

**“The
Business Side
of
Religion.”**

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THE BUSINESS SIDE OF RELIGION

BY

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"The Ought-to-Be's," "Belief and Unbelief,"
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"Our Lady of Guadalupe,"
"Month of St. Joseph,"
"St. Anthony of Padua," etc., etc.



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

At the request of many pastors, I have collected the following articles and put them in their present prominent form. The subject is one which will always be of interest. It deals with the first of all human problems, the problem of existence. The Church can not exist or carry on its work without money or its equivalent. The truest test at the same time of Christian piety is that spirit of self-sacrifice which finds expression in the generous support of the Church and its varied institutions. I have endeavored to set forth catholic teaching on the duty of giving and to apply this teaching to conditions as we find them in this country. Imperfect as this little book is in many ways, I believe it is the fullest treatment of the subject to be found in any language.

The Business Side of Religion

CHAPTER I.

The Priest-Financier

Not Easy.

The average pastor nowadays has to be something of a financier. The science of raising funds for church purposes is not an easy one. It is not learned from books, but is acquired in the great school of the world, known as experience.

Beautiful and high-sounding theories have been promulgated from time to time about the best ways of procuring such funds; but after all has been said and done, it is the pastor himself, who has to go out and raise them. Ultimately the support of the whole organization falls upon his shoulders. Peter's pence, the bishop's cathedraticum and the funds wherewith the diocesan institutions are maintained, all pass through his hands.

In raising these moneys, theories are sometimes forced to give way to cold, hard facts. The one little thing which upsets most theories, is the fact that the support of religion is purely voluntary on the part of the people. There is, of course, a more or less indefinite law, commanding the faithful to contribute according to their means. This law, however, is a good deal like the Protestant doctrine of private judgment. It is sometimes very liberally interpreted and frequently disregarded entirely by people who would promptly resent the imputation of being bad Catholics.

It is the pastor who has to grapple constantly with this cheap Catholicity, and who has to make the best of a bad situation, without driving the "poor pays" from the church through the enforcement of iron-clad rules. To his credit be it said that he generally succeeds in making both ends meet, and the proportion of financial failures amongst Catholic pastors is smaller than amongst any other class of business men the world over.

Not the Same.

I have heard people from time to time grow merry at the expense of the priest-financier; but I have seen lay management tried and I have frequently seen it given up in disgust and even while it lasted it was the priest himself, who had to go out and raise the money for necessary expenses.

The methods and principles of ordinary business are not applicable to conditions, in which the obligation to pay is binding only in conscience. There are too many flexible consciences and too many people without any sense of honor or honesty, when it comes to the payment of church debt. The priest must not forget, at the same time, the higher considerations. The welfare of immortal souls must remain ever and always his dominating principle. He realizes that if it ever comes to a choice between a man's soul and his money, he must endeavor to save the soul, even if he has to look somewhere else for the money. He knows well that there is something radically wrong with the spirituality of a man who is willing to enjoy the benefits and consolations of religion, without making any of the sacrifices which religion entails; but he knows, too, that some people have peculiar ways of forming

their consciences, so he leaves them to God and does the best he can.

The average amount of business done, annually, by the pastors of the country reaches a surprising array of figures. In this age of brick and mortar, there is much to do in the building line, and provision must be made for future contingencies as well as for present needs. The penny-wise and pound-foolish attitude will not do. The pastor must be broad enough and far-sighted enough to lay the foundations for future growth. To do this, he must sometimes burden the present generation with debts, but he is noted, the world over, for his ability to pay debts. The credit of the Church everywhere throughout the country is of the highest order and this fact is no mean tribute to the man whose methods and labors have made it so.

His Return.

I am not detracting from the part played by the laity in all of this. Their turn will come later on. I am merely striving to remove a false impression, which exists in many quarters, to the effect that priests, as a class, are poor financiers. I believe that it can be conclusively shown, that, as a class they are exceptionally able business men, and that very many of them are financiers of the highest order. The real cause for surprise is, frequently, that, with such limited means at their disposal, they have been able to accomplish so much.

The average layman knows little or nothing about the expenses incident to the running of a parish. He figures from the limited cost of his own household, and wonders why it is that a parish cannot be conducted along similar economical lines. He forgets

that it is a dual, and where there is a school, a triple establishment, with added expenses for fuel, lighting, insurance, diocesan assessments, repairs, improvements and the thousand and one things which go to make up the expense account of every institution in existence. He sometimes forgets, too, that the priest is a tax-gatherer, not by choice but necessity.

This collecting business is the most unpleasant part of a priest's life. It is so unpleasant that, if the average pastor knew beforehand the humiliations he would be forced to undergo, in order to contend with this business side of religion, there would be a great dearth of priestly laborers. It is well for the Church that God mercifully conceals from the young levite the mean and sordid side of humanity.

A priest-friend of mine declares that he has always had to do two dollars worth of work for every dollar which he has ever received. It is not the work, however, to which the priest objects. It is the grudging spirit with which the just dues of religion are paid. It is the lack of appreciation and the forgetfulness of the fact that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it is not for himself but for the people and for their children's children for whom he is working and striving. He does not expect earthly riches. He set all hopes of these aside when he became a priest. He does expect gratitude and appreciation and even these are frequently denied him.

CHAPTER II.

The Generous Third**A Case in Point.**

A priest of Indianapolis, recently told me a characteristic story. It was of four Catholic men, who came from a small neighboring town to take a high degree in a well-known secret society. It appears that a letter from the pastor is one of the requirements of this degree, as those who take it are supposed to be the very *creme de la creme* of Catholicity.

They were unable, however, to produce the necessary letter from the pastor and gave as their reason for not doing so, the peculiarly cranky disposition of that good man. He was represented as being old, unprogressive, opposed to secret societies in general and to this one in particular. On their united testimony, he had refused point-blank and without any cause whatsoever to affix his signature to the harmless certificate of good character, required for the occasion. The priest, who was himself a member of the society, after hearing their story, concluded to investigate. He called up the pastor by telephone and asked him the reasons for his refusal. The old man hastened to assure him that the aforesaid gentlemen could come to him and very readily receive the letters asked for, simply by paying their back pew rent in full. All four were delinquent in their church dues and he was taking this means of enforcing payment. The old man also took occasion to remark that men aspiring to be considered representative Catholics ought to give some substantial evidence of their faith; and that in his

opinion the societies of the Church would do well to pay particular attention to the financial shortcomings of their members.

It was the old story over again of the pastor, who had suffered a sudden loss of popularity, merely because he insisted on making the payment of Church dues a test of genuine Catholicity.

Three Classes.

I have heard it said by priests of experience and of long standing in the ministry, that our Catholic people can be divided into three classes, viz:—the one-third, who pay more than their share, the one-third, who pay as little as they can and the one-third, who pay nothing or almost nothing. This general summing-up may not be true of all localities and conditions, but my own experience leads me to believe that, for our people taken as a whole, it is a more or less correct one. There is in every parish a certain percentage of those, who, as the saying goes are “hanging on to the Church by the eye-lashes”. They go to church rarely, seldom or never approach the sacraments, except perhaps during the time of a mission, and their contributions are not regarded as playing any noticeable part in the solution of the financial problem. The pastor is glad to see them come to church, if only occasionally, and he hopes against hope that the time will come when they will realize the inconsistency of their conduct and become faithful children of the Church and regular contributors.

Their difficulty, in nine cases out of ten, is a financial one. They would come to church more regularly.

if they were not expected to pay. It is cheap Christianity, sometimes, almost (if possible), as detrimental in its effects, as weak morals and decayed faith.

There is still a large percentage of those, who scarcely ever think of missing Mass or of being remiss in their ordinary spiritual duties. They are devout, in their own way, and some of them approach the sacraments frequently. When it comes to giving, however, a chronic shyness seems to take possession of them. They pay only under compulsion and then grudgingly, wondering, all the time, why religion cannot be dissociated from the eternal money question. Some of them are honest and particular when it comes to the payment of other debts; but they would gladly welcome a return of the Church to the simplicity and apostolic poverty of the early centuries, when the pagans did not permit the faithful to build churches and when the preachers, like St. Paul, were sometimes forced to earn their living in the sweat of their brows.

The Old Stand-Bys.

There are lastly those who do their share and more than their share. These make it possible for the Church to exist. If it were not for them, we might close our religious establishments and arrange to have services at infrequent intervals in some of the more important centres of population. The prosperity and growth of the Church is the result of their efforts. They were the main-stay in the past—in the days of the pioneer bishops and priests who laid the foundations of the Church's present wealth. They are the main-stay today of every form of pious benevolence. Schools, hospitals, seminaries, orphanages, academies and every species of Catholic endeavor ultimately de-

pend upon them for support. Their names come first on the collection and subscription lists. They are not necessarily the most devout, but their professions of piety bear the genuine stamp of self sacrifice. They are not, as a class, those that are best-off from a standpoint of worldly goods, but as a class they are those that are most respected and honored in every community. "The good pay" in matters of religion is generally a good pay in matters of business. They strive to live within their means and to be just and honorable in all their dealings. What they have to give, they give cheerfully and ungrudgingly. They take it for granted that the men who minister at the altar will make the best possible use of the money that is paid into the treasury of the Church. Their responsibility ends, in a certain sense, with the fulfilment of their own duty. If the temporalities of religion be wasted and dissipated the fault is not theirs. They have seen very little, however, in the management of Church affairs in this country to make them anxious as to how their money is going to be spent.

They are behind the pastor too in every worthy undertaking. Whenever property is to be acquired, or a church or school to be built, they are there with the sympathy and encouragement which sometimes means more than money. They are not critical or given to boasting as to the amount of past contributions. They, themselves, sometimes make mistakes in business matters and they make allowance for mistakes when made by their pastors. If all the faithful were of this class, the business side of religion would be without those perplexing problems that vex and harass the souls of pastors the country over.

CHAPTER III.

The Poor Pays**How He Knew.**

An old and frequently told story runs to the effect that a Western Catholic, looking about in New York, for an opportunity to hear Mass on Sunday, wandered into an Episcopal edifice and began to say his prayers.

As soon as the services opened, he discovered his mistake and leaving he wandered about in search of a real Catholic Church. He finally came to what looked like one, but as he entered a clergyman in cassock and surplice was mounting the pulpit. He stood at the door and awaited developments. They soon came. The first announcement made by the preacher bore upon the large number of those who were delinquent in the matter of paying Pew Rent. It was enough. The opening announcement was one he had often heard in his own church out west, and it was a sure sign he was amongst his own brethren.

The delinquent members or the poor pays are the bane of every form of business. They create all the problems of the commercial world, and they must be reckoned with in every enterprise in which capital is invested. There is no monopoly big enough to leave them out of its calculations. There is no infant industry small enough to escape the consequences of their shortcomings. In the realm of trade, they are a constantly disturbing factor, in business matters pertaining to religion they are a chronic source of irritation, anxiety and dissatisfaction. They cannot be counted upon, when they are most needed. They always fail the pastor at the critical moment—the moment when bills fall due and when he needs real

cash rather than empty promises and unreliable assurances of future assistance.

They pay something, of course, from time to time. Their remittances, however, are never regarded in the light of an available asset. They are too irregular, too uncertain and too long delayed.

Priests Too Gentle.

The pastor of a cathedral parish in the East, told me not long ago of a gentleman, who had held a front pew for five long years without paying so much as a single cent for the use of the same. He had hypnotized the bishop with a hard luck story which had served its purpose during all that time. When it finally came to a time, when he had to pay or give up his pew, he grew insolent and threatened to file a bill of complaints against the pastor. Such people never get their just deserts. Priests are too gentle and too considerate for their feelings. A lusty janitor with a strong right arm and no qualms of conscience is urgently needed in a case of this kind.

Another priest pointed out to me, in his church, what he was irreverent enough to call "*a cheap saint*". The "saint" in question was a widowed lady of considerable wealth. She moved in high society and the accounts of her receptions sometimes took up considerable space in the local newspapers. She was a frequent communicant and bore all the external earmarks of real piety. When it came to contributing, however, she was always ready with an excuse. She was so gentle and sweet about it too, that the pastor did not have the heart to adopt severe measures. "She is a pious old fraud" he said, "and we will try to get along without her money, but I have more respect for

people who pay more and pray less". It was a rough way of putting a plain truth, but the pastor was right. This woman's piety was destitute of the element of self-sacrifice. She had money for everything else but the support of religion. She was like a good many more of our fashionable Catholic people. They want the Church and the pastor to be ultrafashionable, but they leave it to the common people to pay the cost.

A Tempting Offer.

A friend of mine, who is now the pastor of an important parish in the city of Detroit, was sent in the early days of his missionary career, to take charge of a little French congregation in an outlying portion of the state of Michigan. The good old priest who had just died, had been their pastor for many years. He had inherited considerable wealth from his parents in France, and, as the people knew it, their remittances grew less and less each year. The last financial statement showed that the total receipts of the parish from all sources were something less than \$200.00 for the whole year. The new pastor determined to have an understanding right from the start. He had no wealth of his own to fall back upon, and he made up his mind then and there that radical measures were necessary. In his very first sermon he explained the condition of things to the people, told them what he wanted and invited the men of the parish to meet after Mass for the purpose of devising ways and means of raising the needed revenue.

As soon as the meeting was called to order, one of the patriarchs of the place arose and calmly told the new pastor that he was not wanted. They wanted, he said, the bishop to send them a good simple, old man,

like the late incumbent, one who wanted little and was easily satisfied. Others spoke in the same strain. They did not want those young American dude priests, who had to have a big salary and many other unnecessary comforts. He could go back to Detroit and they would ask the bishop for a priest of simpler tastes.

The humorous side of the situation appealed to the pastor, so he made them a startling offer. It was to the effect that those present appoint a committee and go to Detroit and lay the whole matter before the bishop. If they succeeded in inducing the bishop to change him from that to some other place, he offered to pay their fare there and back and to donate \$100 to the church as an evidence of his sympathy with their feelings in the matter. Needless to say, his offer was not accepted. It began to slowly dawn upon them, that the young pastor was making sport of them and that the acceptance of his offer would place them in a ridiculous light with the bishop,

A Vain Hope.

I have sometimes wondered if any priest has ever encountered a case in which a poor pay has desired to make restitution on his death-bed. I have prepared many of those people for death, and I have followed the theological injunction of not disturbing a possible good faith. The Church has always regarded the death-bed as a very poor place for the collection of back dues. It is a strange fact, nevertheless, that not only do such people never think of making reparation, but they do not make provision for the charity of which they

may stand in dire need. The poor pays seldom make provision, in their wills, for Masses, and if they make such provision, their wishes in this matter, strange to say, are not always complied with, as poor pays, as a rule, are very unfortunate in the character of their heirs.

Not long since, a pastor in a nearby city was called into court in an action to quiet the title to some property. He was surprised to find an old bequest for Masses, which had never been satisfied by the Catholic heirs who had inherited the property. One of them was now coming into court for the purpose of evading this sacred debt by due process of law.

The impiety, injustice, ingratitude, and unnatural cupidity of such a proceeding seemed to have no weight with the man who was bent solely upon clearing away the cloud resting upon the title.

The men and women who are acquiring property with the confident hope that their children will make due reparation for their sins of covetousness and greed, ought to know by this time that such reparation is never made. The wealth of the penurious is generally a curse to those who inherit it. The last thing such heirs think of is that of making reparation for injustice, uncharity or fraud. One thing has been shown by experience and that is that the graves and the souls of the covetous are generally neglected by those to whom they leave their property. It is a retribution for the cupidity which closed its heart to the demands of justice and religion. It is an ever-present object lesson which has become so familiar that no one heeds it.

Some one has said that the dead bear in their clenched hands before the throne of God, only what

they have given away—in charity. If this be true many will enter empty-handed.

CHAPTER IV.

Costs Them Nothing

Plain Talk.

It is not a question here of the poor, of those who are not able to pay. From these the Church asks and expects nothing. It is a question of those who are able to pay and who will not.

Let there be no mincing of words and no misunderstandings. Vague words and gentle hints in a case of this kind are worse than useless. They elicit nothing but faint smiles from those for whom they are chiefly intended. Pastors have sinned through excessive gentleness and these people have come to believe that they can pursue their course, with impunity. If the shoe pinch, we want it to pinch so good and hard that its effects will be felt in the collection-box next Sunday, and on other Sundays throughout the year. We have all been in the habit of treating those people too gingerly. We credit them with feelings which they do not possess. The real truth is that they are destitute of shame; they are devoid of self-respect. The plainest kind of plain talk is what they need and nothing else will do.

Again, let there be no misunderstandings. I am treating of people who still claim to be Catholics, who frequent Catholic churches, at least from time to time, who approach the sacraments at more or less irregular intervals, who do not hesitate to call for a priest in

time of serious illness, who cherish the hope of dying in the state of grace and of being buried with the last rites of the Church. They worship in edifices, towards the construction of which they have contributed little or nothing. They hear the Mass of the priest whom others support. They enjoy all the facilities of Divine worship for which others pay and they do this year after year because there are enough of generous people to bear the burdens which they should share, and because the traditional charity of the priesthood hesitates about publicity exposing the shortcomings of any particular class of sinners.

Plainer Still.

The following extract from a letter received within the past few days from a well-known pastor in the city of Buffalo, N. Y., is very much to the point: "Don't mince words in the treatment of your subject. We are entirely too easy. I have people attending my church, the color of whose money I have never seen. I have people occupying pews for the use of which I have never received a dollar. I have people coming to Mass, Sunday after Sunday, and crowding the good pays out of their pews. They simply will not do their duty in the matter of contributing, and warnings and admonitions seem to be a mere waste of words. They have no shame, no sense of justice, no honor. I was going to add no religion, but I will not presume to judge in so weighty a matter. Every parish in the country has its quota of just such people and pastors everywhere are puzzled over the problem of how to bring them to time. I believe there is one way. Force them out into the light. Focus public opinion upon them and the problem is already half solved."

Always a Pretext.

When approached as to their reasons for not contributing, these people are always found to have a pretext. The commonest pretext is that they are dissatisfied with the management of the parish. It is an ancient and a venerable one, and even in the days of the Prophet Jeremias it was suffering seriously from overwork. Perhaps the pastor has been imprudent enough to contract a debt without their advice or permission, or it may be that he has erected a building which, in their judgment, was wholly unnecessary. Perhaps he has been too frank in his money-talks and has in this way offended their sensibilities, which are generally very acute. Then there is the old plea of that much-talked-about early Christian, Ananias and his close-fisted wife Sapphira. It is the plea of pretended poverty. The tragic fate of that historic couple does not seem to have deterred penurious Christians, in our own days, from making similar pleas.

These people like nothing better than a frequent change of pastors. The man who remains for any length of time in charge of a parish is their natural enemy. He knows them and that is enough. They are generally, however, the first on the ground to welcome a new pastor, and their protestations of future support and sympathy are of a character to deceive the young and inexperienced. The old-timers are not so easily deceived. They have met them before and they recognize them almost immediately. They are very suspicious, too, of the critics of former administrations. They know that the old guard, the tried and trusted friends of former pastors can always be depended upon to do the right thing. They accordingly listen and say nothing, being content to wait for

whatever the future may unfold. They know, too, that the critics and "knockers" of a congregation are largely recruited from this class and that their grievances are, in nine cases out of ten, financial ones. They could be really sweet and agreeable Christians, if they were not expected to pay.

The saddest thing in connection with this whole matter concerns the children. It is a well-established fact that many of them fall away from the Church. It could not well be otherwise. From the beginning they are, in a certain sense, religious outcasts. They soon come to understand the anomalous position of their parents and they feel keenly many things which have no effect upon the parents themselves. They are taught to believe that the Church is a mercenary institution and that priests are altogether too much interested in the financial side of their sacred calling. They become gradually embittered against both church and priest, and the final step of separation is easily taken.

Poor Parishes.

I read an article in a Boston paper, not long ago, treating of a Protestant congregation at Plymouth, Mass., in which it was stated that the people neither attended church or gave to its support and that, as a consequence, they had to have a new preacher every year. The retiring pastor always gave up in disgust and his successor became suddenly unpopular, as soon as he began to demand his promised salary.

If Catholic pastors could pack up and leave, every time their salary was not forthcoming, there would be many vacant parishes everywhere throughout the land. Many of them undergo positive privations and

suffer on in silence, rather than appeal to men and women, who they know, by bitter experience, will receive their appeal with studied indifference.

There are a few "poor parishes", in every diocese. They have not been termed "poor" by reason of the poverty of the parishioners. They are poor, because the people have never acquired the habit of giving generously and freely. Appointment to them is regarded in the light of an exile, which some priests must undergo, for a time, in order that they may better appreciate decent parishes when the terms of their probation have expired.

There are grave and prudent priests, who hold that one of the best ways of making a poor pay a good Catholic, is to make him pay. The mere fact of his having paid creates a desire to get his money's worth, even in matters of religion. The real reason, however, for the change of heart which is thus frequently noted, lies in the added sense of self-respect and in the consciousness that he is at last doing his duty. He is no longer an intruder. He meets and mingles with his religious brethren on terms of equality. He can now employ, without compunction, the collective term "We" in speaking of church affairs, and he feels that at last he really belongs to the household of the Faith.

The religion too, which costs nothing generally cost a good deal in things which cannot be measured by a mere monetary standard. The loss of reputation, friends, self-respect, honor in a community are considerations which always have had weight with the best elements of humanity. They cannot be overlooked even by those who make the acquisition of the world's goods the chief aim and purpose of their existence. The heaviest cost of all is that which comes last. It is the loss of that spiritual upbuilding which flows from self-sacrifice and contributing to the support of

religion out of a pure intention is, according to all authorities, a very meritorious form of self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER V.

Protestant Generosity

Begin Early.

My neighbor, who is not a Catholic, has a little girl who is a faithful attendant at the Methodist Sunday school. During a recent visit she was telling me, with considerable pride that she always gave to the collections.

"We have two collections," she said, "and I always take six cents. Five cents is for the church collection and one cent is for the Sunday school." "Sometimes," too, she added, "we have three. Whenever we have a birthday we have to give as many pennies as we are years old, and this is for the missions." "And do all the children give?" I asked. "Oh, yes," she replied. "I wouldn't go to church unless I had the money. I guess most of them would stay at home too, if they didn't have it; but they nearly always have it." The attitude of this little Methodist girl has its lesson for many of our grownup Catholics. It is a tribute at the same time, to the character of the training which she receives at the hands of her spiritual teachers.

Of course I know there are those amongst us who resent the idea that we can learn anything from Protestant methods. This, however, is the gravest

kind of a mistake. If Catholic interests suffer because of traditional slipshod methods, common sense demands that new and better methods be adopted. The Church possesses the sacred deposit of Faith, but it has no monopoly upon business sagacity.

Better Trained.

I have heard it asserted time and again, that Catholics, as a class, are better givers than Protestants. I do not believe such to be the case. I believe, too, that Protestants are more regular and systematic in their giving, and that their methods do not leave so many loopholes for the escape of the poor pays. The children, too, are better trained than ours in the science of giving, and the missionary activity of American non-Catholics throws ours far into the shade.

These are unpleasant truths, but we have done considerable boasting and a little of the plain, unvarnished truth will not hurt. Spread-eagle descriptions of our growth, our progress and our wealth have led many people to believe that the Church in this Country is getting along very nicely without their assistance.

No One Exempt.

Protestants approach the business side of religion in a more business-like way. Amongst them the duty of giving is always kept in the fore-front, and no one is held exempt. We are less direct and to the point. We hint and beat about the bush when we should come out openly. We have no fixed rule of action, and as a result, certain classes successfully evade all our efforts. I will illustrate just what I mean. There are

hundreds of Catholic young men earning good wages, who come to Church and sit in the family pew, and still permit their parents to do all the paying. The real truth of the matter is that they are better able to contribute than a large class of married men, who are supporting families on smaller wages than they receive. The same is true to a less extent of many of our young women. This cannot happen in the average Protestant congregation, where each adult member is expected to individually subscribe a certain definite amount. In their dealings with the children, the same holds true. Every child is trained to do his or her best, first towards the support of local interests, and secondly towards the maintenance of missions at home and abroad. The amount of money contributed by Protestant children for missionary purposes is one of the wonders of the century.

True, the sects have a certain advantage over us in the method of church affiliation. A Catholic becomes a member of the Church when he is baptized. A Protestant becomes a member when he is formally affiliated.

When he is thus formally received into fellowship, the obligation of bearing his share of the church's burdens is clearly set forth. There is nothing indefinite about it. He is henceforth a member and one of the duties of membership is that of contributing regularly according to his means. There is consequently from the beginning the benefit of this clear understanding. He binds himself in black and white to give a certain sum and the congregation knows what to expect from its membership, taken as a whole.

Amongst us there is a general understanding that young people ought to begin paying as soon as they begin to be self-supporting; but as a rule of conduct,

this is very generally disregarded. We have shown a reluctance at the same time about instructing children as to a duty of giving, and this lack of instruction is largely accountable for their shortcomings in these matters in later years.

A World's Wonder.

I think it can be truly said, too, that wealthy Protestants, as a rule, are more generous than wealthy Catholics. This is undeniable when it is a question of contributions for missionary purposes. The sums contributed for such purposes by American non-Catholic millionaires have astonished the world. Our Catholic millionaires with two or three honorable exceptions, have given very little. This fact, alone, is so remarkable that it has been commented on time and again, but apparently without results. The same holds true of the endowment of educational institutions. Aside from Creighton University, Omaha, our higher institutions of learning are badly crippled for funds vitally necessary to carry on their work.

I would much rather under-draw than over-draw the picture, but we have had a little too much of this patting of ourselves on the backs, and a little too much of the flamboyant style of jubilee oratory.

When the Methodists started a few years ago to raise a twenty million New Century Mission Endowment fund, everybody smiled. They raised it, however, within an incredibly short space of time. One Methodist layman, from his desk at Kenosha, Wis., raised seven million, five hundred thousand dollars of that fund through the medium of a type-written appeal to Protestant men of wealth all over the country. There must be considerable love of God in the

hearts of men who give thus generously of their means for the propagation of Christian teachings. It is greatly to be regretted that their example is not followed more generally by those who have the happiness of belonging to the household of the true faith.

CHAPTER VI.

As It Seems to Others

Will Help Not Hurt.

“The business side of religion is a subject which has been shirked altogether too long,” writes a Wisconsin priest. “When we get a business conscience formed in the laity, the scandal of money sermons and the scolding and coaxing, that wears out the life of a priest, will be eliminated. Business principles carried out will not make the church more worldly, but will allow the pastor to attend better to the spiritual.”

“Business conscience” is a good term. It means simply that a strict sense of duty should prompt our people to give the church debt the place of honor among their financial obligations. Judged from every standpoint, it ought to be the most sacred of all debts. Too frequently it happens that it is the last debt to receive attention. The “business conscience” of our people certainly needs an awakening.

A woman said to me, not long ago, “Father, I had some money saved up to pay my pew rent, but an agent came along and induced me to buy something, which I did not need, so you will have to wait.” In other words, the pastor must wait to meet his financial

obligations until she finds it easy and convenient to meet hers.

A Lame Excuse.

A wealthy farmer stopped me recently on the street and said, "Father, I have bought a new farm, and as I have had to go in debt to do this, I will not be able to do much for the church during the coming year." "But, my dear man," I said to him, "are you not really richer today than you were a year ago? You have prospered so that you feel justified in reaching out and acquiring more property. You have put your money in land instead of in the bank, and you make your increased wealth a reason for economizing in the matter of church dues. If a man, whose only income is his daily wages, should come to me and tell me his wages had been reduced, I would cheerfully grant his request for a proportionate decrease; but you—the richer you grow, the less you wish to pay."

The attitude of this farmer is not an unusual one. There is a saying amongst priests who live in agricultural communities which is that "the richer the farmer grows, the tighter he gets!" Their very debts frequently represent increased wealth, but they furnish them with much needed excuses. There is always a mortgage, a poor crop, an epidemic amongst live stock or some other providential calamity to furnish them with pretexts for refusing to give. There are generous farmers, of course, even amongst the wealthy, but as a class I do not believe that it can be said that they give to the church in proportion to their means.

A Real Grievance.

"I am a poor pay," writes an anonymous correspondent, "and the shoe pinches. I sit in a rear pew, because many of the respectable people, who sit up in front, will not pay what they owe me. I have remained away from church, I am sorry to say, rather than be seen and not pay. Preach a few sermons on the paying of just debts to the people, who have the name of being generous donors, but at the expense of grocers and butchers and bakers and business men, who are often at their wits' ends to obtain the means wherewith to meet their bills."

I believe that my anonymous friend is mistaken, when he assumes that "respectable people", who do not pay their bills, are generous donors. As I asserted once before, poor pays in the business world are generally poor givers. They are generous only when it is a question of their own comfort or pleasure. No priest wants the money which ought to go to the payment of just debts. He has been taught to repudiate the generosity which comes before justice. Time and again it has happened that gifts and bequests have been refused, because the acceptance of the same would seem to be in violation of the principles of justice and charity. These people, of whom he writes, may sit in front pews, but I believe that a little investigation will show that their pew rent, like the rest of their bills, is long since overdue. When business men cannot collect, it is a foregone conclusion that the priest has failed.

A Charge Refuted.

"I believe," writes another, "that priests as a class, are lacking in sympathy for the men and women who supply the funds. They do not and cannot understand the character of the problems, with which the contributor is frequently face to face."

I believe that nothing can be farther from the truth than such an assertion. Priests, as a class, know well the value of a dollar. Few of them are the sons of wealthy parents. Before entering the sacred ministry, many of them have worked hard for a living. They understand well the frequency of the calls which are made upon the wages of the average laboring man. The only tainted money in their eyes, is that of the poor, who can ill afford to give. It is a case in which every true priest would rather give than receive. They understand, too, what it means to pay for rent and clothing and fuel and groceries and the thousand and one things which enter into the problems of human existence. Their generosity and charity are by-words amongst the tramps and vagabonds of the world. The greater part of their scheming has for its object the lightening of the people's burdens. The real truth of the matter is that their excessive sympathy leaves them easily imposed upon. Those who have shown a disposition to meet them half-way, have never found them wanting in that spirit of sympathy and self-sacrifice, which have been characteristic of the priesthood in every age.

CHAPTER VII.

The Poor in Rich Churches**A Startling Statement.**

An Eastern bishop, in speaking of a famous center of refinement and fashion, within the limits of his own diocese, recently made the statement, in my hearing, that the average Catholic millionaire of that particular place gave about as much to the support of religion as the average servant-girl.

This simple statement was the severest possible indictment of the fashionable, frivolous, pleasure-loving class, to whom he had reference. Let it not be forgotten, however, that our wealthy Catholic people, as a rule, have very little to do with what is known as the real smart set. Fortunately they are men and woman of simpler tastes and have no desire to engage in the empty struggle for social honors, which occupies the attention of the idle rich. Neither was the good bishop's statement so startling as it appears at the first glance.

In reality he was not imparting any new or unexpected information, for the pastors of many of the so-called wealthy congregations have learned as the result of a chastening experience, that the noble are not always the generous. They have found, too, that the last people upon whom they can depend, in a financial emergency, are the reputed leaders of high society. What is known as "a wealthy parish" is frequently only another name for a shabby-genteel institution, which depends chiefly for its support upon the maids and men of all work and the poor people

who live within its boundaries. It is an old saying amongst priests, that a parish without a goodly sprinkling of the common people, is the poorest kind of a parish. In the long run, it is the common people, who do things in religion as in all things else; but let it not be forgotten, again, that some of the best specimens of the common people are those, who have acquired wealth honorably and honestly, who live simple lives and do their share and sometimes more than their share towards the bearing of the Church's burdens.

The Counterfeit Variety.

It is not these however, but the cheap imitators of the real smart set, who have been chiefly instrumental in bringing wealthy parishes into disrepute. The sham aristocrats, who are everywhere living beyond their means and devoting all their efforts towards keeping up the outward appearances of real wealth—these are the people of whom it can be said: "Blessed are those who expect little, for they shall not be disappointed." With them, as with their prototypes, everything is subservient to the desire to cut a figure in that inner circle of select mortals, whose doings are chronicled in the society columns of the daily papers. In their eyes even the church itself is valuable only insomuch as it helps in furthering their social ambitions. As a class, they are notoriously poor pays, along all lines. They live on the fashionable avenues, pay high rents, and the true secret of their being able to do all this, on a meagre annual income, lies simply in their ability to evade their just debts. They go to church largely because church-going is in good taste, in fashionable circles, but the family pew

merely serves to remind the pastor that the world is full of disappointments and that even in religion it can frequently be truly said that all is not gold that glitters.

A Baltimore pastor was telling me recently of an aggravated case of this kind. The family, to whom he had reference, belonged to his parish, but as far as financial returns were concerned, they might as well have lived in Hong Kong. They occupied a three-story rented house, kept a couple of maids, held receptions and functions, to which the gentry of the city were invited; but their credit was exceedingly bad and the maids had to go to their own lowly homes, from time to time to get what is commonly known as "a square meal". Their charming manners made up, in a measure, for their financial shortcomings; but the pastor pitied them, from the depth of his soul and deplored the pathetic, but foolish vanity, which reduced them to such desperate straits in order to keep up the outward appearances of real wealth.

There is, unfortunately, altogether too much of this in the larger cities. Woman's desire to be in what is known as "Society" is largely to blame for such conditions. People of limited means live in a state of chronic financial stringency, happy in the thought that they are aping the ways and manners of the real rich.

A New Complaint.

From the East, too, comes a new complaint. It is to the effect that even the servant-girls are not what they used to be, that they are more given to vanity in dress and to those frivolities which are a heavy drain upon a slender purse. If we remember that they were the church-builders of the early days in many of

the Eastern cities, we will understand something of the concern, which pastors feel, when they contemplate the change, which has come over this honored portion of the Church's membership. Since they have come to be designated as "maids", it is said, that they have put on aristocratic airs and have gone so far as to imitate their masters and mistresses in the matter of contributing or rather in the matter of not contributing. Their good example has been badly needed in the upper stratas of society. No matter who failed us in the past, we were always sure of them. And let it be candidly said here and now that they were duly appreciated. They gave quietly, simply, without fuss or ostentation, and not as if they were doing an act of charity. We still need the example of their generosity for our society buds and for those Catholic young ladies, who consider themselves to be high above them in the social scale.

Unfortunately the spirit of generosity has not kept pace with our social progress. The daughters and grand-daughters of the servant-girl are frequently very poor givers. I have taken up collections for Church Extension in almost every important city in the country, and I could not well help noticing the large number of stylishly dressed young women, who never gave to these collections. As the pastors generally requested that I, myself, should take up the collections, I had a good opportunity to observe certain traits of the contributors taken as a whole. Whenever I came with the collection-box, to a young lady dressed up, like the proverbial sore finger, I was absolutely sure of one thing and that was that she had nothing to give. The more perfect the tailor-made suit, the

poorer I found her to be. The real poem in feathers and ribbons and ruffles and lace grew suddenly devout as I approached the pew in which she sat and with her eyes demurely bent upon her prayer-book, she seemed totally unconscious of my presence. She had it all "on her back", as they say and missionary enterprise might languish and die as far as she was concerned. I was always sure of an offering from the woman, with the toil-stained hands and with the dress that showed evidence of having seen better days; but from the artists' models I learned to expect nothing, absolutely nothing. It was only another illustration of the old saying that duty and vanity seldom go hand in hand, another proof of the assertion, that it is not the ornamental people, who pay the bills.

CHAPTER VIII.

About Pew Rents

Advantages and Disadvantages.

There has been a tendency in recent years, particularly in the larger cities, to abolish entirely the system of Church revenues known as Pew Rent. The migratory character of the city's population and the fact that it is essentially a credit system have had much to do with the change.

People move about easily from parish to parish and from city to city and they are not always scrupulous about bills due that intangible entity known as a congregation. The books of many parishes are well calculated to make pastors doubtful as to the ultimate results of Christian teaching, in the matter of common

every-day honesty. The universal tendency to postpone the payment of a Church debt makes the credit system as undesirable as it is unsatisfactory. Instead of being, as we have already asserted the first and the most sacred of all debts it is frequently the last debt to receive attention. It is a fact, nevertheless, that Pew Rent still remains the most popular of all systems. It is simple. It involves the minimum amount of book-keeping. It is well adapted to conditions as we find them everywhere throughout the United States. It is flexible, and accommodates itself to the purses of poor and rich alike.

It promotes order and creates in the minds of the people a sense of proprietorship in those things which pertain to their parish church. It preserves the voluntary character of the people's offerings and makes their contributions a debt of honor rather than a certain stipulated price for a seat. It makes it possible for a large number of people to occupy a limited number of seats, and gives these people the assurance that they will not have to stand or intrude themselves into seats for the use of which others are paying. It recognizes the principles of just taxation for Church support and makes the tax binding whether the members be present or absent. Above all, it possesses the advantage of giving a Catholic a definite and particular place in his own Church. In other words, it promotes the home feeling. This is more important than it would seem at the first glance. There is a tendency in human nature to select a certain definite place and to occupy it, whenever possible. Throughout all the hours of the busy day and even during the time allotted to legitimate rest and recreation, each of us has his or her favorite place. The Church is, in a certain sense, the Catholic's home on Sunday, and the pew he occupies

represents his place in that home. His pastor, his friends and neighbors, his brethren in religion look for him in his accustomed place and his presence there on Sunday is an evidence that religion occupies its proper place in his thoughts and affections.

Historic Associations.

I have heard experienced pastors deplore the tendency to dispense with the renting of pews, on the grounds that seat-money imbues people with the theatre idea, regarding Church attendance. They pay as they go, and if they do not go they do not pay. Pews, again, have been held in the same family, sometimes for several generations. In the old cathedral at Baltimore, the pew of Charles Carrol of Carrolton, is pointed out to visitors, and it is a source of pride to all connected with the Church, that the pew is still rented and occupied by his direct descendants. The same is true of the pews in many of the older churches of the country. They have been handed down, as it were, from sire to son, and serve to show that the children and the grand-children of the Catholic Pioneers are still true and loyal to the faith of their fathers.

A young man, whose home is now in the far West, brought me to old St. Peter's church on Barclay street, New York, to show me the pew which his family had occupied for several generations. As he knelt in that pew and poured out his soul to God, I felt that its associations appealed to everything that was noblest and best in his nature. This pay-as-you-go attitude savors too much of the heartlessness and commercialism of the age. It has a tendency, too, to diminish the number of goings. I will have something to say

later on of seat-money and of the reasons which have made its adoption necessary. I believe that I am correct in stating here and now, that it was the people themselves and not the priests who were to blame for its adoption. Priests, as a rule, prefer the old system, for the reason which I have already given, and they do not conceal their regret that "the family pew" as an institution is fast disappearing from the city churches.

Hope Deferred.

In the smaller cities, towns and rural communities, pew rent is still the rule. Every person who has reached the years of maturity and who is self-supporting, is expected to rent at least a portion of a pew. It is a general rule, too, that this rent be paid quarterly "*in advance*"; but these latter words seem to have taken on a new meaning since they became embodied in parochial legislation. There is another general rule to the effect that if payment be too long delayed the holder forfeits all claim to the seat. This rule is seldom enforced—in fact, not nearly as often as circumstances would warrant. Hope springs eternal in the human breast; but in the average pastor's breast it seems to be a perpetual and perennial fountain. This hope deferred is one of the hardest crosses which the pastor has to bear. I sometimes feel that if the people could only realize what this delayed pew rent means to the pastor, many of them would do better. It lies at the root of nine-tenths of the worries and anxieties of a priest's life. It has dug an early grave for many a poor priest and has spelled ruin and desolation for hundreds of those whose souls revolted against this constant money-talk from the altar.

I have spent the greater part of my priestly life in a pioneer country, and I know something of the trials of a priest who is trying to form a business conscience in the little disorganized, undisciplined flock committed to his care. I have seen brave, young, hopeful fellows driven to the verge of desperation by the struggle to keep body and soul together. I have seen courage and hope give place to discouragement and despair, zeal to indifference and high ideals brought down beneath the level of the commonplace as a result of pew rent, which did not materialize when it was needed. I have heard western priests say, time and again, that they would rather appeal to decent Protestants than they would to many of their own people. They would be surer of a response than they would be by appealing to that large class who are willing, as an old priest friend says, "to give something to a priest, provided there be anything left after all their other bills have been paid."

An Awkward Position.

Where pew rent is the rule in a parish, those who do not see fit to rent pews, find themselves in a very peculiar position. When they come to church, they must either stand in the rear or occupy seats for which others are paying. They cannot help feeling that they are strangers and intruders, and that they are being pious at the expense of other members of the congregation. At bottom, they have no excuse other than an unwillingness to pay. The Church, like the State, taxes the able to help the unable. If they are poor, they will be given seats free and pastors will see that the laudable pride of even the poor will not be put to confusion.

Perhaps the saddest thing in connection with the whole matter is the position in which the children are placed. They are little vagrants, stealing into the seats to which other people have prior rights. They are more sensitive than their parents, and the awkward and embarrassing position in which they are placed every time they come to church, is not calculated to develop the church-going habit. It is a well known fact, too, that the "Ought-to-be's" and the "Used-to-be's" of every parish, are generally recruited from the poor pays, and particularly from those who refuse to provide a place in church for themselves and their children. Considered as a tax upon property or earning capacity, pew rent is generally the most just and equitable of all taxes. It is, at the same time, the best investment which the nation makes, for it promotes in the most effective manner possible those things which make for the stability and integrity of our national institutions.

•Frequent and regular payments are the keynote of success as far as the pew rent system is concerned. This cannot be too strongly insisted upon. Catholics have it in their own hands to eliminate money-talks entirely from the pulpit. Let them contract the habit of paying promptly when their church taxes fall due, and they will have no complaint to make. It is stingy Catholicity and slipshod methods that have brought the business side of religion into disrepute everywhere throughout the country.

CHAPTER IX.

About Seat Money**Its History.**

A multitude of causes have contributed towards the adoption of what is known as Seat Money. In the final analysis, it was the natural out-growth of a widespread tendency on the part of many people to evade every form of Church dues.

In the big city parishes, new problems were constantly arising and calling for a solution. The keeping of a large number of individual accounts was in itself a difficult and burdensome task. The Pew Rent system, at the same time, placed a premium upon absent-mindedness. People moved away from parishes and left behind them unpleasant memories of bills unpaid. Others rented pews but never fulfilled that part of the contract, calling for frequent and regular payments—in fact many of them overlooked the payment side of the contract entirely. It was a credit system with all the evils of such a system, only in a more aggravated form; for there was no legal redress in case of failures to pay.

The transients, or those who were in the habit of flitting about from church to church on Sunday, called for a special line of action. The tourist, too, and the summer boarder began to arrive, and a new problem presented itself. Pastors cast about them for some system which would eliminate long credits, and which would equalize the burden on the people taken as a whole. Various plans were tried and rejected until

finally some pastor with a genius for business inaugurated the custom of paying for seats at the church door. The movement, in the beginning was an extremely unpopular one. The objections came chiefly from the poor pays. They resented the introduction of a system which made the payment unavoidable. The good pays, those who, up to that time, had borne the brunt of the church's burdens, did not object. They were willing to share those burdens with others and cordially approved of anything which kept this end in view. The advantages of the plan, wherever it was tried, soon became apparent. At one bound, it placed the finances of a parish on a strictly cash basis. In some parishes, those who held pews and paid for them might still retain them, but the transients and the tax-dodgers had to pay at the door or undergo the humiliation of accepting a "charity seat." In an incredibly short space of time, Seat Money became the rule in the leading city churches. In the small towns and in the country, things move more slowly, but it is a safe prophecy to make that the time is not far distant when, in a more or less modified form, it will be the rule in every parish of any consequence in the United States.

Not a Burden.

There are good reasons why this should be so. It is an ideal system for people of limited means. It makes provisions for those small and frequent payments which meet with so much approval in the business world. Then again the trivial sum exacted for a seat on Sunday can scarcely ever be regarded in the light of a real burden. As a rule, it involves very little self-sacrifice on the part of the giver, but then again

religion without a certain amount of self-sacrifice is unintelligible. If it were for a luxury or a worldly pleasure, there would be no objection. The money paid by our Catholic people for luxuries in a single day far surpasses the amount paid for church purposes in the course of a whole year; but there is no complaint on the score of extravagance, where pleasure, amusement and vanity are concerned.

Let me repeat here what was laid down in the beginning. The man or the woman, who is willing to enjoy the benefits and consolations of religion without making any of the sacrifices which religion entails, is destitute of the true spirit of religion. "Dead-beat" piety is only another name for dishonesty, masquerading in a religious garb. Pew rent, like the taxes, grew while people slept, and sometimes became a heavy indebtedness, before they realized that it had fallen due. Many people prefer to pay cash down and be through with it. They readily grasp the advantages of a system, which eliminates long credits and which provides a certain amount of ready cash for current parish expenses. This latter feature is, in itself, a matter of the utmost consequence. Business, done on credit means simply business done on other people's money. The interest on this money must be paid in some form. Ready cash saves the interest, facilitates business, promotes good feeling and engenders respect.

Nothing Free.

The lady who recently made the rounds of the Protestant churches of Boston, and gave the result of her experience in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, found much cause for complaint because her presence at the Sunday services was generally overlooked. She would

have been shocked and scandalized beyond measure if she had visited Catholic churches, and met with the request to produce a little of the coin of the realm in exchange for a seat. There is no good reason, however, why strangers and visitors should not pay for church accommodations just as they pay for the accommodations provided by public and private utilities. The churches have been the last of the free institutions, but this freedom has sometimes been purchased at too high a price. Libraries and public parks are supposedly free, but the citizens in general are taxed for their maintenance. The free side of religion has been greatly abused by the very people who are the first to complain of the commercialism of all the churches. We have heard it said, time and again, that there is nothing free but the air we breathe. Even the air breathed within the cramped walls of what is known as the world's homes is seldom free in any sense of the word. These homes are built and furnished at considerable expense, because it has been found by experience that the free air of the out of doors is poorly adapted to the human constitution. There are few things in the world, which are not purchased by labor or its equivalent. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread" is true of the spiritual as well as the material nourishment of the human race.

Liberally Interpreted.

Perhaps the most serious objection urged against Seat Money, is that it imposes the same burden upon the rich as it does upon the poor. In answer to this objection, however, it may be stated that the offertory and the other collections of a parish give men and

women of wealth ample opportunity to display their generosity and liberality. In all the parishes, too, free tickets are distributed to the poor merely for the asking, so that in the long run no one is put to confusion by reason of inability to pay. Priests are reasonable men and enforce even their own rules in a charitable and liberal spirit. Whenever they see people disposed to do what is half right, they are ready to meet them more than half way. Every plan which has yet been adopted for the raising of church revenues has left a large place for those voluntary offerings which, after all, represent the people's real devotion to the Church and to the priesthood consecrated forever to their service.

[To the Editor]

The following letter appeared in response to a specific attack made upon the practice of collecting seat money in a well known Eastern church. The pastor of this church came to the defense of the practice and his letter is well worth being produced for the benefit of my readers.

Some friend in the west, or, perhaps, some fellow with a "grouch" against seat money, has sent me a marked copy of your paper containing an article on the custom of charging for seats in Catholic churches. I had not the pleasure of reading Father Roche's article on this question, but I feel certain he did justice to the subject.

This custom is as universal as the Church itself. In the great cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome, if you wish to hear Mass in comfort, I might say with devotion, you pay for your seat and kneeling bench. Otherwise you stand or kneel on the cold marble floor, without support of any kind—a very trying ordeal. People who do this, are in doubt for the rest of the day whether they have locomotor-ataxia or curvature of the spine. As a rule, they pay the second time.

The same rule is enforced in every cathedral in Europe, and in all the large churches.

In this country seat-money is a question of custom and necessity. Some years ago, pew-rent was the main item of revenue in all the parishes of the dioceses in the East. Seat-money was insignificant. During the past ten years thousands of Catholics have given up their pews and pay each Sunday for their seats. The custom is growing and has the stamp of popular approval. I know of several cases where the rectors tried to stem the tide of this innovation without success. At summer resorts it is not only a question of custom, but of necessity. The rector of a seaside or mountain parish, has to erect a large church to accommodate the summer tourists. And the surroundings must be in keeping with the place. His congregation changes every few weeks, and there is no way of collecting pew rent except by asking an offering for seats. The season lasts two months, after which the rector has a big church and a handful of people. Some parishes on the Jersey coast have a permanent congregation, numbering from sixty to one hundred souls. Perhaps that "intelligent class" of Catholics to which your correspondent, "J. J.," belongs, might not know these facts.

It is amusing to note the tender solicitude these "intelligent" grouchers have for the poor and their great fear of scandalizing Protestants. I am sure the poor will reject their sympathy. The poor pay their seat money, and do not criticize the custom. They know, money or no money, the Mass and church are theirs. It is a mighty poor disguise to use the poor

for hiding one's meanness. As to Protestants, I have had a wide experience with them, and with converts for nearly twenty years. I have yet to find the protestant or convert who has taken scandal from the custom of collecting seat-money. Many non-Catholics attend our services here and insist on paying for their seats. Your correspondent refers to Atlantic City, and Asbury Park. I will answer for the Park and say what he states is true, but he shows his venom in his language. Mark the offering he states and on account of seaside conditions, we are justified.

However, the offering is rarely paid in full, and hundreds give us a scornful look, only which flashes like their diamonds. "J. J.," states that Col. K., was charged \$1.25 for his family. This means a family of five adults, and certainly means an expense of nearly \$100 a week at a first-class hotel. Amusements and the many ways of spending money here will bring it considerably over \$100 a week. I am sure all your readers will deeply sympathize with Col. K., over the loss of his dollar and a quarter. We have plenty of Col. K.'s, and J. J.'s here in summer. People who think very little of spending twenty or thirty dollars at Pleasure Bay or some near resort. Others spend five and ten dollars on Saturday night to hear Eddie Foy, or San Toy, at the Casino. On Sunday morning they wax indignant at the outrage of being asked to pay for a seat.

The incident of the "money-changer" following the person who *forgot* is most likely true. Quite a number of "intelligent" Catholics forget every Sunday, and some of them use all their intelligence to devise means

to beat the Church. In following the person to his seat, the usher made no mistake, and while it may have been amusing to J. J., I am sure it had the effect intended. If J. J.'s band of intelligent Catholics were as careful about giving scandal to Protestants in other matters, we would not have room in our churches for the new converts. To sum up the matter—there is a class of people in the Catholic Church, as elsewhere, who want something for nothing.

[Rev.] THOMAS A. ROCHE, Rector,
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CHAPTER X.

About Collections

A Bad Name.

On one occasion I took up a collection for Church Extension in a certain eastern parish. The city will, for evident reasons, be, for the present, nameless. I had heard from several trustworthy sources, that the pastor of the place was extremely unpopular. He was a veritable "grind" it was said and exceedingly persistent in his demands for money. He was represented, too, as being a constant nagger, so much so that he had driven a naturally generous and well-disposed people into a state of open defiance and rebellion.

I went, of course, prepared for the worst; but judge of my surprise on finding the pastor to be a man of a singularly amiable and genial disposition. He

was kindness personified and did everything in his power to make my visit productive of results. As I passed from pew to pew during the course of the collection it began to slowly dawn upon me that there might be two sides to the story. "You will find them," he had said the evening before, "a poor lot of givers. They labor under the impression that they are being driven to death, but the debt is very large and I must keep on driving. Go ahead, however, and do your best and the more you get the better it will please me."

The collection was not by any means what it should be, taking into consideration the size of the parish and the number of people present at the services. When he said they were poor givers, he was putting it mildly. Not one man out of ten was a contributor on that occasion. The women and children, too, seemed positively pained and surprised at my temerity in passing the box in front of them.

I left that parish with a more or less distinct impression that the pastor was not entirely to blame. He had doubtless made his mistakes; but they had been greatly exaggerated and used as pretexts by those who were neither generous or considerate of the trying situation in which their pastor was placed. He was honestly striving to save the parish from financial ruin and bankruptcy. The people, as a whole should not have permitted themselves to be led by that unreasonable and disturbing element, which makes for trouble in every community. The parish rebels had evidently triumphed for the time being, and the triumph assumed the usual form of a pronounced reduction in the general receipts but particularly in the amount of the voluntary offerings. I felt morally certain, too, that the better instincts of the people would in the long run, prevail

over distrust and misunderstanding and that, when that came to pass, the pastor would be appreciated at his real worth.

In Days of Old.

In the preceding article, I made the statement that the collections or voluntary offerings played an important part in all plans, thus far devised for the support of religion. The collection in fact represents the traditional and apostolic mode of giving. The people in the days of the apostles brought their offerings and laid them upon the altar or in a place near the altar, set apart for that purpose. This act was not without its religious significance. In many of the old liturgies, these gifts, representing the self-sacrifice of the people were offered up to God in union with the great sacrifice of the new law.

In the course of centuries it was discovered that these free will offerings were not always sufficient for the purpose intended and not always representative of the wealth of the givers. To remedy this condition of things, the tithing system of the Jews was incorporated into the laws of the leading Christian nations. The reformation abolished tithes or diverted them to heretical uses in many European countries and voluntary offerings again became the rule.

The state-supported church, however, had troubles peculiar to itself. It was seldom free in any sense of the term. The tax levied by the government frequently had the effect of mixing politics with religion, to the latter's detriment. The church itself was sometimes forced in self-defense, to refuse the aid, proffered by the state, burdened round as it was, with onerous and humiliating conditions.

The Chief Objection.

The purely voluntary system of church support still remains open to the criticism, levelled against it in the early centuries. In leaving everything to the personal sense of duty on the part of the giver, it opens up too many avenues of escape for the avaricious and the penurious. The collections, even as they are taken up in our churches to-day, are seldom representative of the true financial standing of those who give. It is a reproach to religion, that such should be the case; but that it is the case, no one can successfully deny. The sense of justice, which religion is supposed to beget, clearly dictates that, in this matter, there be a due proportion between the size of the gift and the means of the giver.

The trouble with collections in general, is that people of means give very little more than those, who may be rightly classed as the poor. They live better, dress better, consider themselves to be better in every way; but place themselves in the same class, when it comes to collections. A dollar or a fifty-cent piece is a rare sight in the ordinary Sunday offering of even our city churches. The quarters are few and far between and the nickles and dimes furnish no clue as to the comparative wealth of their original owners. In many places the red copper cent of commerce is accorded the place of honor. There was a time in the history of the west, when the popularity of the one-cent piece or the "penny" was at a very low ebb. It was contemptuously refused when tendered through the regular channels of business and even the Indian rejected it in trade and barter. I myself can remember the time when the presence of a penny in the collection-box on Sunday was a sure sign that there was a new tenderfoot in town.

These days have passed away, and thrifty Christians even in the West have come to regard the copper cent as a real and genuine offering. The scriptural story of the widow's mite has led many good people to believe that the mite is preferable to coins of a larger denomination. One of the strange things about religion, too, is the large number of very pious Catholics, aye even monthly and weekly communicants, whose Sunday generosity never rises above the penny mark. They are a trifle better than the people who give nothing at all; but this is a case where comparisons are truly odious. The Sunday offering should be, by right, a most important course of parish revenue. That it is not, is due first to the fact that people of means take advantage of its privacy to give the same as the poor; and secondly, to the additional fact that the penny is altogether too popular with the churchgoers of the present day.

Not Much But Often.

Human respect plays its part when it is a question of what is known as the extraordinary collections. Owing to the fact that the names of the contributors are generally handed in with their contributions, the law of proportions is more carefully observed. They are more truly representative of the conditions of the givers, and consequently more of a success in every way.

A pastor of wide experience and sound common sense said to me not long ago in speaking of this matter: "The trouble with our collections at present is that the head of the family gives for the whole family. As a result, the other members of the household do not contract the habit of giving, I believe we

would have much better results, if everybody gave something were it only a little. The percentage of non-givers is altogether too large. It is not the dollars that usually make a collection; but the dimes and quarters many times multiplied."

It may be well to admit here and now that the shortcomings of many people in such matters are largely the result of pure thoughtlessness. In shirking their duty on the occasion of this or that collection, they proceed on the assumption that somebody else, for the time being, will make up the deficit. They forget that what is true of their individual attitude may be true of the parish, taken as a whole. When everybody is leaving the duty of giving to some one else, the business of a parish becomes a real tragedy, to the man who is trying to foot the bills.

CHAPTER XI.

The Unpretentious Nickel

Expert Testimony.

I heard, not long since, of a Western pastor, who went to the trouble of counting the adults present at the different Masses on Sunday, for the purpose of comparing the attendance with the number of nickels in the ordinary collection.

To his surprise he found that only about one out of three of these adults gave a coin of any kind and that the nickels when compared with this attendance stood in the ratio of about one to five. An investigation of this kind seems somewhat out of place; but the desirability of facts and figures becomes apparent

when we remember that people need instruction in the matter of giving as much as they do in matters pertaining to the other precepts of the Church. One lone fact is some times worth a bushel of theories. The additional fact that it is unpleasant does not by any means impair its value from an argumentative standpoint.

A St. Louis pastor, in treating of this subject some time ago, made the statement that if every adult Catholic gave a nickel in the Sunday collection, there would be no need of fairs and festivals or of any of those extraordinary and sometimes questionable means of raising revenue. The statement in itself, is an extraordinary tribute to the power of the nickel. The consummation at the same time is one devoutly to be prayed for.

The Sunday nickel does certainly solve many problems in many of our parishes. In some places the people have been educated up to the habit of never giving less than this amount and the results are truly astonishing. Some of the very poorest parishes in the country have accomplished wonders and the root of all these wonders lies in the constant, never-failing Sunday nickel. If the poor can afford it, there is no good reason why people of moderate means cannot give that much and more. Spasmodic, occasional giving is seldom productive of lasting results. It is constant, universal, systematic giving that counts; and this cannot be too frequently insisted upon, when it is a question of Church support.

Well Trained.

I know a Connecticut pastor, who has no seat money and only a moderate amount of pew rent; but he has dwelt for twenty years upon the importance of the Sunday nickel: In this way he manages to pay all the expenses of a congregation which calls for the services of three priests. His parochial school contains almost twelve hundred children, but the never-failing nickel pays for it all. Of course there are many in the congregation who give more, as they properly should. The nickel, however, is the smallest contribution expected of anyone and every adult, without exception, is expected to give at least that much. The foreign element at present predominates; but these foreigners have taken kindly to the nickel habit. The non-givers, as a result, have been wholly eliminated and the penny as an adult contribution is deemed entirely unworthy of notice. The success of this pastor's method of training is a striking testimony to the "little and often" habit of giving. It illustrates the power of the nickel to solve even the gravest parish problems, when the giving of the same becomes a universal and constant practice. It may be well to state here too, that the large number of people in the parish makes it possible for this Connecticut pastor, to accomplish what he does on this meager weekly contribution. The same rule, however, carried into effect in other places, would be productive of similar beneficial results.

Too Commonplace.

I know it seems rather strange that so much space should be devoted to the consideration of so trivial and so unimportant a matter as the unpretentious

Sunday nickel. The matter, however, is neither trivial nor unimportant. More than fifty per cent. of the money received for church purpose comes into pastors' hands in this form. "Take care of the nickels and the dollars will take care of themselves," is a good maxim for those, who are responsible for the temporalities of religion. Parishes, at the same time are very much like individuals. Bad habits are easily contracted but the good ones require time and careful cultivation. Even the habit of giving is dependent, to a large extent upon the training, which a parish undergoes. By training, I mean, of course, thorough, systematic instruction, delivered in the plainest manner possible. The people must know and understand the law, before they can be expected to comply with its requirements. They must know the needs of religion before they can be expected to give. Here again, however, a strange inconsistency manifests itself.

Money-talks from the pulpit are a most unpopular form of instruction. No matter how carefully delivered, they are regarded as being a more or less implicit reflection upon the generosity of those present. The priest, as a consequence, is sometimes in a dilemma. It is clearly within his province to instruct his people in the duty of giving. In doing so, he lays himself open to the accusation that he is prompted by selfish and mercenary motives. Some people, again, have very exalted ideas of the dignity of the priestly office. They would have priests' utterances entirely free from material and earthly considerations and above all to so commonplace a thing as the nickel, to which they, themselves, adhere too tenaciously. It is only a minor detail, if you will. Perhaps it is undignified to descend to its level; but minor details play an important part in the success of

every form of business enterprise. A parish, like any other institution, must pay the penalty of ignoring such details. The penalty of ignoring the nickel generally manifests itself in the annual deficit, which is a characteristic of parishes, which place dignity before duty.

The Idea!

But, it will be objected, the nickel in the offering together with the usual ten cent for seat money is a pretty heavy tax for people of ordinary means. Yes, I admit it; a nickel is always a tax with some people, when it is given in a collection. It is never regarded as a tax, when it is expended for beer or cigars or candy or chewing-gum or for the numberless luxuries, in which people of ordinary means invest without scruple or compunction. They never think of economizing when it is a question of such things. They would never think of depriving themselves of a single gratification in order to save a nickel for the Sunday offering. No indeed! The idea is too preposterous to be dwelt upon even for an instant. What was the penny made for, if not to give Christians an opportunity to give the smallest possible amount towards the keeping up of churches and schools and parochial and diocesan institutions? No wonder sensitive people do not go to church! Economize in the matter of luxuries in order to have something for Sunday! well, what is the world coming to any how?

Not Any Poorer.

I believe it is not unreasonable for pastors to expect that grown-up people contract the habit of putting the humble equivalent of five pennies in the Sunday collection. There is no evidence to show that those, who have been doing this for years, are any less prosperous than those, who have refused to do so. Experience, on the contrary goes to show that the faithful, constant giver is generally wise in his economies and so regulates his affairs that his contribution makes no appreciable void in his weekly assets. The poor giver, on the other hand, is frequently hard pressed to make ends meet. He is liberal where he should be economical and economical where he should be liberal. The old saying that "a man never misses what he gives to the Church" is always true in the sense that the man, who gives to the Church makes provision beforehand so that his contribution is never felt to be a heavy or unreasonable burden. The payment of a just debt is not necessarily an unpleasant task. The doing of one's duty has compensations which the poor giver can never understand. Not the least of these compensations is the promised spiritual reward. Some may doubt it, but the truth still remains that "the Lord loves the cheerful giver".

CHAPTER XII.

The Children's Mite**Bend the Twig.**

It is customary in all the large parishes of the country to have a special children's Mass on Sunday.

This custom is productive of many beneficial results. It separates the children from the grown-up people and promotes regularity as far as attendance at the Holy Sacrifice is concerned.

The sisters, who have charge of the children during the week are present to preserve order and to note if any of their youthful charges be missing. The sermons and instructions are adapted to the comprehension of the young mind and the results, as a consequence, are much more satisfactory in every way.

The collection is a regular feature of this service and every child is expected to bring at least a penny. The purpose of this collection is to train the children to the habit of giving. Experience has shown that giving, like saving, is largely a matter of early training. It is a case, too, where thorough instruction is necessary and the sooner this instruction is given, the better for everybody concerned.

None of these things, however, are possible in the smaller parishes. There the training of the children is left almost entirely to the parents, and it is not easy to convince many parents of the importance of such things. A Nebraska priest was telling me not long since of the difficulties he encountered in attempting to secure subscriptions for a little Sunday school periodical. The price was a penny a Sunday, but even this trival amount was not forthcoming. The little paper was welcomed and eagerly read by the children, but the parents refused to co-operate and he was finally forced to abandon the attempt.

Just Tolerated.

In farming communities, the Sunday collection, itself, is generally regarded as a time-honored custom without any binding force even upon the older members of the congregation. Only the heads of families give and the individual contribution is seldom more than a nickel. A coin of a larger denomination is generally an evidence that some wealthy land-owner has not been able to "make the change". A penny is frequently a clue to a case in which some close-fisted proprietor of many broad acres has had a temporary spasm of generosity, under the influence of which he has separated himself from one of the pennies which go to make the dearly-loved and highly-prized dollars. Our farmers are the wealthiest, the most prosperous and the most independent of any class in the country today. It is not unreasonable to expect that their generosity keep pace with their increased prosperity. There is an old saying that the truth never hurts. The trouble is that it frequently does not hurt as much as it should and the telling of it, as a consequence, is barren of results. There is a traditional belief in many parishes that children should never contribute so long as they remain under the parental roof. The term "children" is frequently stretched to include maiden ladies of mature years and bachelors of long standing; but it serves its purpose, when they are called upon to give.

One of my clerical friends was informed, not long ago, by a well-meaning trustee, that this new-fangled custom of demanding a penny from each child was destined to do a great deal of harm. "They will keep on giving pennies", he said, "when they grow up and in the long run we will lose more than we will gain."

This argument is not without its force, but we can only wait and hope for the best. Experience, at the same time has shown that where the habit of giving has become universal, the results are much more satisfactory than where the few contribute for the many.

A Mistake.

I am about to make a strange statement and it is this. I do not believe that there is much use in bringing arguments to bear upon parents, when it is a question of children giving. I believe in going straight to the children themselves and in treating directly with them. Some optimist has said that he would take one hundred children and do more with them than with an equal number of grown-up people. It is wonderful what these little ones can accomplish when their interest is aroused. We priests frequently make the mistake, which fathers and mothers make. We regard them as babies until such time as they have grown to man's and woman's estate. These little ones do a considerable amount of thinking and arrive at conclusions which are not always complimentary to their elders. They have an innate sense of justice, too, and the spirit of self-sacrifice, is sure to crop out if proper means be taken to arouse it. Protestant children every year contribute immense sums for local and general church purposes. The greater portion of this money represents genuine self-denial on the part of these children. I am sure that no one will have the hardihood to assert that Catholic teaching dries up the well-springs of self-sacrifice in our children's souls. The parents have been preached to and preached at until they have grown callous to our appeals. The results of appealing to the children directly cannot be much

worse than they are at present. Let us bear in mind, too, that many of the parents need the very training, which we are anxious to impart to the children and that very best way to impart this training is through the children. The child of careless parents who goes to church of his own volition will sooner or later bring his parents to church. The child who denies himself some temporary gratification in order to give his little mite is preaching a most effective sermon to the father who refuses to give. The neglect of the children's mite costs the Catholic Church in this country every year many thousands of dollars. The giving of the same will benefit the little ones in many ways. It will teach them to practice self-denial. It will make them feel that they are doing their little part towards the bearing of the Church's burdens. It will form in them the habit of giving, a habit which is not by any means as universal as it should be.

Keep It Separate.

Many pastors are of the opinion that the children's collection should be kept separate and apart from that of the adults. In the smaller parishes it can easily be taken up during Sunday school and better results are attained where an accounting is made to them at regular intervals. All this takes time and trouble, but it is time and trouble which will be found to bear immediate fruits.

Children are easily interested in missionary endeavor, both at home and abroad. It appeals to the heroic in their nature and it is a serious mistake not to give them an opportunity to manifest this interest in a substantial way. The Junior Endeavor Society of the Methodist church gives to missions ten per

cent. of the amount contributed by the grown-up members for the same purpose. Besides this, they bear many of the expenses for such definite objects as coal, light, janitor service and the like. And what is true of the Methodists, is true of all the sects. The children and young people are taught that they have responsibilities to bear and duties to perform, which they can not and must not evade.

A very important thing in this connection is this settling of a certain, definite responsibility upon the children. Youthful enthusiasm demands a particular object. Let them feel that they are performing a work which is peculiarly their own, and the means will be forthcoming in due season. We Catholics are to a large extent the slaves of traditional methods. Any departure from the beaten paths, even in the matter of raising money is resented. Our beaten path as far as the children's giving is concerned, is a poor old rut, which should be abandoned at the earliest possible opportunity. The methods of fifty years ago are poorly adapted to an age which has outlived them in all other matters.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rights of the Stole

Would See Him Later.

I heard an Eastern priest on one occasion regale a gathering of distinguished clergymen with the story of a baptism at which he had officiated some months before. It was in his own church of course, and the parents of the baby were of the ultra-fashionable class.

Five automobiles were drawn up before the door of the church at the appointed hour, and the external evidences of wealth, particularly in the matter of costly raiment and fine clothes were very noticeable as they gathered about the baptismal font. After a lengthy consultation in which all participated, the name of the baby was finally settled upon, and the ceremony was permitted to proceed. At its close the mother informed the good Father with the sweetest of smiles, that she would "see him later". The moral of the story is that she has not seen him yet, and probably never will. Appearances even at the baptismal font are frequently deceptive. The expected does not always materialize, even when backed up by an imposing array of automobiles.

Of course there is no such a thing as a charge for the administration of a sacrament. Catholic teaching is very strict on this point. The priest must always hold himself prepared to administer these great means of salvation at all times, and he must scrupulously avoid everything which savors in the slightest degree of avarice or self-interest. "If, however," says the Rubrics, "after the sacrament has been administered, something be freely offered by the faithful as is customary in many places, it can be licitly accepted." There is no room for misunderstanding here, and even poorly-instructed Catholics are cognizant of the traditional teaching of the Church on this head. The universal custom of making offerings on such occasions is merely a recognition of the principle that he who ministers at the altar should live by the altar.

It was an old pagan who said that people are generous on occasions of great joy or grief. Births and marriages represent the joyful periods of life;

funerals supply the element of grief. The gratuities given on such occasions to the ministers of religion are the natural and spontaneous expression of gratitude for real services rendered. They are the result of natural as well as supernatural motives and may easily be made the occasion of great merit when given with the proper intention.

Could Not Stand It.

At the present time there is a particularly nasty book being sold and distributed amongst Protestants in many parts of the middle West. The author, as may easily be suspected, is a renegade Catholic, and his chief purpose is to show forth the "graft" practiced in various forms by the clergy of the Catholic Church. It would be uncharitable of course, to intimate that revenue plays any part in the production of such work. It is only the old story, however, with a new turn. In the eyes of the man who has forcibly ejected himself from the Catholic fold, there is no redeeming feature in the whole system. It is graft and corruption pure and simple from start to finish, fairs, festivals, lawn fetes, shrines, votive candelabra, Masses, scapulars, etc., etc., are all only different forms of the nation's predominant weakness—graft. The priests are bad men of course. They are always bad in the renegade's book. It is wonderful how much goodness good men find in the old church and its ministers, and how much badness the other kind find. He would have us believe he has left us for righteousness' sake. Be that as it may, he has gone over to the Baptists, of whom it has been said that "their olefactory nerves are so benumbed by the practice of brotherly love, that they are no longer able to detect the odor of a bad egg."

We hope he is happy and that at least he is free from the company of ministerial black sheep and clerical scalawags.

He will still find, however, the ministerial perquisite very much in evidence. There is no authentic instance on record, up to date, of a funeral or marriage fee having been refused by a Baptist preacher. Rumor has it, too, that there are Bible and book and mission "grafts" and that preaching is frequently a "side-line" practiced by life insurance agents and by other gentlemen with a practical as well as a pious turn of mind. It is barely possible, therefore, that the gentleman who did not discover the old Church's shortcomings until he had been told to reform or get out, may still find cause for disedification in his new surroundings. It is barely possible, too, that the poor ex-cleric who violated his vow of celibacy, may not have been animated by purely religious motives.

Right and Justice.

Though the stipends given for Masses do not, properly speaking, fall within the scope of this subject, it may be well to state here, that the stipend is by no means a price paid for the all-holy and priceless sacrifice of the Mass. It is a free-will offering made towards the support of the priest in the same spirit as the offerings for baptism and marriage and similarly sanctioned by universal custom. There are theological distinctions and subdistinctions, but back of them all stands out the justice of the principle, that if the Church places a priest at the beck and call of the people, the people in turn are bound to provide him with a decent means of livelihood. The "Rights of

the Stole" are not rights in the strict sense of the word. "Perquisites" is a better term. They are rights in the sense that they have been sanctioned by the faith and piety, and I may add by the common-sense of Christians, in every age. They are not rights in the sense that they can be demanded prior to the ministrations of the priest. The interests of immortal souls must ever remain prior to all other considerations and it has rarely happened in the history of the Church that the ministrations of the priest have been prostituted to personal gain.

In connection with the subject of Masses it may be well to point out a common mistake in the matter of bequests. People on their death-beds make testamentary provision for Masses seemingly unconscious of the fact that Probate courts move very slowly and that many months may elapse before the provisions of the will can be carried into effect. Charity to their own souls ought to dictate that the best time to have Masses said is whilst they are living. It is well to make such bequests, but it is well also to take time by the forelock and arrange to have Masses offered up for their spiritual welfare, whilst they are alive and in the flesh.

CHAPTER XIV.

Pious Vagrants

What's in a Name?

In one of my former missions there was a Methodist minister who told a strange story of his early religious experiences. That it was substantially true I have every reason to believe. According to this

story, he was the son of Catholic parents and the name bore out his statement.

Some of those Methodist clerical names are well calculated to set us a-thinking. He had been brought up after the usual manner of Catholic boys, had gone to confession several times and had received his first communion. A good old grandmother had taught him to say the beads, and even as a minister he retained a few lingering traces of his early devotion to the Blessed Virgin. His parents had no sittings in their parish church, and Pew Rent was in those days the general rule.

When he heard Mass on Sunday, he was obliged to stand or sit in some one else's pew. When about thirteen years old he was the star performer in a little tragedy, which left its impress upon him during the balance of his life. On one occasion he unwittingly entered the pew of a somewhat crusty individual. The pew was far up in front and the owner had not yet arrived. When he did so, he paused in front of the pew and in the gruffest manner possible ordered the little fellow out of the seat and bade him stay out. Smarting under the public humiliation, the boy left the church and no form of persuasion could ever induce him to enter it again. The parents themselves were rather negligent and they did not seriously object when later on he became a regular attendant at the Methodist Sunday-School. A wealthy lady of the same religious persuasion took a fancy to him and offered to put him through college. The parents were flattered, of course, and eagerly accepted the offer. They did not wake up to the importance of such a decision until their son returned to his home a duly accredited Methodist Minister. Vagrant catholicity had once again demonstrated its ability to undermine the foundations of

Catholic faith. It was a few paltry dollars versus a child's soul, the price of a few sittings in church versus their boy's eternal salvation and the boy was sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. We hear a great deal nowadays about the barbarism and savagery of the poor idolators, who sacrificed their children to the cruel gods of pagan times. They were at least animated by religious motives, and their heroic sacrifices were dictated by genuine if mistaken zeal. They compare favorably with present-day parents who wilfully endanger their children's salvation rather than make the few sacrifices, which duty and religion imperatively demand.

Not Paupers.

The vagrants are the original tax-dodgers. They attend church, as I have already asserted several times, but bear none of its burdens. They hear Mass but refuse to contribute to the maintenance of him who ministers at the altar. They will do anything rather than pay. They are not paupers, except when it comes to contributing. They have their excuses, of course. They do not come to church often enough to rent a pew. They cannot afford just now but they will do better at some indefinite future date. They are not going to remain long in the parish, and it is scarcely worth while. Then there are two or more parishes of different nationalities and they have not arrived at a decision as to the one with which they will affiliate. It is a safe guess to make that they never will. When some emergency arises, such as baptism a marriage or a funeral they are very profuse in their promises. They are well aware that in such cases the traditional zeal of a priest can be relied upon and that of two evils he will always choose the least. If the canonical regula-

tions as to parish affiliation were rigidly enforced they would be in dire straits for a pretext but the bruised reed is seldom broken and the smoking flax is seldom quenched. Where the system in force is a combination of pew rent and seat money they will enter a pew with all the assurance of the real owner and when discovered they will merely smile at the collector for his pains. Sensitive? Oh, no! If they were they would have given up going to church long ago. They are simply miserable and mean and penurious and stingy and they go through life, dodging a financial responsibility whenever and wherever possible. They are in reality the recipients of the charity of those who make it possible for the church to exist, but charity has been imposed upon from the beginning and there are nearly always enough of the generous and self-denying to make up for the shortcomings of those who are the reverse. The reader will please notice that I put it "nearly always". There have been instances in which meanness became epidemic and the priestly victim, bound by the vow of obedience to his bishop lived to regard with bitterness the day he became a priest. No priest would dare stand in his pulpit and treat in plain terms of the miserable, contemptible, small subterfuges to which many people will have recourse in order to avoid paying what they justly owe. No pastor could well put on paper all that he has learned of human meanness in the care of the temporalities of religion. There is a saying in the medical profession that if epsom salts were a dollar an ounce its popularity as a medicine would be greatly enhanced. The cheap things are seldom appreciated even by those who take advantage of their cheapness. The fact that it costs them nothing has much to do with the lack of appreciation, shown by the vagrants for the priceless heritage of Catholic faith, known by the generic term of "religion."

Sounds Fine.

We often hear it said by well-informed laymen that if exact business principles were employed more generally by priests, the results would be more satisfactory in every way. Exact business principles mean presumably in this case an equitable assessment made by competent laymen, which assessment every practical member ought to be obliged in some way to pay. All this sounds fine but there are a few difficulties. The chief difficulty is that the wealthy will seldom consent to an equitable assessment. Another difficulty is it makes the condition of the deserving poor a matter of common parish gossip. A third and final objection is that no system has yet been devised which can effectually reach the vagrants and the bad pays. You can assess them until you are black in the face as the saying goes and you are as well off after the assessment as you were before.

CHAPTER XV.**Nursing a Grouch****Finds Fault.**

A gentleman bearing an honored and distinctively Catholic name, writes to know if priests, even with the approval of the bishop of the diocese can licitly refuse the sacraments to a man "unless he contributes money for certain definite purpose". He is furthermore anxious to learn if such a practice does not smack strongly of what is known as simony, for after a lengthy dissertation on the subject he winds up his letter with the

question "if that be not simony, then tell us what simony, is"?

Our friend evidently means well, but unfortunately he belongs to that class of whom it has been flippantly said that "they are long on theology and short on cash". From his letter it would appear that his pastor, with the bishop's approval, is trying to bring him to time, but that he is still inclined to be rebellious. Now as there are quite a few of his kind scattered here and there throughout the country, it may be well to state concisely what the Church teaches and holds on matters of this kind. The proceeding, we will grant in the beginning is a very unusual one. Priests seldom have recourse to the strong arm of canon law in order to enforce their rights.

We can conceive of cases, however, in which such action would be not only permissible, but altogether justifiable. Take for example a case in which the pastor has been ordered by his bishop to undertake the building of a parochial school. Some parishioner of wealth and prominence, refuses to subscribe, and as frequently has happened, does everything in his power to keep others from subscribing. He is a stumbling block in the way of the Church's progress, and it is clearly within the bishop's power to take such steps as will bring him to a proper sense of his duty. The Church has placed a large measure of power in the hands of its bishops. Disobedience, grave scandal and irreligion, are punishable offenses. If he chooses to make an aggravated case of this kind, what is known in theology as "a reserved case", he takes away from the priest the power to absolve the recalcitrant penitent until such time as he complies with the episcopal requirements.

If, at the same time, a bishop can employ punitive measures to force priests to contribute out of the parish revenues to his own support, it is clearly within his power to force the laity by similar punitive measures to contribute to the support of their pastor. This is not simony. It is the common teaching of the Church which is nothing more or less than codified common sense in its application to every day Catholic life. Our friend, has evidently not proceeded far enough in his theological studies to realize the wide range of a bishop's power. He will do well to pay up at once or suffer the consequences, which from a Catholic standpoint are not very pleasant to contemplate. Simony as practiced by the biblical gentleman from whom it derives its name, involved the expenditure of ready cash. Our friend will evidently never be guilty of this offense.

An Old One.

"The apostles as far as I can learn," writes another, "paid very little attention to the business-side of religion. They were too busy preaching the word of God." Yes, that is right. They ordained deacons to attend to it for them. There were no churches to keep up, no schools or educational institutions in those days. Established residences were not necessary, as the early missionaries were generally on the move.

St. Paul's case was an exception. He worked at his trade during the greater part of the year which he spent at Corinth; but this has never been regarded as being to the credit of the Corinthians. He was merely furnishing the covetous and wealth-loving with a much-needed object-lesson in unselfishness. The eighth and ninth chapters of 2nd Corinthians, furnish us with a

clue as to the conditions with which he had to contend amongst those people. Their generosity certainly needed a spur on the occasion of the general collection taken up for the starving Christians at Jerusalem. His words on that occasion are an eloquent sermon on the spiritual benefits of generous giving. It is a sermon, which may be perused with profit by those who labor under the impression that primitive Christianity was first and above all things cheap Christianity.

The men and women who held themselves ready to give their lives for their faith at any moment did not place much value on material possessions. Their comparative wealth is now a matter of very small moment. Apostolic poverty in the priesthood has always been a favorite cry with the poor pays. What they really require is a priesthood, absolutely immune to such mundane necessities as clothing, three meals a day and a roof to cover their heads against the inclemency of the weather—a priesthood which can subsist on water and air, and light, and those ethereal elements which can be absorbed by the system without the expenditure of ready cash.

The Trouble.

I have received numerous letters during the course of these articles, and in nearly every case they are from men and women who in one way or another are "nursing a grouch". Many of them are pathetic protests against harsh treatment to which they have been subjected, but the evidences of the firm purpose of amendment is frequently wanting. These letters are in nearly every instance a confession that they have not been doing their full duty and that they have been justly disciplined. One man states that he has "been

frequently and perhaps profitably buffeted from the pulpit, not of course by name, but so that everybody could understand who was meant.”

As he is really sorry for his shortcomings in the past and is honestly disposed to do better in the future, he deserves encouragement, and the assurance that a changed line of conduct on his part will bring a changed attitude on the part of his pastor. Another has had his name taken off his pew and his wife's name substituted in its place. He deeply resents the public humiliation he has been forced to undergo and humbly asks for counsel in his difficulty. Inasmuch as he neglects to state the part which the wife has played in the whole transaction, he has left us in the dark on a very important phase of his present predicament. His is certainly a genuine case of a man holding his religion in his wife's name. We are inclined, at the same time, to the belief that an extreme measure of this kind must be the result of extreme perversity on his part.

Another has had his name posted on a “dead-beat list” at the church door, and he writes to know if this be an approved Catholic practice. It certainly appears to be right and fitting that the congregation, as a whole, should know who are paying and who are not. Every club, every organization of any consequence, has its delinquent list. A “dead-beat list,” as I understand it, is a list of people who cannot be made to pay. It is passing strange to find people of this kind still possessed of sensibilities.

Another still writes to tell me that he has walked a mile and a half every Sunday to hear Mass in a

neighboring church. He does not like the pastor of his own church, which, by the way, is only a half block from his door. What this poor man really needs is a course in mental therapeutics. His children, it appears, have more sense than their father. They positively refuse to accompany him on his walks. We predict that he will keep on walking during the remaining years of his life. His letter shows him to be a constitutional parish rebel, and these people die, but never reform.

It is altogether too bad that we should have those "grouches" and sore spots and old wounds waiting to be healed. The Catholic who is weak enough and blind enough to give way to a feeling of this kind, is laying up for himself a heavy store of future tribulation. The man who nurses a grouch in parish affairs, is nursing and rearing a brood of poisonous vipers for the future destruction of his own soul and the souls of those committed to his care.

CHAPTER XVI.

Extraordinary Means

Cause and Effect.

I know a little western parish in which there is a beautiful brick church, a commodious and up-to-date school and a parochial residence which would be a credit to a much larger congregation.

Ten years ago it was a struggling, discouraged, down-at-the-heel mission, famous throughout the whole

diocese for its inability to pay the pastor's humble salary. A young priest, with a goodly amount of western hustle, was assigned to the place, and the affairs of the congregation immediately took a turn for the better. The non-Catholics of the place took a fancy to the clerical hustler and helped him in many ways. Fairs, festivals, picnics, lawn fetes, socials, suppers and entertainments followed each other in quick succession. The parochial residence up to this time had been a reproach. It was disposed of at once and a new and more commodious one erected in its place.

Then it seemed to suddenly dawn upon the people that the old church had outlived its usefulness. Steps were taken looking towards the erection of a new one, and before the close of the pastor's third year in the place, the new church was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies. Pride begets progress and progress begets confidence. It took two years more to pay the debts, and then the parish was ready to undertake the building of its own school. Three years more of united effort, and the school was a reality. Discouragement and indifference had given place to confidence. It was now a real Catholic parish, striving for everything that is best in Catholic life and satisfied with nothing less.

A Dignified Age.

The one great means whereby all this had been made possible was the annual fair. I have the pastor's own word for it that the aggregate amount raised in this way during these ten years of brick and mortar,

surpassed by a good round sum the total cost of the new church with all its belongings. Minor affairs, such as socials, suppers, entertainments and the like, netted a sum equal to the original cost of the parochial residence. In other words, what is known as the extraordinary means of raising funds had paid for the two principal parish buildings, and left a little balance over for running expenses. And this is not the only instance on record in which they have played a leading part in parish undertakings.

Oh, yes, I know their popularity is somewhat on the wane. We are growing more fashionable all the time, and it is incumbent upon us to raise the standard or parochial propriety. This is a dignified and respectable age and we must really forget that these undignified means of raising money have paid debts and lifted mortgages and solved problems in the days when people were not quite as fashionable as they are today. And treating of fashionable people reminds me that I attended a fair at Newport, R. I., some time ago and noted that some of the real leaders of fashion were down amongst the common people doing everything in their power to make the fair a success. It is just barely possible, therefore, that such affairs may again become popular, and that even in the wealthier parishes they may sometimes be preferred to house to house collections and to those direct methods in which the work of collecting falls wholly and entirely upon the shoulders of the priest.

From Many Sources.

The great argument in favor of such methods is that much of the money received through these channels comes from the people who would never contribute

otherwise. Much of it comes from well-disposed non-Catholics who patronize fairs and festivals and the like, chiefly because they approve of the general aims and purposes of the Church and hold themselves ready to help and support every worthy cause. The Church in this country, and particularly in the great West, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the genial, kindly, liberal non-Catholics who have come to our assistance in every worthy undertaking. I believe I am safe in asserting that at least one-third of the moneys received for church purposes in this diocese has come from the pockets of well-disposed Protestants.

I believe, too, that we Catholics are not always as thoughtful as we should be in the matter of manifesting our gratitude to those good people. We feel it incumbent upon us to keep alive the religious strife and bitterness of an age which has, fortunately, passed away. We are fighting over the old battles, forgetful of the fact that if Martin Luther were to drop down into the midst of our twentieth century American life, he would not be tolerated for a moment in any Protestant pulpit.

We really ought to relegate these historic gentlemen to the museum of antiquities and leave them there. It serves no good purpose to be constantly reminding well-disposed non-Catholics of the short-comings of some sixteenth century ancestor, whose chief theological argument was a club. Let those brawling, fighting, witch-burning, heresy-hating, hard-drinking, ancestors sleep in peace. The world has moved on and the stream of human sympathy has widened. Men are slowly learning that abuse is a poor argument and that sensible people resent being held responsible for the brutality and savagery of distant ancestors.

Easily Disedified.

Many Catholics who are unable to give much, are willing to give of the time and labor which counts for so much in the success of such undertakings. This, after all, is a most effective form of lay co-operation and greatly lightens the burdens of the priest. Then again there are those who scarcely ever contribute except on occasions of this kind. Untold millions are spent every year by the American people for useless luxuries and profitless amusements. After all has been said and done, the Church might as well have its share of the nation's spending money, and the fair offers one of the best means of getting it. Church fairs at the same time do a great deal of good by promoting the spirit of fellowship not only amongst the members of a congregation, but also between Catholics and their non-Catholic neighbors.

They are open to criticism in the sense that they promote the spirit of gambling. The gambling, however, is of the very mild and much diluted kind. It is neither sinful nor unjust and the people who pay for "chances" as a rule, care very little about the results of the drawing. In my own experience, it is the people who are too mean to pay for a "chance" who are the loudest in their condemnation of this misnamed "gambling". It is doubtful, at the same time, if we Catholics are bound to conform strictly to the Methodist Book of Discipline. These good people have made sins of things that are not sins, and as a result they are altogether too easily disedified.

Of course, it would be better, much better if a congregation could get along without anything of this

kind. It is well to remove all possible causes of disedification. It is well, too, in the management of such affairs to conduct them on the highest possible plane of Christian propriety to the end that our enemies be furnished with no additional pretext for making light of the teachings and practices of our holy faith.

CHAPTER XVII.

Young Men's Complaint

A Surprise.

A pastor in a large eastern city recently went to the trouble of finding out for himself the number of Catholic young men holding membership in the local Y. M. C. A. He found to his surprise that more than three hundred of these young men were entered on the organization's register as belonging to the Catholic Church.

Continuing his investigation he was further surprised to find that more than thirty of them belonged to his own parish. Instead of stopping right there, he went to the additional trouble of endeavoring to discover the influence for good or evil which the organization exerted upon these members. Quietly, but none the less thoroughly he set to work to discover their personal habits and religious tendencies. He found, as he had anticipated that at least one-third of them never put a foot inside a church on Sunday. Another one-third were of the class known as irregular attendants. They came to Mass when things were favorable and approached the sacraments at irregular

intervals. The remaining one-third were regular attendants at the Sunday services, and were more or less faithful in the matter of approaching the sacraments.

With one or two exceptions, all were of the class known as poor pays. They seldom gave to the collections and seemed disposed to give just what they had to for seat-money and nothing more. Whilst this pastor's original purpose was not to discover the attitude of these young men on the question of church support, his discovery lead him to continue his investigations in order to find out the comparative generosity of his young men taken as a whole. I will take the liberty of putting the result of his investigation in his own words.

A Summing Up.

"I found, of course, a certain percentage of my young men who are doing splendidly in the matter of contributing towards the support of our church and its institutions. They are generous on all occasions and can always be relied upon to do what is right. I found again, that young men's salaries seem to play no part in their comparative generosity. Some of them receiving good wages, never give anything. Others, again, with a moderate weekly allowance, are what might be justly called generous contributors. About one-third of my young men belong to this last class, the other two-thirds can be divided again into two classes: the one-third that never give anything for the simple reason that they are very irregular in their attendance at church and very careless, of course, about everything which pertains to their duties as Catholics. The other one-third are generous by fits

and starts. They give occasionally, but are by no means regular contributors.

“A strange thing in connection with these young men is this: the ones who give nothing are the ones who talk most about the mercenary tendency of the Church at the present day. Their favorite pretext for not coming to church is that they do not go because we are always taking up collections. I think at bottom it is not a question of money, but of morals, and that if we could do something to improve their moral conditions, the financial question would solve itself. It is the old story repeated daily under our eyes. They always have money when it is question of their own pleasure. They become financially crippled only when we ask them to aid in the solution of our parish problems.

“We have a school with almost a thousand children. The work done in this school reflects the highest credit upon the parish. We have societies for the mental and physical advancement of our boys and young men. We are straining every nerve to fit the coming generation of men for the responsibilities of Christian citizenship, and one of the chief sources of discouragement is the indifference of those most directly interested. We do not want those young men’s money so much as their souls, but my investigation has shown me clearly one thing, and that is that the Catholic young man who is a poor pay is generally a poor Christian.”

Seems Unfair.

I do not know if this general summing up be true of our young men, taken as a whole, but I do know that altogether too many of them regard themselves as having no responsibility as far as the support of the

church is concerned. It does not seem right that young men receiving good salaries should be exempt, whilst married men and fathers of families, receiving the same and smaller salaries, should be required to make real and sometimes great sacrifices in order to do their duty in this matter. The burden ought to be equalized. Such young men ought really to pay more than husbands and fathers with domestic problems of their own to solve.

Our young men frequently complain that they are preached to and preached at a great deal, and that there is a general tendency towards fault-finding as far as they are concerned. The real truth of the matter is that they are the object of the deepest solicitude on the part of priests and pastors, and that those who show a disposition to do what is half right are treated with every consideration.

What We Want.

There is a saying amongst priests which runs to the effect that if we look out for the young men and boys the future growth of the Church in any locality is hereby assured. This saying seems to be based on the assumption that the girls and the young women will remain Catholic even if no specific attempts be made to keep them faithful. Experience has shown, however, that this assumption is not always a correct one. The mixed marriage has been "the great destroyer", as far as the latter are concerned, and the young men have not by any means responded to the efforts made to uplift them socially and morally. We have never yet been able to organize a Catholic young men's society similar in general scope and purpose to the Y. M. C. A. That there is a real need for an organization of this kind, no one will deny.

If we could once succeed in arousing them from the apathy and indifference and convince them of the necessity of standing shoulder to shoulder in the great struggle for God and righteousness, the future growth of Catholicity in this country would be assured. There is a little ground for hope from this army of careless, lukewarm, indifferent, Mass-missing young men. At bottom we do not want their money, so much as we want them to be true to their convictions, to be honest, upright, sober, industrious, God-fearing young men.

We want to cease apologizing for that form of misnamed Catholicity which is the Church's reproach. We want them to keep out of dirty politics and dishonorable means of making a livelihood. We want their religion to be something more than an empty name, and when that time comes to pass, we feel that they will have no complaint to register against the Church of their fathers. I have found in my experience that the men and women who complain most about the exactions of religion, are they who are striving to trump up a pretext for not practicing that religion. They are giving up the service of God and they are trying to convince themselves and others that He has been a hard Master. They have yet to learn that the devil, whom they have begun to serve, is not by any means an easy one.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Accountability

The Lay Standpoint.

An editor for whose opinions I entertain a good deal of respect, has been kind enough to remind me

that no treatise on this subject can be regarded as satisfactory which deals with the duty of giving to the exclusion of that other and very important side of the question which has to do with the expenditure of the moneys received.

The laity, he gently intimates, have also a few rights. They have a right to insist that the business of the parish be administered wisely and economically. They have a right to such information as will enable them to judge just where the parish stands, financially. They have a right to a regular and specific accounting in order that they may give intelligently and according to the real needs of the situation.

The editor's stand is well taken. There is no room here, however, for misunderstanding or difference of opinion. These rights of the laity every priest is willing to admit. Taxation without accountability has never been productive of satisfactory results. Autocratic methods in the conduct of parish affairs are somewhat out of date in this age of intelligence and practical business methods. Reasonable people are entitled to reasonable treatment and it has been found by experience that men and women give better when they know how their money is being spent.

In the average parish no difficult or complicated system of bookkeeping is necessary. The ordinary sources of revenue are few and easily understood. Fuel, insurance, janitor's service, incidental repairs, improvements, interest, sisters' and pastors' salaries are things which even people of limited comprehension can easily grasp. The duty of accounting to a parish is, after all, an easy one. It is a duty which is made obligatory upon all pastors by diocesan and general legislation for the reasons already given.

Our present methods of church government are the result of centuries of experience. Whilst at the first glance they may appear to be wanting in some of those elements which contribute to the success of ordinary business ventures, it must not be forgotten that the Church is governed from above rather than from below. Bishops are responsible to the Holy Father, and priests to bishops. The laity, who demand the strictest business principles in the conduct of parish affairs, are liable to forget that the constitution of the Church leaves it in the power of the bishops to regulate all these matters in such a way that the real interests of religion will never be sacrificed to purely financial considerations. The supernatural must never be lost sight of, and when people give from supernatural motives, they are generally content with leaving the responsibility for the spending to those to whom it rightly belongs. Thanks to the sagacity and prudence of our bishops, the credit of the Church in this country is everywhere of the highest order. Mistakes have been made, but the percentage of failures is very small compared with those undertakings in which "business" has been the paramount and sole consideration.

Thoughtlessness.

I have endeavored to make it evident from the beginning that the chief purpose of this series of articles has been to reach those who are not doing their duty in the matter of giving. I have been trying to put in cold type those things which priests cannot very well say from the pulpit. I hope I have succeeded in hurting the sensibilities of the poor pays, the slow pays and of those who do not pay anything at all. I am duly conscious, at the same time of the fact that

thoughtlessness frequently plays a large part in the failure of many people to live up to even the ordinary standard of Christian duty. It is not malice; it is not meanness, but just plain, common, everyday, old-fashioned neglect. They really mean well at bottom, but they keep putting off the doing of the right thing until in the end their negligence really becomes a serious matter. It is, after all, an easy matter to be absentminded in the matter of paying out money. I have been trying, as effectively as I know how, to reason with reasonable people, and at the same time to unmask the pretexts and subterfuges of the unreasonable.

The Church of God must have means to carry on its work. These means must come from the people. Giving will ever and always be a burden to the giver, and the interests of religion will always suffer until our people, taken as a whole, have been educated up to the duty of giving according to their means. There is no other side to this question. No pretext can justify any man or woman for failure to give. Laying the blame on somebody else will not satisfy the obligation. The disappointed little parish boss, the constitutional crank, the born critic will all have their say, of course, but, after all has been said and done, the duty of giving according to their means still remains. Priests will make mistakes, as they have done in the past. Architectural freaks will be called churches, unwise debts will be contracted, blunders will be made in the location of churches, economy in the administration of parishes will sometimes be lacking, but none of these things affect the force of the commandment requiring us to contribute to the decent support and maintenance of religion.

For Whom Intended.

I wish it were possible to use none but sweet and pleasant words in the treatment of a subject of this kind. I wish it were possible to point out the path of duty without hurting the sensibilities of those who do not walk therein. Soft words, however, as the old saying goes, "butter no parsnips," and they would be misunderstood by those for whom they were intended. I wanted the shoe to pinch, and I am glad to know it has pinched. Money talks from the pulpit are open to the objection that those who do well are forced to listen to sermons intended for those who do badly. One of the difficulties about sermons and preaching in general is that those for whom they are intended seldom apply the lessons to themselves. I want the poor pay and the bad pay and those who do not pay at all to understand that all my arguments have been directed towards one end, namely, that of bringing them to a sense of what is just and right in this matter, and nothing more. I made the statement in the beginning that ninety per cent. of the priests' worries were financial ones. I made another statement. It was to the effect that at least one-third of our Catholic people are doing nothing or practically nothing towards the support of religion. This is my justification for the use of words which cannot be and may not be misunderstood.

CHAPTER XIX.**The Indefinite Commandment****Why This Silence.**

When I began collecting material for this series of articles, I thought it well to find out, in the very begin-

ning, just what the theologians taught relative to this subject of giving.

The Fifth commandment of the Church, as it appears in our catechism, is rather hazy and indeterminate. It reads: "Fifth, to contribute to the support of our pastors." That is all. It is beautifully indefinite and its interpretation and explanation rests with the theologians, whose views and conclusions are, after all, nothing but common sense applied to Christian teaching. A Catholic writer is not always safe in setting forth his own personal views. He is always safe in following the truth as it appears in the approved teachings of the Church.

To the question "how much must the faithful contribute," St. Thomas answers: "*determinatio certæ partis est reservata ordinationi ecclesiæ.*" By this St. Thomas evidently means that the determination of an exact sum is left to the judgment of the Church and particularly of the bishop. The bishops through synodal enactments and through special decrees regulate the salaries of pastors and assistants. They are the best judges and their enactments are never oppressive.

Sabetti, our own distinguished Jesuit theologian, as usual, is clear and to the point, but his treatment of the subject is so brief that, if it were translated and put into an English dress, it would occupy less than half the space of this article. He quotes from Archbishop Kenrick's text-book of theology, in which it is stated that it is necessary that each one contribute something according to his means. So long, however, as this duty is not defined by any special legislation, he does not seem disposed to condemn any one as

being guilty of mortal sin, who omits to contribute his just share, provided, however, that there is no danger that the pastor suffer want, or that others who contribute, be, on this account, obliged to bear too great a burden. Those, however, who out of a spirit of avarice refuse to contribute seem, in the two cases above mentioned, "to be guilty of mortal sin, and to be unworthy of absolution, for they violate the Law of Christ relative to the support of the Ministers of religion and expose themselves and others to the loss of eternal salvation."

Here again, however, we have nothing but the mere general principle—no specific laying down of the law relative to the support of bishops and priests, no pointing out of the people's duty relative to the support of parochial schools, diocesan colleges and seminaries, missionary establishments and eleemosynary institutions, no insistence upon the obligation resting upon the faithful, taken as a whole, to provide the Sovereign Pontiff himself with the means of living up to his high station and exalted dignity. All this particular legislation is left to the discretion of the bishops or to the Holy Father acting as the head of the Church universal.

A Summary.

The general teaching of the Church on this matter may be summarized as follows: The duty of giving to the support of religion rests, first, on the divine law as is shown by the setting apart of the Levites in the Old Law and by the institution of tithes for their support. We have also the express words of St. Paul that "the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel," and that "they that

serve the altar partake with the altar"; second, on ecclesiastical law, as is shown by the commandment itself; third, on the natural law, which dictates that "the laborer is worthy of his hire" and "the workman is worthy of his meat."

This common sense of mankind known as the natural law recognizes that the men who give themselves up entirely to the service of God, the administration of the sacraments and the care of souls, are entitled to a decent support. The neglect of this duty is, consequently, a sin, first, against religion, which cannot be maintained in the world without the ministry of its priests, and, secondly, against justice, as the people's contributions are "not an alms so much as they are a remuneration for valuable service rendered."

By the support of religion is understood, first, the maintenance of the clergy and the hierarchy, the Holy Father included; secondly, the erection and preservation of church buildings; third, the necessities for public worship; fourth, schools; teachers and the necessary equipment for carrying on the work of Christian education; fifth, eleemosynary and charitable institutions; sixth, missions at home and abroad. Every law thus far enacted recognizes the primary duty of people to their own parish and their own pastor, to their own diocesan and local institutions in preference to outside interests, no matter how praiseworthy. This duty, which begins at home does not, however, end there. The extension of God's kingdom in Christian and pagan lands has ever been a legitimate object of Catholic zeal. All these forms of giving are generally regulated by the bishops of the various dioceses who are, after all, the best judges of the comparative importance of local and outside needs.

No Evasion.

The Church, too, recognizes the principle of just and equitable taxation, even in the matter of giving. The contributions of the faithful should, as far as lies in the power of pastors, be representative of the means of those contributing. "Let the rich give freely," says a spiritual writer, "the poor more sparingly, but cheerfully." "Those who cannot give money, let them give in labor or some other form. Even the children should be taught to give as a part of their training in good works, to the end that when they grow up they will not fail in the performance of this important duty."

The sin of avarice lies at the root of many people's failure to contribute. Men are selling their souls to-day for dollars and cents just as they sold them in the days of Martin Luther and Henry Eighth. Back of many of these pretexts for not paying lies that baneful vice which threatens to sap the very foundations of the nation's existence. Graft and corruption in politics, failure to pay just debts, petty theft and public plunder are merely varying forms of the same old vice which prompts so many of our people to evade their just obligations as far as the support of the Church and religion is concerned.

CHAPTER XX.**Appreciation****The Printed Sermon.**

It is with a feeling akin to regret that I bring this series of articles to a close. I am grateful for many suggestions received from the clergy and laity, from editors and even from those whose views differed from

mine. It was an evidence that they were reading these articles and thinking, and an evidence too, that they were not entirely satisfied with their own way of looking at the subject. Wholesome discussion clears the intellectual atmosphere. Like the five blind men of Hindustan in Saxe's poem, our way of looking at things is generally dependent upon our environments and individual circumstances.

Many have cut themselves off from the Church under the childish impression that they were "spiting the priest". Others have borne resentment in their bosom for years because of some fancied allusion to their personal shortcomings from the pulpit. Good men, by assuming a critical attitude towards the Church and its ministers have lived to see the results of this false attitude in the lives of their children, who could not distinguish between the personal element in the Church and the principles at stake. Others can always discover the beauties of their religion in strange places, but are never satisfied with the Church as they find it at their doors. The man with a "grouch" is generally a man with high ideals which he expects other people to live up to. It is quite common for men of the lowest morals to give the lapses of the ministers of religion as a reason for their personal depravity. The Devil is an apt hand at supplying his clients with excuses and pretexts. All this has been brought home to me time and again during the course of these articles; but over against all these stands another principle, viz., that the truth is powerful and will prevail.

I have been consoled, at the same time by the thought that I have been preaching for twenty consecutive weeks to an audience of at least two hundred thousand readers on the simplest and commonest of Christian duties, viz., that of giving to the support of

religion. No preacher could desire a nobler audience. The spoken word frequently passes in one ear and out the other, but the printed word remains. After all has been said and done it is the people who read Catholic papers, who mould and form Catholic opinion. The Catholic home without a Catholic paper is a home with a serious spiritual and intellectual handicap. It is a fortress without the arms and ammunition wherewith to defend it. In this age of ideas it is as great an anomaly as a school without textbooks, or the ordinary means of instruction. The sooner these things are realized by our people the better it will be for the future of the Church in this country.

The strength or weakness of the Church in any country today is shown in the strength or weakness of its press. The Devil has nearly always beaten us at the game of printer's ink. This mightiest human agency for good or evil must be reckoned with at every turn in this struggle for God and human souls. I am grateful to Almighty God at the same time for the opportunity and privilege of instructing so large a body of the faithful in that which concerns the material support of His Divine Spouse, the Catholic Church. What I have said well, let it be said to His honor and glory. What I have said badly, let it be put down to my human frailty and to that darkness of the understanding from which no man is free.

Where Praise is Due.

I have been fearful that I might be thought lacking in the appreciation of the generosity and self-sacrifice of our people taken as a whole. I have been fearful least "the edge of a naturally caustic pen" should repell rather than attract my readers. I have good reason to know and understand the vast amount of

unselfishness in the big heart of my Catholic brethren here in the United States. Two years ago the Catholic Church Extension Society was started with nothing but faith in God and confidence in the generosity of our Catholic people. The Society, thanks to the generosity of priests and people, is to-day in a position to do an incalculable amount of good. Our confidence has been abundantly justified. The men and women, too, who have built up the property of the Church and made it the most powerful organization in the world even from a commercial standpoint deserve considerable credit for what they have done. Parochial schools, hospitals, orphanages, refuges for fallen women, old people's homes, convents, colleges, academies and all those numerous evidences of Catholic zeal and self-sacrifice are so many proofs that a large proportion of our people have done their duty bravely and well. I have been pleading with the non-givers and the poor givers to the end that they may come to the assistance of the good and the generous. They who have borne the burden up to the present hour have a right to demand that this burden shall be equalized. The slow pay, the poor pay and the people who do not pay at all are very exacting when a priest owes them a bill. They demand prompt settlement and are very much disedified if he copy their own methods, in their dealings with the Church. The future welfare and growth, too, of every parish in the land is dependent, to a large extent, upon the manner in which they learn the lessons bearing upon Church support. Religion without the spirit of self-sacrifice is inconceivable and the duty of giving, strikes at the very roots of this spirit of self-sacrifice. If it ever come to a choice between the man's money and his soul the Church solemnly adjures him to keep his money and save his soul, i. e., if he can, which, to say the least, is somewhat doubtful.

The Test.

I feel I would be guilty of a serious oversight if I closed this series without any reference to something which concerns very closely the business side of all forms of religion. I refer of course to missions, to those undertakings having for their purpose, the preservation and propagation of the principles for which the Church stands. We speak in glowing terms of the great missionaries who labored amongst the aborigines away back in the days when the country was one vast wilderness. We take an honest pride in the efforts of those apostolic men who have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in strange lands. The gospel remains the same and the duty of spreading a knowledge of its saving truths is still incumbent upon those who believe in its efficacy to raise up and save a fallen race. American Catholic parents scarcely ever dream of the possibility that their boys may have a vocation to preach that blessed gospel to those who sit in the darkness and shadow of death. The race problem will always remain a problem in this country until the white and black have learned from the lips of the church the common brotherhood of man.

Spiritual destitution should not exist side by side with spiritual luxury. Catholics living in churchless communities must receive more attention. It is easy to save those who rightly belong to us if the proper means be taken. Mission churches must be built and priests supplied. These are legitimate objects of Catholic zeal. We should never be so busy at home that we must perforce turn a deaf ear to the Macedonian call to "come over and help us". The heart in which the spirit of Christ dwells is always open to the cry of the needy no matter whether the need be spiritual or temporal.

[THE END]

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