

The Christian Sun.

BY ATKINSON & LAWRENCE.

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.

Current Comment.

We often get in debt to others. We stay in debt to ourselves. Some of these debts we will never pay because of natural or enforced inability, weakness or infirmity. There is one debt, however, which every man owes to himself, the failure to pay which there is no excuse for. I refer to personal cleanliness. In this lies a great deal more than would at first appear.

Many a life has been wrecked, many a boy ruined for time and for eternity simply because there was not inculcated the habit of neatness and cleanliness. There is one law in this universe that man has to contend against all his days. That is the law of degeneracy, or if you will, disintegration. There are a hundred forces and factors operative upon man, tending to cause him to degenerate. Those forces make their attack at the most vulnerable points. It may be through the physical, the mental or the moral man. Whenever the force enters, it causes general degeneracy. Man is to do all in his power to keep from degenerating. All may not dress fine, nor wear costly garments, but the personal appearance of all may be neat and cleanly.

I have seen dull boys take a course in school, go out into the world and succeed. I have seen bad boys pass through school, reform at the last, go into the world and succeed. I have never yet seen the boy who cared nothing for his personal appearance, who was slovenly and always assumed a "don't care air" go into the world and make a success in life.

This from U. S. Senator Beveridge in a recent number of the Saturday Evening Post is sense and religion, as well as very good advice and sound philosophy:

"Another thing. Go you to church. Use clean linen. Wear good and well-fitting clothing. Take care of your shoes. Look after all the details of your personal grooming. In short, observe all the methods which human experience has devised to keep men from degenerating. There is an unalterable connection between the physical and mental and moral. The old saying that 'cleanliness is next to godliness' has beneath it all the philosophy of civilization. It is an easy process that produces tramps. A few days' growth of beard, the tolerance of certain personal habits of indolence—and your tramp begins, vaguely, but none the less surely, to appear. This is accompanied by a falling off in clear-cut thought and a cessation of definite and effective energy."

We receive our paper, take a few moments from our leisure and rush over its contents without much regard to its real value or importance in the world. Least of all do we ever consider what expenditure of energy, capital and thought it has cost to bring it to our table, or what influence it is wielding in our lives now that it is before us. To measure the power of the press, or weigh the influence of the printed page, are tasks impossible and incomprehensible.

This is among those silent and immeasurable influences which control us in a way and manner "we wist not of" and to an extent we know not of. One of the most influential men in this country is Editor Bok of the Ladies' Home Journal. How influential, neither he himself nor any one else will ever know. In ways unnumbered he influences the goings and the comings of hundreds of thousands of people. To these he speaks each month. How well, how commandingly, how rightly, how influentially he speaks, I say, is another and an altogether unknown question.

But some idea of what is required in labor and capital, for him, his co-editors and contributors, to speak and to lay upon our table the finished product of their speech may be gathered from what follows:

One man could not mail a single edition of the Ladies' Home Journal in a whole year. Eighteen men, aided by the fastest mailing appliances, are kept on a rush every month getting the Ladies' Home Journal off to its subscribers. The first shipments are started about the middle of each month, and from that until the twenty-fifth the magazines pour out of the Journal's publishing office by its two-horse dray load. On the twenty-fifth of each month every Journal has reached its destination, and work in the mailing department slackens for a few days. Some idea of the tremendous size of the Journal's subscription list may be gained when it is known that forty tons of mailing type are required to set up the names of subscribers. There are three-quarters of a ton of each numeral, and it requires twenty thousand galleys to accommodate the subscribers' names in type. This stock would equip six or eight large daily newspapers. As many as sixty-five compositors are employed in setting the names of the Journal's subscribers in type—printers enough to set the type for the biggest metropolitan daily newspaper. The postage paid by the Journal approximate \$75,000 a year.

This is taken as a sample of only one feature of the work, and that a very small feature, comparatively, of what it takes to place a journal upon your table each month. Take the daily or weekly journal of similar proportions, in number of subscribers and readers, and the imagination will have some help in its effort to comprehend the amount of labor, capital and energy required to furnish us each day, week and month with only the current literature of the time.

North Carolina, as well as many others of the Southern states, should have a State reformatory for youthful criminals. Our present system of taking the youthful offender of the law and putting him prison side by side with the hardened criminal is but a schooling in crime, and a sin against the youth who has transgressed.

There are two methods of punishment, the reformatory and the punitive. The first method looks to the punishment of the crime and the reformation of the criminal, while the latter looks to the punishment of the crime and the degradation of the criminal. It is not difficult to decide as to which method should be pursued by a civilized, much more by a Christian State.

The one plea of those who argue against a reformatory is the poverty of the State—that a reformatory will cost more than the State can afford to expend in that direction just now.

In reply to this two points may be urged: 1. The immediate cost to the State may be more than the immediate returns, but the ultimate cost will not. If memory serves correctly, (I haven't data at hand) the superintendent of the Massachusetts reformatory at Concord told me a few years since that 75 per cent of the youths in that reformatory left there when their terms expired never to return, but with a knowledge of business

and a useful trade.

It may be estimated with safety that one-half of those leaving a reformatory return to the world outside and engage successfully in some "productive industry. The indirect returns to the State through these laborers and skilled workmen more than compensate the State for its original outlay even in dollars and cents.

2. But the primary and fundamental question for a State never is and never can be, "Does it pay?" Deeper than this, and more far-reaching than this, is the question, "Does it make better citizens?" This last is the question with which a right State is most deeply concerned, and has first of all to consider.

True, the State is not a charitable institution. Neither is it a money making institution. Its chief business is to make a right citizenship, to create and to furnish conditions in which an intelligent, free and, so far as possible, self-supporting, prosperous and happy citizenship may abide.

To the argument then that we are too poor and that a reformatory is too costly we have to say, that it will pay immediately and primarily in a better citizenship and ultimately and indirectly in dollars and cents.

We are glad indeed that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of North Carolina is working so faithfully in the direction of securing a reformatory for the State. We believe their efforts will be crowned with success.

The Asheville Union presented their petition to the Press Association of North Carolina recently and every member present became a signer and the Association selected a committee of their body to argue the matter before the next legislature. The legislature of this State had the matter up once before and it only lost by one vote.

We trust that the press of the State and the friends of an enlightened and Christian citizenship in the State and the friends of young offenders of the law who need to be helped to stronger manhood and not condemned to a life of crime, will bring such pressure to bear upon our next general assembly that something practical and definite will be done.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

BY W. F. PRICE.

[Matthew 13: 24-30, 37-43.]

We have here the beautiful and significant parable of the wheat and tares. It is one of the many pretty symbolic illustrations which our Lord used to simplify and make plain the great truths of the gospel, so that the most ignorant and unlearned might easily see and understand. They all knew what the wheat and tares meant, and what relation they bore to each other. They knew that the one meant life and health and strength, while the other meant only disappointment and death. One meant the staff of life; the other the destroyer of life. One meant prosperity and happiness to the tiller of the soil, while the other represented everything that retards, and stifles, and dwarfs the growth of the fruit, and makes the field of less value in proportion as there are tares growing in it. And so he put forth this beautiful parable, and said: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field."

Christ is represented here as the sower, the field as the world, and the good seed as the children of his kingdom. God is the author of all good, for "Every good and perfect gift cometh from above." Every sacred thought, and noble deed, and high and holy impulse that throbs through the heart of man comes through the direct influence of the heavenly Father, and bears the unmistakable evidence of the divine. God is the author of all good, in both saint and sinner, and let not any one think be his profession whatever it may, that his noble traits of character, or his kindly disposition, or his love and charity toward his neighbor is other than

a touch of the divine hand that fashioned him.

Then if God be the author of all good the devil must be the originator of all evil. It was he who punished Job of old: it was he who sowed tares among the wheat. It was he who gave us our bar-rooms, and gambling-hells, and houses of prostitution. He is the author of the widows' tears, and the orphans' cries, and the broken hearts of so many of our dear old sainted mothers. It was he who caused the deluge of old, the fall of Pompeii, the Lisbon earthquake, the Johnstown flood, the Chicago fire and the Galveston horror; and all of the many wars, and famines, and pestilences, and horrors of wind and flood and flame, from the beginning of time down to the present moment; for who can lay any of these things to the charge of the immaculate God? Ever since he stole his way into the paradise of innocence and purity and music and birds and flowers, and there by his subtle ways, and sophistic reasoning, induced our first parents to sin against the holy commandment of God; even down till now Satan is the author of all of our sins and sorrows and pains and miseries and deaths, and will be till time shall be no more. Oh how awful are the works of this mighty destroyer!

But now about the tares. The parable says that "while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." This is characteristic of the methods of Satan. He chooses the darkest night, the weakest point, and the most unguarded moment to carry on his nefarious business of wrecking, ruining, and destroying the lives, and hopes, and homes of men. It is so in the city in which we live. "He goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," yet he is often seen as an angel of light. May the Lord help us to ever see and know him, and guard against his cunning.

"While men slept." A sleeping church as well as a sleeping Christian will sooner or later be filled with tares. So many of us are asleep to our souls best interest and the interest and welfare of those around us. How little do we seem to care! We profess to be Christians and to follow in the steps of the meek and lowly Nazarene, yet it our lives and actions count for anything we care less for the church than we do for the world. Should we not rather be up and doing, and like the little twelve-year-old Teacher in the temple "be about our Father's business?" Oh if God should call us all home to-day, of how many would it be said, "Well done thou good and faithful servant?"

When I was a boy we used to choose sides and play a certain game which required a dividing line to be drawn between. In running to and fro over the lines so often we would frequently put it out, and not know exactly where it was, or on which side we stood. I sometimes think it is so with the church. So many of our members have crossed over the line to play with the world, and so many of the world have followed them back into the church till it is a little hard to tell just where the line is, or which side some of them are on. Would it not be well for each of us to give our hearts a scrutinizing search, and see where we are standing today.

Now let us look at some of the tares of the devil, and see how they are sown. They come to us among the little things of life. It may be but an unkind look, a curl of the lip, or a toss of the head. A little thing it may seem, yet it is the substance from which often spring the hateful wicked tares. It may be but a glass of wine kept in the cupboard for some imaginary ill, yet the example of your life may produce a habit that will make of your boy a drunkard. It may be but a little innocent looking pack of cards placed in your parlor to amuse the children or to while away the idle hours with some friend, yet the boy that now plays for fun will soon-

er or later play for stakes, and your home will thus be made the starting point of a gambler's sad career. It may be but a little cake walk, innocent and pretty and childish as it may seem, yet it was born and nursed in the lowest theaters, and reared in the vilest atmosphere of the vilest of our cities, and the prominence and example it is now given, and the effect it produces in the hearts and minds and lives of our little ones is calculated to make for us a thousand dancers who will grow up worldly minded and careless, and who will turn a deaf ear to a mother's prayers, the calls of the church, and the wooings of the Holy Spirit. This is sowing tares; the reaping will come by and by, for God's book says: " whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

And friends, the trouble is we will reap more than we sow. Not only, "Whatsoever a man soweth will he reap," but perhaps he will reap a hundred, or a thousand fold more than he sows. When a farmer plants only a bushel of corn does he expect to reap only a bushel of corn? Ah no, but possibly a hundred times as much, for one grain will often produce a thousand. So it is in sowing tares. If your boy or girl could only reap the one bad example you gave them it would not be so bad; but for the one indulgence at the card table, or the punch bowl, or the dance, or the theatre you may reap a life time of tears, and disappointment, sorrow and grief and all because of a wayward child.

We note that the wheat and tares were very much alike at first. So is morality and Christianity. They may look a little alike to some, but in God's sight there is a vast difference between the two. A moral life is nice and pretty and good as far as it goes, but it only goes to the grave. Christianity is the only principle that has to do with two worlds. It does not stop at the grave, but spans the wonderful mysteries of death, and anchors on the shores of the great beyond.

Neither did the farmer discover the tares in wheat until after they had sprung up and began to show their colors. Then it was found to be too late to uproot them. So it may be in the lives of our children. The set habits and the evil tendencies of their early making often clings to them through life and will sooner or later become fixed principles, not to be easily changed: and like the little hand that bends the tiny oak, the growth and grandeur and beauty of a right tree is forever destroyed because it was started in the wrong direction.

Friends, habits will grow, and good habits will grow as well as evil ones. Give God a chance. There are so many little hearts that might be made gardeners in the Master's kingdom, sowing the seeds of kindness and love. Let us sow all the wheat we can while the devil is sowing tares; and when the angel of God shall come at the end of the world to gather in the golden sheaves, may it be said of each and every one of us, as of the servant of old, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

BY REV. W. S. LONG, D. D.

There are two kinds of religious knowledge, which though intimately connected as cause and effect, may nevertheless be distinguished. These are the knowledge of truth as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and the impression which that truth makes on the human mind and heart when rightly apprehended.

The first may be compared to the inscription or image on a seal; the other to the impression made by the seal on the wax. When that impression is clearly and distinctly made, we can understand, by contemplating it, the true inscription on the seal more satisfactorily, than by direct view of the seal itself. Thus it is found, that nothing tends to confirm more strongly and elu-

cidate more clearly the truths contained in the word, than an inward experience of their efficacy on the heart. There is, however one manifest disadvantage, under which we labor, in acquiring this kind of knowledge, whether by our own experience, or that of others; which is, that we are obliged to follow a fallible guide; and the pathway to this knowledge is very intricate, and the light which shines upon it often obscure.

All investigation of the exercises of the human mind and heart are attended with difficulty; and never more so than when we attempt to ascertain the religious or spiritual state of our hearts. If the impression of the truth were perfect, there would exist little difficulty; but when it is a mere outline and the lineaments obscure, it becomes extremely difficult to determine whether it be the genuine impress of the truth. There is, also, so great a variety in the constitution of human minds, so much diversity in the strength of the natural passions, and so wide a difference in the temperament of Christians, and so many different degrees of piety, that the study of religious experience becomes exceedingly difficult. In many cases the most experienced and skillful casuist will feel himself at a loss; or may utterly mistake, in regard to the true relation of a case submitted to his consideration. The complete knowledge of the deceitful heart of man, is a prerogative of the omniscient Lord. "I the Lord search the hearts and the reins of the children of men." But we are not on this account forbidden to search into the matter; so far is this from being true, that we are repeatedly exhorted to examine ourselves in relation to this very point. Paul says: "Examine yourself, whether you be in the faith—prove your own selves—know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

In judging of religious experience, it is very important to keep steadily in view the system of divine truth, contained in the Holy Scriptures; otherwise, our experience, as is often the case will degenerate into enthusiasm or fanaticism. Many ardent professors, seem too readily to take it for granted, that all religious feelings must be good. They therefore take no care to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious. Their only concern is about the ardor of their feelings; not considering that if they are spurious, the more intense they are, the further will they lead them astray. In our day, there is nothing more necessary than to distinguish carefully between true and false experiences in religion; to "Try the spirits whether they are of God." In making this discrimination, there is no other test but the infallible word of God; let every thought, motive, impulse, and emotion, be brought to this touch-stone. "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to these it is because there is no light in them."

If genuine religious experience is nothing but the impression of divine truth on the mind and heart, by the energy of the Holy Spirit, then it is evident that a knowledge of the truth is essential to genuine piety; error never can, under any circumstances, produce the effects of truth. If the error relates to fundamental truths, then there can be no genuine piety; but when a true impression is made, it may be rendered very defective for want of a complete knowledge of the whole truth; or its beauty marred by the existence of some errors mingled with the truth, which may be well illustrated by looking again at the seal. Suppose that some part of the image inscribed on the seal has been defaced, or some of the letters have been obliterated, it is evident that when the impression is made on the wax, there will be a corresponding deficiency or deformity, although in the main the impress may be correct.

There is reason to believe, therefore, that all ignorance of revealed truth, or error respecting it, must be attended with a

corresponding defect in the religious experience of the individual. This consideration teaches us the importance of teaching the truth, and the duty of increasing daily in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. This is the true and only true method of growing in grace. They may be much correct theoretic knowledge, I admit, when there is no impression corresponding with it on the heart; but still, all good impressions on the heart, are from the truth, and from the truth alone. Hence we find that those believers who receive the system of evangelical truth, only in part, have defective experience and their Christian character is defective also. Even when piety exists, under such circumstances, we often find a sad mixture of enthusiasm, self-righteousness, or superstition: And even when the theory of doctrinal truth is complete, yet if there be an error respecting the terms of Christian communion, by narrowing the entrance into Christ's fold to a degree which His word does not authorize, this single error, whatever profession may be made to the contrary with the lips, always generates a narrow spirit of bigotry, which greatly obstructs the free exercise of that brotherly love which Christ made the badge of discipleship.

If these things be true, then should all Christians use unceasing diligence in acquiring a correct knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and they should pray for the influence of the Holy Spirit to render the truth effectual in their sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," was a prayer offered up by Christ, in behalf of all whom the Father had given him.

A Unique Religious Enterprise.

According to letters received in this city, a unique religious enterprise has been established at Coney Island, N. Y., long a place of pleasure and a sink of depravity as well. In the very midst of the worst carousals rises a tower, sixty-five feet high, upon the top of which is a box-shaped cabinet, with sides of ground glass, upon which are painted in startling colors the words "Jesus saves." At the top of the tower is a tall flagstaff from which floats a long streamer bearing the same inscription. An electrical apparatus furnishes a light so strong that the legend can be read from passing steamers at least two miles, and sometimes three miles out at sea. In addition to this lighthouse negotiations are now in progress for an instrument that will throw letters of fire upon the clouds at night and thus bring the word of God and the promises of religion constantly to the attention of the habitues of the most hilarious resort in the United States. At the foot of the tower is a yellow building fitted up as a resort for tired people, women and children, who come down to Coney Island from the city to spend the day. They are furnished free ice water and milk. There are tables upon which they may spread their lunches, and a cool shelter to which everybody who desires can escape from the hot sun and the confusion outside and find a quiet, comfortable place to rest. The chapel is open every afternoon and evening, and the seats are usually well filled, the chapel and the tower being always strong rivals of the merry-go-round, dancing pavilions, saloons and other resorts of the island. The place is due to the personal enterprise of William D. Hughes, an ex-convict, a man of education and culture, who is devoting his life to mission work.—Washington Correspondent.

Break one thread in the border of virtue, and you on't know how much may unravel.—Cunningham Geikie.

It is said that there are as present as many as 60 Mormon elders or proselytes at work in N. C.