

# The Christian Sun.

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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.

### CHURCH PAPERS.

It would seem that church papers are regarded somewhat as free soup kitchens, from which all should be allowed to take, to which, however, few are expected to contribute. We doubt if there is a church enterprise that so much helps the church and yet costs the church so much in what may be termed real losses. The Church Advocate gives the following facts relative to the Methodist church papers the past four years: "In addition to its general organ at New York, there are a number of conference papers, all official, and thirteen of these show an aggregate loss of \$108,023 the past four years. The remarkable fact is that some of these papers have quite a large circulation, and yet do not pay. Thus the Western Advocate, with a circulation of 19,625, in the past four years lost \$8,483; the Northwestern Advocate, with a circulation of 26,000, lost \$7,973; Methodist Review, with a circulation of 6,314, lost \$18,370; the Southwestern Advocate, with a circulation of 4,800, and a subsidy of \$12,000, lost \$12,000; and the New York Advocate, the leading official paper, the circulation of which is very large, lost in the past two years over \$11,000. These losses are made good, as we understand, out of the Superannuated Fund of the profits of the Book Concern.

### ENDURING MONUMENTS.

Time was when men thought to perpetuate their names in marble and bronze. That time has passed. Great piles of stone and heaps of marble belong to the materialistic age. Today in the hearts of men, in human lives, in the developed and enlightened minds and well shaped character, do men of success and achievement desire to live and perpetuate their name and memory. This desire is everywhere felt, daily expressed. Every week, well nigh every day, do we read of the gifts and bequests of men of wealth to the various educational and church enterprises. Ours truly is an age of philanthropy, big gifts and large heartedness. Last week Gen. J. S. Carr presented to the University of N. C. a handsome stone and brick structure furnished with all modern conveniences and ready for immediate occupation. Mr. J. B. Duke gave to Trinity College the same day a sum sufficient to erect and properly equip a library building. The father and brother of this donor have given most largely to the building and equipment of the twenty-one buildings of Trinity. The spirit of giving for education, especially, seems to be getting hold of men of means as never, and as nothing has, before.

Trusts may be bad things; we think they are. There are worse things, however; for instance, mean politics and bad men. We have heard and read no little lately of the New York Ice Trust. This was denounced throughout the country as the "coldest-hearted" and most thoroughly "freezing-out" scheme yet at-

tempted by the corporations. Suit was instituted by the N. Y. Journal against this trust. That suit brought out the following facts: that Richard Croker held 1,000 shares, Augustus Van Wyck—the Democratic candidate for Governor in 1898—1,100 shares, Mayor Van Wyck 4,200 shares, ex-Mayor Grant 1,400 shares, while many other important political leaders and office-holders, including two Dock Commissioners and ten Judges of State and county courts, were heavily interested in the Trust. Nearly all of these politicians were connected with Tammany Hall. A few, however, were prominent Republicans, including Senator Platt's son, and also the Senator's law partner, Mr. Boardman." These men were in a position to manipulate for themselves and their "Trust" certain special privileges. This they did, regardless of "party affiliations" or "previous conditions of servitude." Democrats and Republicans in N. Y. had struck hands under "trust" to rob the people of N. Y. This they were doing under "legalized" privilege. Here lies the trouble. Legalize any man, rich or poor, to rob and plunder and he can make mischief. So of a number of men. It is not the Trust that does the greatest harm; it is the granting of privilege to irresponsible men and political manipulators.

### MISSIONARIES SYMPATHIES IN CHINA.

Our deepest sympathies go out for the missionaries in China, whose lives are so much endangered by the recent uprising of the "Boxers." Our government at Washington will do all it can to protect them, but as the following from our Washington Correspondent shows, every precaution will be taken not to get ourselves into a Chinese "brawl" at present: "Real interest in this city in the Chinese situation seems so far to be confined to diplomats and to religious bodies which have missionaries in China who are in danger from the rioters. A number of communications have been received at the White House from representatives of the missionary societies. One from Secretary Leonard, of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Foreign Missions, was as follows: "The missionary society of the Methodist Episcopal church has forty missionaries in the service in northern China, included in the present serious disturbance in that country, and we are very anxious concerning their safety. Cablegrams from private parties receive no reply. May I therefore ask you to enquire by cable through our minister, Mr. Conger, whether American missionaries in Pekin and surrounding country, are safe? Be assured that we will very greatly appreciate any information that you may be able to give us." A similar letter was sent about the same time to Secretary Hay by the Rev. Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York. No assurances have yet been received in reply, but of course every possible precaution will be taken to save the lives of those exposed. At the same time, however, Secretary Hay states positively that this government will not, under any circumstances, land a military force in China other than comparatively small parties of sailors and marines. He adds that rumors attributing to the President an intention of holding 10,000 troops at Manila in readiness for service in China to assist in looking after American interests, are devoid of the remotest semblance of truth. Conditions may arise calling for a larger naval force than is now at the disposal of Admiral Remy, commanding the Asiatic station, and in this event the necessity for a larger marine force than is now at Cavite may become evident. Possibly 1,000 marines could be gathered from the Cavite station and ships of the fleet

## Contributions.

### THE PRODIGAL SON.

BY WM. F. PRICE.

"And he said, A man had two sons." Luke 15: 11.

It is said that in the parable of the prodigal son we have one of the most surpassingly beautiful and wonderfully sweet and pathetic pieces of word painting to be found in any language, tongue or nation. It abounds in the extremes of love, ingratitude, folly, extravagance misery, penitence, hope joy and restoration, and proves conclusively the great and beautiful lessons of God's unbounded love toward man, and man's free-agency and moral depravity. The elder brother is said to represent the Jewish nation who had been the keepers of the land, while the younger brother represents the gentiles to whom it was afterwards given.

"And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; and he divided unto them his living." (v. 8).

There seems to have been an ancient law or custom under which the son had the right to demand of his father during (the father's) life time a portion of his estate, and he was in duty bound to give it to him. Thus the son became his own free agent to do with his own as he pleased, which is a suggestion of the great doctrine of man's free moral agency in matters pertaining to religion. God has placed before us life and death (Deut. 30: 19), and he says, "Choose life," but has left us the prerogative of choosing either. And while our heavenly Father may greatly disapprove of our conduct in matters pertaining to our stewardship here, yet it is one of the divine laws of his kingdom to let us act out our own wills in the matter, even to the destruction of our souls.

"And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living." (v. 5).

One of the saddest scenes in the life of a young man is when he prepares to leave home to go out into the world to seek his fortune. Perhaps he is the youngest of the family, and is the pride and hope and joy of his mother's heart, and the mainstay of the aged pair in their declining years. But he must leave home to go out and seek his fortune, he says, when really it is more often to get out from under parental restraint that he may do as he pleases and have "a good time." The day arrives, and he must take his leave. Friends gather around him to bid him a last farewell. The old father who has fought many a life's battle, and knows something of its stern realities has counseled his son to stay at home, but he is obdurate. At last with sadness in his heart, and grim determination not to weep upon his countenance, he extends his hand and says, "My boy, remember what your father has told you. Good by." The come next, and throwing their arms tenderly and lovingly about him they kiss him a last farewell. Friends crowd around him and each bid him with many a hand shake and hearty farewell God-speed on his journey. Then comes the poor old mother. She has waited till the last that parting kiss, and last embrace of her darling boy, whom she loves better than life itself. With that unspeakable sadness of heart that cannot weep, or with a mighty river of tears coursing down the wrinkled features of her dear old face she throws her arms about his neck and exclaims, "My boy!" then sobs aloud. Oh, what unspeakable depths of anguish there is in that fond embrace! The angels of God above must look down upon a scene like this and weep, for what is more divine than a mother's love!

So it is with a child of God when he leaves his Father's house. The church is his beautiful home wherein is joy, and happiness, and peace, and purity, and love, but he forsakes all and goes off into a far country—the world, and there spends his time, talents, energies and the grace that makes men free in serving the devil. God, the heavenly father is grieved, and Christ, the blessed Savior is dishonored, and his cause disowned, and the Holy Spirit is made to take his flight, and the angels weep, and the Christians of earth are bowed down in sorrow and grief because of a brother's folly. Oh, who will dare, in the face of a righteous Judge, to bring all this to pass! May the God of heaven grant that it shall never be one who may read these lines.

"And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." (v. 14).

He failed to provide for the future. In his self-security, with friends around him, and money in plenty, he doubtless felt like many today, that he would never need anything else. It never once occurred to him that one day, and that very soon, too, he would need the very things that he was then throwing away. Indeed I doubt if he ever thought of a famine at all. But ah, here swiftly does retribution overtake the thoughtless wanderer as he strays from his father's house! Under the kind protecting care of father, and mother, and kindred, and friends, and the hallowed influences of a lovely Christian home he had all that heart could wish or money buy. But having left all and gone out into a cold heartless world among strangers and spent all in "riotous living," the stern realities of poverty overtake him and he "begins to be in want." That isn't all. When he reaches the lowest depths of poverty and distress, when money is all gone and friends have departed, and it seems that only one more straw is needed to break the camel's back, behold there rises a famine in the land, and he realizes for once in his life that the struggle for very existence has begun. How different now from the luxurious circumstances of his father's house!

But so it will be with those who depart from the cause of the living God. After they have backslidden from the church and gone out into the world and spent all in pursuit of their own selfish pleasures there will arise a famine of grace to them and they will "begin to be in want." And in the evening of life, when the day is over and the sun of their existence begins to sink, and they come to lay their wearied heads upon the cold pillows of earth, with no loving Savior to guide them over the dark, sad river, no kind friends to offer them words of comfort and cheer, and no star of hope to throw her glad, gleaming rays across the great span of death; what an awful famine of despair and loneliness will come over their souls!

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." (v. 15).

This was the most menial and dishonorable position, to a Jew, imagineable, especially to one who had been brought as he was, in luxury and affluence. To his very sensitive nature, to be thus compelled to administer to the wants of an animal which he had always considered unclean, and whose flesh he would not dare to touch or eat. It must have been an ordeal disgusting and revolting.

But it is just such positions as this that the devil gives to his poor sinful and deluded subjects in the end. He sends them into a bar room to sell or drink the accursed stuff that robs man of his reason, ruins his family and damns his soul; or into a gambling den, or—anywhere, everywhere that he may practice the netarious business of vice and crime, and then go down to hell at last. What an awful picture is this, but ah, how sadly true.

and careless regarding their spiritual obligations, and thus go and dance, or play cards or get drunk, or swear, or do something of the kind, and when they are brought up before the church, plead as their only excuse: "I didn't know there was any harm in it." Ah, I want to tell you, my friends, that a true child of God doesn't have to do any of these things. He doesn't have to feed swine for the devil.

It is only when he grows cold and careless and indifferent and wanders far from the Father's house that such suggestions and inclinations will come to him at all. It is a Christian's duty to be about his Father's business, and when he neglects the high and holy calling of serving the Master, it will not be long before he will be found serving the devil.

"And he fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." (v. 16).

Poor, thoughtless, wandering, prodigal boy! How different now from the happy condition of thy lot in thy father's house! But we look around us today and see hundreds, yea, thousands, who have neglected the sacred sweets of the Master's table that satisfy for the dirty husks of the devil that do not satisfy. They are, therefore, forever hungering and thirsting but will not partake of the Bread of Life, nor drink of the fountain of grace that flows from the Rock of Ages.

But you ask, "What does it all mean?" The sad condition of the prodigal only shows to what depths of sin, sorrow, wretchedness, misery and woe a man may plunge—even a child of God—when he starts on the downward road to perdition. Did I say child of God? Yes, for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Even if a son, if he is lost and dead, what more terrible condition, I would ask, could language express or pen portray! And if truly a lost and dead son, how much more horrible will be the pain and anguish that will consume his soul in hell!

"And no man gave unto him"—as might have been expected. The same selfish treatment would likely be accorded to him by many, even at this late day, for how many have learned from bitter experience, that our friends (?) in affluence are often our foes in need. It is a mean disposition of the human heart that does not belong altogether to the world, to cater to the rich and generous as long as his money lasts and then turn the cold shoulder and give him a kick as he starts down the road to ruin. God pity the man or woman who has no pity for those who are down.

"And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" (v. 17).

"And when he came to himself." That's the secret of the matter. If he had to come to himself it is evident that he was not at himself previous to this, therefore he was in a state of lunacy as regards his spiritual condition. Just so it is with the world—it is spiritually blind and cannot see. If by some means sinners could be made to realize their awful condition out of Christ. If they could just see their poor, naked, miserable souls as God sees them, oh, what a mighty forsaking of sin there would be, and returning back to the Father's house!

The reason why so many are out of the church and Christ today is, because the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of the devil have so completely blinded them that they cannot see the tender, loving, bleeding Savior hanging on the cross. They are so thoroughly under the hypnotic influence of the devil—so completely wrapped up in business, society, finance, pleasure, and politics that they are asleep to their souls' best interest, blind to the judgments of God, and dead to every issue that has for its purpose the up-building of God's kingdom in

and the world. It can be truly said of them that they are not at themselves.

But when he "came to himself" he reasons and says, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." Ah friends, how many look upon the morally good, great and grand of earth and say, "What a noble man he is." But I want to tell you that the humblest child of God that ever placed his hope in Christ is greater, grander, nobler and better than the best moralist that ever lived. The difference is, one gathers his food from the Master's table where there is "plenty and to spare," while the other feeds on the husks of the world. No, the best man in the world is he who has the most perfect ideal and strives the hardest to attain it. No man will dispute the fact that the Christian has the most perfect ideal the world has ever seen, therefore, the humblest Christian must be better than the best of all other men.

"I will arise and go to my father." (v. 18).

Ah, what mighty power there is in that little word, "I will!" The greatest and best legacy that God ever gave to a human being is the privilege and power to exercise his own will. Though the wandering prodigal had left home and gone out into the world and spent all, and sacrificed his character, and lost his friends, and ruined his reputation—even getting down so low as to actually want to eat with the hogs, yet he had not lost his power to will. And when the guardian angel of his sainted mother stooped down and whispered a little lullaby in his ear, one that he learned away back yonder in the old homestead, as he nestled close to his mother's bosom, something immortal and divine asserted itself in his heart, and he arose and said, "I will."

No prodigal ever gets too far away from his Father's house, nor too low in the degradations of sin but that if he will exercise the divine power that God has placed in every human heart and say, "I will," he may be saved. Oh, the power of the human will!

"And he arose and came to his father." (v. 20). And his father saw him a great way off, and ran and met him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and placed a royal robe upon his body, and shoes upon his feet, and a seal of sonship upon his hand, and a great feast was prepared, and great rejoicings were in that house and heaven because of the return of the prodigal boy. May God help every prodigal who may read these lines to arise in the majesty of his might and say, "I will," and return to his Father's house.

"THE DISSOLUTION OF HELL."

BY REV. J. P. BARRETT, D. D.

Rev. Dr. Shinn, writing in the North American Review, only recently, declares that in the minds of most people hell has become a thing of the past. He makes a strong contrast as between the belief of the early church and that of the church of today. He says: "Years ago the theme of the great revival movements in this country was how to escape hell. He declares that the early Christians believed in hell; the fathers in the church were outspoken in their belief in it; the theology of the middle ages was full of it; the sacred Scriptures recognize it." And then he adds with force this statement; "Indeed there is an unbroken chain of testimony to the belief in the existence of hell down to comparatively recent time!" He also declares that the movement for the dissolution of hell started in the United States more than a century ago with the organization of the Universalist body.

Dr. Shinn continues very much to the point, as follows: From the tone of uncertainty the pulpit has adopted in regard to future retribution Dr. Shinn thinks that "people almost gain the impression that religious

teachers are trifling with them. The dread of speaking out causes many a sermon to lose its point. The preacher seems afraid to say what he believes or appears to be in great doubt whether, after all, it makes any difference how people live." But while the angels do fear have well nigh ceased, Dr. Shinn holds that there is no fact which we are so compelled to see as the fact of retribution. We may give up entirely the notion of a material hell, but we cannot give up the doctrine of retribution. "Let us grant," adds Dr. Shinn, "that the descriptions of hell are figurative and that men have blundered in accepting as literal what was intended to be figurative. Let us grant that there is no material lake of torment. Is there not something back of the imagery? Is there not something so real that men may well strive to escape it?"

No doubt many a man is anxious to get rid of hell, but he does not like to accept the way which has been provided in Christ. He wishes to abolish hell rather than to be saved from it. What he wishes is to get clear of hell and then live as he pleases, just as though there were no hell. Let the pulpit give attention to what Dr. Shinn says as to the uncertainty existing with most ministers as to hell, and this, he declares, is shown in their sermons. Brother, may your trumpet give no uncertain sound.

Some people especially dislike the thought not only of hell, but of holiness. They dislike the one about as much as the other. They desire both to be taken out of their way. Recently Sam Jones was in Norfolk and lectured. He had before him a bishop of his own church, preachers, and a plenty of other folk, and before them all he declared: "It is holiness, or it is hell." And he wanted them to look at the facts and decide just which they would take. To many people this idea is an awful one. They cannot put up with the thought of "hell at all, nor can they tolerate the thought of holiness in any real sense, and the idea of facing the fearful truth that it is holiness or hell is shocking to them, but they had better be shocked, if thereby they can be led to escape the horrors of hell, and reach the joys of holiness in Christ. People are often asking: "Is holiness essential to heaven?" Why, yes; "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12: 14. Again in Revelation 21 (especially the last verse) we are told that nothing which defiles shall enter heaven. If this is true, we must get rid of sin somewhere—this side of the grave. Then where is a better place than Calvary? Who will tell us?

"LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP."

FROM A RECENT SERMON BY REV. J. P. BARRETT, D. D.

Luke 8: 4.

Some Christians are like some sailors, they never make much headway because they never leave the shore far enough to get into deep water. Hence they are always "beached" or "stuck in the mud," or on a "sand-bar". Oh, sailor, on life's sea "launch out into the deep," "let the shore lines go," trust God for safety, and sink or swim, live or die; give yourself to God for ever. It is in hanging around the shore that the Christian gets the spotted fever—gets spotted with the world (see James 1: 27). It is only when he launches out into the deep of God's love that he misses the spotted life of sin and gets to wear the white robe of the saints—the righteousness of Christ. Oh, launch out into the deep, brother, and pull for the other shore. But this is mutiny ground. Men are willing to hear you talk of launching out into the deep, only you must not urge it as a present duty and a blessed privilege. They are willing to view the matter as a beautiful picture in the distance, but they cannot bear to be

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