

The Press.

That the press is a powerful ally of the Church, will be called in question by none who know what it has done and is doing still. But it is a very grave question whether it cannot be used on a vastly more extensive scale. The fact is only too obvious that the press is at present working against the Church as well as for it. Let the money-making enterprise of the country, little restrained by conscientious scruples, supply the literature most in demand, and the result is what we might safely anticipate. There are hundreds of publishers and thousands of writers busy in considering what will make the most profitable sensation; and their eagerness to provide and purvey popular tastes, however vitiated, is contagious. The average newspaper finds itself impelled to adopt a policy like that of publishers, who simply ask what will sell best.

Now it is quite obvious that this state of things will never, of itself, work its own cure. The vitiated taste is confirmed by that upon which it feeds. We must do for good publications and for good reading what we must not do for the bad, or the merely sensational, we must push their circulation. This is a duty of good men as much and as truly as anything else. Books, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets embody influences that are the allies or the antagonists of Christian truth. If they are good, calculated to be useful, adapted to the times and the occasion, they deserve to be studiously distributed, planted as carefully and thoughtfully as trees are planted or seed sown. If they are evil they should be supplanted, or their circulation anticipated and prevented by getting the start of them, and preoccupying the soil with good influences.

What we should aim at is to bring the wonderful power of the press just as far as possible from the side of evil to the side of good. And we must not trust to the spirit of the age, the nature of things, or commercial tendencies, to accomplish this. There must be positive and direct and possibly expensive effort. It is worth considering whether measures cannot be adopted to secure the far more extensive circulation of a Christian—not to say Presbyterian—literature than now prevails. One of the first requisites to this is to have the power of the press appreciated, to have our ministers and churches alive to the benefits that may be secured, the good that may be done by availing themselves of the issues of the press, whether in the form of the religious journal or other literature. We can conceive of this form of Christian enterprise being so appreciated and adopted, as to become the right arm of the Church. In full accordance with our views are those of Mr. Thomas Sinclair, of Belfast, who, in the course of a speech at the annual meeting of the Belfast Bible and Colportage Society, remarked:—

"The modern Press is the modern Tower of Babel. It aspired that its top may reach unto heaven. A human thing, it claims omnipresence, and pretends to omnipotence. In every circumstance of human life it is present. It sits by our fireside, it is a guest at our tables, it is our companion in solitude. It buys and sells in exchanges and market-places, it regulates our shops and our counting-houses. It rules in our places of learning, it disputes the supremacy of the pulpit, and it is a continuous occupant of the pew. It governs our governors, it speaks even within the sacred precincts of justice. It travels with us by rail or road, it takes ship with us for far off lands. Go to the battle-field, it is there; enter the High Court of Parliament, it is there; sit with prelates in Ecumenical Assembly, it is there; join with the councils of kings and of emperors, and it is there, assisting to decide the destinies of nations. He, therefore, who will subdue the world, must first subdue the Press. They who will Christianise the world must first Christianise the Press. They who will conquer the world for Christ, must first conquer in His name the world of literature. It is, then, in this great warfare that the Bible and Colportage Society stands forth to do battle for the truth; and we find in the field already marshalled hosts of hostile forces. If the Church has been slow to enter the lists, the Church's enemy has not been slow. He ruined the world at first by presenting the desire of forbidden knowledge, and he perpetuates that ruin by the same policy. He whom in the beginning of the world Gabriel discovered in the shape of a toad whispering in the ear of Eve, may be found in the nineteenth century in the form of the sensational novelist—I distinguish him from the legitimate novelist—whose gilded pictures of breaches of the sixth and seventh commandments are shattering the moral safeguards of women and men in all classes of society. He is to be found in the coarser form of the publishers of those low newspapers, whose weekly tales of almost unvarnished vice and crime act as burning tinder to maddened desires. . . . And it is the function of our society to wage irreconcilable war in this class of literature, and to drive it from the field, not by physical force, but by the superior and expulsive attractions of a pure and elevated literature. The taste for the true, the beautiful, and the good, must exercise the craving for the false, the debased, and the depraved. The fates are sown in the field, and if we cannot absolutely root them out the good seed must destroy their power by such a vigorous growth as will stunt their evil tendencies."—Weekly Review.

Duty of Protestants to Romanists.

There is a tendency among Protestants in the United States to regard the Romish Church as less dangerous than it once was, in the other days and in the other lands. This tendency arises, on the one hand, from the prevalence among many of a chronic spirit of liberality, which, throwing down the barriers of creed and dogma, is disposed to look charitably upon men of all shades of opinion, and to gather under the broad mantle of Christian charity those whose doctrines and practices are undisputedly at enmity with the law of Christian belief and morals laid down in Holy Scripture. The tendency also has its origin, to a considerable extent, in the nature of our political institutions, which accord all men an equal

ity before the law without regard to their religious convictions, and which, indeed, are indifferent whether they have any religious convictions at all. On the other hand, we are led into this delusive sense of security because the Romish Church has never, as yet, openly exhibited in this country the arrogant, intolerant, domineering and persecuting spirit which it has shown, on occasion, in other lands.

Nevertheless, the Romish Church remains the same. It has never abandoned a single one of its pretensions or made a concession of any of its most presumptuous claims. It has ever preferred, as Schiller has well said, "to risk the loss of everything by force rather than voluntarily to yield the smallest matter to justice, for the loss was accidental only and might easily be repaired." This principle has run through the entire life of the papacy. Whatever has been yielded has been under compulsion, subject to conditions expressed or reserved, and it has been laid aside in readiness to be asserted again in all its proportions when the exterior pressure should be removed and the times and people have become favourable. Thus it has come that while England and Prussia and the United States are Protestant, and have been Protestant for centuries, Rome holds that they are in the condition of heretics and schismatics; that they are under obligation to return to the obedience of the Church, which event she waits for with imperturbable impudence and works for with indefatigable cunning.

If Rome is less imperious, less repressive, less intolerant, less persecuting than she once was, it is because, as a matter of policy, she allows her arrogant claims and dangerous pretensions to slumber for a season, while the exterior pressure of rulers and peoples and of the spirit of the times, is too great for her. This temporary accident, as she conceives it, once removed or greatly mollified, Rome will be herself again—intolerant, inquisitorial, destructive of personal and civil and civil liberty as ever—carrying the sword in one hand, and in the other the fagot. She only bides her time.

The declaration of the infallibility of the Pope by the General Council, in 1870, was the latest step, or rather stride, of the Romish Church toward that supremacy over the minds of her adherents which has been hitherto greatly impaired and was intended to pave the way for the assertion of her supremacy over the nations and their governments, however different their political institutions. By its operation the Church was pronounced not only absolutely independent of but superior to the State; and at the same time, the bishops, who had always before been before in a large measure independent of and antagonistical to the centralization of all authority in the Pope, were made absolutely dependent upon the Pope, while the diocesan clergy, in their turn, were made dependent on the bishops. Of course, the laity, having no voice, were dumb, and abjectly followed in the train of their spiritual teachers. The chain, contrived to manacle the minds of men, was now nearly complete, and has since been fully forged by papal allocutions absolutely condemning every kind of toleration, declaring all the ideas on which the relation of the modern Church to the State is based to be erroneous, and assuming that the Pope, as the representative of Christ on earth, is infallible in matters not only of faith but of morals, and all the wide interests which morals may be construed to include. The principle underlying the whole of the dogma is aimed at the supremacy of the laws of the State, and amount to this, "that the State has no right over anything which the Church declares to be in her domain, and that Protestantism has no rights at all." This is a far different thing from the declaration that the State shall do nothing impairing freedom of faith and conscience, and is, in fact, a declaration that the Church of Rome alone, and in spite of State or people, will impose a rule of conscience and of belief, and that wherever the canonical or ecclesiastical law and the laws of a country contradict one another the latter must go to the wall as being of inferior force and authority.

This is the battle which Rome is now waging, openly in Europe, and silently but adroitly in the United States. Here, the aim is, by the contracted efforts of priests and Jesuits, to sap the foundations of our public schools, to debauch our literature, to disarm Protestantism by liberalizing it, and by every means that they can devise to mix up their religious system with the needs of political adventurers so as to endure a preponderating power, which shall be directed from a common centre, and be controlled as by one mind, for the exaltation of the Romish Church and the abasement of all others.

It is time that Protestants should awaken from their dreams of liberality to Romanists. The two systems are irreconcilable and deadly enemies, and must ever remain so. As Protestants we can never resort to the means which the Romanists would surely resort to if they dared—namely, the rack, the screw, the dungeon, or the *auto da fe* of the inquisition. Nor would we if we could. Equality before the law, equal protection and equal rights for all under the law, form the key-stone of Protestant thought, and feeling, and action. Therefore we would not counsel intolerance, much less persecution; but if the signs of the times are read aright by us, Protestants should be propagandists as against Rome and its impostures more than they have been or now are, and that speedily. Their mightiest concerted efforts, as Christians and patriots, at this hour should be directed toward the youth of Roman Catholic parents, who should be educated to see the truth as we see it, and taught to reject the superstition and imposture which would enslave them. These must be evangelized by the exertions of Protestants and to this end missions should everywhere be organized and set in motion to emasculate the growing strength of Romanism in this country by the enlightenment and conversion of Roman Catholic youth to the Protestant faith.—N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.

Talkative persons seldom read. This is among the few truths which appear the more strange the more we reflect upon them. For what is reading but silent conversation?

Our Young Folks.

The Best Teacher.

From everything our Saviour saw, Lessons of wisdom He would draw: The clouds, the colours in the sky; The gentle breeze that whispers by; The fields, all white with waving corn; The hills that the vale adorn; The road that trembles in the wind; The trees whose none its fruit can find; The sliding sand, the flinty rock; That bears unmoved the tempest's shock; The thorns that on the earth abound; The tender grass that clothes the ground; The little birds that fly in air; The sheep that feed the shepherd's care; The pearl that deep in ocean lies; The gold that charms the miser's eye; All from his lips some truth proclaim, Or learn to tell their Maker's name.

Strong Children.

"Freddie!" "What is it, mamma?" "Come and sit down by me."

Fred walked across the room in a reluctant sort of way, and seated himself at mamma's side. He had nothing remarkable in his looks, this Fred Long; "just a rough, honest-looking boy," and one would have said, "with plenty of independence and frankness, but rather lacking, perhaps, in pity and tenderness."

On this particular winter afternoon, Fred had been sitting still and doing nothing for twenty consecutive minutes—a very rare and unusual thing for him. His watchful mother had noticed that his step lagged when he came in from school; he, whose walk was firmer and pace swifter than any boy there; his head hung down, and he threw his books on the table as if they were a load too heavy to be borne. Then he walked out to the barnyard to have a look at his pet doves, and back to the house in a most moody, spiritless way; so miserable, indeed, did he look, that mamma asked if he felt quite well? "Perfectly!" was the answer, and given so unhesitatingly that she knew it put illness out of the question. Then Fred began to study, but it was not long before his books slipped unheeded to the floor, his elbows went down on his knees, his head on his hands, and there he had been for full twenty minutes, when as we have said, mamma called him to sit by her.

"Freddie," she said, "you are unhappy. Tell mamma what the trouble is."

Yes, it was an unhappy face that was raised to meet Mrs. Long's eye; misery had made a little temporary home in the puckers on the forehead, and wretchedness looked out of the dark, gray eyes. His mouth quivered, but Fred had heard it was "not manly" to cry, so he was quite resolved no amount of unhappiness should make him do that.

"Well, mamma, I don't think I shall ever hold up my head before the boys again."

"Why Fred! what can you have done?" and the mother's eyes looked anxious and sorrowful.

"Mamma, dear, if you will give me your hand to hold, and let me lay my head in your lap, as I used to do when I was a very little boy, I think I can tell you; but I couldn't look you in the face, at least not while I am telling you about it. O! you'll be so ashamed of me."

Mrs. Long did as Fred had asked, and then he commenced:

"You know, mamma, the boys call me the strongest boy in school; they say I can walk longer, run faster, and jump higher than any of them, and then I have always stood pretty well in my classes too. I couldn't help it, mamma, but I have liked to hear the boys praise me so; a week ago, when I went head in place of Bertie Adams in geography, and he burst out crying, I heard Tom Neale whisper, 'What a cry-baby! I'm glad our Hercules has gone above him! I'd like to see Fred Long cry!' and then some other boy said, 'That's so! It did please me; I suppose it was wicked, mamma, but it did please me. Well, today Bertie Adams went ahead of me in four different classes, and it made me so angry that he, the 'cry baby,' should do it, that I couldn't get over it, and resolved to pay him off for it. At recess, all we big boys went out to make a snow fort, and we had it nearly finished when I saw Bertie coming along with an apple in his hands. Then all at once something (I suppose you'll say it was the devil) put it into my head that I'd like to send the apple out of his hand, with one snowball, knock him down with another, and make him cry, so that the boys would call him 'cry baby' once more. So I sent one snowball, and the apple went out of his hand, and then had raised another large one, when Will Carson touched me and whispered, 'I wouldn't, Fred, he's such a weak little fellow;' but something urged me on, and I threw it."

I heard a little scream"—there was a suspicious choke now in Fred's voice—"and Bertie didn't get up, so Will and I went over to see if he was hurt, and we found he had fainted away."

Here Fred stopped altogether, and mamma thought she heard a little sob; but his face was so buried in her dress, she couldn't see, and soon he went on:

"Well, we carried him into the school house somehow, and when he came to, we found his arm was broken. Mr. Nelson sent one of the boys for the doctor, and he told me (me, mother!) to fan Bertie till he should come, and O, mamma, as I bent over him, Bertie whispered in his little voice, 'I'm sorry I got knocked down, Fred; I was bringing you an apple for your lunch, because I was afraid you were mad with me this morning.'"

There could be no doubt about it—mamma's had flown to the winds, and Fred was crying as if his heart would break. "Oh, mamma," he sobbed out, "God will never forgive me, and you and the boys will always despise me, and as for Bertie, O! O! O!"

Mrs. Long waited till he was a little calmer, and then said, "Freddie, my son, let us kneel right down now, and ask God's forgiveness."

So they knelt down together, and after the prayer was finished, Fred's face looked, and his heart felt, lighter.

Then the mother said, "Now, Fred, go and tell Bertie all about it, and ask him to forgive you;" and Fred said nothing, but put on his hat and went out.

It might have been an hour afterward, when a boy came running into the front gate of Mr. Long's garden. Could it be Fred? Yes, it was; but such a different looking Fred from the one who had passed out of the gate an hour since, that one would have hardly thought he was the same boy.

That one had looked so downcast and troubled, and this one came bounding up the steps and running into the house with a smile on his face. We will let him tell his story in his own way.

"Well, mamma, it was hard for me to tell even you about it, that's a fact; but after I had done that, and had asked God's forgiveness, the way seemed plain enough. So when you spoke to me about Bertie, I went right down there, and do you know the dear little fellow was so good about it, that I—I did—I cried again. I don't think, though, I could ever have asked Bertie's forgiveness if I had not felt first that God had forgiven me, and do you know, mamma, I think, mamma, that boys who do cry sometimes are worth more than them who don't!"

"Yes, dear boy," said the mother, "and I want you to remember that the best strength we have is the strength to do God's will, and that, 'Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'"

Listen! Obey!

"Walter," said Mrs. Maynor, pleasantly, "will you close the outside door?"

He was a dear little fellow, but not quite an angel, and at this time was kneeling on the carpet, very busy with his building-blocks, and pretended not to hear.

"Walter," she repeated, with more authority, "close the door for mamma."

He did not even look up; but drew his feet under him ready for a spring, and went on building his church with nervous haste. Mrs. Maynor said no more, but went to the nursery for a rod of correction. The little boy threw one swift glance after her, hurried on two or three more blocks, and as her returning feet crossed the threshold, placed the last block, and springing across the room, closed the door carefully. Then turning around, his face all aglow with excitement, and a wonderful mixture of triumph and penitence in his tone, he exclaimed: "I didn't do right, did I, mamma? 'ought to minded twick!"

The Threatened Blow.

I want to tell my younger readers a true story about Eddie and Willie; the one eight, the other six years of age. Bright little fellows they were, and loved each other dearly. They would play happily together for hours, while their dear mother was attending to the wants of their sweet baby sister. But it happened one day, as they were enjoying their plays, that Eddie, the older brother, did something that exceedingly displeased Willie. In an instant he raised his little fist and said: "I would strike you, Eddie—if mother was willing!" Though he was very angry, the hand fell. The blow was not given. A long pause ensued, but they finally resumed their sports.

How many children, do you suppose, would have been thus thoughtful, when angry, of mother's wishes?

When anything occurs to displease you, and your naughty tempers rise and make you feel as though you would just like to strike your dear brother or sister, or any other playmate, remember Willie! Stop and think "if mother would be willing."

It will save you many a heartache.

Taking Care.

One day a little boy asked his mother to let him lead his little sister out on the green grass. She had just begun to run alone, and could not step over anything that lay in the way. His mother told him he might lead out the little girl, but charged him not to let her fall. I found them at play, very happy in the field.

I said: "You seem very happy, George. Is this your sister?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can she walk alone?"

"Yes, sir, on smooth ground."

"And how did she get over these stones, which lie between us and your house?"

"Oh, sir, mother charged me to be careful that she did not fall, and so I put my hands under her arms when she came to a stone, so that she need not hit her little foot against it."

"That is right, George; and I want to tell you one thing. You see now how to understand that beautiful text: 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' God charges his angels to lead and lift his people over difficulties, just as you have lifted little Annie over the stones. Do you understand it now?"

"Yes, sir, and I shall never forget it."

Can one child thus take care of another, and can not God take care of those who trust him? Surely he can. There is not a child who may read this story over whom He is not ready to give His holy angels charge.

You are an immortal creature; a being born for eternity; a creature that will never go out of existence. Millions of ages, as numerous as the sands upon the shore, and the drops of the ocean, and the leaves of all the forests on the globe, will not shorten the duration of your being; eternity, vast eternity, is before you. Every day brings you nearer to everlasting torments or felicity. You may die any moment; and you are as near to heaven or hell as you are to death. No wonder you are asking, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The Sunday School.

If St. Paul were to write an epistle today to the saints that are in the Sunday-schools, his first words of caution would be, "Dear beloved brethren and sisters, don't gush." What he means by gush everybody will recognize to be extravagance of expression, a surplus of sentimental words, the offensive garrulity of shallow minds. "The superintendent who comes into his school saying, 'My dear, dear children, you can't know how much I love you; how constantly I think of you as I go about my business; as I walk the crowded street my mind is dwelling upon you; and I am all the while studying to know what I can do to make you happy, and to lead you to the Saviour,' is probably guilty of gush. This statement is not likely to be exactly true to begin with. No doubt he does think of the children several times during the week. He may even give to the interests of his school four or five hours of thought and labour between two Sundays. But it is not probable that his mind is so engrossed with concern for the children as his remarks represent; and it is altogether likely that the children know it. Nothing could be truer than this: The injury that is done to children by this extravagant style of expression is very great, for it encourages them to a like extravagance and inaccuracy. We wish this "don't gush" advice would be taken in largo doses, not only by superintendents, but by that numerous army of Sunday-school friends as well, who are happy to have the opportunity of making a few remarks to the scholars, "all of whom they hold next to their hearts."

Duration of the Lightning Flash.

Since the time of Franklin, the lightning-flash has been regarded as a gigantic electric spark produced in the atmosphere; the inquiry, therefore, involved the nature of the meteorological discharge as well as of the spark artificially produced. Various attempts to determine the duration of lightning have been made, with varying results. Faraday observed it, without any instruments for measuring the time, which seemed to last for a second, but he was doubtful if part of the effect was not due to the lingering phosphorescence of the cloud. DeCaenne observed the lightning-flashes from a distant storm, which also appeared to last for from a half to an entire second. Prof. Dove employed a revolving disk with colored sectors, and satisfied himself that single flashes of lightning often consisted of numbers of instantaneous discharges. It is well known that, when a rapidly moving train of cars is illuminated at night by lightning, it seems to stand still, that is, the duration of the flash is so brief that no motion of the train is perceptible while it lasts. The wheels are sharply defined as if perfectly motionless, but if they had a blurred aspect, we should know that the illumination lasted sufficiently long to render the motion perceptible. Prof. Rood extemporized a simple contrivance for observing lightning, which acted upon this principle. It consisted of a white cardboard disk, five inches in diameter with a steel shawl-pin for an axis, on which it was made to revolve by striking the edge. He traced black figures near the circumference of the disk, and when it was in rapid motion these figures were sometimes seen as sharply as though they had been stationary, although they were often blurred as though the disk had moved through a few degrees during the act of discharge. He then cut narrow, radial apertures into the circumference of the disk, and observed the lightning through these openings. Here, again, the apertures were sometime seen quite unchanged, but they were more frequently elongated into well-defined streaks some degrees in length. He afterwards measured the average rate of rotation imparted in the disk in this way, and arrived at the conclusion that the lightning-flashes on the occasion referred to had a duration of about one five hundredth of a second. Dissatisfied with the roughness of these observations, Professor Rood arranged a small train of toothed wheels driven by a spring, which rotated a circular pasteboard disk with four open sectors. This instrument gave more regular and precise results; and while it was shown that the flash sometimes lasts for a whole second, the suggestion of Dove was clearly verified that each flash consisted of a considerable number of isolated and apparently instantaneous electrical discharges, the interval between the components so small that, to the naked eye, they constituted a continuous act.—Popular Science Monthly.

Objection Makers.

It will probably be found, however, that those qualities which come under the head of foibles, rather than of vices, render people most intolerable as companions and confidants. For example, it may be observed that these persons have a more worn, jaded, and dispirited look than any others, who have to live with people who make difficulties on every occasion, great or small. It is astonishing to see how this practice of making difficulties grows into a confirmed habit of mind, and what disheartenment it occasions. The savor of life is taken out of it when you know that nothing you propose or do, or suggest, hope for, or endeavor, will meet with any response but an enumeration of the difficulties that lie in the path you wish to travel. The difficulty-monger is to be met with not only in domestic and social life, but also in business. It is not unfrequently occurs in business relations that the chief will never by any chance, without many objections and much bringing forward of possible difficulties, approve of anything that is brought to him by his subordinates. They at last cease to take pains, knowing that no amount of pains will prevent their work being dealt with in a spirit of ingenuous objectiveness. At last they say to themselves, "The better the thing we present, the more opportunity he will have for developing his unpleasant task of objectiveness, and his imaginative power of inventing difficulties."—Arthur Helps.