

concentrate our minds upon it as a fact, as certain as that we must all one day, be it soon, or be it late, pass away from this world. We shall indeed behold the King in His Beauty;—and to all those “who love His appearing” it will be a joy beyond all joys, the sunrise of an unending day of unimaginable happiness! But to those who live as though there were *no* second Coming of Christ, how awful will be that Coming—how terrible that awaking—when they shall be brought face to face with the Judge in His Majesty. Let us then listen to the voice which comes as the blast of a trumpet to awaken us from our slumber and our sloth. “Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” for “who shall abide the day of His Coming! Who shall stand when He appeareth!” Those only who in humble faith can cast themselves upon His mercy, who now have found Him precious to their souls and can cry: “Come Lord Jesus!”

SHORT SERMON.

“Upon the first day of week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.”—1 Cor. xvi. 2.

The Weekly Offertory is of the remotest antiquity. It traces its origin back to the days of the Apostles, and claims its authority in the pages of Scripture. It is a principle, which, lost sight of indeed from time to time, has never been abandoned by the Church of Christ—a principle which lies at the root of her system.

I. And first we may notice that the claim upon the alms of the Corinthian Church, made by the

Apostle in our text, was a claim based upon an already recognised custom. In the days when the Lord walked upon earth, with but a handful of followers, a common purse, possibly supplied by the voluntary offerings of all, ministered to the wants of the little community.

After His Bodily Presence was withdrawn, and those followers had banded themselves into a distinct and separate Society, this simple system expanded into a well-regulated central fund under the direction and control of the Apostles themselves.

The rapid increase in the numbers of the Society brought a corresponding increase in its duties and responsibilities, and seven men were appointed to preside over this special work, that the Apostles might give themselves “continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.”

The system of contributing to a common fund was not, however, confined to the Church at Jerusalem. Wherever the Christian Society established itself, there the common fund existed also. Out of this fund the various necessities of the Church were provided for. From it the clergy received their stipends; for when S. Paul waived his own claim to a portion, as he did in the case of Corinth, for peculiar reasons (1 Cor. ix. 6), he intimates that he was giving up a *right*. And from some of the churches he did receive a stipend (2 Cor. xi. 8).

Then, too, there was generally a college of widows supported out of the fund, in some respects similar to our almshouses for infirm poor; and the needs of the Church in one