

The Church Guardian

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See page 14.

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER.

Dec. 2nd—1st Sunday in ADVENT.

" 9th—2nd Sunday in Advent.

" 16th—3rd Sunday in Advent. (*Notice of St. Thomas and Ember Days.*)

" 19th—EMBER DAY.

" 21st—St. Thomas; Ember Day.

" 22nd—EMBER DAY.

" 23rd—4th Sunday in Advent. (*Notice of Christmas; St. Stephen. St. John and Innocent Days.*)

" 25th—CHRISTMAS. (Pr. Pss. M., 19, 40 85. E. 89, 110, 132. Ath. Cr. Pr. Pref. in Com. Services till Jan. 1, incln.)

" 26th—St. Stephen, 1st Martyr.

" 27th—St John. A. & M.

" 28th—Innocent's Day.

" 30th—1st Sunday after Christmas.

DEGRADING METHODS OF RAISING MONEY FOR CHURCH SUPPORT.

By BISHOP GILLESPIE.

The season has returned when Parishes and Missions are found desiring to raise money for their general support, or for some particular object; by means of some of those expedients which in our day so frequently take the place of the simple Scriptural "giving alms of our goods." The list of these expedients would be a long and curious one, and when associated with the objects, in some cases there would seem a positive profanity.

The writer may claim to have had from his position unusual opportunities of observation. He has endeavoured to judge impartially, and especially in cases where necessary expenditures came upon the few, and the law of pure charity might seem to be relaxed.

He is prepared to take ground against this system, for a system it has become, and he will frankly state his reasons.

The system may be attacked in its strong hold; it does not pay pecuniarily. The frequent jokes on this method of Church finance, are wit and wisdom. The very experts in the business when hardly pressed, will admit that the money put in the shape of material, advertising, hire

of hall, and numerous *et ceteras*, to say nothing of time, only comes out, and not always that. The time is a pretty important factor. How often after a sale, a social, a dinner, we hear one and another of the active workers say: "Well, I would rather pay, in making a good price for the speaker, than go through this again."

One item is often overlooked. Great stress is laid on the patronage from without; but there is no monopoly of the business, so these outside customers come to have their own affairs of the sort, and it would be very mean not to return their courtesy—in other words, to pay them back their money.

We have spoken of the variety of these devices. In a world that loves pleasure well, "having a good time," will be the ruling idea in device and arrangement. And so the world comes in in some of its most objectionable amusements. Yes, the children who have been baptised into purity; and the maidens whose should be the "bashful blush," dance and perform before whosoever will pay the dime or the quarter, and if they have a conscience in the matter, think that the charity makes it all right. It is pleasure, amusement, that is denying the Lord the travail of His soul; and the Church is helping it by her dances, her masquerades, her theatricals, her lotteries, and many other devices borrowed from the world. When the Church bewails the marked indifference to her God and the Saviour of her sons and daughters, and sadly asks, why it is so, she may recall these things, and return answer unto herself. Of course, if all this is right in the Holy Church, very much more in the same direction is it right where no Church is concerned.

These modes of raising money are often attained with not only the loss of the benefit of the holy seasons of the Church, but with their actual profanation. Easter-tide is a very common time for making money after this manner. And we have known the affair contending with holy duties all through Lent, and even the solemnities of Passion week, mingled with the rehearsal and the details of the coming sale or show.

There is no more fruitful source of parish irritation and contention than this whole business. Who has not heard when it was over, how this one would do nothing, and that one was entirely too officious, and what this one said, and that one did. And more than this; many is the pastor whose life has been embittered, and who has seen his holiest efforts frustrated by this system. In my soul, I honor the minister who will say to his people: "Brethren, I will have nothing to do with any means of raising money that I believe is unfriendly to the spiritualities of the Church."

This working is the degradation of Charity. It is taking away from the individual the blessing of the simple self-denying gift. It is saying to men, come and get gain; come to the Church counter just as you go to any other counter, and you shall have a return; when the blessed Lord has said, "do good and lend, hoping for nothing again." It is treating charity as a pill that must be sugared.

There is nothing worse for the Church treasury, and certainly for the treasury of the Lord, than this system of Church sustentation and benevolence. Sooner or later it comes to this, that there is little or no actual giving. As lately I heard in one of the most disheartening parishes, considering its position, I ever knew: "We have been so in the habit of relying on the ladies, that now we look to them for everything."

I believe that this thing is the demoralization of the Church; that it is a leading cause of the lukewarmness and inconsistency we all mourn over. I think there is a scarcely a pastor who would not rejoice to have it proscribed. As I write, I meet these words in a Parish paper: "In those parishes where much attention is

given to concerts, entertainments, bazaars, and the like, it is found that the conversation in pastoral calls naturally drifts in the same direction. The clergyman is asked such questions as these: How much did the ladies make last week? Was there a crowd at the bazaar? What are the young people planning for their next entertainment? This result stands as one of the greatest objections to this kind of effort. We may defend them by all the arguments of expediency and necessity, still they stand condemned when they secularize the Christian mind and lead it to think chiefly of these things. No wonder such people come in time to look upon the Church as existing, for this kind of work as well as being supported from such a treasury."

But it is said "you can't get the money in any other way." No doubt when people have been educated in this way, it is very hard to get them out of it—that is one of the evils. But it has been done, and it can be done. Let a minister say to his parish, "we will try simple giving, we will have no more of such modes, we will try and have some gospel and some blessing in giving our money," and many will feel it a great relief. Many a husband will be glad to give his wife a great deal more charity money, rather than have her wearied and annoyed as he has seen her as officer of a society or member of a Committee.

Upon our larger Parishes devolves the responsibility. As long as they uphold the system the weaker Parishes or Missions will plead, and with some force, their example.

Earnest as are our words, and unduly severe as they may seem to some, they are the expression of the best thought and feeling in the Church.

DO AND DON'T.

If you want to be a Christian do whatsoever our blessed Lord directs you to do. Be His disciple, one of His co-workers, His friend. Help Him in all His work of saving mankind. Do not live for yourself, but for others. Use your time, money, influence, in this work. On His day, "the Lord's Day," attend both the morning and evening services of His Church. "Make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to praise Him." Let nothing keep you away from church except before the Lord some very great necessity. If the husband cannot go, let the wife go and pray and worship for him. And so the husband for the wife. Let no weather prevent your attending that would not keep you at home during a week day. Do not say that the distance is too great. If you can go the same distance to your business you can go to church. Let no visitor keep you. Bring your visitor to church or let him stay alone, for God in the Fourth Commandment holds you responsible for "the stranger within your gates" on His Holy Day. The Lord's day is set apart, and His Church services established, that mankind may not forget God. Come, then, to church, to keep up His name, His authority, His love, His law.

Come regularly to the Holy Communion. This is to hold up to the world that Christ died for the sin of the world. Through His death only we are each forgiven. By partaking of this remembrance of His death we receive daily spiritual strength. We cannot receive the Lord's Supper too often. Be regular there. Don't let your place be vacant. Be seen there. Let your influence go out from there.

Bring your offerings to God's House. Let us either close God's House or support it. God commands us to support it, its services and ministers. Hear His stern rebuke to those who will not sustain His Church. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes