

are among the barriers in the way of a Christian civilization ; they belittle and corrupt society. Nothing can reach them so effectually as the shaft of wit. There are multitudes of people callous to the effects of logic, who laugh in their sleeves at the solemn energy of the preacher's Scripture quotation, but the hot shot of satire makes them wince ; the arrow of truth, pointed by wit and feathered by humor, finds its way through the joints of their armor ; and, on the apostolic principle of " becoming all things to all men if by any means we may save some," these weapons must not be neglected in any spiritual armory.

It is both legitimate and sanative to make sin appear not only grim and ghastly, but ludicrous as well. For wickedness, while it has an awful and repulsive side, is also a monstrous absurdity ; to the whole moral order it is a hideous caricature. The transgressor builds his house on quicksand and of ice for granite, heals his wounded conscience with shin-plasters, breaks through a hedge to snatch forbidden fruit and lands in a nest of serpents, chases jack-o'-lanterns to flounder in the bog, and gambles with the devil, who mocks while he fleeces him. What more legitimate work than to make sin then appear incarnate folly, to be laughed out of countenance, and hooted from the court of common sense !

ENEMIES EMPLOY IT.

The enemies of religion have always used wit to discredit Christian doctrine and life. What bitter sarcasm, keen satire, laugh-provoking burlesque has not scepticism hurled at the Church ? Rarely has it met us upon the field of sober logic or historic evidence. What weight would Ingersollism, for instance, have had but for its continual use of a reckless, conscienceless, but popular form of raillery ? It is the part of wisdom, in warfare, to learn from the enemy. That powerful, irresistible weapon to which human nature the world over and the ages through is so sensitive, the preacher must use (wisely, to be sure, and honestly) if he would increase his power. There is nothing that people are so unwilling to forgive as dulness, prosiness, ponderous argument unilluminated by illustration, anecdote, parable, wit, or humor. Whatever may have drawn people to such preaching in earlier times, they will not now go to church with the expectation of enjoying a comfortable nap while the minister drones through the seventeen points of his theological thesis or well-worn homily. They will simply find their pabulum outside the meeting-house in more lively and entertaining discourse.

SAMPLES OF EARLY WIT.

Men have become more keen, wakeful, and intelligent, and therefore more receptive of what is bright and witty. We have fallen upon more cultured days than those when the most distinguished ministers took strange liberties with their congregations.

Think of Dean Swift, preaching on Pride, saying : " My dear hearers,