

in short, that you resemble your Master, the more valuable and successful will your witness be. Rousseau has said: "Take away the miracles of the Gospel, and the earth will be at the feet of Jesus." We say: let lukewarmness in every church be replaced by life, worldliness by holiness, selfishness by love; and when the Gospel shall have accomplished this magnificent miracle,—this miracle which it alone can accomplish,—the whole world shall believe in the Gospel.—*The Right of Every Man to Read the Bible.*

Survey of Papal Affairs.

In our humble opinion, things are not looking up in the Papal world. We know not how the present occupant of Peter's chair may feel; but, were we in his position, we should not be much at our ease. On all sides new complications are appearing, and dangers are starting up, which the Court of the Vatican, weakened as it has been in political power by recent events, is but ill fitted to cope with. Matters have not mended since the famous decree of the Immaculate Conception. The Pope looked for an instant and beneficial change on the posture of affairs as the consequence of that decree. Why he should, we could not very well see; but that he did is unquestionable. He made no secret of regarding his decree as a masterly stroke of policy, which could not fail to extricate him from all his difficulties, and bring utter discomfiture upon all his enemies. He had made Mary his debtor for ever, and was fully entitled to expect in return every interposition in the power, and every blessing at the disposal of the Queen of Heaven. The world,—that is, the Papal section of it,—was to pass from under "the reign of judgment, to the reign of love." Cholera, famine, revolution, heresy, in short, every plague which had afflicted mankind, was to give place to a golden era of amity and happiness, much as the beasts that prowl by night flee to their dens on the approach of dawn. It is now two months and more since that decree was proclaimed, or, as a gambler would say, since the Pope played his last stake,—for both he and his friends talked of it as such; but we have not been able to learn that any very marked improvement has taken place in Papal affairs. If changed at all, they have not changed to the better; and all the good things which the Pontiff so confidently promised himself are yet to come. But they must come soon, if the Papal See would be spared some sore humiliations and losses. A heavy blow impends at this moment over Papal interests in more than one of the countries of Europe. While the Pontiff has been making conquests abroad, he has had to encounter formidable revolts against his authority at home. He boasts that he has brought back England and Holland to their orbits in the Catholic world; but these acquisitions are balanced by the threatened loss of Sardinia and Spain. In truth, the acquisitions of the Pontiff are to a great degree nominal and imaginary; while his losses,—both those he has already sustained, and those with which he is now threatened,—are substantial and real.

While the general policy of Europe, more especially since the breaking out of the war, is not in accordance with Papal interests, and, indeed, is fraught with possible disaster to them, the individual and internal policy of several of its States is such as to give no un-mixed satisfaction at Rome. Piedmont must have been the cause of some anxious hours of

Spain is another quarter in which trouble is arising to the Vatican. The "unkindest cuts" at this hour are dealt the Pontiff by the hands of those who were formerly his best friends. One would scarce have thought that there remained spirit enough in Spain for such a course; yet that country has grown weary, like Piedmont, of feeding some thousands of idle men, and has set itself in earnest to the work of suppressing the monasteries.

Nor are France and Austria maintaining that thorough subservience to the Papal See which both professed some little while ago. We can discover in the former kingdom a disposition to indulge the priests in small things, but to check them in great. France has not yet made up her mind whether she shall permit the publication of the decree on the Immaculate Conception, and a Report of State is understood to be in preparation against it. According to the concordat of Napoleon, the consent of the Council of State is essential to the publication of any dogma or bull, and the probability is that Jesuitism will not be able to number this among its other triumphs in France. The opposition of Austria to the new dogma is more open. She has enjoined upon her priests in Lombardy silence respecting it, and they dare neither publish it, nor preach upon it from their pulpits. The alliance of Austria with the Western Powers must necessarily tend to a decline of Papal influence at the Court of Vienna. Last of all comes Naples; and certainly this is the last corner in Europe where one would look for any symptoms of re-action. But even here it has been felt that the yoke presses somewhat too heavily, and Ferdinand has entered, in express terms, his dissent against the popular doctrine of the Jesuits, that the Papedom is above the Monarchy.

On the other side of the Atlantic, too, a powerful movement has sprung up against the Papacy. The Saxon spirit of the American people has been roused, and they are prepared to grapple in no gentle fashion with a system which they see to be the foe of their liberties,—a system which shed their father's blood in the old world, and which is prepared to light the fires of martyrdom for their sons in the New. "The Know-Nothing movement" is daily widening in America; and, provided it is not seduced into physical violence, will tend to conserve the liberties of that great country.—*Witness.*

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Fellowship or Social Prayer Meetings.

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. x. 24, 25.

THE Christian stands in a threefold relation to the duty of prayer. First, as an individual, he is commanded to engage in secret prayer,—to enter into his closet, and to lift up his voice to God. Private prayer is needed, because there are many things between a man and God, which should not meet the ear of other men. Secondly, as a member of a family. Family religion is a duty which belongs to all the members of the house. The faithful in every age have cultivated family devotion. As there are

circumstances belonging to a family which are not common to the world,—mercies enjoyed and afflictions suffered which affect every member of the family in common, so they are called upon to meet together "in unity," with thanksgiving and supplication. We read that when David "had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts," and afterwards "returned to bless his household." Thirdly, as belonging to the same great family, the head whereof is Christ, and here dwelling together for a season, feelings of sympathy, fellowship and brotherly love naturally spring up between those who are of the "household of faith," and hence arises the desire to join in social worship, or Prayer Meetings.

These duties are intimately connected with each other. He who does not fear God in the closet is not likely to be a man who will take delight in worshipping him in the family circle, or take pleasure in the exercise of social worship. On the other hand, the man who delights to pour out his soul before God in private, will most certainly be a man like Cornelius "fearing God with all his house," and taking every opportunity of joining others in the solemn service of public devotion. Once a man's heart has been touched—once he is made to feel his own depravity, his utter helplessness and the consequent need he has of a Saviour, he will then and not till then be able to exclaim with sincerity and truth, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, oh God, a day in thy house is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Among professing Christians the great fault of the present times seems to consist in the want of a living, vital, practical conviction of the majesty, authority and power of the Word of God. How often also, in these days of widespread unbelief and infidelity, do we hear the sceptic arguing against the efficacy of prayer, and attempting, by crooked and perverse reasonings, to undermine the whole fabric of revealed Religion! Among professing Christians, the want of a living faith is nowhere more clearly manifested, than in the too general neglect of meetings for social worship. A cold and benumbing scepticism seems to be stealing over us, and freezing the vitals of true religion. In such times as these, Christians ought strongly to be reminded of the value and importance of prayer meetings. Prayer is a mighty instrument in the hands of a true believer. Ye who read your Bibles, and believe them to be the Word of God, what think you of such words as these, "ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." These words, you know, were addressed by our Saviour to his first followers, and were they not well calculated to inspire hope and confidence in the bosoms of his disciples! They were spoken, however,