

Our Contributors.

THE ALLEGED PREFERENCE FOR YOUNG MEN.*

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT

Two remarks by way of introduction. Taking up some extracts from the writings of Thomas Fuller (A.D. 1608-1661), the wise and witty divine of the Commonwealth period, I found the following:—"New beams sweep clean; new cisterns of fond men's own hewing, most likely to hold water. Aged pastors, who have borne the heat and burden of the day in our Church, are jostled out of respect by young preachers, not having half their age, nor a quarter of learning and religion. Yet let not the former be disheartened, for thus it ever was and will be: English Athenians, all for novelties, new sects, new schisms, new doctrines, new disciplines, new prayers, new preachers." We are in danger of magnifying the tendency complained of, its manifestation may in measure be due to the ever-shifting character of our new country and the intensely changeable life of the nineteenth century.

My second preparatory remark is: A definition is needful as to what is old and new in this connection. Some men—and some women too—are old at thirty; others are young at sixty. There are grey haired boys, and crusty old bachelors with dark brown locks. Many of my readers will remember Scheherazade's poem in Holmes' breakfast Table series on Aunt Tabitha, who was always checking her young nieces' youthful spirits with her remembrances

"When she was a girl (forty summers ago),
Aunt Tabitha tells me they never did so."

No wonder the poor girl had some naughty reflections, which ended with a marriage reflection, as such thoughts are apt to do:

"—When to the altar a victim I go,
Aunt Tabitha 'll tell me she never did so."

Such a mood is not helpful to perpetual youth.

I am convinced that we cannot improve upon the ordinances of God, and He has made the family the unit of society, as it is also the type of the great consummation. The eternity of the Fatherhood implies the eternity of the Son, and the fulness of Him who filleth all in all is the ransomed Church. A home without youth is chill and lonely, a year without spring; and a house where only is orphanage may be a playground for a little, but the bread-winner gone, hunger and death soon closes the scene, a spring that preludes no harvest does but herald famine and ruin. I confess that I look with concern upon the multiplication of Young People's Societies in the Church, and the growing tendency to ignore the family pew. In the harmonious blending of all the ages the family ideal alone is to be found. This is the undoubted ordinance of God, the evasion or neglect of which can only end, as all transgressing must, in disaster.

These reflections lead to questionings such as this. In our Church polity as at this present carried out are we not eliminating this family relationship? "Always room at the top," was the reply of a young aspirant in business pursuits to the cautious query of a friend as to the possibility of overcrowding. But finding the top too often means elbowing, jostling, overthrowing. Jay Gould found room at the top, but the number of bankruptcies made in the climbing will scarcely stand calm consideration. We are, or ought to be, members one of another, and yet the struggle for the top existence in neighbouring congregations too frequently emulates the struggle in a business street for the pre-eminence in trade. The dominance of the "local church" idea is the disintegrating factor of Independency, and the losing of our Presbyterian bonds, or in other words of the oneness of the Church, on a rock we are dangerously near. As association of congregations such as the collegiate

churches of our brethren of the Dutch Reformed, served by two or more pastors in common, would give to the congregations thus united the advantage of varied gifts such as youth and age, teacher and evangelist supply, which advantages at present are reduced to a minimum. Let Eph. iv. 11-16 be studied, and the enquiry made as to how far our present system of calling and settling affords opportunity for enjoying the gifts of Christ to His Church.

I know of no more ready field for attempting some such change than in the Algoma and Muskoka districts, where preaching stations and missions have been opened up to a separate existence of perpetual poverty and immaturity. Strengthen some centre, give to the minister in charge, during the available season, student or catechist aid; establish something of a parish system, with rector and curate or curates; youth and age can then work harmoniously together, unity of endeavour will be encouraged; the mission spirit will be strengthened, not antagonized, in the individual congregations; and though the millennium may not be reached, there will be growing fraternity, and less will be heard of the rivalry as between youth and age. Unselfish endeavour for the upbuilding of the Church of Christ will soon lead us to the solution of vexed problems such as age and youth present, indeed of all others too.

SCRIPTURE TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.

REV. J. A. M'KEEN, B.A.

"Neither shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii: 39.

I remember a discovery I made one day concerning the cordage used by the British Admiralty. I was in a fishing yacht, with some colored men, ten or twelve miles off the shore of Bermuda. We were catching porgy. Our boat was fastened to a jagged rock not far below the surface, and we could see the coral reefs in all the richness and splendor of their submarine growth. Conversation took a turn in the direction of fishing lines, and I was assured that the best were to be found at Her Majesty's dockyard near by, but they were for the use of those only who were in the naval service; they could not be purchased, and if you had one in your possession somebody might ask where you got it. I was of course anxious to know how "somebody" would know that it was a dockyard line, and I was told that they bore the Admiralty mark. This mark is a scarlet thread running through the line. All the cordage of the British navy, from the fishing line to the hawser, is marked in this way. It is called the Queen's strand. We have something like this in the cordage of heaven. Through all those cords by which God binds us to Himself there runs the royal strand. It is the scarlet thread that has been dyed in blood. It is the love which God has to us in Christ—Christ crucified. Bound with such a cord, can anything "be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

Orono.

EXPERIENCE OF A CHINESE FARMER ON SABBATH-KEEPING.*

In regard to the Sunday Rest, a farmer, Sang-Kuan Kueh-few, gave a very good testimony something to this effect: It is now eight years since I broke off the opium habit, and seven years since I became a believer in Jesus. During these years I have come regularly to worship, very seldom missing a Sunday. During the first few years I used to come to worship, but used to work in my fields on my return home. Then I was not very strong, and so far as time was concerned I had two or three "rest days" in a week, for I could not do a day's work like a strong man; but still I did not enjoy "God's Rest Day." Two years ago I became much exer-

cised in soul with regard to a whole rest day, as compared to a worship day; and after careful study of the Scriptures, I decided to keep a whole day of rest. This I have done, so far as I, myself, am concerned, ever since, but still I was ill, and could not do a decent day's work like another man. This year, at harvest time, the work was heavy and helpers were not to be hired. Coming home tired one Saturday night I prayed to God to show me why I was not being blessed as I knew God was willing to bless me. That night I got no guidance, but next morning on my way into the city to worship, I began to think, why should I enjoy this rest myself, and my two men-servants with my cows and mule working hard in the field? I began to think what God's command was in regard to this. I did not decide anything in my own mind in regard to this; but I was amazed when the pastor announced his text "The Sabbath was made for man." He showed how God had created man, body and soul; and how, at the creation, He had also appointed a day of rest, which was necessary for the well-being of all creation, and especially needful for man, body and soul. God made it clear to me, there and then, why I was sickly. I was keeping my fellow-men, God's creatures, from enjoying the rest God had ordained for their benefit. Since then man, woman, and beast in my house have a whole Sunday rest, and there is more work done in six days than was ever done in seven, and God has made me ever so much stronger than I have ever been since I became a follower of Jesus.

He farther exhorted the members to enjoy a whole Sunday rest. This man is always wonderfully practical in his addresses, and has great power in speaking. He gives his winters to help in opium refuge work. He does this at his own charges, and works his farm in summer to support himself.

THE EDICT OF NANTES AND ITS RECALL.—II.

BY J. G. ROBINSON, M.A.

Although Louis XIV. became of age at fourteen it was not until after the death of Mazarin, in 1661, that he began his personal rule. The young king was then in the twenty-third year of his age. He had handsome features, courtly manners, and although below the average stature, a dignified and commanding presence. His mental qualities have been variously estimated. His panegyrists extol them highly; Prof. Baird considers they were barely respectable; Saint Simon asserts emphatically that the king's intellect was below mediocrity. Be this as it may, it is certain that, while well trained in arms and in all manly exercises, his early education, in some directions, had been neglected to a deplorable extent.

"Of many branches of polite learning he was throughout his life shamefully ignorant. His knowledge of the history of the nation over which he ruled was very imperfect."

There was one lesson he had thoroughly learned—the lesson of his own importance. Adulation was the very food upon which he fed. The grossest flattery did not seem to him excessive, because of the persuasion that he deserved every word of praise lavished upon him.

Statesmen, poets, preachers, all supplied fuel for the flame of his self-esteem, in unmeasured panegyrics which ministered to him infinite delight."

Even the Huguenots seemed to have embraced the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and addressed their monarch in terms that would have sounded blasphemous in the ears of an English Puritan or a Scotch Presbyterian of the same day. Pierre du Bosc, the eloquent Huguenot pastor of Caen, when pleading against the proposed abolition of the "Chambers of the Edict," thus addressed the king: "You hold the place of God, and I act before your majesty as if I beheld God Himself, of whom you are the

* "The Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes." By Henry M. Baird, Professor in the University of New York; author of "The History of the Rise of the Huguenots in France" and of "The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre." With many plates. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Toronto: Wm. Briggs, S7-50.

image"; and one of the refugee pastors in England used almost similar language to that royal scapegrace, King Charles II, who certainly had as little love as Louis for Calvinists and Calvinistic doctrines.

Soon after the king's assumption of personal rule, persecution commenced and grew apace. In the Pays de Gex, a little district containing seventeen thousand Protestants, with twenty-four churches, and a Roman Catholic population of only four hundred, with twenty-five parish churches served by seventeen curates, all the Protestant places of worship, save two small chapels, were condemned, their bells and benches removed, and their portals walled with solid masonry.

Everywhere Huguenots were, at the instigation of the clergy, subjected to vexatious interferences as to their Synods, their worship, their funerals and marriages, and even as to the costume of their pastors. But measures still more oppressive and tyrannical soon followed. Huguenots were excluded from lucrative trades and professions; in many places their churches were closed or torn down; their institutions of learning, built and maintained at their own expense, were appropriated by Roman Catholics or placed under Roman Catholic control; new and stringent laws were issued against "relapsed persons and apostates"; the parish priest was permitted to visit any sick Protestant and learn from his own lips in which religion he wished to die; and the visit could not be declined nor prevented. The rights of the family were invaded by an Order in Council permitting Protestant children—boys at the age of fourteen and girls at the age of twelve—to make profession of the Roman Catholic faith, and choose whether they would live with their parents or elsewhere, under Roman Catholic control of course, at their parents' expense, to be paid quarterly according to the station and circumstances of the family. These and many other decisions, orders and edicts were consolidated in the Royal Declaration of 1666, which gave them the force of general laws and occasioned the first considerable emigration of the Huguenots to foreign lands.

Three years later the Declaration of 1666 was revoked, to the great joy of the Protestants; but their rejoicing was of short duration. "It was not long before a new series of Orders in Council began to narrow down the privileges of which the Huguenots could boast."

We cannot dwell on the evasions and explanations resorted to at the instigation of a vigilant and virulent clergy to render nugatory the concessions granted by the Declaration of 1666. In a few years the condition of the Huguenot was practically as bad as before, with the certain prospect of still worse things in the future. We must also pass lightly over the "mercenary mission" carried on by means of the "Conversion Fund" established in 1676, with the king's approval, by Paul Pellisson, an apostate Huguenot, but a man of learning and brilliant literary abilities. The sole agents of this mission were the Roman Catholic bishops, who were able to report to the king in course of three years no less than ten thousand converts at a cost of about two dollars per convert. But as they would not stay converted, the laws against relapsed persons were made still more stringent; and if any such persons should be admitted to Protestant worship, "the services were to be declared suppressed and the ministers to be deprived of the right to officiate."

After the peace of Nimeguen in 1676, Louis, who had emerged from the war with glory and increase of territory, and was now styled "the Great," had leisure to devote himself vigorously and systematically to the congenial work of persecuting and "converting" his Huguenot subjects. Protestants were excluded from even the humblest occupations. No Protestant could be a midwife lest a child might be allowed to die unbaptized; and no Protestant lawyer was permitted to administer provisional

* Substance of an address by the Rev. John Burton B.D., before the Synod of Toronto and Kingston.

* Extract from a letter from Mr. Dunlan Kay (China Inland Mission), dated Kueh-Wu-Hai-an.