

The Christian Sun.

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

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Winter Evenings.—To what a splendid use these fine winter evenings may be put. It were a shame and a pity to waste them.

By seven o'clock p. m. now in the average home, the day's work is done, the evening meal finished and the table cleared. At the least there are two and a half to three hours before reasonable bed time. When there is no company, and the family is not going out, what a splendid time for reading, study, self-improvement. Talk of the golden hours, these are the golden hours, for they mean more than gold, they mean opportunity for a broader and better outlook, privilege of knowing more useful and agreeable facts and fancies, pleasure of pursuit and possession of that which is best in life, namely, mind and soul food.

For such evenings every family needs more than the local paper. A good magazine or two should come now and then: a fresh book will add untold delights to the family circle: and the good books and the Book of books already in the home should have new reading now. Yes the winter nights have come. Get out the books and bring in the papers, and let the family have a good time by the cosy fireside.

Barn Burning.—According to the Charlotte Observer eighteen farmers' feed barns have been burned in Mecklenburg county within the last few months and not a guilty person has been arrested. We happen to know that what the Observer reports in its own county is going on to more or less extent in other counties of this and adjoining States. It would be nothing less than appalling to know the total destruction of property in this fashion every year in North Carolina. It must be enormous. Not infrequently the farmer sees the entire year's feed for his teams go up in smoke, and now and then the teams themselves are also destroyed. Withal it is a pitiable spectacle.

And the more pitiable for this reason. This barn burning as a rule results from a cowardly and villainous attempt to secure revenge. An offended former tenant, or an irate wage earner, bears a grudge, and while the farmer sleeps, the offended one steals in the dead hours of the night to his former land lord's barn, and seeking vile revenge, sticks fire to a building quickly caught and easily burned. There is seldom a way of finding out the villain and the coward.

In all the annals of law breaking we do not know a baser and more cowardly sentiment that prompts to crime than this of barn burning. The State ought to take some steps to hunt out these dastardly offenders and put them in the chaing gang.

Bombarding the Filipinos.—We have not yet done with the Philippines. Not a little jesting has been indulged in as to our original purpose in possessing ourselves of this rather troublesome Achipelago. But let the original motive be what it may, those tribes, far back in the ways of civilization, are ours for keep and for protection and guidance until our nation sees fit to let them go. To this end we are still bombarding them, not with shell and shrapnell now, but with book-bags, tablets, and teachers. Our nation is maintaining a quota of a thousand school teachers there. The government is now advertising for three hundred more to go out early next year. The age limits are twenty and forty years. The entrance salary of the great majority is \$1200 for the first year, with promise of promotion and advance on worth and merit. Already more Filipinos can speak English than can speak Spanish, though Spain ruled those people more than two hundred and fifty years. So with our English tongue and thought, with our American ideas and ideals are we bombarding the barbarism of this people and bringing them to a better day.

In God We Trust.—These words which President Roosevelt has ordered removed from our coin are coming in for public notice and discussion not a little. We expressed our opinion and deep regret last week that the words were to be removed. Many other religious journals are expressing the same regret.

Among the most powerful opinions expressed as to why these words should not be removed is that by the editor of the New York Christian Advocate. This paper gives a full history of how the words came to be printed on the coin at all. Rev. M. R. Watkinson of Ridleyville, Pa., under date of Nov. 13, 1861 wrote Hon. S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, asking that something be expressed on our coin showing that we were not an atheistic or a pagan people. To this Secretary Chase replied.

Treasury Department, November 20, 1861.
Dear Sir: No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins.

You will cause a device to be prepared without unnecessary delay with a motto expressing in the fewest and tersest words possible this national recognition.

Yours truly,
S. P. Chase.

James Pollock, Esq., Director of the Mint, Philadelphia, Pa.

In keeping with this decision Congress later enacted a law that the words "In God We Trust" should be placed upon our coin. Now in commenting on the President's decision to remove the words the paper referred to gives these fine sentiments. "Gladston said that a religious tradition should never be disturbed unless it is necessary. There is a great difference between beginning a custom and summarily abolishing it. There had been no protest against the inscription and there would have none had it remained. Something immeasurably more productive of irreverence than incidental irreverent jesting suggested by the inscription on the coins, prevails in this country, even among men in high position, the profane use of the names of God and Christ in conversation.

Every good citizen desires to approve the did not foresee that the great majority of States if possible, and it is strange that he did not foresee that the great majority of religious people, Protestant, Catholic, many Jews, would be sensitive at the removal of those words at a time when every vestige of national recognition of God is of importance, when the forces that make against religion are growing bolder and stronger, and when, as some one has said the country never needed to connect the thought of God with financial transactions more than it does now.

The faithful performance of the duty of the Chief Magistrate of the Union will necessarily entail many divergent judgments and, as Abraham Lincoln is said to have remarked: "A statesman who would be sure of his friends must beware of their sensitive points." In view of the existence of the inscription so long, the effect of it might well have been taken into consideration before surprising the American people with the act. It will be used by all opponents to the Christian religion or any other founded on one God, to strengthen the opinion that "religion is dying out."

Judge Cook of the Superior Court in delivering this charge to the jury at Durham N. C. our chief tobacco town, created a great deal of interest by devoting most of his charge to the violation of law in selling cigarettes to minors. In this part of his charge he told the jurors as to the law against selling cigarettes to minors and that those who sell should be presented. He said, in part of his charge, that he did not think that any boy who developed the cigarette smoking habit early in life ever developed the highest moral character in life. The judge told the jurors that it was their duty to present each and every dealer in cigarettes who has been selling to minors.

"OUR FATHER."

The two articles already published were intended to prepare the way for the statement of a few fundamental truths that are greatly needed at the present time. That the unsettled state of opinions respecting both the particular statements of theological doctrines, as found in the creeds, and of the fundamental question of the validity of the Christian religion itself, is not without meaning. Something is wrong somewhere. Where is it? Can these questions be answered? I think they can be answered, and that too by propositions that will commend themselves to the good judgement of every sincere inquirer after truth. I think "the fulness of time" has come for the statement of the fundamental, central truth, on which a theory of God's dealings with the children of men will be constructed, that will be to the present system what the Copernican system of astronomy was to the Ptolemaic. Whether this bold statement is a vain boast or not my readers shall be the judges.

I find this fundamental, central truth in the familiar phrase "Our Father." Deep down in this phrase I find the primary idea of all the works God has ever preformed, and all the words He has ever spoken. It covers all time, from the first creative fiat down into the ages of eternity; and from this as a viewpoint all God's dealings with humanity are to be studied. It is also the only viewpoint from which they can be truly understood.

When a young man, who has just reached the age of lawful manhood, goes West, obtains of the government a quarter-section of wild land, and puts up a cabin, his primary though is undoubtedly a home, a family. This is one of God's most instructive and impressive object lessons. It points directly, as a parable of action, to the fact that when God created this universe, He was building a home for His family; and when He had spent inconceivable ages in framing, finishing, and furnishing His home, He created man in His own image and likeness (children always are in the image and likeness of their parents), placed him upon this little planet, and gave him dominion over everything upon it. This is His family. Of other families He may have on other worlds, I know nothing, and have nothing to say. I have no doubt that Jesus intended the prayer, beginning with the words, "Our Father," for the use of all men; the very first duty of a human life being to recognize and observe that fact.

In studying the meaning of this relationship, we discover that it embraces three particulars, of fundamental importance in determining the duties, and understanding the experiences of life. These particulars are (1) the relation of parent and child; (2) the relation of provider and dependent; (3) the relation of Ruler and subject. All the duties and experiences of our individual lives grow out of and are connected with these relations. The relation of parent and child imposes the mutual duties of love, confidence, devotion, and that beautiful freedom and familiarity that is the crowning glory of a happy home. The relation of provider and dependent imposes upon the parent the duty of providing for His dependent children everything necessary for their welfare and happiness; and upon the children the duty of gratitude and thankfulness, expressed in every appropriate form of word and deed. The relation of Ruler and subject imposes upon the Ruler the duty of establishing just and wholesome regulations for the observance of the members of the family, in their relations each with all the others.

As to the first two of these relations, there are no conflicting opinions. The differences that have distracted and divided people on theological lines all come under this third head. This is the tribe within which the difficulty is to be found; now let us find, the guilty family.

In our comparison of the Ptolemaic and Copernican system of astronomy we found that the Ptolemaic theory was constructed

upon a superficial observation of phenomena it proposed to account for. Here again the resemblance between that theory and the theories of "Systematic Theology" that have prevailed for centuries is complete. From a partial observation of the nature of the government of God's family, wise men affirmed that government to be an absolute monarchy; and worked out its details without considering the fact that the Sovereign of the kingdom was the Father of His subjects.

Hence He issued His decrees by authority, supported by His omnipotence. His laws, though wise, and having the welfare of His subjects in view, were, nevertheless, arbitrary expressions of His sovereign will, their ultimate motive being His own glory. (Discussion continued in our next article.)

Thomas Holmes.

Chelsea, Michigan.

TURNING MEN TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The chief mission of the Church in the world is to turn men to righteousness. Many important enterprises have been committed to the Church, but none of them is so important as this. This work lies at the foundation of all moral and social reforms. Do we wish to make the community better? Nothing we can do will reach this end so surely as turning the people to righteousness. Do we desire to improve the condition of the poor? The poor will, to a large extent, take care of themselves when they shall have been turned to God. We do not forget that many poor are good people. Their poverty is caused by conditions over which they have no control. But we remember also that much of the poverty which exists, especially in this country, is the result of intemperance and kindred vices, and when the poor shall be saved from their sins they will quickly improve their condition. The oppressed will achieve their own freedom when the Son shall have made them free.

Good laws are good, but they can never cure the evils which cursed society. They can only deal with outward actions, while the cause of evil lies deep within. The law cannot deal with the spirit of man. We hear much about the social order being wrong. What is the matter with the social order? Too much selfishness and too little righteousness. Let rich and poor be turned from sin to righteousness and the social order will correct itself. The best laws in the world cannot revolutionize the social order so as to give the workingman a fair chance. A general distribution of wealth will not effect a permanent cure of poverty. A few million genuine conversions would do more to correct the evils that curse society and set at rest social disturbances than all the legislation the next fifty years shall witness. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

The chief business of every individual Christian is to turn men to righteousness. A celebrated evangelist preached a famous sermon about a year ago in which he contended that no one has a right to call himself a Christian who is not a soul-winner.

That sermon has been severely criticised. Perhaps the evangelist went too far. It may be that his contention cannot be maintained, but he was more than half right. All will agree that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and save the lost, and all will agree that every disciple of Jesus should go about as he did seeking and saving the lost.

In these days every Christian is already overloaded with work. Each man must make a living, and if he has a family he must make a living for his family also. The question of making a living in these days of high prices is a living question. It means to rise up early, sit up late, eat the bread of diligence, and toil, toil, toil. The Church also calls for laborers in many fields. If one is a good church member he must teach in the Sunday school, be ready to give money for the support of the gospel, and serve on various committees, and work in many societies. A young minister in a certain city said recently, "My people are so busy attending meet- (Concluded on fifth page.)"