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THURSDAY, MARCH 4TH, 1886.

COMPANIONSHIPS.

NO Grand Lama can so seclude himself as to be independent of the sympathy and help of his kind; and no ragged beggar is so utterly an outcast as not to attract to himself some companion in wretchedness. Companionship is one of man's primary wants. The magnificent Elijah suffers utter collapse when he thinks himself forsaken and alone, and even Jesus plaintively reproaches his unsympathetic disciples in the garden with a—"What could ye not watch with me one hour?" The uncompanionable man stamps himself as odd and eccentric. It is true that great men, like lofty mountain peaks, are, in a sense, necessarily solitary; but they are generally found to be at bottom men of wide and deep sympathy with their kind. The high mountain roots itself in the foot-hills at its base. A man never attains his best when isolated. It is from the heart of the forest, not from the open plains, that mast timber comes. The cup of happiness needs to be shared to reach its sweetest. It is significant that solitariness is foreign to the heavenly state, where humanity blooms in perfection of strength and bliss.

It may be a mere fancy that husband and wife come to resemble each other in features as they tread the pathway of life together; but they certainly do assimilate as to character. Intimate companionship is amongst the most powerful of formative influences; and so it is true, not only that a man is known by the company that he keeps, but that a man becomes like his constant associates. The ancient proverb has the freshness of an axiomatic truth, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise"—fragrance adheres to one who moves amidst fragrant objects, while the converse is equally apparent,—"but the companion of fools shall smart for it";—even iron will warp and melt through long contact with fire.

The formative influence of companionship is, of course, more conspicuous in the case of the young. It is young wood that grafts best. Contagion is most to be dreaded in the case of those of tender years. The man is very likely to be pretty much what he has allowed the companions of his youth to make him. There are exceptions to every rule, but the solid and prosperous men of any community are generally those who have avoided the ensnarements of foolish and ungodly companions in earlier years. It is only now and then that a companion of "fools" succeeds in making anything but a "fool" of himself, and then only by abandonment of former associates.

Young people would do well to take the advice of the more experienced in so important a matter as the choice of companions. A few simple rules may be helpful to those who are anxious to act wisely. It is a safe thing to look upward, rather than downward, in seeking a friend. Let the companions chosen be ladders towards self-improvement, not weights dragging down to lower levels. Regard should be had, also, to what will last, in preference to what makes most show. The handsome face, the peachy cheek, the glitter and tinsel of surface accomplishments,—these are as temporary as they are fascinating. The steady head, the sound heart, the modest graces of true worth, are rarer, and often very hard to find; but when found, they are of enduring satisfaction. Let companionship be for worthy ends, not solely for recreation, and certainly not for dissipation, but for mutual improvement, and for the accomplishment of some noble purpose.

It is quite natural that companions should be sought of one's own age, but the young lose more than they are now aware of when they turn their backs altogether on older persons, especially on their parents. Perhaps it is more the fault of the older than the younger people that this misfortune happens. Parents are apt to become absorbed in working for their children. They forget that these need companion, ship, as well as food and clothing and shelter, and that they will seek it abroad, if it is not to be found at home. It pays to give time and thought to making companions of the little folk. It is a veritable specific for the dull weariness of the daily burden of work and care; and it has the further reward of the retaining of the confidence and love of the young. Happy are the parents and children who are companions, as well as relatives!

It ought not to be counted too solemn a thought that companionships are for eternity. The present life fixes the future condition. No deep gulf lies between this world and the world beyond the grave. The righteous continue righteous, and find their delight in the society of the righteous; the unrighteous remain unrighteous, and love still to be with the unholy. Death strips a man of his body of clay, and of his earthly possessions; the man himself is untouched, and his selection of companionships in the other world will be in the precise line of his previous choice on earth.

ROMANISM IN QUEBEC.

ALL who were privileged to hear the lecture of Principal McVicar in College Street church, on the subject, "What Great Men Know But Dare Not Speak Of," will not be likely soon to forget the deep impression made upon them. We earnestly hope the Rev. Principal may be asked to repeat it in some more central locality, for we doubt not the Pavilion could be filled with the people who are interested in the great question he handles with marked ability. Dr. McVicar's indictment of the Romish hierarchy in Quebec was presented with judicial calmness, every charge being abundantly proved by facts and figures drawn from their own archives, or from the personal experience of the public of that Province. There were no bitter words against our French Canadian fellow citizens, and no such remedies suggested as are popular with disappointed politicians at the present time, but a solemn arraignment of the false Church as the source of all the troubles that afflict the people of Quebec, backed by evidence so convincing that we venture to believe not one of the Principal's hearers went away unimpressed with the gravity of the subject or unmoved with a desire to deliver our fellow-citizens from their terrible thralldom. The Principal's statement that our so-called great men are conversant with the facts he brought before us, will be readily agreed to, and that not one of them dare speak out respecting the facts goes without saying. Our politicians are bound hand and foot by the Church of Rome, and vie with each other in caressing the hand that binds them. No one wishes them to show an intolerant or bigoted hatred to that Church, but we do wish them to be free men, whom the Romish hierarchy will find it impossible to cajole or intimidate. The Catholic vote will cease to be of importance the very moment our politicians declare themselves, either in power or out of power, independent of it and determined not to court it. Dr. McVicar questions if we have any great men among our politicians; in our opinion there is really no question about the matter. Whenever it pleases God to give us a great man he will show his greatness by grappling with this question of the influence of the Church of Rome on the politics of the country, and will not rest until the whole Dominion is set free from her tyranny. But the learned Principal might have gone further in his search for great men, for they are as difficult to discover outside as within the walls of Parliament. The idea of those who think themselves great is that this is a subject of little moment, and not worthy of their consideration, and they are therefore content to be ignorant both of the past history and present condition of the Church of Rome. We are sorry to say that some of these supposed great men are to be found in Protestant pulpits, and that on this account many of our people are ill-informed and ready to become an easy prey to the blandishments of Archbishop Lynch. It is certainly pitiable to think that we have among us Protestant ministers who coquet with dignitaries of the Church of Rome, and who are openly or secretly hostile to the work of French Evangelization because it endangers the *entente cordiale* between them and their Roman Catholic friends. We have no wish to arouse a spirit of bigotry, nor to prevent a broad and liberal view being taken of this question, but we do demand of Protestant ministers and people as true a loyalty to their Church, and as bold a contending for the faith, as is exhibited by Roman Catholics. When this is secured the troubles that now distract the country will quickly disappear.

The Principal concluded his lecture by asking what are the prospects of Quebec in the future. He declared himself to be very hopeful that better days are coming. We agree with his opinion, and trust that many of our readers may live to see the day when the way of Rome over Quebec will have passed away, and the two Provinces, Ontario and Quebec, united by the bonds of a common faith and—what will be sure to follow—a common language and equal laws, will go forward together, leading, as they ought to do, the other Provinces into the brighter and happier future that awaits the great Dominion.

THE question raised by "Philo" in his "Notes," and also by a correspondent last week with regard to permanent members of the General Assembly, is of great importance, and we trust presbyteries in choosing their representatives this year will give it serious consideration. Fortunately, the evils complained of has not assumed with us such large proportions as in some other Presbyterian churches, but it is certain to grow with our growth unless vigorous steps be taken to check it by presbyteries exercising their powers impartially, and such as have hitherto been permanent members refusing any longer to retain a superiority over their brethren which is thoroughly opposed to the principle of Presbyterian parity. There are, perhaps, only some ten or twelve men who deserve to be ranked as permanent members, and we have no doubt these have become such simply because of their activity in church work and the high esteem in which they are held by their brethren. The advantages to be gained by the adoption of a system preventing the existence of permanent members are such as must outweigh any seeming benefits derived from our present method. If we have no permanent members we will have no ecclesiastics aspiring to be leaders, and so the time and temper of the General Assembly will be saved. We will be less troubled with a party spirit, for permanent members are apt to allow partizanship full sway if it is in the interest of their leadership to do so. We will have fewer speeches and less legislation and consequently will have the real work of the Assembly properly attended to. The rank and file of our ministry will have a fair opportunity for taking part in the work of the Assembly, and attempts on their part to help the councils of the church will not be frowned down as they often have been in the past. The mere ecclesiastic, as has often been remarked, is a very dangerous character, and there are none in such need of being preserved from becoming ecclesiastics of this unsatisfactory kind as those who are permanent members of assemblies and committees. The remedy for this trouble lies in the hands of the presbyteries. Let them send all their ministers by rotation, then all will be on a level as to opportunity for serving the Church, and there will be no more said about permanent members.

THE French priests have received a stern reminder from the Government that ecclesiastical intervention in political contests will no longer be tolerated. In the ministerial declaration read in the French Senate a short time ago there is the following pregnant sentence: "Everybody understands that such a state of things [as clerical interference in political affairs] cannot last for ever, and that the grave problem of Church and State will soon be forced irresistibly upon us." To this statement a number of startled cardinals and archbishops have replied that the clergy are conscious of the gravity of the situation; they will bear anything not inconsistent with conscience and honour, and they will ever be guarded by the Pope's recent reminder that "the Church condemns no form of government." In the light of experience the authorities, we venture to think, will be very careful of accepting promises that imply more stealth and not less activity. But French politicians, now thoroughly aroused as to the blighting influence of Roman Catholicism on civil affairs, are not likely to abate their vigilance and vigour.

THE report of the commissioners appointed to investigate the charges of cruelty and partiality against Mr. Massie, warden of the Central Prison, Toronto, has been issued and it will surprise no one who followed the progress of the investigation as reported in the daily press to learn that the charges made against him are without foundation, and are evidently the outcome of malice and bigotry. Mr. Massie has come out of the trial unscathed. The result of this enquiry should be a stern rebuke to plotting bigots against the folly and wickedness of seeking to undermine discipline and introduce sectarian teaching into our penal establishments by removing faithful and competent watchmen. Persons, whether in short coats or long coats, who seek to ruin faithful public servants, should themselves get a taste of the Central Prison.

REV. JOSEPH COOK in a recent Boston Monday lecture urged the following arguments against Sunday newspapers: 1. They lead on other violators of Sunday laws. 2. They require Sunday work. 3. They propagate low tastes and often loose opinions. 4. They secularize Sunday, the right use of which for rest and worship is essential to the sanity of civilization. 5. They obstruct the moral and religious education of the people. He proposed the following remedies for the evil: 1. Do not advertise in them. 2. Let printers strike against Sunday labour. 3. Let the worth of Sunday be taught from the pulpit and platform. 4. Let Sunday Associations and Law and Order Leagues and civil magistrates do their whole duty and execute the laws now on the statute books. 5. Let good men found respectable journals without Sunday editions. And he might have added: 6. Let good men support the religious press.

THE very interesting letter in another column from the well-known Jewish missionary at Rome, Rev. A. Ben Oliei, is gratifying to us as, not only affording another evidence of the ever-widening circulation and influence of the REVIEW, but as supplying also what must be regarded as cogent reasons for the further development amongst us of interest in the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews. We shall take an early opportunity to lay before our readers the matter in connection with this work kindly placed at our disposal.

A FORGOTTEN QUESTION AND ANSWER.

BY REV. JOHN GRAY, D.D., ORILLIA, ONT.

A few weeks ago my minister stated in substance in his sermon, that much was said in the present day about the sins of the pulpit, but that, for his part, he believed that a very respectable volume could be written about the sins of the pew.

These remarks suggested a certain train of thought. A question frequently discussed in this age has called forth a vast variety of answers: "Is the pulpit losing its power, and sinking into pitiable weakness?"

My reading and experience constrain me to give to this pertinent query an emphatic negative. Never was there a time in the history of the Church when the gospel was more purely and faithfully preached; when so many able and earnest preachers of the Word were to be found in every part of the world, or when the area of sound evangelical preaching was so extensive. Though this is not the age of great and eloquent expounders of the truth, there is an unwonted large multitude of fair average preachers, from whose pulpit issues no uncertain sound.

When, then, the pulpit in itself is stronger and purer than it ever was in any former age, how does it happen that the blessing to souls does not correspond with the increased power of preaching?

The answer to this, is that there is a marked weakness and degeneracy in the pew.

There is not the same earnest attention in hearing, or the same loving reception of the Word that used to prevail in former times.

As a herald of the gospel for many years, and, through enforced silence, a hearer for some time, I have come to the settled conviction that the pew is rapidly degenerating as to its duty and responsibility in hearing the truth. There are few such patient and docile hearers as formerly used to be so numerous in every congregation.

One cause of this is that the instruction on this subject drawn from the holy oracles, and found in Questions 89 and 90 of the Shorter Catechism, is now rarely enforced and impressed upon the young. Admirable as the logical order of the catechism is, yet it is doubtful if that order is the best in teaching it to the young.

It seems to me that, after committing to memory the first three questions, the child should pass on, like the theology of Dr. Chalmers, to the 82nd question "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?"

In this way the youthful mind is brought, at its most susceptible age, into the closest contact with the marrow of the gospel, and soon finds itself face to face with the duty and privilege of gospel hearing, as taught in the 90th question.

This question, with its appropriate answer, is now given in full—would that it were engraven with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, on the heart of every worshipper—"How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?"

"That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives."

Have you ever, my readers, observed the admirable arrangement of this answer, and how nicely the parts of it fit into each other?

It begins with the antecedent duty of

(1) ATTENTIVE PREPARATION.

In those days when, in Canada, the "Word of the Lord was precious (or, rare), and there was no open (or, rather, frequent) vision," our missionaries enjoyed the privilege of preaching to a class of hearers who are now not often met with. They were usually calm, quiet people, but, during public worship you would see them, with bright eye and luminous face, stretching out the neck, turning the whole body towards the speaker, and, in the outward attitude of earnest attention, drinking in so fully and keenly the truths spoken from the pulpit, that they proved a real help and stimulus to the preacher, as well as a visible rebuke and spur to the careless. These were men that loved the truth for its own sake, prepared carefully for the worship of the sanctuary, and were carried to the house of God in a chariot of prayer. With the resurrection of such worshippers in the present day, the pew would regain its former power, and become, more than ever, a help, instead of a hindrance, to the declarations of the pulpit.

The Question next considers our

(2) ATTITUDE OF MIND IN THE SANCTUARY.

Beside every worshipper ought to stand two heavenly graces, faith and love. "Bold belief is always better than cold doubt." In the house of God the chief power is the receptive faculty. It is as little children, simply absorbing the truth, and not as critics and judges that we are to feed upon the Word. It has been said that, in every congregation, there is always present one perfect worshipper, along with a crowd of imperfect hearers.

Let us worship under the feeling that the eye of that Unseen Worshipper is gazing all the time into our inmost souls, and reading at a glance our thoughts and feelings. Let love to an invisible living Saviour so fill our hearts that we shall rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

3. A subsequent duty, as we retire from God's house, is to

LAY IT UP IN OUR HEARTS.

One of the most interesting sights, a few years ago, was to witness, on some fine summer day, the dispersion of a rural congregation, and to watch the several groups wending their way homewards. By drawing near to one of these little bands you would find that they were talking about the sermon, and with the help of some one of their number, possessed of an uncommon memory, treasuring up the truths which they had heard.

In the town of Biggar lived for many years a Dr. Smith, as minister of a large U. P. Church there. He was known as a deep preacher, and, therefore, rather difficult to understand. But, in one of the principal companies, that each Lord's Day issued from his church, was a leading elder, the father of Dr. John Thorburn, of Ottawa. Possessed of an excellent memory and a very intelligent mind, he delighted to gather the young around