

# The Christian Sun.

BY ATKINSON & LAWRENCE.

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.

Affairs grow no better, but worse in AND THE CHINA. The Boxers are numerous, bold and threatening. They despise foreigners and encroachment of all kind and want no more of them. Murder, burnings and plunder are reported from many quarters. Some missionaries, traders and many native Christians have been tortured and murdered. Much property has been destroyed. All this the Chinese government secretly approves or openly sympathizes with. It would seem that war is eminent and that the Chinese government is to be broken up and partitioned among the powers. And yet we seriously doubt either, and for two reasons. First, the Chinese are a people of great treachery as well as of unlimited adaptability. You cannot count on them. When they seem most bold and threatening they may be preparing to be most docile and harmless. They know how to take the back track, to make amends, apologize and be cowards. Just when you get ready to fight they are likely to be most ready to yield, surrender and make any sort of concession. They may do so this time. There is no reckoning with them. Second, the powers are jealous. Neither Japan, nor Russia, nor Germany, nor France has decided what part of China either wants for herself, or is willing for the others to have. It is doubtful if they do decide. It is more likely they will not. Meanwhile massacre and murder, burnings and plunder go on among foreign missionaries and merchants, a most unhappy, unfortunate, and precarious one. The whole affair is a deplorable one.

THE SEABOARD AIR LINE. It is doubtful if there has been more widespread and universal interest in any business enterprise in the South for many years than that begotten by the successful completion and consolidation of the Greater Seaboard Air Line system of railroads. With little exception, if any, the press and people generally have united in their congratulations and praise of the policy pursued and work done by President John Skelton Williams and his able, whole-souled and efficient co-laborers and subordinates. It is a mistaken idea, that of thinking that a railroad company or corporation must of necessity be non-accommodating and unpopular. The Seaboard Air Line practically disproves, and experimentally demonstrates the falsity of, such a theory. Go where you will and you will find people interested in, and speaking in highest praise of the Seaboard Air Line, and deservedly so. The management is efficient and thorough, agents, conductors, and employees generally, courteous, kind and accommodating. You find in it all a striking and happy combination of public spiritedness and business push and enterprise. And why should it not be so? Sentiment has a commercial worth and kindness itself an economic condition and value. Better be generous, courteous and accommodating because it pays better than not be so all—by far. Even the largest

corporations are not independent of the people who patronize them. The corporations are no more soulless than are the men who own and control them. Put men with souls in them to own and operate the corporations and you put souls into these. We join in the universal congratulations and best wishes to the courteous management of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad.

THE ONE marked characteristic of your AMERICAN TEMPER is that he likes a joke. It is a part of his being to take things—even serious things—in good humor, and laugh over them awhile. He may become serious, but the first bent and strongest instincts of his mind are to the jovial; afterwards to the serious. He regards nothing so helpful to his digestion, so strengthening in his burden bearing, as a good joke and a hearty laugh. His inconsistencies and incongruities furnish the abundant and ever ready material out of which he first gets his fun and pleasure, and then afterwards, by means of these, he turns with a more serious mind and a richer experience to the matter-of-fact and mighty problems of life. You will make no greater blunder than to mistake his fun for seriousness, or his pleasure for business. Admiral Dewey made that blunder. Your American took his day off, went on a pleasure trip and gave the hero of Manila a glorious welcome home. That was his holiday. When the hero's reception was over and the American returned to his home and settled down to business, conditions were changed. Dewey the hero and Dewey the presidential candidate were two different men altogether, and your American regarded him with two different moods altogether.

This reminds us of a scene through which we Americans are passing now. On every hand you hear the "trust" denounced. From these oratorical and political denunciations you would think the trust some awful and hideous monster, seeking whom it might devour—and finding very many. Newspapers and stump speakers, college orators, political debaters, and legal declaimers all join heart and hand and voice in this terrible denunciation of the "trust." Now about nine-tenths of all this is only a large joke, a sort of a side show before the main performance begins. Your American will after a while possibly look the trust question square in the face and grapple with it like a man. At present, however, he is not doing so; he is having his joke and you must let him have it out. Men are not now serious about the "trust." Neither political party is in earnest about it, nor is doing anything to rid the country of it. It was more in earnest about this ill that everybody tells us threatens our national existence, we could have more light upon it and in some sort get to work at the obliteration of it. But we are not in earnest about it. High time we were, possibly, but we are not. Says an exchange: "The whole country has been disturbed by the trust issue. President McKinley denounced it in his message. Every newspaper has debated it; every political convention has proclaimed against it in its platform. Both parties are committed to the capture and the taming of the monster, and yet absolutely nothing has been done by the Fifty-sixth Congress to halt or to hinder any corporation or combination." Thus you see that every single power in the land has had abundantly to do with the trust except the one power, Congress, that could possibly deal with it.

How true a picture is this of that which takes place so often in our churches, our communities, our homes! Every agency and power is agitated, disturbed, and harassed except the single one that might, and alone is able to, cope with and obliterate the ill.

## Contributions.

### GOD'S PECULIAR TREASURE.

REV. J. W. HARRELL.

God has many rich and beautiful treasures, but only one peculiar treasure, the bride of Christ, his glorious church. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my peculiar treasure." Mal. 3:17. R. V. God's chief delight is the bride of Christ. He counted no sacrifice too great for him to make in her behalf. He could freely give his only begotten Son for her sake. Nothing has been spared that would in any way contribute to beauty and happiness. He has done everything that was necessary to her beauty and happiness. He has done everything that was necessary to make her lovely and attractive. He is today permitting the world, so full of sin and wickedness to continue her course until the bride of Christ, His peculiar treasure, shall be made ready and adorned in every particular. He wants her to rejoice and triumph throughout all the cycles of eternity; hence the Lord has delayed His coming until she shall receive the last touch from the divine Architect.

The bride of Christ, which is the peculiar treasure of God, has been washed in the blood of the Lamb and made white every whit. There is nothing unclean or filthy about her. The old garments stained with sin and iniquity have been put away and a beautiful robe from the heavenly wardrobe has been received by faith from God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." This splendid outfit from heaven God sends the bride forth into the world to live a spotless life, in the very midst of the grossest sin and corruption, without having her garments stained in the least. She lives in the world, but is not of the world. She sees sin all around her but is not a partaker of it. She reaches forth her hand to lift the vilest and lowest sinner out of the cesspool of sin and darkness, and yet she herself is not stained. She is kept by the almighty-keeping power.

The bride of Christ has not only been made white, but clothed with the holiness of God. She is a partaker of the divine nature. "Wherefore are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." "For they verily for a few days, chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." The holiness which the bride of Christ possesses is no human invention. It is not to be purchased with anything that we possess. It cannot be earned or merited by hard and persistent labors. It is impossible for us to grow into it. It is the free gift of God to his church, and the only means by which she can receive it is simple faith. By faith we become partakers of that which God has already prepared and offered us. God has given His precious promises to awaken in us a burning desire for his holiness and has, in all the tenderness of his love, permitted the chastening rod to fall upon us that we might look unto him in simple faith and become "partakers of his holiness." He uses every means possible to bring us into the place where He can clothe us with His holiness. Oh, the depths of His infinite love and mercy. How we should yield to the first call of his gentle Spirit and receive His blessed will, so full of care and interest for us.

God delights to fill the bride of Christ with His own presence and power, which gives her prestige and power in the world. She has nothing of herself. She

gave up herself and took Christ. All her possessions are from above. Her treasures are in heaven, so she has a single eye. All things are viewed from a heavenly standpoint, and the question always asked is, will it glorify God. God has been pleased to come down to the earth and walk in His church as He goes in and out before the world. He fills her with His glory and so directs her that she will always glorify His name. The church should be filled with the divine presence, as the holy of holies with the shekinah shedding forth always the effulgence of the divine nature. In this sacred place God dwelt in His fullness. It is the presence of God in the church that causes sin and formality to drop off as the dead leaves of autumn. It is the presence of God in her that makes her the faithful bride of Christ.

What is needed in the churches of the land today above everything else is the presence of God. He would loose the fetters that bind her to the world and teach that she could not save the world by becoming like the world. Many times has the blessed Holy Ghost been grieved when the church compromised with or sold herself to the world for a few paltry dollars or the favor of men who loved not the Lord. If the churches of the land today would open their hearts to God, and in the depth of humility beseech Him to come in and fill them with His presence and power there would be a repetition of the Apostles. She would swing back to Apostolic plans and means of work with the same results. The church would be able to accomplish wonders, as the Holy Ghost moved in and worked through her. God is the same mighty God that he was in the days of the early church. There is a great lack of spiritual power in the church of today. She is not filled with that presence and power which regenerates society and gives it a mighty bent heavenward.

God, in the church, seeks to reach the people through regeneration instead of reformation. Reformation may follow regeneration, but it never precedes it. The sinner must be regenerated before he can be truly reformed. Let our churches be filled with the presence of God and mighty victories will be won from the powers of darkness. Let us wait upon God until us with his heaven inspiring presence and power.

### THE TRUE SERMON.

We believe that many preachers think that unless they can get something sensational they will be dull and tiresome to their congregations. Nothing could be further from the mark. Congregations do not want to hear sensations when they go to church; they can get plenty of those from the secular press and from neighborhood gossip. They want to hear the gospel, the simple, sweet story of the gospel, a theme hallowed with age, but always new, always interesting, never old, never tiresome.

Congregations never grow tired of the story of the gospel when it comes from a heart aflame for the salvation of the man, with a soul inspired by the great and thrilling love of God for sin-cursed and sin-sick mortals.

Dr. Joseph Parker as quoted in the Watchword and Truth recently quoted some very wise and timely words for the preachers:

"In the pulpit we want to hear as little as possible about labor and capital, strikes and wages, classes and masses; in the pulpit we want to hear as little as possible about public events which can seldom have other than the most transitory interest. We want to preach to the common experience of mankind. We need not say a word about capital and labor, yet we can so preach the universal Gospel of Christ and the everlasting law of God as to put an end to all strifes and bitter contentions and hostilities. The true sermon is not a summary of the week's events. We are to go for our materials not to the newspaper

but the Bible. There will always be a minor grade of humanity caring most for anecdotes, events, eclipses, and collisions, and to whom an eruption or an earthquake would be more interesting than the vision which Isaiah saw when the seraph came with a living coal to his waiting lips. An anecdote is not a revelation. A newspaper is the most godly people in a congregation do not want in a sanctuary to hear anything about science, about criticism, and even as little as possible about the Pope, and nothing at all about evolution. The men who have exercised the profoundest influence in the Christian pulpit are the men who have kept most strictly and most fervently to the declaration that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Let ministers read the lives of Wesley, Whitfield, Baxter and McCheyne and not least, the lives of the early Methodist preachers. What was it defied the devil and awoke angry passions and caused the bitterest persecution? It was evangelical preaching that did the work. The early Methodist preachers had no learning, they had no academic degrees, they took no scholastic prizes, but in the power of God they shook the world! Most of the people are weary, sad, disappointed, full of fear, and nothing but the love of God in Christ Jesus can get at the wound which makes the heart bleed. Ministers of the gospel let me plead with you to heal the sores of time with the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

### SIGNS OF A REVIVAL.

Immediately following the recurrence of the old faith and the abandonment of the fancies of the critics we find an increased warmth in the piety of the churches. From every quarter also, come assurances of the conviction and conversion of the outside world. All over New England the tide of spirituality has begun to rise. In Brooklyn the meetings under the direction of all denominations have been greatly blessed. In Denver one church reports converts by the hundred, and in Los Angeles, a little boy, under twelve years of age is there with his father and older brother at work and a church seating 2500 turns away hundreds of people every night. The lad says nothing striking except that he tells the old story of the old gospel in a simple, earnest and natural way and many hundreds have confessed Christ publicly and by testimonials that revealed deep and healthy experiences. Oh, ye brethren who have been wailing over the dearth of the land, God is not dead and the gospel has not lost its power. Get back to the heart of God, feel his great love for lost men throbbing in your human heart, believe in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, give him a chance to glorify Christ by unfolding the wealth of his grace to meet the need of the sinner, plead with lost men to cease their rebellion against God, their folly against themselves, and beseech them to flee from the coming doom of the lost, and then see what great results will follow. There is a sign of something moving in the air and we believe it is the droppings before the coming shower. Call your people together, brother pastor, for prayer, confession, and for work. God will bless you, and that speedily.—Religious Review of Reviews.

There is a mistaken idea of culture prevalent. Culture does not mean merely committing to memory a great number of facts out of text-books, but it does mean a careful and thoughtful assimilation of every bit of knowledge that comes our way for the purpose of making ourselves more intelligent, more noble, more helpful human beings, and where can be found a better school for the development of these attributes than in a wisely and properly conducted home?—Ladies' Home Journal.

### THE FOOL'S DEATH.

BY W. F. PRICE.

"And the king lamented over Abner, and said, died Abner as a fool dieth." 2 Sam. 3:33.

Saul, the first king of Israel had been slain in battle with the Philistines. The throne of Israel was vacant with Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and David as aspirants. Each has his armies and following. David enquires of the Lord and is directed to go up to Hebron where he is anointed king over the house of Judah, while Abner, the general of Saul's army declares Ishbosheth king over all Israel. Thus matters stood for a while; but the two kings could no more rule peacefully together over the same land than two can reign together in the same heart, so there was no alternative but to fight. They met together in battle array, the armies of Saul and David, with Abner as leader of the Israelitish forces, while Joab espoused the cause of David. The field of battle is by the pool of Gibeon. They select twelve men from each side to precipitate, by a preliminary skirmish, the battle that was soon to follow. They meet in mortal combat and Judah prevails. Abner, with his army flees, with Joab in hot pursuit. Asahel, one of Joab's brothers, in order to distinguish himself upon the field of battle endeavors to capture and slay the vanquished general. Being light of foot he advances upon him, but heedful not a generous warning, twice given, the fleeing foe turns upon him and spears him to the ground. Thus is laid in this act the foundation for the fatal tragedy of our text; and though purely a matter of self-defence on the part of Abner, yet Joab is henceforth his sworn and bitter enemy, in that he had slain his brother.

It is not long before Abner quarrels with the King over a matter, and deserts him for the cause of David. They league together which means the overthrow of Ishbosheth, the king, and great rejoicings and feasting are in the house of David. But a man's greatest enemy is sometimes found in his own household. When Joab heard of Abner's kind reception by David he was very wroth, and his intense hatred and jealousy kindled afresh the awful fires of revenge. Seizing an opportunity to make way with his rival as well as to avenge his brother's death, he induces him under the pretense of a friendly walk and consultation to step outside the gate of the city, where without a note of warning the unsuspecting Abner is slain by Joab, his pretended friend. David is deeply grieved and all the people mourn and weep over his sad and untimely death. "And the King lamented over Abner, and said, died Abner as a fool dieth. Thy hands were not bound nor thy feet put into fetters; as a man falleth before wicked men so fellest thou. And all the people wept over him again."

Now, let us draw a few suggestive lessons from this narrative. Why is it said, "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" First, I would say that Abner died as a fool because he listened to the voice of his enemy. He had slain Joab's brother and he knew it, and thereby incurred his eternal enmity. He should not have listened to, or trusted himself with, such a deadly foe.

But is not this first what many are doing today? The devil is man's sworn enemy. It is his highest ambition and purpose to deceive and destroy the souls of men. He came from a world of darkness to capture and carry our souls into darkness. The blessed, tender, loving Christ came from glory that he might carry us to glory. Thus two unseen but mighty powers are continually at war for the souls of men. But one is the embodiment of all that is good and grand and glorious in this life while the other is the embodiment of all that is evil. One hopes to win and conquer by the sweet demonstrations of truth

and love, while the other depends upon his power to deceive. The latter is a liar from the beginning (see John 8:44) and to listen to his sophistical means to commit eternal spiritual suicide. He says to the awakened sinner, "Be not in a hurry; there is time enough yet." God says, "Today is the day of salvation." He says to the man of the world, "Get riches by all means, for wealth is the source of all pleasure and position." God says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, for what doth it profit though a man gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? He says of the church, "She is an hard road, filled with superstition and deceit, wherein dwelleth no good thing." God says, "He that winneth souls is wise," and of the church, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." He says to the worldly-minded, lazy Christian, "Sleep on in ease, seek pleasure, have a good time; at a more convenient season thou canst obey thy Master's call." God says, "I knew thy works, that thou hast a name that there livest and art dead." "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." Oh, that men would stop listening to the subtle whisperings of the evil one, and listen to the still small voice of God. Then it could not be truly said, "Die they as a fool dieth."

The second reason I would give why Abner died as a fool is, he should have been ready and defended himself. He knew that Joab was his bitter enemy and might attack him at any moment, therefore he should have been prepared to meet him. In the midst of David's sorrowful lamentations over his fallen friend, he cries out in the agony of his soul, "Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters." Why, O, why, Abner, didst thou not defend thyself against thine adversary?

But is not this also true of many a professing Christian today? He carries no spiritual weapon with which to defend himself against the attacks and wilful sophistries of the devil. The Bible is our weapon. It is God's will concerning us, revealed, and contains all the powder, shot and shell needed to put the devil to flight if we only knew how to handle it properly. We should know it and use it in defense of our Master's cause whenever and wherever occasion demands. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." We should study to know it as perfectly as a physician knows his medicine chest, for here may we hope to ward off the darts of the evil one, or administer its soothing and healing balms to the sin-sick soul without a knowledge of just where to find the fit and proper remedy?

The reason why so many go wrong today is because they do not take the time and trouble to open that blessed Book and read therein the way and words of life. They do not study for themselves, but listen to every creed and confession and doctrine and "ism" that comes along and consequently they believe they know not what. They have no abiding convictions of their own, but are led hither and thither by that old sophist, the devil, and eventually go down to perdition and to ruin. Ah, brethren, we should arm ourselves with God's eternal truths and counsels, and like David of old, go forth in the might and power of our God. Then the giants of sin and deception would fall and victory would be ours, through Christ, our King.

The third and last reason I would give why Abner died as a fool is, he should not have gone outside the gate of the city.

(Concluded on 4th Page.)