

The Christian Sun.

BY EMMETT L. MOFFITT.

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY; IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY; IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.

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The Christian Sun

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CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.

1. The Lord Jesus is the only Head of the church.
2. The name Christian, to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of fellowship or membership.
5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

REFLECTIONS.

The appeal that the Wilsons—former Railroad Commissioners for North Carolina—made before the United States Supreme Court against Governor Russell's appointees—Caldwell and Pearson—has been dismissed, the Court deciding that it had no jurisdiction in the matter. So the new commissioners hold on to their positions.

The report that Hon. William E. Gladstone is dying of a cancerous growth, involving the bone tissues back of the nasal passages, will cause universal regret. The "Grand Old Man" has been a central figure of all the world for many years, and his death would deprive the world of its greatest statesman. His departure, however, cannot be long hence: he has been an old man for many years, and soon will be no more—save as he lives on in the hearts of men and women for ages to come.

The question of the lease of the North Carolina Railroad to the Southern has now been taken out of the courts, and the matter is left for Judge Simon-ton to pass upon, without argument from either side, the Southern agreeing to pay all expenses that have been incurred by the State in the fight that has been made. The contempt cases that the Railroad Commissioners had in court against Col. Andrews and others for failure to answer certain questions have been decided in favor of the defendants.

The Hartford Courant submits the following five propositions, which are as pertinent to every other State as to Connecticut: "1. That our soundest, wisest, best-paying investment here in Connecticut to-day is our public schools. The most precious and productive of all community expenses is, as President Eliott said at Fall River the other day, the school expense. 2. That our constant aim and policy should be to improve our school system. The better the schools the richer the returns to town and State. 3. That we should economize anywhere and everywhere else before we begin to economize at the expense of Connecticut's boys and girls. 4. That only a demonstrated necessity could justify any crippling of the evening school work, or of the school library work. 5. That any demonstrated mistake, foolishness or wastefulness in the school system should be corrected. Money's worth for the money is a good rule in school matters as in other matters." It would be difficult to err on the side of doing too much for our public schools; for they are indeed our soundest, wisest, best-paying investment. When we spend money in developing the minds and hearts of the boys and girls of the land we may be sure of rich returns in the future: more productive, more intelligent, more moral and religious communities; a higher type of Christian manhood and Christian citizenship. A new North Carolina Legislature is to be elected this fall; and we hope our people will vote for no man who does not favor public schools in the State. Make this one test.

Miss Clara Barton, who has been in Havana for some time endeavoring, through the Red Cross Society, to relieve the starving Cubans, has left that city and gone to Washington to consult the President in reference to the manner in which Spain has been interfering with her work. It is claimed that "Spanish officers have stolen large quantities of the provisions sent for the reconcentrados, and that much food has been spoiled by its wilful detention." This is the first time that Miss Barton's work has ever been interfered with. She has everywhere been received as an angel of mercy on a mission of love to suffering humanity; and now for Spain to interfere with her work is brutal and heartless.

It is estimated that the Georgia farmers this year will decrease their acreage of cotton about fifty per cent. That this is a wise decision, five-cent cotton will bear witness. If all the States would make a similar reduction, and put more time, more land, and more money into the raising of what they have to use on the farms, cotton would soon be a money crop again. Bearing out this idea, Mr. Patrick, of the S. A. L. Industrial Department, sends out the following "Lesson About Cotton": "Here are some facts about cotton every one interested in the production of cotton would do well to study. The 9,900,000 bale crop of 1894-95 sold for \$228,000,000. The 7,000,000 bales produced in 1895-96, sold for \$292,000,000. The crop of 1896-97 amounted to 8,750,000 bales, sold for \$327,000,000. Or the big crop of 1884-95 sold for \$64,000,000 less than the succeeding year's crop, although it was nearly 3,000,000 bales larger. The crop of 1896-97 sold for \$199,000,000 more and was over 1,000,000 bales less. Thus it will appear that the larger the crop the less it sells for, and a 7,000,000 bale crop is really worth more to producers than a 10,000,000 bale crop.—Exchange. Or the more cotton the less money, a verification of the well-known law of inverse proportion. Moral—Plant more corn, sow more wheat, raise more to eat."

From an examination of the statistics on cattle-raising in the United States the Progressive Farmer finds that there has been a gradual decrease in this industry during the last few years. It says: "A glance at the statistics compiled by the United States Department of Agriculture shows that since 1892 there has been a regular and quite rapid decrease in the number of cattle in this country. There were in 1892, 54,067,590 head while the decline has brought us to 45,105,083 in 1898, showing a net falling off of 8,962,507, or in round numbers 9,000,000, or 16 1/2 per cent. Considering the fact that our population is steadily and regularly increasing, this decrease is beginning to look a little serious. It is beginning to be felt already, not only in the beef, but also in the hide and leather trade. Taking these statistics as we find them, and as they are reliable, ought not our people to begin to hedge against a further diminution by giving more care to their cattle? Those who 'take time by the forelock' and give best care and attention to their breeds and grazing and marketing, will be apt to reap good rewards for their pains." This is a condition very much to be regretted; for it means that if the decrease continues the consumers of beef (and they are many) are soon going to find prices going up; and leather, together with everything that is made out of leather, will take a corresponding rise. The condition in North Carolina is a little better than this general showing. The decrease here during the past three years has been only from 653,528 to 608,872—only 6 1/2 per cent. Would it not be well to look a little more closely to our cattle-raising industry now, before it is too late?

CONTRIBUTIONS.

ESAU, THE ELDEST SON OF ISAAC.

BY HERBERT SCHOLZ, A. M.

Part II.

Esau sold his birth-right to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Esau had been out on an extended hunt. He came home very hungry, almost perished, as we sometimes say. He found his brother cooking pottage. This was a mixture of vegetables and meat, and was a common dish in those times. The savory odor that arose from that pot of pottage made hungry Esau still more hungry. His mouth watered for some of that pottage. He asked his brother to give him some to eat, for he was very hungry. His brother told him that he would barter him some for his birth-right. This was indeed a very dear price for a dinner, but Esau's stomach finally overcame every other consideration, and he consented to exchange. So Jacob gave to Esau some of the pottage which he was cooking, and Esau ate it and then went on his way. This was but the beginning of the downward course of Esau and the upward course of Jacob. One bad deed usually leads to another. It was so in Esau's case. He first gave his consent to dispose of his birth-right. That was the first big mistake of his life. The second mistake occurred a few years later.

Like the most of young men, Esau thought that he could get along better in the double harness than in the single state. But he went farther than that. Instead of contenting himself with one wife, he went and took two. These were the daughters of the Hittites, and were entirely ungenial to the parents of Esau, and by no means disposed to check Esau in his downward course. The Bible narrative declares that they were a continual grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah, doing what they could, we presume, to render unhappy the home into which they had been taken by the marriage. The union produced domestic discord and established idolatry in an hitherto religious home. Esau's mother had never loved him so well as she did her younger son, and the mistakes which Esau made had the tendency to make the ties which bound mother to son much weaker than they were before. Hence it is not a matter of very great surprise that she should enter into a compact with Jacob to deprive Esau of his father's blessing.

When Isaac was about one hundred years old, he became somewhat blind. He was, perhaps, able to see a very little, but not enough to clearly distinguish objects. He thought, on account of this blindness, that the end of his life was near at hand; that his race was almost run; and that he was about to sink into the grave. So he called his favorite son, Esau, to him, and bade him go into the fields and hunt down some venison and bring to him, that he might eat of it and then give to him a father's blessing before he died. Esau went out from his father in obedience to his command. It happened, however, that Rebekah had heard what her husband had said to Esau, and she at once set to work to turn aside this last great blessing intended for Esau, and to bring it on the head of her beloved son Jacob. She called Jacob to her and told him to go and kill a kid, and dress it nicely and bring it to her that she might prepare savory meat which he should take in to his father and pass off for venison, and pass himself for Esau. Jacob was afraid to do this, lest his father might detect the deception, but his mother persuaded him to obey her. So the kid was caught, killed, and prepared, and Rebekah took parts of the kid's hide, and placed them on the neck and hands of Jacob, so that if his father should feel of him, he would find him hairy, just as his brother Esau. Dressed in this manner, Jacob took the savory meat and went into the presence

of his father and told him that he had brought to him the venison as desired, and was now ready to receive the blessing.

There were two things which made Isaac suspect that he was being deceived. One was the shortness of time that intervened between then and the moment when he had sent Esau out; the other was the voice which he heard. Isaac did not think Esau could have gotten back from the hunt so soon, neither did he think that it was the voice of Esau that he heard. But he thought he could test the matter by feeling of him, so he said to him, "Come near, my son, and let me feel of you." Jacob approached the bedside, and when Isaac felt the hair on the hands of Jacob, he said, "Truly these are Esau's hands, but the voice is the voice of Jacob." And he said to him, "Art thou my very son, Esau?" And Jacob said, "I am." Then Isaac took of the meat which Jacob had brought, and ate of it, and when he had finished, he gave to Jacob the blessing which he had for Esau, thinking at the time that he was bestowing it upon his elder son. When he had finished, Jacob both joyful and conscience-stricken, went out from the presence of his father. Shortly afterwards, Esau returned from the hunt, and went into the apartment of his father, and announced to him his return with the venison. We can hardly imagine how great was the surprise of both father and son, when the father found out that he had been so thoroughly deceived, and the son discovered that he had been so shamefully defrauded. Both were much distressed over the matter, and Esau wept most bitterly. He asked his father if he did not have yet another blessing, which he could bestow upon him. His father told him that there was yet another blessing, but it was nothing compared with the one intended for him. So Esau received the blessing which his father proffered, but it was one which made him second to his brother, and deprived him of his prestige in the family.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN.

Half our troubles come from despondency, discouragement, grief. We faint in the day of adversity. We abandon the struggle when enemies oppose. We say, "I have labored in vain and spent my strength for naught," when a few little difficulties cross our path, or a few discouragements try our souls. But have we not seen shadows before? and are we afraid of shadows? Have we not passed under clouds before? and are we afraid of clouds? Have we not met with enemies and conquered them? Have we not seen mountains before us which yet have been moved out of their places? Have we not had trials, conflicts, and temptations, and yet have overcome them? He who has been with us in time past will still be with us to the end.

Have faith in God. The God of heaven does not taint and is not weary; does not forget and does not falter; and if we trust his promises and cast our care upon him, he who has been with us in the past will be with us in the future, will help us in our time of need, will drive our foes before our faces, and will at last crown us with strength and joy and victory in the glory of his kingdom.

What though thou rulest not?
Yet heaven, and earth, and hell
Proclaim, God sitteth on the throne,
And reigneth all things well!
Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command:
So sha't thou wondering, own his way,
How wise, how strong his hand!
Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully he the work has wrought
That causeth thy needless fear.

As will be remembered, some time ago the North Carolina Railroad Commissioners made an order reducing first-class passenger rates to 2 1/2 cents a mile and second class rates to 2 cents. Last week, however, they reconsidered the question and restored the old rates—3 1/2 and 2 1/2 cents a mile.



REV. N. G. NEWMAN.

THE PULPIT.

PAUL ON MAR'S HILL.

BY REV. N. G. NEWMAN.

"For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."—Acts 17: 23.

Paul was re-visiting all the cities in which he had preached and strengthening the churches. At Thessalonica and Berea he was persecuted and forced to flee to Athens. Here he tarried awhile for the coming of his companions, Silas and Timothy. While waiting in Athens, Paul's soul was stirred within him, as he perceived the whole city given over to idolatry. He could not be idle. He entered the synagogues and preached Christ to the Jews and proselytes, and disputed daily in the market place. In the latter place he was encountered by the Epicureans and Stoics. Some said he was a babbler. Others said he seemed to be a setter forth of strange gods. So they took Paul and carried him before the court of Areopagus, which would hear what this new doctrine was. Such were the circumstances leading to this memorable address. Let us notice:

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT WAS DELIVERED. It was delivered on Mar's Hill, which was one of the four great hills of Athens. On the rocky summit of this hill was held in open air the great court of Athens, where distinguished judges and senators sat to decide upon all the more important questions of state and religion. They sat in concentric circles upon seats hewn out of the solid rock, while the accused and the accuser stood each upon a stone in the centre, the one upon the right and the other upon the left. Upon one of these stones stood Paul, not as a criminal on trial, but as one who seemed to have set forth strange ideas, and had thereby excited the curiosity of the Athenians, "who spent their whole time in nothing else, but either to hear or to tell some new thing."

2. This discourse was delivered to the most cultured and refined audience the world could then produce. Athens represented the highest culture of the world, and this court the highest culture of Athens. Not only were the Athenians an intellectual people, but they were a religious people. Paul told them they were too religious. They believed in a god for every domain of nature and every division of state. Along the highways, in the streets, in the temples and groves, and in the homes—everywhere in Athens, were statues of gods and goddesses. There were gods sitting, gods reclining, gods standing, gods quarrelling, and gods fighting. There were gods of wood, gods of stone, gods of ivory, brass and marble. Standing upon Mar's Hill, Paul's eye was greeted at every turn by these products of human ingenuity and human folly.

3. This discourse was delivered by a poor persecuted unknown and uncared-for wandering Jew from Cilicia. You may imagine with what contempt these haughty Athenians looked down upon such a man—a man whose bodily presence was weak and whose speech was contemptible. But in that careworn and homely pilgrim who stood before them they met met the great hero and scholar of history. Some critics say that here for one time Paul met his match. I take issue with them. Here for one time

the Athenians had met their match. He could meet them on their own ground: they could not meet him on his. He knew their poetry and philosophy, and appreciated whatever was good in their art. But they were strangers to the teaching of Paul. This was a great opportunity for Paul and the gospel. It was carrying the gospel to the mighty of earth and attacking the enemy in his own stronghold. Nineteen years before, it had started with a few fishermen of Galilee. Now it is proclaimed by one of the greatest scholars of the age, and perhaps of all ages, in the most cultured city of earth, and to the most cultured audience of that city. Such opportunities are rare and come only to such men as Paul. Great men are not made by great opportunities, but great opportunities are made for great men.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE DISCOURSE. It was courteous and complimentary. He begins, "Ye men of Athens." No phrase could have fallen more suavely upon the ears of an Athenian audience. It was the polite address of Greek orators, and the one always used by Demosthenes in his Oration on the Crown. His reference to their religion was equally courteous. He says, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious", that is, very devout, over-religious. In this Paul sacrificed no principle. It was a true statement. Perhaps no people were ever more religious than the Greeks. The only trouble was the kind of religion they had, and that trouble Paul had come there to remedy. Courtesy is a cheap thing and pays well. Rudeness and bluntness have no place among Christian graces. Give a man credit for whatever good there may be in him, and use that as a means through which to bring him a blessing. No man knew better how to take advantage of circumstances than Paul, and in no one thing is his human shrewdness and ingenuity more evident. He says, "I am become all things to all men, that by all means I might save some." By this Paul does not mean that he ever sacrificed principle by deviating from truth or descending to low and vulgar flattery: but in a legitimate and honorable way he took advantage of circumstances as only the wise can do. To the Jew he asserted his character as a Jew. To the Roman he asserted his character as a Roman; and thereby he many times saved his life. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." So Christ taught and so Paul practiced.

But now comes Paul's most masterly stroke. I regard Paul's address on Mar's Hill as the most wonderful production I have ever read, and I believe it is the most wonderful in existence. It should be a feasting ground for every Christian student. Space forbids more than a bare reference to it here. I wish all Christians, and especially scholars, would make it a study. Paul had been in many close places, and had had many occasions to exercise his wisdom; but until this occasion the supreme hour had not come. He now stands where Socrates had stood four centuries before, and stands guilty of the same thing for which Socrates had been condemned and executed by that very court; that is, for introducing gods not recognized by the Athenian state. It was a terrible ordeal. One misplaced word, and his life must pay the penalty. Can Paul prove equal to the occasion? He begins, "As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD; whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." He took his text from the inscription on one of their own altars. In expounding to them this "Unknown God", he could not be accused of introducing new ones. This is one of the most masterly strokes of shrewdness and policy on record. Yet it was perfectly legitimate. It was sincere and honorable. The true God whom he would declare unto them was truly the "Unknown God"—un-

known by the Greeks in that they had no conception of him, and unknown in that he is the Great Unknown and Unknowable God, whose judgments are unsearchable and whose ways are past finding out.

2. This discourse was weighty and powerful as an exposition of the "Unknown God". Paul saw in the idolatry of this city a feeling after God, and in this inscription, though faint and dim, a confession of a belief in some being whom eye had not seen and of whose character and attributes the mind had never conceived. They had been feeling in the dark and perhaps had gone as far as human wisdom could carry them, and at this point the apostle would take hold with revelation.

Paul did not begin here, as he always did to the Jews, with the cross and the resurrection. This would have been meaningless to an Athenian who knew nothing of the Scriptures. He began with the God of Creation, the supreme Governor and Ruler of the Universe, sets forth his relation to man, and closes with the doctrine of the resurrection. In doing this he demolished the whole system of Grecian philosophy. Epicureanism taught that all things came by chance. Paul declared that God made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein. Their common mythology had peopled the universe with gods and goddesses, and filled Athens with temples, images and shrines. Standing in full view of these, Paul declared that God dwelt not in temples made with hands, neither was worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, for he himself gave life and health to all things. Stoicism denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead. Paul declared that God had appointed a day wherein he would judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he had appointed, whereof he had given witness in that he had raised him from the dead. They represented their gods and goddesses by images of stone and brass. Paul reminded them that one of their own poets had said, "We are the offspring of God." If we are the offspring of God, says Paul, how can the godhead be like unto silver, or brass, or stone? The Athenians claimed to be of a different origin from the rest of mankind. Paul declared to them that God made of one blood all nations of the earth. Thus Paul dealt the Grecian philosophy blow after blow, and at every blow a system tumbled.

Critics say that this discourse was a failure so far as fruit was concerned. Not so; it was a glorious success. "Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed", and one of these a member of this distinguished court. Paul sounded from Mar's Hill that day the death-knell of pagan Athens. It was the beginning of the downfall of paganism. Pagan Athens could flourish and revel in her glory, but when once the gospel had been sounded from her hill-tops, pagan Athens could be pagan Athens no longer. She must be Christian Athens or perish in the dust.

In conclusion, I ask, Where is ancient Athens and all her glory to-day? Her poetry and philosophy are but facts of history, and her art has perished in the dust. Where, I ask, is Paul and the gospel he that day sounded on Mar's Hill? Paul's memory has lived and expanded with the ages, inspiring and transforming the lives of men. The truth he preached has transformed pagan Athens and pagan Greece and pagan Europe. It has crossed the waters and transformed the wild continents of the west. It has penetrated the darkest continents of earth and the remotest islands of the sea, transforming and elevating whatever it has touched.

Time is an important element in all things temporal, but it is worth remembering that nothing great is ever accomplished by a man who has formed the habit of watching the clock.—Richmond Christian Advocate.

Send in your renewal for Sun.