

The Christian Sun.

BY EMMETT L. MOFFITT.

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

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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 following from the Asheville Citizen contains some very timely observations—and we have been to some churches where this species of nuisance existed in profusion:

"I never hear the snapping of a watch lid in church without feeling uncomfortable and wishing somebody would take the snapper from the building and give him a talking to that he would not forget in a hurry. This is undoubtedly the day of the short sermon, but there is no call for a man to exhibit his lack of breeding by timing the preacher and closing his watch with a click that startles those in the pews about him and causes the preacher to fall with a heart-chilling tumble from the dizzy heights of eloquence on which he was busy carving his name. It doesn't matter if it is one of the most fashionable churches, where old-time religion would not be recognized if it came in at the door, marched down the aisle and took a seat in the pulpit—a minister is a minister, and as such he is entitled to respect. Surely a man ought to sit patiently through an hour's service without making an exhibit of himself. If I were a preacher and some of the congregation should do the snap watch act (which would be most likely) I should make a mental note of the fact, and at the end of the service I should cast up the total snaps and preach a sermon from the text 'Thou fool.' I should say that however many idiots there might be in the congregation only so many had made their presence known; that the church was built for purposes of worship and not for exhibitions of bad manners; that there was no string tied to the persons who had taken the trouble to watch their watches so closely, and they might have retired at any stage of the service; and, finally, that the best goods do not always come in the smallest packages. Watermelons take up more space than diamonds, and are decidedly preferable when it comes to eating. But to be brief: The watch snapper makes of himself a nuisance, and he ought to be suppressed."

Scientific farming means much more than is generally understood by the term. Farmers are prone to suppose that scientific farming is practiced by a certain class of experimenters only, and that ordinary farming is a different pursuit. The fact is that scientific farming simply means the best system that can be put in practice. It is not founded on theory only, but upon careful and laborious investigations of the methods in general use. Every farmer should consider himself as a scientific experimenter and should also aim to improve his farm and everything upon it. Improvement is the foundation of success in farming, and no rules can be promulgated that can be made to apply to all farms. The best farmers are those who make their farms pay without decreasing the fertility of their soils, for when the soil

becomes impoverished a large proportion of the capital invested in the farm goes with that which leaves the farm. One of the advantages in dairying is that there is a large amount of feeding material brought on the farms—such as bran, linseed meal, cottonseed meal, gluten meal, etc.—which substances not only replace the elements removed in the beef, milk and grain, but the manure heap is the accumulating point on which is deposited the plant food of another season. The scientific farmer is he who does not fail to purchase the low-priced feeding materials, make a profit therefrom and enrich his farm at the same time; yet he may know very little of what is termed "science," though his methods are really scientific and based upon practical experience.

SKILL IN FARMING.

More skill is required to properly manage a farm than in any other occupation, as farming includes many different branches of business; and, while some are more skilful as breeders, others are more successful in growing special crops. Gardening includes the forcing process while fruit-growing requires a knowledge of insects and varieties. In fact, there is no limit to the field of the farmer's usefulness, and the farmer who becomes an expert in any particular line follows scientific methods just as surely as he who studies and observes in some other direction. If the farmer succeeds by adoption of the surest and most profitable systems he should be all the more willing to theorize and endeavor to further improve his practice. Farming at the present day is rapidly drifting to that point at which the farmer must be a specialist and give his attention to some particular line. The dairyman who has devoted the greater portion of his time to the improvement of breeds and the production of superior milk, butter and cheese would probably not succeed should he venture into the forcing of vegetables in winter, while the florist would no doubt make a failure with field crops. These facts demonstrate that there is always something to learn and that, as the improvements occur in mechanics, the farmer is more or less affected by the changes in economic conditions and must adapt his operations accordingly. He must be a scientific farmer in order to keep place with his competitors in the march of progress.

INCREASING THE PROFITS.

In ordinary farming with field crops alone there is much to learn. The simple rotation of the crops of today is scientific farming compared with the system practiced fifty years ago, when the land was made to produce the same kind of crop every year, or when a grain crop was followed by another as it is now well understood by all progressive farmers that the constant cropping of the land with one or two grain crops in succession results in exhaustion of the soil, because such crops require the same elements of plant food. Every system of cultivation that does not bring to the farm something from an outside source leads to impoverishment, but the farmer knows how to gain nitrogen by using clover in his system or rotation, and he thus follows scientific methods, because experience proves such to be correct. He is aware that narrow-leaved crops, such as wheat, oats and rye, should be followed preferably by crops having broad leaves, and he uses plants that require cultivation in order to destroy the weeds that would injure sowed crops. He also rotates, so as to take advantage of the crops that are produced above the ground and those that yield roots, while crops that prove the least exhaustive are followed by those of opposite characteristics. Every time the farmer studies and plans how to produce at the least cost and for the largest yields he is using "science" as an aid, and every year farming is becoming more scientific.—Raleigh Post.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

A CHRISTIAN WORK SHOP.

BY PROF. S. A. HOLLEMAN.

[Delivered before the N. C. & Va. Christian Sunday School Convention, and published by request.]

In all avocations of life there must of necessity be a place of labor, where the raw material is transformed, and where energy or power of some kind is stored for use, and perhaps where the perfect goods are produced outright.

The mechanic has his work shop, the blacksmith his forge, the farmer his field, the pastor his charge, the lawyer his office, the teacher his study, and so on for every man who has a business. The Christian has a work to do as peculiar as has the doctor or the farmer, and he has just as much need for a work shop as has the wheel-wright or the merchant. The church has a mission, and its work is worldwide. It needs no work shop. It is a body militant, whose crusade is against the world, the flesh and the devil; and its need is a strong executive, vested in a strong organization of the church into battalions with its generals and a host of valiant soldiers of the cross. Not so with the Sunday school. Instead of a mission or crusade, it has a work to accomplish, and this work is specific. It is my purpose to speak of this work as it especially relates to the adult—be he saint or sinner.

To attain the best results in any work we must know what the labor is especially designed to accomplish, and then by the grace of God go at it with full armor, and perform the duties required the best we can.

The Sunday school is not the least of the fields of labor for the cause of Christianity. The church, the prayer meeting, the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, the singing class, and all such have their own sphere and work, and the Sunday school is distinct from each and works in a different way. It is a school in the strictest sense of the term. It is also to the community what the protestant church is to the world—an exponent of the Christian life. It has been called the cradle of the church but it is a misnomer. It is not exclusively the work of the young, either in years or Christian experience. Cast your minds back to your own home schools and ask yourselves if your old men and women—those whose lives have been spent in the Christian work, whose hairs are white with the glory of ripe Christian experience, your church leaders, your very wisest sires of church enterprise—I ask you, are they to be rocked in the cradle and dandled in the lap of training for the church? I tell you, not so. Rather is the Sunday school the corner stone of the church and not the cradle.

We admit that in some localities this idea of baby-hood is prevalent, and we go to the church early Sunday morning and find a cradle full of children and a good old deacon to do all the rocking, and a great big clamor among the babies as to who should be rocked the quickest and best. I admire the baby that comes to the cradle, while I pity the community that has but one poor good man to do all the rocking. Such a community or church is a baby itself in the vineyard of the Lord, and needs to be rocked by a thunderbolt of religion.

Which of your Sunday schools represented here today is indeed a school of study and religious research? Are any of your church members too learned in theology or in religious knowledge to need more study? How many presumably have their diploma with the degree of Master of Piety. Ah, my friends, your church has too many so-called Christians, who are such by profession, and just as much a real teacher of Christianity as I am a teacher of Hindoo. They forget the command to let their light shine, and also to grow in

grace. They lose sight of the fact also that the Sunday school is the study room of the post graduate as well as the undergraduate. Those who are specially in the work as teachers and leaders fail to grasp this idea as they should. While teachers are presumed to be, and really should be, instructors, they are also learners and my experience is that the diligent teacher learns more than any member of his class. The teacher should be rather a co-worker with the adult. We call him a teacher of course but he should be the same kind of worker as the humble Christian leader of a prayer meeting. He needs not to be the most scholarly or indeed the most pious member of the church. In fact some of the best results I have ever seen have come from a new convert with a heart full of Christian zeal, entering into the class with a will to get and give all the good possible from a thorough study of the Word. By all means deliver us from the self-righteous good old teacher of forty years who actually thinks he has compassed the whole field of Christianity, and seeks Sabbath after Sabbath to train the minds of those he presumes to teach to think in all things as he thinks. But give us instead the teacher who is ever calling out the individual thoughts of his class, who is constantly on the alert to direct a line of thought peculiarly suited to the individual and who never, or seldom at least, says I believe this or that, when this or that is found only in a commentary. It is quite suitable, and indeed profitable I admit, in a few schools for the teacher to lecture to his class every Sabbath. This is the case only in classes of established Christian Bible students, and the teacher himself is a vigorous religious thinker. Most schools composing this convention are not strictly of this class and do not need the lecturer, but a teacher. When you go back to your respective schools, try to put them in the proper way of study on the part of each member and not a weekly blank listening to a teacher who has dreamed during the week and imposes upon the class on Sunday with his individual beliefs and not the gospel.

I would not have you misunderstand me and think I would include the little children in this discussion. They must of course have a teacher in the fullest sense of the term—a person whose grand duty and privilege is to lead the tender mind in the straight and narrow way. The little mind so impressionable and not competent to think for itself, is very different from the biblical mind of which I am speaking and which I imagine the great God spurns, when it professes a religion it cares not to contemplate and study as we urge to be done in our Sunday schools.

Since the Sabbath school is a studio or workshop and each adult is a student, let us for a while consider and ascertain who are to be students or workers, what is to be studied, then how the work should be done to get the best results, and finally at what sacrifice and at what gain.

First, who are legitimate workers in this shop? The man or woman of mature mind may or may not be a Christian. One thing is certain, every intelligent person thinks of some kind of religion or creed. You can no more live without some thought of religion than you can walk without motion. You cannot restrain the mind. If then you are indeed a religious student, there are only two schools in which to work and they are diametrically opposed to each other. You have heard that an idle brain is the devil's workshop and is equally true that a busy brain, seeking truth, is God's workshop. Every brain is one or the other. The Sunday school must necessarily embrace all persons both saint and sinner. The sinner will often use the studio to better advantage than the saint. He does not need a pious teacher. He is able to work alone perhaps and will be offended by the pre-

sumptuous interference of a conceited teacher. He must however be informed that he is a perfectly legitimate member of the school. It is as much his as his pious neighbor's. He has the same rights and privileges. Herein the Sunday school differs essentially from the church. The church will fail by its contamination with the worldly member, while the Sunday school grows strong in its membership of sinners. Human nature revolts at compulsion. You cannot drag the sinner into the light of Christ. The Sunday school should be simply the light house and every seaman whether foreign or native can use the light beacon freely and feel it is his. So the sinner as well as saint has the right to come into port by the influence of the Sunday school if the studio of your church is indeed a light house of the gospel.

Otherwise the beacon light will run the sinner aground upon shoals of sneers and skepticism and your school become a curse rather than a blessing.

I am confident that if every church member or professing Christian diligently uses the studio, every sinner likewise in the community will be inclined to seek thought and opportunity also in the same place and along the same line.

'Tis a mistaken idea that the sinner despises religion. He certainly does despise hypocrisy and when he sees the so called Christian neglect his workshop he readily points the finger of contempt and will not join, where he otherwise would do so.

Next let us consider what is done in this workshop. What profit to the farmer to walk into his field and sit down to do nothing, or the carpenter to stand and gaze at his hammer and saw. Can a man learn to write by standing by an expert penning and never touch a pen? Likewise I would ask, can a man learn little truths by simply going to the place where they are studied? Must he not learn by his own efforts? What a sad mistake our Sunday schools make by simply opening its doors and instituting nothing worthy of thought. I have in mind a school where the illiterate decline to take part simply to avoid the embarrassment attending their misfortune. They are in part consistent church members, too, but that Sabbath school is not arranged to suit their special ability to labor. They can only listen and keep quiet, and such a condition is contrary to a Christian's nature. What a grand opportunity for you Sunday school workers. "They that are well need no physician but they that are sick" comes to us from the lips of the Master. Now my friends the type I have just presented to you is not a stranger to most of you. Such a school may be doing and no doubt is doing much good in a certain way, but it needs more careful organization, and a place where religion is to be discussed and simple Bible truths exposed by those who are peculiarly suited to open suggestive fields of thought which will lead the illiterate to ask questions and pray over their own meditation, for you may accept it as a fact that the unlettered man thinks and questions as much as those who are more fortunate. Especially is this the case over matters pertaining to religion. Give us in the Sunday school religion and not history, piety and not grammar, conduct and not creed, faith and not speculation, Christianity and not theology. These should be the emblems of the consecrated school where the weak are strengthened and the blind are led to see, and such a school Jesus will delight to own and bless. These and these alone will bring the desired results and fill the true function of the Sunday school. To this end we should have the keepers of this studio so to plan and contrive the work that the simplest Christian or vilest sinner may have the same happy influence thrown around him that comes to the hypocritical orthodox, creed-be-ridden church monger who has uppermost in his mind

the accession to his local church of all professors of religion.

Next, how can this work in the adult class be done to best advantage? As I have already said, perhaps in some schools the lecture system can be successfully adopted, but not generally. The teacher who poses as an advocate teacher is usually a failure. No studio is so cosmopolitan as the Sunday school. No teacher can be an autocrat to his class and succeed. He has many and varied minds before him and his function is to stimulate rather than direct the thought. He has the most responsible of all duties in the school. Here is a young, giddy, educated, college girl and by her side perhaps sits the sedate, homely mother who has sat in the same seat Sunday after Sunday for a quarter of a century.

She knows more gospel truths and religious joys than even her teacher. Shall the same line of thought lead her higher than is required for the girl by her side? Shall they be in the same class? This is very debatable ground and in the study of anything except of the simple gospel of the humble Nazarene I would say no. But in the Bible we seek no display of intellect or culture from human standpoint, but a simple prayerful knowledge of that grace that leads to salvation and the girl and mother may both drink from the same fountain, follow the same Jesus, and get the same good in the same class; provided, however, the teacher will recognize his true position and direct the mind of each in its peculiar way, that they may not diverge, but converge to the Savior of all mankind through faith which each must exercise alike. That teacher is a simple machine who allows the editor of the Sunday school quarterly to do the teaching. The quarterly is probably the most misused of all the instruments in this great workshop. There is a deplorable tendency today to study the quarterly alone. How many members of your class do you suppose study the Bible as many minutes as they do the editor's comments on the lesson? Some of course will use the quarterly as a help only. This is the only office it is designed to fill. It is simply intended to aid the student and not to supplant the use of the Bible. He who uses the quarterly alone, even with what texts he usually finds there, cheats himself of the richest blessings of the Book. The average Sunday school scholar it is said reads the Bible less than before the quarterly was instituted. I trust this is a false estimate, but I do believe the system as used in the rural districts satiates the limited thirst for the truths too quickly and eliminates a thorough study of the Book itself. Such is a misuse and I may say abuse of the help given us by thorough Bible teachers. I can go into many of your Sunday schools, I suppose, and find any Sabbath morning half your scholars without a Bible, to say nothing of not having studied it. They have a quarterly of course. They get the golden texts and central truths as it they were the only ones that could be used. They get the places, dates and persons and even improvise answers to the questions of the editor. This is all right as far as it goes, but the true study of the lesson is not in this. This merely exposes the thoughts of the peculiar editors of your quarterlies, which may or may not be in accord with the real subject to be presented, and is certainly not gospel first handed. Search the Scriptures, is our Master's exhortation. Not search commentaries. The Bible for truth always—the commentaries for helps in finding it. This is merely cautionary and not to condemn. Let us not put editorial religion before the simple gospel as given us direct from Jesus.

Please do not understand me as condemning the use of the quarterly. No indeed. I am rather after warning the teacher who yields to the perfunctory routine with which you are all more or less familiar, who does not search the Scriptures as he should and does not expect his pupils to do so. If either the Bible or the quarterly must be omitted for goodness sake omit the latter.

Then in arrangement of classes, care must be taken to give those who are old and less vigorous in thought, a line of study suited to their peculiar needs. Bear in mind that gray hairs may indicate a wearied body or mind but is never a criterion of religious decline. They may quickly tire of a vigorous youthful discussion of an insignificant idea, while the youthful mind, vigorous in its search for truth, will grow impatient with the deep, quiet flow of the half-century Christian. These conflicts must be avoided as far as expedient. Each consigned to his most joyful method of research, barring, of course, a careless skimming of any lesson.

Of all places in the world the Sunday school is not a place for doctrinal discussion. Historical themes grow tedious. The only thing to be freely distributed and discussed is Jesus Christ and him crucified, representing the true ideal in Christian character and vital piety. Persons, places and circumstances are to be used only as a canvas upon which are to be painted character, piety and Christian thought, and never any theological ism.

In the next place let us consider the sacrifices necessary to be made, both of time and labor. I will not include money for that is too insignificant so far as the school itself is concerned. Enterprises may be taken up and pushed by the Sunday school very properly which would demand extra time and money but of these I am not speaking now. I refer to the work in the shop—the essential sacrifices of the school itself for its own success. As such, it needs only time and religious energy. These are in a sense sacrifices though they be not given grudgingly by the Christian. The school that studies diligently and with proper direction is the one that gives life to the church—such life as can be given it from no other source. The student in the school who diligently and patiently studies his work during the week may expect a rich reward on Sunday with a happy heart and a spirited thought. On the other hand, he who sees not his theme before the Sabbath morning he is to meet his class, reaps a shamed face and a guilty consciousness of laxity in the work of the Master. Perhaps no one present appreciates better than I the real situation of a farming community as to its opportunity to prepare during the week the lesson of the coming Sunday. A man who follows the plow all day is too tired he says to think over the lesson till Sunday. This may be so if he has put the lesson entirely distinct from his labor. Many of the self same men so tired with daily labor, however, can find time to sit and chat an hour or two with a neighbor even at a time when farm work is at a rush. These same men are so pressed with work that at noon or night they cannot spare fifteen minutes with the precious Bible truths to be presented the coming Sunday. Is what I tell you not the case in fact? Do they not let carelessness prompted by the devil come between them and the work they have promised to do for the Master? They will do better if they would only stop parleying with the devil and try a little harder to serve the spirit of gospel progress. Of course you see this plea of the farm laborer is largely a false one, but false still is plea of the office laborer or him who works a stated number of hours and has systematic hours of rest and recreation. If the all-day laborer is at all condemned for negligence, I repeat, the limited day laborer is twice so condemned. Did you ever get a letter from a friend that said he had not had time for a week to write. You know what that means just as I do when I hear a man say he has not had time

[To be continued.]