

on the part of our ancestors embodied in the older records of those pieces of land in our own country which we occasionally see in the market at an upset price of from thirty to forty years' purchase? No. There can be but one answer to questions such as these. Paley's compact is altogether a fiction; and a citizen of York or of Bagdad might as well lay claim to some island of the Indian Ocean or the Pacific, on the ground that his townsman Robinson Crusoe or his townsman Sinbad the Sailor had once taken possession of it in behalf of the people of York or of Bagdad, as the poor lay claim to free support on the ground that such was the intention of the first appropriators of the soil. The first appropriators of the soil had no such intention.

The poor have indeed claims on the compassion of men; and these claims, when their poverty is the result of misfortune, are very strong. God speaks in their behalf in his Word. He speaks in their behalf in the human heart, which his finger has made. When He gave laws to his chosen people of old, He forbade them to reap the corners of their fields, or to gather again the loose ears which fell from the hands of their reapers, that the fatherless and the stranger might pluck and eat, and that the poor gleaner might not ply in vain her tedious labours. But he gave to the poor no right in the property of his neighbour which the poor could assert before the civil magistrate. No third party was permitted to step in and determine what amount of assistance the pauper was entitled to receive or the rich necessitated to give. To Himself alone did God reserve the right of being legislator and judge in the case; and under His wise management, a genial charity, that softened and improved the heart, and clarified the whole atmosphere of society, did not degenerate into an odious tax, redolent of bitter discontent and ill-will; the bowels of compassion were not sealed up among those whom He had blessed with substance; nor did the children of poverty