

less faith in God, or in His ministers, or the work of the Church. I believe it is owing to the lack of a systematic plan for bringing before the people the needs of the Church, and for collecting their offerings. In former days the Church was the recognized medium for all religious and charitable work. She was the almoner of the world, and no other agency could have done as wisely as she did. All offerings, great and small, were gathered regularly and systematically, and thus the habit of giving was formed, and no one, no matter how poor, would approach the altar without an offering. But the Reformation changed all this, and the first work of the reformers was to disparage the Church in the eyes of the people, by enlarging on her weaknesses, and hiding the good she was doing and had done in the world. The people then lost confidence in religious teachers; the 'habit of giving' was also lost, and the habit has not been revived. To revive this habit of giving cheerfully and systematically is, I believe, the great work before the Church to-day.

To do this means work for the rector, but it is work which will repay a hundred fold. It calls for patience, perseverance, and above all, gentleness. My method is as follows: I send the following pledge to every member of the parish:

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION.

PLEDGE 189.....

For the Diocesan Assessment, Diocesan Missions and the benevolent work of the Diocese.

I do hereby promise to pay the several amounts set opposite the following funds, on such days as may be appointed by the Canons of the Church or by the Rector, to receive the same through the offertory.

FOR THE DIOCESE OF MISSOURI.

	Per Week.	Per Month.	Per Year.
1. Diocesan Missions .....			
2. Diocesan Assessment...			
3. Aged and infirm Clergy			
4. Orphan Home Fund....			
5. St. Luke's Hospital ....			
6. Theological Education.			
7. Permanent Fund for Support of the Episcopate.			
<i>Outside the Diocese.</i>			
8. Domestic Missions ....			
9. Foreign Missions .....			
10. Church Building Fund			
11. For Rector to distribute among above funds as he may deem it best			

(Sign Name here) .....  
Address .....  
P.S.—Return this Pledge to the Rector at once, by placing it on the Alms' basin.

I. THE LAW. Upon the first day of the week let EVERY ONE OF YOU lay by him in store as God hath prospered him. [1 Cor. xvi.; 2.]

II. THE PROMISE. He that soweth little shall reap little, and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a CHEERFUL GIVER [Prov. xix.; 17.]

When these are returned, I file them for reference. Then in a blank book we write the names of contributors and the amount of the monthly offering, and distribute it as desired.

I claim for this system, (1) that it is simple, (2) that it is effective, (3) that it interests the contributors concerning the work to which they give their offerings. Under this plan the contributions of the parish have been more than trebled, and will at the end of the year show a per capita offering of about five dollars, probably more, and this without being compelled every Sunday 'to talk money.'

INATTENTION OF MEN TO CHRISTIANITY.

G. V. in *Church Bells* says on this subject: The inattention to Christianity and to public worship—which, of course, means far more than attendance at morning or evening service—by the men, is needless to prove; because although in a few churches the number of men attending is very beautiful and encouraging, this is not so generally, and particularly too as relates to the Holy Communion.

Now, will the following suggestions prove practicable? Perhaps they are already in operation. If so, there is no harm in suggesting their extension, and there will be no harm in eliciting suggestions and experiences from others. With a loving longing, then, to strengthen the Church as Christ's own divinely appointed corporate body for doing good, of which He is the Founder and the Head, the following thoughts are offered for consideration. Probably they are not new. Let it be hoped that they all are wise and true. Chiefly, then, in regard to the political stump oratory and newspaper influence so successfully wielded against the Church.

It does not, perhaps, require that the difficulty be met by actual conflict and controversy; but rather by teaching the truth, and by not being ashamed to proclaim it. A newspaper which the working classes will purchase as their paper, which they will trust as being truly in their interest, and in which Church matters are honestly put before them as affecting their interests in every way, would prove of incalculable benefit. This has been attempted, indeed, in various places. Possibly, in some instances, the effort is prospering and doing a good work. But it cannot prosper unless it is really a good paper, with news close up to date, not a day or two after everybody has heard it. It is much easier to describe what a paper ought to be than to produce it and to sell it, and yet it ought to be self-supporting. Subsidized papers rarely prosper; but a working man's *Times* or *Standard*, or something very like these, is what is needed, with perhaps a little more about Church history than they give. The working folk do not know the truth about the Church, and therefore their inferences are unfair to themselves and Christianity. Let them know the truth, and stump orators may rage and orate in vain. Whether the clergy may not and ought to teach much more than they now do, by very careful catechisings (not by careless questioning, which is positively harmful) and by a sermon once and again full of truthful statements nicely and lovingly told, must be, of course, left to them to determine. It would seem as though good results have ere now followed some such efforts. Then, in regard to worship, morning, noon, and night, the services must be manly. That is to say, they must be carried out in a manly and reverent way. Given, Morning Prayer, or Litany, or Evensong, it is beyond doubt that they can be so rendered as to repel a congregation from joining in them, and can be so ministered as that the people can scarcely refrain from taking a hearty participation in them. It may be said here that the clergy are hardly aware what an unseen but almost magical power for good is within them, which, wisely used, brings the people along in reading the Psalms, or in chanting and singing or in the Litany, or the Prayers. How, too, a congregation listens to God's Word when, without affectation, mannerism, self-consciousness, or conceit, the Lessons, Epistle, Gospel, are distinctly and naturally read to the people. A manly tone, combined with true reverence, ought to characterize the priest in all he does. 'Love and power and a sound mind' may be manifest without any lack of reverence; and

these become the Christian priest in all he does, though in himself he be nothing and be a truly humble man, as he ought to be.

But all must be manly. Singing, sermons, preaching, catechesis—all loving, but such as men may listen to and feel that there is good sense, reasonableness, and truthfulness in what is done and said. Much harm has been done by a perfunctory way in performing occasional services, and sometimes, again, by extreme fussiness. Is there not such a thing, even in services, as 'taking the folk into one's confidence' and acting in all Church functions upon the principle of the Catechism, that they are members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that the minister is there as their 'Servant for Christ Jesus' sake' to carry out with them and for them the appointed offices of the Church of their God and Father? If it be said that they know nothing about the Prayer book, its meaning, and its offices, whose fault is it? Ought not the meaning and object of all these things to be constantly so alluded to that all shall know and understand, and so value them? The two points mentioned must be met by the Church. The hints now offered may or may not be right suggestions. Probably other and better suggestions will be afforded. The Church can meet every difficulty, and is bound to do so.

Two other suggestions shall conclude this comment:—In every parish there ought to be a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, and for every parish an annual confirmation. The Church must show that she believes the importance of these things which she professes to regard as almost necessary to salvation. Let her be true to Her Divine Founder, and she will win all unto Him.

FASTING.

One of the strange inconsistencies of the descendants of the Puritans is their disregard of Bible precept and example in the disuse of fasting. Holding to a type of religion peculiarly austere, and professing exact conformity to the Bible, they not only neglect but affect to despise this means of spiritual discipline which has the highest sanction of Holy Scripture, has always been enjoined by the Church, and has been practiced by Christians from the earliest times. It is amazing to find, as we do find from time to time, newspapers and preachers, representing one or another of the Protestant denominations, declaiming against fasting as mere formalism, a superstitious and senseless exercise, delusive to the soul and injurious to the flesh.

To the benefit of fasting as a means of discipline, a practice of self-denial, an acquirement of self-control, and expression of penitence, all history and experience witness. As to its effects upon the body, physiologists agree that in moderation and at regular intervals it is hygienic. To the full grown and well fed man or woman, who is not subjected to very exhausting labor, abstinence from flesh food every Friday in the year and more frequently during Lent, is a most wholesome and healthy rule, even if it had no reference to religious precept or ecclesiastical observance.

Interesting experiments have lately demonstrated that even very long periods of fasting may be undergone by some constitutions, without detriment to health. A noted case is the Italian Succo who has abstained from food for forty-seven days. Not many of the best fed Christians could survive the half of that time without nourishment; but it is not a little amusing to hear a plump 'Prayer Book Churchman' declare that he must have meat three times a day and seven days in the week, and