

vice of such persons that they always thrust their hands into other people's pockets before they will dip into their own, with the inevitable result that their own souls must shrivel, simply because they are too selfish to let Charity begin at home. But the second of the above-named classes commonly bethink themselves at once of some mode of *earning* the money needed for Church purposes. Beyond a doubt this is a legitimate method of securing a parish income. To turn labor into money is honorable even though the money itself be squandered: much more if money so gotten be consecrated to Christ and His Church. And yet there is "a more excellent way," that of having a Church income by *saving* from our personal income.

Till we have actually given, or conscientiously pledged ourselves to give a due proportion of our income, we cannot justify and honorably ask even those to give who have much of this world's goods, nor allow over-worked women to take up additional tasks. Where is the family that has not an income and would not be the better for practicing at times a firm self-denial so that a fair proportion of it might be given back to Him from whom all has come? Let "the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life" be thus met and overcome, and there would be little likelihood of injury from the resort to doubtful modes of begging and earning money.

We suppose these principles underlie all the criticisms so generally made on "modern modes of raising money for Church purposes." Rather than pinch ourselves we would put the pressure on others. But we find promiscuous begging brings only a sorry return; everywhere the field has been begged over and over again. And then we fall back on some scheme for drawing a crowd by the promise of entertainment. Here is where all the evil comes in. The moment Christians commence the traffic in amusements, they come down to the level of the world. The reputation, the influence, and the growth of the Church is endangered, the moment her representatives set up as caterers for the fun-loving and amusement-crazed part of the community. And this is irrespective of the propriety or impropriety of the particular amusements provided. In respect of cards, dances, theatricals, &c., they may or may not be evils *per se*, nevertheless, if resorted to as a means of income, they are invariably detrimental to the spiritual interests of *those who provide them*. The Church cannot thrive that way. We cannot here show how and why this is so, but all experience proves that it is so.

We can do better for the Church than run any such risk. First of all, we can save from our income, be it small or large, the percentage justly due to the Giver of All. Then, after we have ourselves given according to our ability, we may in a respectful and self-respecting way ask others to give; or, if we have not the genius and disposition for begging, we may in a straight-forward, business-like way ask others to buy what we have to sell. But certainly, as Christians, we are bound to offer only *good* goods and *fair* prices. Give useful articles and catch penny-devices the go-by. But the necessary, the useful, the ornamental, the beautiful and true in nature, art, science and literature, may be dealt in to almost any extent. Surely, the field remains large enough. And in this way by *saving*, by *earning*, or by *asking*, we may have enough for our *giving*.

J. W. B.

SKEPTICAL INSOLENCES.

Christian men can understand and bear with one class of skeptics—men of unblemished lives, who tell you, with reluctance, that they have earnestly investigated the subject of Christianity, have wished to believe, but cannot conscientiously do so. They shrink from disturbing the faith of any human being, and

recognise the sincerity and earnestness of Christians, and attribute to them ordinary wisdom and enlightened views—men who keep their infidel views to themselves, unless forced to disclose them, for fear of tearing down when they have nothing to give for rebuilding. We can respect such men, because we respect the majesty of conscience. The arguments which to us appear invincible, evidently do not touch them at all. Such men we can only leave with God, pray for them, ask the prayers of others, urge them to continue their search for light. But there is another class with whom it is very hard to get on. The men who are constantly slapping you in the face with their infidelity; who seem to think it smart to not believe in God, and sure evidence of a superior mind, and they want everybody to know how superior their minds are. Sin is a disease, they tell you, very like scarlet fever. Our dear Lord was simply a remarkably intelligent and clean Jew. Does not Renan say so? The Bible is of a piece with the Vedas and Tennyson's poems. Clergymen have to get a living, and must preach what they do, but half of them do not believe it, and the other half are fanatics who would burn you if they could. How much of this talk we hear? Among clerks in their hours of leisure, among all-knowing high school graduates, as they dispense wisdom to listening audiences, and tell how they floored the clergyman who ventured to talk to them about their souls; dabblers in infidelity, who have caught up a few catch-words of skepticism; men (and even some women are getting at it now) who, perfectly untrained in the science of theology, which is as much a science as that of law, thoroughly unacquainted with the niceties of Latin and Greek, unversed in the deep writings of mental and moral philosophy, write so fluently and talk so glibly about the impossibilities of a Divine Revelation and the folly of a Special Providence. It is this sort of person who excites the anger of the Christian man, and makes him indignant at the loud-mouthed, ignorant, but no less harmful skeptic. A thing does not have to be very large or powerful to work much mischief. There are great tracts in this country perfectly uninhabitable, simply because mosquitoes swarm there. It is not with cultivated scholars and keen intellects they do their mischief, but with impressible, half-educated young men. They talk about intolerance and bigotry, and that a man must not be bound by any creed or any Church, but must be free from sectarian narrowness. They talk about priests hoodwinking people into being frightened about the devil, for their own personal advantage.

Now, young men are very sensitive on the point of being led, about being their own masters, and this kind of talk is very taking with them; and they become suspicious of clergymen, and the natural heart chimes in with it all, and, before they know it they are in the ranks of the sneerers, and the "superior thinkers," and the "calmly indifferent." How are such lying lips as these to be put to silence? What is the very best answers to such unbelievers?

You must not blame some of us if we sometimes think that a cool stone cell in a comfortable jail, with a very abstemious diet, would be a well-earned reward for some of this loud-mouthed anti-Christian writing and teaching. We are men and such thoughts will come to us. I know the cry of free speech will immediately be made. True, but you do not stretch that principle to cover the utterances of one who stands up and talk open treason and incite the people to revolt. You would soon silence him and arrest him. Ought not the same rule to apply to those men who, by attacking the Christian religion, are sapping the foundations of all morality and leading on the ignorant masses to that unenviable outcome of all infidelity—the Commune. But let that go. We

are not Jews of the olden times, calling down fire on our enemies, or wishing them blown into dust, or turned into monuments of stone. The noble, forgiving example of our Lord must ever keep us from thinking of force as any possible weapon, or from wishing any harm, earthly or unearthly; to those teachers of infidelity, of whom we have been speaking. And argument is just as useless as force with this sort of skeptics. You can argue with a scholar equal in learning, you can argue with one who appreciates deep and logical argument; but you cannot argue with such as these. They are too flippant, too superficial, often too anxious to excuse a sinful life by denying any responsibility for it. The arguments for Christianity are piled mountain high, but to understand how impossible it is to use them, in dealing with some men, one only has to read the controversy between Gladstone and Ingersoll. The former goes down to the depths of things; the other reiterates again and again, those common places of infidelity which have been put forward and answered a thousand times. The great answer to these gaddies which so annoy us, is the calm exhibition of a truthful, holy life. It is recorded in the life of our Lord, that his foes, at the very sight of Him, fell back overawed by the awful beauty and the wondrous grace which streamed out from Him. So let our foes fall back before the sight of the manly Christians consistency, the holy truth and conversation, the beautiful resignation, the unselfish generosity, the frank forgiveness, the cheerful, gentle, hopeful, courageous discharge of all the duties of life. It is not because our example in these ways is so deficient that lying infidel lips so often obtain such credence and make such clamor. Let men see the beauty of Christianity exhibited in other men—what citizens, what men of business, what fathers, what sons it makes. Then will the public outcry be when an attack is made on Christianity: "No more of that. Men moulded by Christianity form the rock basis on which all that we love is resting."—C. L. in *St. Andrew's Cross*.

AN ADVENT MOTTO.

"Jesus only."—Matt. xvii. 8.

What shall be the special lesson that we carry away from this Advent Season? There is no lack of suggestive subjects for meditation, for the season has many a lesson which is full of help, and fraught with meaning. There is the solemn thought that we are on the threshold of another year, that before us is an untrodden path, which may either bloom with fragrant flowers, or lead by lonely ways, where life's shadows lie. Or we may turn our gaze backward to the year that is past, and think, with sad regrets, of its opportunities neglected, its rich promises that came not to fruition, its resolves that died with their birth, its scattered seed that never ripened into harvest.

Or, turning to the present, we may dwell on the "preparation" which is the special keynote of the season—preparation of heart and mind for the coming of the King. We may forget the things that are behind, and resolve to devote ourselves to the hope that lies before us, a hope which will not fail, but is certain of fulfilment.

Or, once more, we may, if we will, give ourselves up to the vision of the future, of the rest that remaineth, of the wondrous beauty of our Father's home, of the glory of Emmanuel's Land, and as we think of it it may be that it will become more real to us, and that our hearts will be moved and our feet quickened in our march towards its borders.

That palace of our heavenly King,
We find it nearer as we sing.

But whatever may be the lesson that the season may convey to us we cannot take a better motto from it than the words which stand at the head of this column. To take a firm grasp of