

The Christian Sun.

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

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All communications, whether for publication or pertaining to matters of business, should be sent to the Editor, J. O. Atkinson, Elon College, N. C.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Tragedy and Mystery.—All tragedy is mystery, because unnatural, and per contra, all mystery, as a rule, is tragedy for the same reason. Mystery or tragedy is perplexing and deplorable enough, but darken mystery with tragedy, or deepen tragedy with mystery and you have a most unholy combination. Such a combination is the Beaseley-Harrison episode in Currituck Co., N. C., in which episode seven year old Kenneth Beaseley disappeared as suddenly and as completely as if the ground had swallowed him and closed its jaws forever; and the last act of the episode ended last Wednesday when Joshua Harrison, accused and convicted of kidnapping Kenneth, blew out his brains with a pistol in a Norfolk, Va., hotel. In 1905 Kenneth's father was a member of the Legislature at Raleigh. One day when the lad was returning from school he disappeared, and all searching found no clue to the missing boy. In due season rumor went out that a neighbor, Joshua Harrison, had kidnapped and made way with the boy. A trial followed in which it was shown that Harrison had threatened the Beaseley boy's father and had been seen with young Kenneth after the mysterious disappearance. There was produced much damaging circumstantial evidence which a jury decided was sufficient to convict. The court's decree was twenty years in the penitentiary. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, and on appeal there being heard, a new trial was refused and the decision of the lower court unanimously and vigorously affirmed by the higher court. When Harrison learned the final decision and that he was not to be granted a new trial and that his sentence of twenty years must begin he ended his life with a bullet while the officer was in the hotel seeking his arrest. A note was found on the dead man's person declaring his innocence.

But even suicide has not changed public opinion. The verdict of the public, from evidence that seems beyond dispute or doubt, is that Joshua Harrison was responsible for the disappearance of young Kenneth Beaseley. The mystery of it all is now most likely locked in the grave; but in this world of wonders it happens that the truth, though buried in the ground, usually rises. We doubt if this tragic mystery, this awful and deplorable tragedy which has wrecked two homes and blasted the hopes and plans of many lives, will remain shrouded and uncovered forever. But this episode is a lesson in tragedy, sorrow and gloom that one does not like to think of long or dwell upon. In any event, write this down to remember, to wit: that in this dark deed and behind it all, and causing it all, is black and awful and hideous Sin. For Sin originates the suffering and all the trying tragedy of this earth.

Prosperity and Gamblers.—One good result of the present prevailing prosperity is that the country does not have to stand in daily dread of the gamblers and stock gougers on Wall Street. A few days ago things went all to smash in the Street and the occupants of the Street stood with open-eyed awe to witness what calamity would then befall the balance of the great American people. Lo, and behold, nothing whatever happened. The country went on the even tenor of its way, paying not the least attention whatever to Wall Street doings.

It were worth a decade of endurance and hardship to teach Wall Street and its gamblers that this country is not dependent for its prosperity, or for its adversity, on them.

Fact is, it never has been if only honest men had had confidence in themselves and in others like themselves. That a great nation should be, or feel itself to be, dependent for the tranquility of its financial affairs upon a few score of thieves and rob-

bers is a bubble of nonsense and idiocy which it has taken this wave of general prosperity to puncture. Even prosperity has its blessings.

Drinking In Public.—Had you taken time to observe that there is shame, if not scorn and disdain, for the fellow who dares to take a drink in a public place these days? Time was, and not long ago, when at a hotel, or in a railway car, one did not hesitate to pass around the bottle and fill the air with the unhallowed perfumes of strong drink. You do not see that in our times much. We have come to better things.

This writer was at a lunch counter in a railroad hotel recently when a very courteous and courtly sort of well dressed fellow drew his bottle and requested a glass with ice and water. "Will you kindly go to the ante-room to drink, please?" the clerk graciously requested. "No, I am not ashamed of this place to drink in," retorted the bacchanalian. "But, my dear sir; we of the place are ashamed of you is the trouble" replied the clerk. And that was a center shot. The fellow took his drink, bowed himself out of the place amid the shame and scorn of the spectators, while the clerk was commended for his courtly and courageous deed and manner. "We are ashamed of you," is the hotel clerk's and the public's verdict against the man who flaunts the fact that he loves the bottle and is not ashamed of it. This is well. If a man will drink, is fully determined upon that sort of thing, let him not flaunt that fact to the public these times. It is not good for him. It is no longer considered the "big" and manly thing to do. The biggest and the manliest men are letting the fool stuff alone.

*A DESTRUCTIVE CRITIC OF 1907.

(To the Reader of 1907.

Dear Brother: Although interested in the able writings of the higher critics of 1907, especially in their assumption of having discovered something valuable, as if the "historical method" were new in studying the Bible, I confess I became somewhat drowsy under their monotonous efforts to make the sacred writings seem to abound in misstatements. But I gradually absorbed their genius and spirit, and seemed to become a destructive critic, though calling myself a higher critic.

While in this state of mind, sleepy though I was, I seemed to live rapidly through the centuries, century after century, until I found myself moving among scholars who related their letters with the numerals, 2, 9, 0.

On seeming to be roused from a semi-consciousness, and supposing that a thousand years had passed from the time I fell asleep under the dreary chanting about the mistake of the Bible, I seemed to be walking among the fancied alcoves of my library, now increased by the additions of a thousand years and coming across the following correspondence I give you the letters, believing that it may be interesting to the reader to observe how the reasoning of the future destructive critic (writing in 2907 of our times in the spirit in which the destructive critic of 1907 writes of Bible times) will make the conditions of our generation to appear.

If we of the year 1907 know something of the conclusions of the learned gentleman of 1907 to be false, whose letters I now reveal if his modes of reasoning are absurd, or if he lays stress on insufficient data in his logic, or, especially, if he is ludicrously given to denying the statements of eye-witnesses to the facts which we of our time know to be true, these faults must not be attributed to me: for I copy the letters and publish them exactly as I found them a thousand years before they were written.

J. J. Summerbell.)

Dayton, Ohio.

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NINTH LETTER.

Kinkade, New Zealand, 15, 11, 2907.

My Dear Grandson,

You may remember that in my last letter I wrote you about the corruption of the courts in America in 1907, giving you extracts from the press of Europe, whose editors stated that important decisions were announced from the bench, but the real work was "done behind closed doors." This, of course, is an insinuation of bribery, or corruption of some other

form. The editors of Europe considered "the judicial procedure of America a menace to society." The editors represented the courts as "subservient" to "predatory wealth," and the lawyer as the "hanger on of corporations."

I again call your attention to these conservative and unprejudiced opinions of European editors, in order for you to grasp more readily the stupendous misrepresentation of court affairs in America.

The case which I shall use to prove this to you is that of the great Standard Oil Trust.

In our age we could never have arrived at the truth on this subject, had not our higher critics become experts in the use of the historical method in investigating the facts of past ages.

The direct falsehood that the American public deluded itself with was that the Standard Oil Trust had been tried in court for many violations of some law, had been found guilty by a jury, and had been fined \$29,240,000 by the presiding justice, Judge Landis. It is astonishing how widely the opinion prevailed at the time, that this statement could be fact. Even the higher critics of 1907 seem to have believed it. It is wonderful how people will believe impossible things.

But a fine of \$29,240,000, imposed in 1907 on a law breaking corporation in America, would have been an absolute impossibility:

1. Because of the testimony of the European editors I quoted above, to the effect that in America the corporations ruled the courts. Their unprejudiced testimony must in such a case be accepted as conclusive:

2. The magnitude of the fine itself is proof enough. Such a fine was never in all the history of the world imposed in a civil court for a violation of law. The statement contradicts the experience of mankind of all ages and lands. The alleged fine was so great that it might have been inflicted by a victorious nation after a bloody war on a conquered state. It might be the ransom of a city. But to believe that such a fine was imposed by a civil judge after a jury trial is unthinkable. Our critics are unanimous on this point; that is, our higher critics.

We went to work to discover the origin of the story, and most of us attribute it to the awkward arithmetical or numerical system of 1907; especially its notation. The Americans used the decimal system in money matters. The separation mark between dollars and cents was only a point, a period mark (.). Now suppose that Judge Landis had written the fine thus: \$292400.00; and that the decimal point separating the two right hand digits (00), for the cents, had been obscured or erased in some way. Judges and lawyers sometimes did not write plainly. If that decimal point had been obscured, the clerk, or reporters, might have read the fine thus, \$29240000, instead of \$292400, the real one, according to most of our critics.

Even this sum, which I myself think too large, would "tax credulity" for the Oil Trust was guided by one of the saintliest men of 1907, who would not have permitted any violation of law in the corporation he had created, and which was intimately associated with his name, John D. Rockefeller. He was a large and frequent giver to the religious enterprises of the following denominations: Congregationalists, Disciples and Baptists. He was religious in his tastes and habits. He certainly would never have allowed his corporation to commit crimes justifying a fine of \$29,240,000.

Besides, his son was the celebrated leader of a Bible class in New York, before which he clearly explained how the poor should be content with their lot, after the example of Jesus. Thus the whole family influence was on the side of right.

And again, another of the great Oil Trust officers, H. H. Rogers, was a man so far removed from anything selfish, sordid, or criminal, that at a city, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, at his own expense he erected in honor of his mother one of the most beautiful churches on the western continent. It must have been exceedingly artistic and expensive, to attract attention in that country, where from the time of the Mound Builders and

Pilgrim Fathers on down to 1957 the people were great builders. His filial piety strongly negatives the belief that he could have engaged in anything criminal; much more the idea that he could have done anything justifying such an enormous fine as \$29,240,000.

Thus the majority of higher critics consider the sum of \$29,240,000 all that could have been imposed by Judge Landis. Even that was so tremendous that the saintly Rockefeller said that Judge Landis would be dead before the government would get the money. I presume he said it under inspiration.

Besides, the dividends annually distributed by the Oil Trust among its stockholders, about fifty million dollars, show that it must have been a law-abiding business house.

This opinion is powerfully confirmed by a fragment which we have found of a proclamation issued by the directors of the Oil Trust soon after the trial, reading as follows:

"The directors of the Standard Oil Company, in printing this pamphlet, desire to emphasize for the half million people directly interested in its welfare, the assurance of the company's absolute innocence of wrong doing on any of the prosecutions lately instituted against it in the federal courts."

Now, my dear grandson, you must remember that this proclamation was issued by the board of which the pious Rockefeller was head, and therefore must be accepted. You see it is a direct statement of innocence. Then it follows as reasonable, that if the corporation was fined at all, the judge (being under corporation influence, and also recognizing uncertainty as to the guilt of the Trust) imposed as small a penalty as possible. In fact, I am of the opinion that the decimal point should have been placed just after the figure 9, making the fine \$29.24; and that the zeros after the figure 4 were all added by some shrewd forger, to make the fine appear enormous, and to make the judge seem independent of corporation influence. The fine, thus, was \$29.24, which harmonizes with human experience, and with the evidence of the European editors.

My dear grandson, I hope you will bring the same resourcefulness and analytic spirit, which we critics have exercised about the \$29,000,000 fine myth, to the study of the Scriptures. Few things are more unfortunate than to believe things that are not so. We ought to seek the truth.

Now there is the deluge of Noah, for instance. I do not believe that story; for it contradicts my own experience, and that of all men I ever saw. In fact there were only eight witnesses, anyhow; none of the rest of mankind testified to it, not one.

Of course, I believe in the glacial epoch in the earth's evolution, of which the geologists write; that ice once covered much of the northern hemisphere, mountains deep, carrying in its icy mass, or pushing before its front precipices, great boulders, which, when melting, it dropped all the way from Massachusetts to Kentucky; and the water resulting from the melting of this mass of ice, reaching from the north pole to Kentucky, deep enough to flow over rugged country, and heavy enough to gouge out such deep lakes as the Seneca, in the province of New York, would be enough to flood all the civilized world even in our time, 2907. I can believe that: for geologists reason from their appropriate proofs that it must have been so.

But that water could cover the inhabited world, in an early age, at the command of God, that I cannot believe: for it—well, if I believed that, I would have to believe some other remarkable things stated in the Bible. I can believe that ice covered much of the globe in the glacial period, for the Bible does not say anything about that; does not even mention it.

In my next I will try to show you more of the dreadful corruption of the year 1907, against which the higher critics in vain hurled all their proof that John did not write the fourth gospel.

Your affectionate grandfather,
Higher Critic.