

CART AND HORSE: WHICH IS WHICH?

By N. O. A.

One is not, as a rule, considered to pay himself a compliment who indulges in destructive criticism. But there may be occasion when the question demands the sacrifice of the man, so far as concerns the compliment.

The Synod, according to modified Presbyterian usages, is at best but a court of review and possessed of small measure of finality. For all of that, however, it may be, may have been in its time, or might be made to be, an important enough court. That is not the question. But this: The wisdom and good taste of giving the Synod conference program pre-eminence over the Synod docket in issuing the personal announcement of an approaching meeting of Synod.

The afternoon Sederunts are set apart by rule of Synod for Conference.

The remaining Sederunts are devoted to business according as the docket may be arranged.

The "remaining Sederunts." That is the way it reads, and that is the order in which it is put down. And thereby hangs a tale. The Synod docket is not considered of sufficient consequence to be outlined. The inference is, it is a nullity. Are there not young members awaiting initiation into the business of the several courts of the church, that routine should not be given a line of indication. Are there not matters handed down by Assembly for consideration of the lower courts? Are there not questions of the day that are sure to be up? Or are these to be sprung after the fashion of the political campaign? or discussed sub rosa? And those entrusted to the memory of the member of the court who has digested the Assembly's report?

Does the Synod but serve as a rallying point for the annual conference? Is the Synod conference intended to coax members to the Synod? In either case, make the conference programme twice as attractive. Let the subjects proposed to be discussed be neither hackneyed nor too general. Let there be some phase of a question proposed so that the mere reading of the program puts an edge on the mind. One has a sense of plethora when he reads, "The Proposed Church Union in Canada," or "The Church of Christ and Social Problems." Give us a specific problem to chew on: Then we will have something to spit out at the conference—or rather the Synod.

I have not aimed particularly at suggestion, being just a little inclined to offer criticism for the time. But permit me to say, this is not without having helped to secure a definite place and recognized hour for the Synod conference in one Synod. But not a pre-eminent place. I want the conference; but I want the Synod more. If it be that the Synod lives by virtue of the conference, then the conference runs a great risk.

DO GOOD AND TRUST GOD.

Will the good that we do be ever wholly lost? Since good is of God it does not seem as if he would permit it to perish from the earth. Though we may fail to follow it among the changing circumstances of life, may not God be guarding his own and nourishing somewhere the little flower that we have planted? We should not forget that our eyes are dim and there are horses and chariots in the mountains which we cannot see. If we do the planting faithfully we can safely leave the harvest with Him. I think of a blighted field where once a minister of Jesus faithfully toiled. Once the field was flourishing, now it has gone into decay. The old congregation has lost its strength and maybe its very organization, and as the minister looks back over the place where he spent years of earnest toil he sees only emptiness. The whole scene is bleak as an autumn landscape when the hot summer suns have left it parched and waste. And he says with a sigh that cannot be repressed: "Where is all the good that I have done? There is here no church; or if there be, it is one of alien speech and of other faith. Surely my influence is as water spilled upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again." But has not God said: "My word shall not return unto me void." The soil in which the seed was sown is not as the soil of the field on which the old church stood.

The preacher's planting was in human hearts, and these we take with us no matter where we go. Somewhere the seed is bearing fruit. The fathers and mothers may be in their graves and the site of the old church may be scarred with the plowman's furrows. Or the graves of the dead may rest where once the tables of the Lord spread. Little is there to remind one of the former days. But the good still lives. It is growing in hearts of the children of those sleeping fathers and giving fragrance to their lives. The influence of those faithful years is a thing immortal. In heaven, too, the ones whom once he knew and to whom he proclaimed the Word of reconciliation, are rejoicing. The fecundity of that abode is enjoyed by many because the discouraged pastor once taught them to lie down in green pastures and led them to the still waters that they might slake their thirst. The good will not, cannot die. The loving Father who blesses and nourishes his own will not permit it to pass as the cloud or the dew and be no more. Do good and trust God and on the golden plains of the everlasting years he will put the sickle in your hand and bid you reap to the satisfying of your soul.—United Presbyterian.

The treasures of the sympathet heart are more rich than the ore-veins in the mountains. The one increases by use while the other is diminished. A smile is one of God's advance agents.

GRATITUDE.

The cheerfulness of heart which springs up in us from the survey of nature's works is an admirable preparation for gratitude. The mind has gone a great way towards praise and thanksgiving that is filled with such a secret gladness—a grateful reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies the soul, and gives it its proper value. Such an habitual disposition of mind consecrates every field and wood, turns an ordinary walk into our morning or evening sacrifice, and will improve those transient gleams of joy which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness.—Lutheran.

THE PEACEMAKER.

What is the thing men first see in you, your distinguishing characteristic? How grand a thing it is to be known as a peacemaker and not a busybody; how beautiful to be known as a comforter of others in their sorrow and not a multiplier of those sorrows; how divine a thing it is to be instinctively thought of as Christlike in our thoughts, words, deeds—in our life.

Every attempt to make others happy, every sin left behind, every temptation trampled under foot, every step forward in the cause of what is good, is a step nearer the cause of Christ.—Dean Stanley.

Teach your boy, especially by example, that he may take a few hours of God's day for his own pleasures, in excursions, baseball, or other amusements, and when he is grown see if he will not take the whole day for himself and leave God nothing. It will need no urging to accomplish this.

"The Covenanters: A History of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution 1560-1688," is the title of Rev. Dr. Hewison's new book.

Each home was poorly furnished; but if the men have a bed, a chair and a candlestick, it is enough for them, a landlord remarked, at an inquest in the East-end of London.

The Dean of Westminster, preaching upon the Welsh revival, said that there is need that this great movement should have its counterpart in the Church of England.

A set of butterflies has been presented to the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, for which the collector had received 20,000 pounds. The collection is said to be the finest in the world.

Dunfermline's Provost makes the modest claim on behalf of that town that it has a past of which many towns might be proud; and a future of which many towns are envious.

The Rev. Mr. Robertson, of Edinburgh, who on the 6th inst. missed his footing on Ben Nevis, during a thunderstorm and rolled down nearly a thousand feet, is reported making satisfactory progress. His arms and legs are terribly lacerated.

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