

unfolding a detailed system of almsgiving for wide acceptance and as obedient children they recognized the authority of St. Paul and felt that they were not at liberty to adopt any other plans. Such an idea does not seem to have entered their minds. On the contrary loyally did they follow the master's precept "freely ye have received, freely give." Loyally did they adopt the business like method of this apostle and their efforts met with marked success. Recognizing the importance of their Father's business above all other, knowing how wrong it is to trust to impulse, they made periodical examination of their financial standing, setting aside as God prospered them a portion to be expended on works of piety and charity.

Then according to Dean Goulburn, when the people assembled on the Lord's day to receive the Holy Communion, offerings of money, food and clothing were made by all members of the congregation who did not lie under any church censure. These offerings were afterwards divided into four parts. The first part went to the relief of the poor; the second to the maintenance of the Bishops; the third part defrayed the expenses of the sacred fabric and its ornaments; the fourth was divided among the subordinate clergy.

Now after making all due allowance for the altered circumstances in some respects of the present day, can we point to any other system so beautiful in its idea, so honouring to God, so generally applicable as this scriptural plan which was tried and not found wanting in the best days of Christendom?

Suppose, then, that as earnest students of the Bible and Early Church History we prefer God's plan of finance, have we not ready at hand a comprehensive system in the verses quoted above?

I. The sacred ministry are to take an active part in the spread of scriptural ideas on this important subject. Earnest, good laymen often think that their parish clergyman is overstepping the bounds of duty when he takes a prominent stand in money matters and the clergy not liking trouble frequently acquiesces. We can trace St. Paul's hand, however, actively at work in the particular instance of of Almsgiving already mentioned as far at any rate as the inculcation of practical interest in others, is concerned, and if our Lord in His Sermon on the mount placed Almsgiving, Prayer and Fasting on the same level the ministry have no right by their silence or inadequate teaching to give the impression that the first mentioned in God's sight is less important than the second and the third. Take into account the large space in God's Word devoted to Almsgiving in all

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