

when considered in the connexion in which they occur in the epistle from which the text is taken. It is applied to illustrate the Apostle's rule as to the payment of presbyters. "Let the elders that rule well," says the Apostle, "be counted worthy of double honour;" that is as it probably means, be counted worthy of double pay, "for honouring more often means, honouring with the substance in the New Testament, than any thing else. And the next verse, "for the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward," shows that the reference is not to respect or good esteem merely, but to pecuniary recompense of work.

You will remember how our Lord in rebuking the Pharisees for their want of filial affection, made the commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother" include the support of them when aged and infirm. And there is hardly one place if there be one in the New Testament where honouring does not carry with it the notion of pecuniary benefit. Observe too one passage of scripture, a few verses before, where, when prescribing what widows should be eligible to a share in the Church's fund, the Apostle uses a similar expression, "honour widows that are widows indeed," that is, let their allowance be liberal. Those who have used hospitality, those who have ministered to saints, and those who fulfilling these conditions have no sons or near connexions to undertake their support, those when of proper age were to be admitted into the list of the Church's pensioners and to be liberally provided for, and in this way honoured. I mention these points not merely because they are matters of curiosity or information, or mere critical niceties of no practical value, for you will see how close a bearing they have on the subject on which I am speaking now. They show that there was even from the earliest times a definite organization, a central fund; that from this fund widows were pensioned and clergy paid, and other expenses of missionaries or messengers doubtless defrayed. And though the epistles or letters which have come down to us from the Apostles' times are but few and written with other objects than to explain these points to later generations, yet they by incidental allusions, which are specially valuable, afford a good deal of information as to the fact that in the Apostles' time there was order and method, and systematic arrangement of the funds and expenditure. Thus, observe how St. Paul in the epistles to the Corinthians indirectly tells us the same. He had with a desire to relieve this fund in the Corinthian Church, avoided taking wages of them, though he had done so from other churches, and had wrought with his hands (as we read in Acts, 18,) with Aquila and Priscilla, his occupation being that of a tent maker. Some of his enemies wishing to depreciate him and make him contrast unfavourably with others, objected that one who took none of the church's wages was not the church's servant, that he could have no claim to be an Apostle, for that if so he would draw his support from the church's fund. The Apostle, therefore, in explaining his reasons for waiving his claim, takes care to show that he was foregoing a right "I only and Barnabas," (1 Cor. iv. 9,) are we the only ones who have power to forbear working with our hands, we have a right to the regular pay as well as others. And in vindicating his claim to the Apostolic office he beseeches them in terms which under an irony convey the severest rebuke, that if this were all they had against him they would "forgive him this wrong," (2 Cor. xii. 13,) as if

he would say, that by not accepting wages from them as from others he had wronged them.

This fund moreover was a liberal one, for the offerings of christians at first were large, though the amount contributed was optional, at least to some extent. In fact the way in which the greater part of it was raised is mentioned, for it was to consist of offerings on the "first day of the week as God had prospered them," (1 Cor. xvi. 2,) the proportion which they were expected to contribute being probably one tenth of their worldly gain. Moreover, special collections were made on special occasions, as when the Macedonian and Corinthian Churches sent a contribution to the christians of Judaea during the famine which had been foretold by Agabus, as it is written in the Acts, St. Paul himself mentioning the subscription in 2 Cor. viii. Perhaps then as now collections were made for special funds on special days. Perhaps the Widows' fund, and the Clergy fund, and the fund for Missionary purposes were made the objects of special appeal. But in whatever proportions it was raised the general fund was large and the pay of the clergy ample, as appears from two oft mentioned requisite of a minister that he be "not greedy of filthy lucre," (1 Tim. iii. 3,) and the caution against the conduct of those who entered from corrupt motives into the ministry thinking to make a "gain," (1 Tim. vi. 5) of godliness.

Now, my brethren, I have brought forward these particulars, which you will observe rather afford proof that a system existed, than enable us to follow it into exact details, not because they are the only proofs that in early times the church had a fund out of which the various charitable and necessary expenses were paid, and distribution made to the necessities of saints, for in fact, early history will teach the same with more clearness and distinctness. But I think it is well for us to notice that we have scripture warrant that such an organization did exist, and that we are not by our efforts now departing from the Apostolic method. And thus when we remark on St. Paul's order that the Elders who rule well, be counted worthy of double, which is probably a way of expressing liberal pay, (an expression derived from the fact that the first-born were originally the priests of the family, and that they had a double portion,) we see how well it applies to the text which immediately follows, and is a comment thereon, "the labourer is worthy of his reward." It may perhaps be asked why if no more minute details of the system of the early church are known from Scripture, we have dwelt on those indications of a system to be traced in the inspired page. Perhaps we may advantageously derive this lesson, that though in its general features it is advisable and right to go upon the Apostolic model, yet the particulars of the system will vary with the age and circumstances of the Church. There were, doubtless, many provisions made then, with reference to the customs and ways of feeling of eastern Christians, which would be unnecessary or superfluous now, and we again require provision to be made for our condition and circumstances, which would have been unmeaning in earlier times. But there can be no doubt that now as then it is most important that we should work by a system, and that the groundwork of that system should be in the words of the text, "The laborer is worthy of his reward." It is on this ground that we can boldly challenge contributions for the fund for the sustentation of the clergy. It is a false modesty which would shrink from pressing a claim like this. We may despise one who asks alms because he will not work, and justly so, "for in the sweat of his brow man is to eat bread," and he is guilty of unmanly, no less than unchristian conduct, who shrinks

from taking his portion of the common lot of man, and seeks to eat his bread by the sweat of other men's brows. Or we may pity with good reason him, who by physical or mental inability, by sickness or infirmity, is thrown on the good offices of his fellow men, being deprived in God's providence of the privilege of doing active good to man, or engaging in active service of God. But no such feelings can apply to a case like this. It is a thing monstrous and unheard of, that he who works, shall not eat; that he who labours, shall not have his wages; that those who are for Christ's sake the servants and ministers of His people should not from those people receive the wages that are their due. There can be no doubt, no hesitation about the matter, but the question would seem to be "how is the requisite provision to be made?" The state of the case is summed up in few words, the work is great, the labourers are few, the recompense in general miserably insufficient. I could tell you of young men scarcely arrived at the age at which in the Primitive Church they could have been eligible for the sacred office; old men in constitution, broken in health and spirit, by the combined operation of over work and the next thing to absolute penury. I could tell of the backwoods missionary, with nine congregations under his sole charge, even during his diocese, only two of them meeting for worship within fifteen miles of where he lived, travelling night and day, through winter and summer, to preach to the scattered sheep in the wilderness, and happy at least, in this, that though his powers were miserably overtasked, yet the possession of the pittance which the Church Society could afford him ensured him at least daily bread. I could tell you of cases in which the services which had been performed freely for the love of Christ, had to be discontinued, because though the labourer received no hire himself, and would have worked without any, he could not afford the burden which the necessary means of conveyance entailed upon him, the people being unable or unwilling to pay even for the keep of a horse. I could tell further of one endeared to his people, by the patient and diligent performance of his duty, who by his efforts built churches in his mission, and aiding the erection of those churches by scanty means of his own, which he could ill afford to spare, was driven to the greatest straits by the inability of the people to do more while the churches were being built; and, who having been saved from starvation by a small allowance of the Church Society, had to leave his work in two short years, his health gone, and with small chance of his ever even partially recovering it. I could tell perhaps, did time permit, and were I not speaking from my own knowledge, of cases more distressing than these. But I forbear, begging you only to recollect that such cases must infallibly occur in a country like this, with so scattered and poor a population, unless some central system act upon the outposts; that unless there be some vigorous pulsation of the heart, the circulation of the stream of life to the extremities must stagnate and cease; and further, which is a point by no means to be neglected, that those who most need the Gospel teaching, those most remote from its sanctifying and humanizing influences, are those who are least able to provide the means of grace, and even if they were able, from ignorance of their value, would be least willing to do so, for now as of old is it true, "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear without a preacher, and how can they preach except they be sent." But my brethren there is another side of the question which the text suggests. If there be no hire, there will be no labourer: if the hire be small, the quality of

\* For this view of the text quoted here, and several other illustrations of the management of the funds in the early Church, I am indebted to the works of the late Professor Blunt.