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## THE TIMES.

SIR,—In a restaurant the other day I happened to hear the following conversation.

Two gentlemen were talking with the proprietor, and saying something respecting the various places of worship in Montreal. Just as I entered, the proprietor remarked, "There are too many churches in Montreal."

"Guess you don't trouble them much," remarked one of the guests.

"Well, I went to hear Mr. Bray last Sunday evening," replied the publican.

"Yes—clever man," said one. "Preaches to publicans and sinners," remarked the other, to which the man of beer responded, "It was a very interesting and instructive discourse, and well delivered, but there was not much religion about it."

Now I want to ask you to explain, if you can, what that man meant by religion, and what are the religious requirements of such people, as I have often heard similar remarks, which puzzle me. Yours, &c., *Querist.*

They puzzle me just as much as they do my friend "Querist." Time and again I have tried to find what is meant by "putting religion into a sermon," and have always failed to get a satisfactory answer. Generally, I think, sermons which have least of reasonable argument and least of practical teaching for daily life, are considered to have most of what is popularly termed the Gospel in them. Our ordinary church-going community thinks that a man preaches the Gospel best who simply quotes, without explaining, Scripture, and indulges in vague declamation. "Not much religion about it!" Well that is what the old Jews often said of their prophets, and the Pharisees could find no piety in the sermon on the Mount. Jesus Christ talked of thinking right thoughts and doing right actions, bringing the just laws of heaven to bear upon the daily life of the people, and they could find no religion in such teaching. My good "Querist," do you not know? do you not understand that history repeats itself? Very likely something was said to that Publican most applicable to a sinner, and he thought that "there was not much religion about it."

It occurs to me to ask laymen to tell us what they think of our modern style of preaching? I mean as to its general usefulness, and not to the preaching of any particular minister. Clergymen cannot very well "sit under" themselves, nor do laymen often tell them frankly in private what sort of attitude they assume toward sermons generally. I know that many of them call us "old women," and say we are dull and "humdrum," and "behind the age," and such like things, but will they tell us in all honesty what they expect, or what would interest and influence them in the way of preaching? I am certain that a little free criticism would do us good, and if sermon-hearers will write to me—not making personal attacks, but dealing with preaching generally—I will publish their letters, and ministers will have the chance to see themselves as others see them.

Is it too much to expect that some day our newspapers will have some respect to the value of accuracy in the items of news they give to the public? The *Globe*, a little while ago, gravely announced that the Political Economy Society was defunct, and a leader contained the insinuation that the *Globe* had been instrumental in killing it. Now the *Globe* correspondent in Montreal might have discovered the facts

of the case quite easily; but he found it lighter work to make news than to glean it. How long will that last, this system of coining things?

Here is another specimen of *Globeism*:—

"It is stated on good authority that the Rev. Alfred J. Bray, who was instrumental in establishing the Canada Independence or Political Economy Club here, is about to withdraw from the pastorate of Zion Congregational Church to found an independent congregation of his own on broad principles."

I can hardly imagine that a more misleading statement could be invented. First of all, the "authority" could not have been good. If the remark was ever made—which I very much doubt—it must have been by one who was totally ignorant as to the matter he talked of. I am not about to withdraw from the pastorate of Zion Church; I am simply going with the church and congregation to a better locality—as may be seen by my sermon published in this present issue. And then—why say "the Canada Independence or Political Economy Club?" This is put as if it were the name adopted by the society, but, of course, "Canada Independence" is what the *Globe* chooses to call it. The other day it was an "Annexation Club," said the *Globe*, but now it has assumed a milder form and is only seeking "Independence." I would advise the Editor of that journal to make a "firm stand" against this habit of falsification, and a "big push" in the interests of truth.

The torchlight procession in honour of Mr. Parnell at Montreal on Monday evening was certainly a great success. Some four or five thousand men and boys must have carried lights, almost an equal number walked without lights, and a good many thousand lined the streets looking on. But there was very little enthusiasm abroad. When some energetic brother at the corner of McGill and Wellington Streets proposed that three cheers should be given for the hero of the night, only a score responded, and they hardly seemed to know what to shout. Mr. Parnell and his friends once at the St. Lawrence Hall, the streets quickly resumed their normal state of quietness and good order. The city proper was not at all moved, and from the fact that the Theatre Royal—by no means a large house—was not filled on Tuesday evening, it may well be inferred that the agitator did not accomplish much in Montreal. Of course the Irish turned out in obedience to their leaders on Monday night, and of course a crowd was attracted by the torchlight procession, and of course again, there was a liberal response to the call for money, for all are glad to help the poor starving Irish. But Mr. Parnell's own particular personality and land law agitation scarcely caused a ripple upon the surface of society.

Is there any significance in the fact that more thousands formed the procession for Mr. Parnell than scores when the Princess and the Governor-General were in the city for the first time. Then the procession could not be found by those making diligent search; but on Monday evening there was no difficulty in discovering its whereabouts. Will someone explain this very strange thing?

Mr. Parnell's ideas of controversy are peculiar, to say the least of it. In his address at the Theatre Royal he attempted a vindication of the course he pursued when he spoke at Springfield about Lord Randolph Churchill. Mr. Parnell said: "Another statement was made against me by Lord Churchill, that of falsehood. In such a case I considered myself entitled to show that Lord Churchill's ancestry was not of the most stainless character." The report says that this sapient remark was received with tremendous cheering. It deserved to be—the thing was so ingenious. Lord Churchill charged the agitator with making false statements; but quoth Mr. P., Who are