual.

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

Expressions of this same all-encompassing compassion have been repeated over and over in modern scriptures.

. . . and he inviteth them to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile. (2 Nephi 26:33)

Woe unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls. (D. & C. 56:16)

Deep concern for one's neighbor was the concept underlying the Church's Law of Consecration, a new principle and social order for the Latter-day Saints which was designed to banish the curse of poverty forever.

And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken. (D. & C. 42:30)¹

It is noteworthy that during his lifetime the Prophet Joseph Smith was highly sensitive to the needs of others, both inside and outside the Church. He displayed an unceasing interest in social reform. His range of recommendations included such proposals as the purchase and emancipation of the slaves by the federal government, the reformation of civil and military penal systems, the upgrading of public education, the establishment of a central national bank, and the institution of a highly sophisticated system of urban planning.

In modern times the Church has continued to distinguish itself by its concern for human suffering, as exemplified by its Welfare Program and its world-wide distribution of relief to disaster victims. Having endured so many wrongs and hardships themselves, the Latter-day Saints now find it quite natural to relate to those who may find themselves in similar predicaments.

On reflection, however, this rather generous estimate of the Good Samaritan propensities of the contemporary Mormon faithful may have to be regarded, in some cases at least, more as an expression of wishful thinking than of fact. It was during my three terms in the United States House of Representatives² that I was brought into contact with an ultraconservative element of the Latter-day Saint community whose concepts, in my opinion, were completely at variance with the Mormon ideal of showing active concern for one's neighbor. Though the members of this group were endowed with normal feelings of human kindness in their dealings with friends and associates, they were generally disinclined to project their Christian concern beyond the limits of their homogeneous little circle.

Their ideological common denominator was the conviction that virtually all social welfare legislation³ was incompatible with the principles of

¹See also D. & C. 38:16, 35; 44:6; 52:40; 104:18; 105:3; and Mosiah 4:26.

²1959-1962; 1965-1966.

³This term is intended to denote that large assortment of government-sponsored programs which are traditionally supported by liberal and opposed by ultraconservative legislators. They include both economic and social welfare measures, usually aimed at stimulating the national economy, raising individual living standards, improving education and job-training, creating job opportunities, clearing out slums, expanding civil rights, removing pollution, improving environment, etc.

the Restored Gospel. This would explain their unwillingness to recognize the state as a proper agency for promoting programs of human betterment. Stated in its most forthright terms, their message was that there was something basically "non-Mormon" about using the agencies of the federal government to translate abstract Christian concern for one's neighbor into concrete proposals for the relief of human suffering.⁴ Though in their own minds this point of view was quite compatible with the Gospel of Love, to humanitarians outside their group it seemed to lack the up-to-date realism necessary to turn love for mankind from a theological abstraction into a practical instrument for serving human needs.

Numerically, this group constituted but a small part of the body of the Church, and geographically, its members were widely dispersed. Its point of view, however, was articulated with such persuasiveness that it exerted a disproportionately strong influence on the total Church membership. In fact several faithful Latter-day Saint congressmen were defeated as a direct result of this group's aggressive political activities. Its point of view is still strongly felt within the Church, and in obedience to the well-known political law of the pendulum, it may be expected to wax and wane as the years go by.

Although in politics the Latter-day Saints generally tend to lean toward moderate conservatism, a clear distinction must be drawn between the latter position and that of the ultraconservatives herein referred to. Most Latter-day Saints, though deploring big government and deficit spending in general, would accept, at least up to a point, the need for federal assistance in such areas as reclamation, urban renewal, slum clearance, job-training, area redevelopment, and even civil rights.

To better place the subject of contemporary Mormon ultraconservatism into its historical setting, however, let us first recall that during the 1950's, and the early and middle 1960's, it became apparent to most that millions of Americans had fallen into conditions of extreme adversity. They were the slum-dwellers, the unemployed, the illiterates, and, more particularly, some twenty million race-conscious Blacks. Compounding our national malaise was the dramatic proliferation of such ills as regional economic stagnation, environmental pollution, campus unrest, and a general breakdown of law and order. No particularly prophetic powers were needed to see that America was running a race against catastrophe.

In an attempt to ward off disaster (which attempt, historians will ultimately agree, was at least partially successful) Congress enacted a number of

⁴This generalization is not completely accurate, of course, for the reason that even within the tight circle of ultraconservatism there are bound to be individual differences. Many ultraconservatives appear to have finally reached a compromise with the twentieth century by accepting, though reluctantly, such once-liberal measures as the Federal Reserve System, social security, federal reclamation, etc. However, when new but comparable measures are currently proposed, even these reformed ultraconservatives still oppose them with the same fervor, as well as the same arguments, as they did the older measures which have now passed into general acceptance. This points up the perceptiveness of that dryly humorous definition of a conservative: one who refuses to do anything the first time.

social welfare measures which the ultraconservatives chose to categorically reject. Though I applauded their zeal, I could not endorse their misconceptions.

In the first place they could never face up to the reality of the nation's social problems. Their single obsession seemed to be that of Communist penetration. Since their thesis was that free societies possess a built-in, self-correcting mechanism which can operate without help from the government, they could not consistently admit that any of our social problems were insoluble without such help. This would explain their refusal to acknowledge the seriousness of the trouble we were in, or else their disposition to blame all these troubles onto the Communists.

Even more grievous than this, however, was their failure to recognize the moral responsibility of each individual citizen to assume his share of the burden which must accompany any meaningful effort to mobilize a national effort against mass misery. Specifically, they failed to understand that racial prejudice, ghettos, and other social evils of that nature could never be uprooted until each American reached the point of acting as though these problems were his *own*, rather than belonging exclusively to the man living on the other side of the railroad tracks.

The dialogue carried on between members of this group and myself on this point was an exercise in total frustration, probably for both of us. My explanations regarding the economics of unemployment seemed to bounce like pebbles off a granite wall. My description of the misery of innumerable Black Americans drew from them a theological dissertation, totally irrelevant, on certain passages in the Book of Abraham. My modest remedial proposals elicited charges of Communist complicity.

When the medicare bill came up for discussion I was admonished by them to "uphold the Church position against it." I protested that the Church had no position against it, any more than it did against social security. In addition, I tried to describe to my correspondents the plight of some twelve million senior citizens for whom the high cost of needed medical care had placed hopelessly out of reach. On this point I drew a total blank. In talking to them about human suffering, which is the language that everyone in the world is supposed to understand, I always had the feeling that I was trying to pass through a brick wall. Others must have had this feeling, too, for during this period the impression was common in some legislative circles that the Mormons neither saw nor cared beyond the horizons of their own immediate interests. This entirely false image was bound to impede the progress of the Church, and to reduce its range of influence.

A second misconception of the ultraconservative group had to do with the proprieties of personal conduct in the political arena. A great number of them, upon entering active politics, became intemperately aggressive. This led, in a few extreme cases, to public attacks on the faith and religious motivation of devoted Latter-day Saint officeholders. From my personal observations these attacks were unwarranted and degrading to the American political process. Not only did they inflict unnecessary injury on their victims, but

also embarrassed the Church by making it appear to be torn by internal dissension:

. . . I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine. (D. & C. 38:27)

A third mistake which I ascribe to my ultraconservative friends was their persistence in alleging, erroneously, that their extreme political views had received the official endorsement of the General Authorities of the Church. As all Latter-day Saints know, it is easy to get this impression because of the nonprofessional character of our priesthood and Church procedure. All worthy members have access to the pulpit, and hence to the means of attributing to their own opinions an authoritativeness to which they may not be entitled.

It was in order to put a stop to such erroneous attributions that the First Presidency took occasion, on January 2, 1963, to reiterate the Church's clear and unambiguous position of political neutrality, in the following words: "We believe in a two-party system, and all our members are perfectly free to support the party of their choice. We deplore the presumption of some politicians . . . who undertake to align the Church or its leadership with their partisan views."

Informed Church members should certainly know by now that the Church has always officially taken this position. As recorded in the *Documentary History of the Church* (Vol. 5, p. 526), the Prophet Joseph Smith himself declared in 1843, "I am not come to tell you to vote this way, that way or the other. . . . The Lord has not given me a revelation concerning politics. I have not asked for one. . . . I desire to see all the parties protected in their rights." Moreover the Doctrine and Covenants reads, in this respect, "We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government . . ." (D. & C. 134:9).

Considering, then, the Church's support of the United States Constitution, including the latter's clearly expressed doctrine of the separation of church and state, it seems to me that Latter-day Saint meeting-goers would do well to check their politics at the chapel door before entering.

It would be appropriate at this point to evaluate the bedrock logic supporting the ultraconservative opposition to government-sponsored social welfare programs. It can be simply stated as follows: the operation of the principle of free agency is prerequisite to spiritual growth and salvation. Therefore, everything that enables free agency to operate is good, and everything that circumscribes its operation is bad.⁵ Since government programs are imposed upon dissenting minorities as well as assenting majorities and are enforced by legal sanctions, they are compulsory and therefore restrictive of free agency. This is particularly true of federal programs, which are more comprehensive and therefore less individualized. They are considered, then, to be necessary evils, at best, and must be kept at an irreducible minimum. Society's social and economic ills should be cured, not through compulsory

⁵See Moses 4:1-3; D. & C. 29:36; and 101:78.

collective action programs, but through strengthening individual moral fiber. Where collective action does become necessary, voluntary organizations and state and local units of government, rather than the federal government, should be used as the acting agent.

The moderate conservatives and the liberals agree with the ultraconservatives that the preservation of free agency and of moral fiber are all-important. Up to that point their respective positions are indistinguishable. The final conclusion of the ultraconservatives, however, relate to the disqualification of the federal government from any social welfare role, is predicated on two intermediate but important premises which the liberals and many moderate conservatives categorically reject.

The first is the premise that all government social welfare programs diminish man's free agency. In answer, it must be pointed out that what really concerns us is not whether federal programs result in *some* diminution of individual freedom, which obviously they must, but whether they result in a *net* diminution. Stated interrogatively, can it be shown that the adoption of federal programs will bring to American citizens, on balance, a greater total amount of ultimate freedom than was previously enjoyed, even though some intermediate freedoms may have been sacrificed in the process? The liberals argue that it can.⁶

By way of analogy, a motorist choosing to travel on a public highway thereby loses his freedom to drive on the left-hand side of the road at 100 miles per hour while intoxicated. Stiff penalties are imposed to enforce these interdictions. In exchange, however, the motorist acquires freedoms far greater than the ones surrendered, including the freedom to travel in comparative safety at driving speeds instead of at walking speeds. This alone could well result in liberating a thousand extra hours a year for his own individual use. Hence it will be seen that his freedom has been increased, rather than decreased, by virtue of the penalties of the Traffic Code.

The force of the argument, in the context of the social welfare problem, can be clearly felt by considering a specific case: that of a Negro boy who, we shall assume, has lived all his life in the slums of a decaying metropolis. His parents are barely literate. His playgrounds are dirty streets, and his toys are whatever he can lay his hands on. His medical and dental care are mediocre or non-existent. His schooling is sub-standard; his environmental influences, unbelievably atrocious.

As he reaches manhood, he finds that he is poorly trained, jobless, and without prospects. He feels despised and beaten before he starts. His constitutionally-guaranteed political freedoms are totally untranslatable by him into anything relevant to his far more pressing concern, which is how to earn a living and support a family. What he feels he really needs is the freedom to secure some technical training and job opportunities, the freedom to be

⁶Obviously this would not be true of all federal programs, for some of them are indefensible. It would be unfair to judge the soundness of either the conservative or the liberal position on the sole basis of samplings taken from the extremities of the legislative spectrum.

treated as an equal, and the freedom to own a home on terms of equality with other members of the community. As far as he is concerned, any freedom that doesn't give him that much isn't really freedom at all!

It is only in that context that any realistic evaluation of the curtailment of free agency by a federal program can be made. Let us take, for example, the federal job-training program, which is designed to give our Black youth, if he takes advantage of it and works hard, the technical skills enabling him to find permanent employment and therefore economic independence and social dignity. Comparing the very minimal diminution of freedom which this program may occasion to society as a whole⁷ with the considerable augmentation of freedom made possible to the hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries of the program, we would logically have to conclude that the program's net effect is decidedly in favor of freedom.

Comment should be made here on that nugget of wisdom so freely given by today's well-to-do to our younger struggling generation. We've all heard it. It goes something like this: "My great-great-grandfather didn't get any help from the government, and yet he succeeded in establishing himself out West as a prosperous farmer. Why can't you do the same thing? What you need is more backbone and initiative."

The advice about backbone and initiative is excellent, but not entirely germane. If we are going to be absolutely honest about it, we will have to admit that the great-great-grandfather in question, though extremely hard working, also received some valuable help in the form of real estate, which was available in copious quantities during much of the last century. It could be obtained, either from the government or from land speculators, and sometimes for little more than pennies. It is true that under the Homestead Laws settlers had to work hard to perfect their title, but the opportunity was there. Translated into today's terms, this would be as though every unemployed person, upon application, and for a modest fee, were set up by the government in business with a substantial amount of capital equipment, whose costs could be repaid on easy terms, out of profits. Unfortunately this kind of economic benevolence disappeared with the frontier.

The second major premise of the ultraconservatives which is challenged by their opponents is that federal social welfare programs should not be used to take care of our social and economic ills because local governments and voluntary organizations can do the job better.

If this statement is meant to apply to *all* programs, at whatever level, then it is obviously not true. Of course no one will dispute the fact that local governments can do *some* jobs better than the federal government; and almost everyone agrees that local governments should remain strong and vigorous to perform the jobs they can do best. Most liberals would go as

⁷In considering the cost of job-training programs it should be remembered that the revenue from the taxes later to be paid by job-trainees, after they have become profitably employed, will return to the government the initial cost of the program many times over. In no sense can such programs, which add immeasurably to the nation's total wealth, be considered a net drain on the United States Treasury.

far as to concede that, all other things being equal, it would be better for local governments to be responsible for all of society's social welfare programs; but, alas, all other things are not equal, and out of recognition of this simple fact our great federal system was born. Its numerous programs came into being, not because of a power-hungry bureaucracy or communist infiltration, but because America had no other choice. The proof of this assertion is that fact that when ultraconservative candidates for the presidency or other high national political office move closer and closer to victory, a clearly discernible metamorphosis takes place in their thinking. Faced with the awesome responsibility of presiding over the destinies of 206,000,000 Americans, their conservative panaceas appear pitifully inadequate. Gradually they abandon their pledge to destroy those very federal programs whose destruction constituted the *raison d'être* for their entering politics in the first place. Although the Sherman Antitrust Act, the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, the Federal Pure Food and Drug Act, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Fair Labor Standards (minimum wage) Act, the Social Security Act, and a galaxy of others were condemned at the time of their enactment for being socialistic, wasteful, bureaucratic, unconstitutional, and un-American, I have not heard of one responsible conservative presidential aspirant, not even Barry Goldwater nor George C. Wallace who now seriously proposes their repeal.

Federal social welfare programs are the direct outgrowth of the bigness and complexity of a society which we were all responsible for creating, and the price for which we must all be prepared to pay. It seems to me that the only persons entitled to protest these government programs would be those pitifully few who receive no benefits from them at all. They would be limited to a few hardy souls who migrate into the desert and there live out their days in misanthropic solitude.

Today, all of our nation's producers, distributors, and consumers are enmeshed in a network of economic interdependency, requiring the most sophisticated kind of planning and coordination to keep in proper functioning condition. This is as self-evident as the fact that a modern space vehicle containing over one million interrelated parts requires more centralized control to operate correctly than does a covered wagon. It would hardly seem necessary to add that the federal government is frequently in a better position to provide national coordination than are the states. Consider for example the fact that a substantial drop in the price of lead and zinc, due, let us say, to the unexpected discovery of a commercial substitute, might well result in the closing down of 100 marginal mines and the unemployment of 25,000 miners. This, in turn, might well trigger a serious regional recession which a small or poor state would be hard pressed to cope with.

When the American fuel consumers changed over from coal to gas a few years ago, annual retail coal sales dropped by millions of tons, and a hundred thousand coal miners in the coal fields of West Virginia were thrown out of work. It was comparable to the gradual drying up of a huge river, leaving millions of fish to die. Such a catastrophe could only be averted

by either pumping more water into the river bed or by transferring the fish to another river.

It is interesting to note that in the case of the coal miners, these were the two objectives which the government sought to achieve through its regional development and anti-poverty programs, i.e., to stimulate new regional industry, and to make possible the physical transfer of the unemployed into new areas of economic opportunity. The results of the program were encouraging.

On the floor of the House of Representatives, at the time the above measures were debated, the ultraconservatives argued that West Virginia should take care of its own unemployed, and that to bring in help from the outside would weaken the West Virginians' moral fiber. The fact was, however, that lack of moral fiber had nothing to do with their predicament. The stricken area had become economically weakened from the loss of its major source of income. Its tax base, due to the depreciation of property values, had shrunk so small that it could no longer support the burden of its idle unemployed. Any attempt to do so by further increasing its tax rates could only have had the effect of driving the few remaining businesses away, in search of tax relief. Congress wisely concluded that these unfortunate people were victims of adverse economic conditions over which they had little control, and that they were entitled to national assistance. The ultraconservatives, on the other hand, believed that the whole program moved us just one step further down the road to communism and destruction.

What was true of regional rehabilitation for the economically depressed coal fields was also true of slum clearance, pollution abatement, narcotics traffic control, mine safety, minimum wage, and civil rights. In the case of each of these problem situations the history of the state and local community effort was a history of "too little and too late."

From this it must not be concluded, however, that all federal programs are good. It is no secret that some of them are proved disappointing even to their sponsors, and many of them have shown dangerous tendencies toward proliferation, duplication, and bureaucracy in the worst sense of that word. As a liberal I have no hesitation in saying that the correction of the abuses and excesses of federal power is a necessary and a never-ending task, and one for which the moderate conservatives are often better equipped than the liberals.

In recent times we have seen a sincere effort to give more meaningful political roles to the state and local governments. Not even the most extreme liberal would find fault with this. The destruction of humanity's natural diversity through the uniformizing process of our modern political and industrial giants is one of the most depressing developments of the twentieth century. The further strengthening of local governments could only serve to help correct this unfortunate development.

As ambassador to the Malagasy Republic and to Mauritius I saw with concern the increasing suppression of individuality on an international scale. I saw to what extent the super powers were imposing their language, their

music, their art, their politics, and a whole standardized way of thinking on the emerging nations, to the annihilation of the latter's national personality. While all this is probably not intentional, it is nonetheless a fact.⁸

Returning, however, to the national picture, it is apparent that solving the problem of giantism isn't as simple as going out and slaying the federal Goliath with one stroke. His continual presence in our midst testifies to the fact that we have now found that we can't get along without him. To suddenly smite him to the earth without first providing a replacement, as my ultraconservative friends have frequently suggested, would be an invitation to anarchy. Let it be remembered that our federal Goliath, unlike the ancient Philistine monster, did not invade the sacred soil of Israel uninvited and unwanted. If the states regard him as an interloper, they have only themselves to blame for his presence. His intrusion only served to fill up a vacuum which they themselves created. The national water pollution scandal offers a dramatic case in point. The record will show that our slow-moving giant waited over a hundred years for the states to stop dilly-dallying with the problem. The verdict of history will be, not that Goliath moved too fast, but that he didn't move fast enough. Because of his delay, many of the finest lakes and watercourses in America were ruined, some beyond redemption.

The objective of this article, however, is not to philosophize on the merits of federal versus state programs, nor to attempt to define their respective jurisdictions. Its effort is only to point out that the spirit of modern liberalism, which seeks to translate concern for one's neighbor into effective social legislation for the relief of human suffering, is not incompatible with the Restored Gospel. There are many devoted Latter-day Saints who so believe. Others may honestly disagree, but this disagreement certainly raises no presumption that one or the other of these groups must have fallen into the quagmire of sin and error. There is ample room, within permissible limits of Latter-day Saint orthodoxy, for honest differences of political opinion.

To many members of the Church, liberalism offers the only practicable way for the Gospel of Love to bring material blessings to suffering millions who are not yet able, or willing, to accept the Lord's better plan, but who are still our brothers, and deserving of Christian compassion. I find no scripture directing us to confine our solicitude to those of our own faith, or to build a wall around our benevolence.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stronger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did not to me. (Matthew 25:44-45)

In addition, those for whom the preservation of traditional American values becomes the all-important political objective should not forget that

⁸It is interesting to note that several contemporary thinkers have argued that the demand for a high degree of specialization in thousands of categories of current technology has tended to restore a great deal of our vanishing diversity.

some of the most effective blows in defense of the Constitution, and against Communism, have been struck by liberal swords.

Surely liberals and conservatives, if they are candid, will have to acknowledge that every well-balanced society needs both of them, and that each should understand the function of the other.

Another issue has appeared on the scene, however, which may result in a complete reshaping of traditional political alignments. One cannot avoid referring to it in passing. It has to do with permissiveness in general, and more specifically, with liberalizing the laws concerning such matters as "promiscuity, pot, and pornography." Those carrying the offensive for this kind of liberalization are equipped with some extremely impressive armaments, including the recommendations of Presidential commissions, scholarly committees, and a battery of avant-garde freethinkers. Some apologists for this new far left argue that our laws on abortion, prostitution, adultery, marijuana, parental control of minors, and criminal procedure in general are "hopelessly out of date," by which they mean "too strict."

Many Americans, including both traditional liberals and traditional conservatives, view this turn of events with pure horror. They see in it an apostasy from the principles underlying America's greatness, and a confrontation with the most serious threat in our national history.

Because of an unfortunate semantic confusion, the designation "liberal" will be given to all permissivists and those who advocate "liberalizing" the laws-referred-to-above, even though many traditional political liberals may consider such appellation a hideous distortion of this noble word.

Liberals, like conservatives, come in all varieties, and, like the conservatives, are split badly on this new moral issue. This means that new alignments will be made in which traditional political liberals, including this one, will be found fighting side by side with many traditional political conservatives, for the preservation of the historic moral values which are presently being threatened by the dissidents of both camps.

This continuing struggle to establish permissivism must not be confused, in spite of the confusion of terminology, with the traditional liberal-conservative political struggle, which must also continue, and which is still very much relevant to contemporary life. Traditional liberals still have their work cut out, particularly in the field of anti-pollution, race relations, urban planning, and consumer protection.

If the liberals of old had faltered at the crucial moment of their history, there would have been no American Revolution and no emancipation from human slavery. Had they not played out their historic role with courage, today we would not know the blessings of public education, community hospitals, libraries, safety standards, and pure food and drug laws to name only a few.

Now that the fighting is over and the victory won on these historic issues, it is reassuring for the timid to believe that every worthwhile liberal cause has already been disposed of. They are quite prepared to be convinced that those who continue the fight for the benefit of some unfamiliar person, and

on some unfamiliar frontier, are troublemakers, and that the miserable of the world who have made untidy beds, should now be required to lie in them.

Those hearts who feel little charity for the millions of human beings who are being slowly crushed by the wheels of a Juggernaut not entirely of their own making, would do well to consider the words of King Benjamin in Mosiah 4:16-19:

And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish.

Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just —

But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God.

For behold, are we not all beggars? . . .



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