

mourners are comforted, that the sick are not forgotten, that the dying do not lack the consolations of religion. It is his duty to prepare sermons, to carry on correspondence, to keep a-going the machinery of his congregation, and to carry the gospel as he can, to parts beyond. Where is, therefore, his time for Soirees? The burden is not so heavy on city ministers, who have only one congregation, and who can, within a few yards of their door, get speakers to make a successful Soiree; but the case is different with country pastors, who have two or three stations, each of which must have its Soiree, and where it occupies a great part of the winter travelling in all directions, attending Soirees to pay back the dozen speakers. What would we think of a doctor who was driving all around attending Soirees, drinking tea, eating cakes, telling funny stories, making sport of the Philistines, while his patients were allowed as they chose or could to get well or die. On the shoulders of the Soiree, and of those who cry out for them, rests much of the blame for neglected pastoral work in many a backwood parish. The children of the church are neglected, the dying are unvisited, books are lying uncut on the study table, sermons are crude, the holy devout frame of mind called "unction," so essential to an ambassador for Christ, is lost, because people must have Socials and Soirees. Well, indeed, may many a country pastor in Canada say with Sterne's soldier, "they knocked me down and then told me to stand up."

We know what reply comes readily to one's lips. "We raise a good deal of money by Soirees; in fact we could not get on without them." A good deal of money! No. On a purely commercial calculation there is no speculation we know of (save, perhaps, railway shares) so utterly unremunerative, when we count time and trouble of begging and buying and borrowing, of cooking and printing and speaking, as a church Soiree.

But supposing money was made, to be counted in pounds, where we actually count it in cents, it is money got at a ruinous price.

It is money got at the price of *departing from Apostolic precept and example*; from apostolic precept; for Christians (as for the world, if they won't give their hearts to Christ, why should we seek their money?) are told to give according as the Lord has prospered them, not according as men coax and cajole them. From Apostolic *example*, for it amounts almost to irreverence to imagine the walls of Antioch covered with placards announcing a grand Soiree, where Paul and Barnabas are expected to speak so as to amuse and please Jew and Gentile, Heathen and Christian, the money to be devoted to building a church in the city, or paying the expense of the first missionary expedition into Asia. It is money got at the expense of *drying up the springs of Christian liberality*. There is no farmer but knows that it is bad policy to train a cow to let down her milk only as she is kept eating. But this is the very principle on which we train the churches of Canada, when we, trusting to a false method of selling so much entertainment for so much money, neglect the true method of appealing to the higher principles of the Christian's nature, saying to him when we want money for Christ's cause, "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich.*" It is getting money at the expense of *dulling the weapon of our warfare*. The mission of the Christian ministry in this world is not to provide amusement for the public, nor even to enlarge the range of secular knowledge, but to combat with the wiles of the devil, and to deliver poor captives from his power. In this work they require to put on the whole armour of God. They must