

fail. I could tell you of a church in the metropolis where the amount thus collected has reached as high a sum as 1,300*l*. With this sum the clergymen have been enabled to accomplish many important objects. Free church accommodation has been extended; instead of three clergymen, four are constantly employed; the poor-rates have been lessened; and, in addition to these benefits, it may be mentioned that all other modes of collection for the ordinary purposes of the church have been done away with altogether. All modern means of soliciting Christian alms are dispensed with; there are no plates with persons of quality, male and female, presiding over them, placed at the doors—no subscription papers circulated with the names of the donors emblazoned thereon—no searching after popular preachers to stimulate into an occasional and spasmodic act of charity, by highly-wrought pictures of distress—nothing of all this, but a return to the ancient, simple, and sober practice of the weekly collection, encouraged and increased not by flights of human oratory, but by the only true, religious, and right-principled stimulant, the solemn declaration and exhortation, the blessed promises and awful denunciations of Almighty God himself, for such are the sentences that are read at the Offertory service. But I need not take you to a distant part of the country for evidence of the successful operations of the principle I have endeavoured to bring before you. I will tell you what has occurred in your own town, at your very doors, in your own parish church. I had the honour to be the churchwarden of Liverpool some six or seven years ago; and it may be in the recollection of many present that in the discharge of my official duty I had to propose a church-rate to the parishioners, out of which to defray the expenses connected with public worship at St. Nicholas's Church. This was refused, and the congregation of that church, in a proper and confident spirit of self-reliance, fell back upon the legitimate plan of the weekly Offertory. What was the result? Why, that whereas the aggregate amount of collections from all sources and for all purposes had in the previous year reached the sum of 100*l*., the Offertory in the following year yielded 300*l*. This is no solitary instance. I could bring before you numbers of cases, did time and opportunity permit. Instead of this wholesome plan, it is the fashion of the day to resort to all sorts of expedients for the sake of raising money. At one time it is the bazaar with its varied allurements (its articles very different from the "coats and garments" made by Dorcas, and disposed of in a very different way): at another time it is the charity dinner, with its list of subscriptions read out, often amid loud applause for the large, and impressive silence for the donors of small sums—(a laugh, and "Hear, hear")—at another it is the occasional charity sermon delivered by special preachers, a plan commonly followed at the present day. Now, all these plans possess this one fundamental objection—that in the use of them people forget the true nature of alms—giving as an act of worship, as an offering of the substance to the Giver of all good gifts, for a testimony of our heartfelt homage, dependence, and love. Alms are the wings of prayer that carry your petitions to the Mercy Seat on High, and will only be