

# The Church Record

VOL. III.

SEPTEMBER, 1899.

No. 9.

## Principles of Almsgiving.

—o—  
WE have received a copy of a Sermon preached recently in Trinity Church, Seattle, by the Rector, Mr. Gowen, and it is so much to the point that we would like to print the whole of it, but our space forbids.

Mr. Gowen says, "It cannot be denied that there has arisen among church people a feeling more or less general, that almsgiving is only an accidental accompaniment of religion, a necessary evil, a collection to pay expenses, and that were the church out of debt and an endowment secured, how gladly and with what a sigh of relief we would abolish our offertories and accept ministrations which cost us nothing. But—*We can no more part with almsgiving than we can part with prayer.* One is the complement of the other. To come without the gift is to come without one of the essentials of worship. So did Jesus teach. In the Sermon on the Mount there is no apology for almsgiving, or prayer, or fasting, but a plain statement of the principles guiding their use. Hence, the inference that when fasting goes almsgiving goes, and when almsgiving goes prayer departs too. And what shall it avail, if a man listen to a sermon or singing, if he neither fasts, nor gives, nor prays? Did not Festus and Agrippa listen to Paul, with all their fashionable company, not to their edification, but alas! to their greater doom?"

"The church everywhere has embodied this principle of the necessity of almsgiving as an essential of worship, in its highest service, the Eucharist. Here is the continual protest against the selfishness of man. As long as the Eucharistic service remains to men, the pathway to the highest spiritual blessing is through the gate of the offertory. Here, all we have to offer, body, soul, spirit, offerings and oblations, is accepted by God and consecrated to the highest purposes, and it is noticeable, as indicating the mind of the church, that our money here is not "filthy lucre" but is included among "*the devotions of the people.*"

"The main principles which are to regulate our giving are these:

1. A practical recognition of our dependence upon Almighty God.
2. A consecration of the secular life by offering its product to the service of the church.
3. A methodical disposition of our substance, in accordance not with impulsive feeling, but with the law of God.

Almsgiving must not be casual or impulsive, but methodical, regular, stated and conscientious. This is taught in one of the most permanent institutions of the Jewish Church. In recognition of the fact that all we have proceeds from God, it is laid down that *one seventh of our time and one tenth of our substance* is to be *directly* given to Him. The one day in seven is not ours but His. So the one tenth of