

THE AGE OF KNAVERY.

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Is this the age of dishonesty? "Not the age of dishonesty," says some easy-going optimist, "but the age of detected dishonesty." In the same spirit the indignant American in Europe meets the charge of the inherent dishonesty of republics, "where every body does as he pleases, you know," with the eager assertion that it pleases the said every body to follow the occasional cheat and the exceptional liar with a very sharp stick, whose resounding blows and penetrating punches really make the noise we hear.

The question, talked up in that way, is not an easy one to settle. It is difficult to compare one age with another, for the plain reason that we know all about the misdoings around us, and very little of those that were before us. "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

The same difficulty occurs in comparing fairly one nation with another. Russia, whose civil-service is honey-combed with fraud, gains but a feeble notoriety for her genius in that line, while the Yankee, who is on the whole the most conscientious man in the world, bears a reputation to which only a very long string of such adjectives as *shrewd, cute, sharp, close*, are able to do justice. England, where bribery in elections and legislation has long been reduced to a system, has no qualms in lifting up holy hands of horror at the stories of ballot-stuffing and log-rolling with which each virtuous party is wont in this country to assail its corrupt opponent.

The current facts of the times can do little better in leading us to a fair verdict as to the condition of the popular morality. These facts are so "current," that we cannot catch them and hold them long enough to weigh them properly, and balance them against each other. On the one hand it cannot be denied that since the close of the war on slavery, the war on dishonesty has been waged with extraordinary vigor. Thieves and honest men have joined together, from opposite motives, in assaulting established and organized rascalities which have had all the meanness of the slave system, with none of its generousities and chivalries. Much of this is reassuring, doubtless. Much of it is a genuine protest of real virtue. Even that part of it which consists in the hostility of one knave to another is so far a new guaranty that wickedness has no real stability in human affairs. There is solid ground for the defence set up by the patriotic traveller, that, in this country, the exposure of dishonesty has reached a very remarkable development, while the dishonesty is in no way original or peculiar. On the other hand there are some facts which cannot be called in question, of a most serious and significant kind.

It is a fact that American manufacturers, as a rule, are unworthy of confidence. The brands affixed to them are, as a rule, glaring falsehoods. "Pure," "unadulterated," "best," "extra," "superfine," mean nothing, even over the names of reputable firms, while label measurements certainly never violate the truth by exaggeration. A good article is made for a time, until it has gained a reputation, when, as if it would faith in human integrity in the most vital part, that reputation is made a cover for cunning adulterations and sly deteriorations, through which the manufacturer turns himself into a "sneak thief"—nothing better or nobler than that—stealing, in a petty way, out of peoples' kitchens and wardrobes and side-boards. So common is this that the universality of the practice is offered by individuals as their personal justification. Another plea is—"People will have cheap articles." So the cheap articles are furnished with the lies thrown in gratis. The deacon in the story, who calls to his son down in the shop, "Tom, have you watered the rum?" "Yes sir!" "Have you sanded the sugar?" "Yes sir!" "Then come up to prayers," is no myth. Deacons who do such things, or who at least have great and peculiar pleasure in them that do them, are not unknown now-a-days. These are specimens, these pure men among us to whom all things are pure that will bring money, though

their own mind and conscience be meanwhile defiled. To our shame it must be admitted that a foreign brand or trade mark is esteemed, as a rule, trustworthy, while an American manufacture is handled with great suspicion.

It is also a fact that the apparatus of exchange devised by modern commerce to facilitate business, is employed in a deceptive and misleading manner, and is made the cover for gigantic fraud and robbery. And it is a recent fact that while one of the most eminent merchants of London was committed to jail in a common prison van for one of these "irregularities," and another was compelled by public sentiment to flee the country, a parallel transaction in New York, is justified by the plea, "We supposed everybody understood it," and there is an end of the matter.

It is also a fact that an American Joint Stock Company is so commonly a mere scheme of robbery, that it has become a maxim with us, "Never invest money for others to control." Mining stocks and railroad stocks, however valuable the property or the franchise, are proverbially untrustworthy. Bank stocks are but little better, and even our savings and life insurance institutions are regarded with increasing distrust. The safe investment of property requires more knowledge and sagacity than its acquirement. The code of morals among men of business, and the ingenious reasonings by which they justify to their own consciences transactions which they know are calculated to deceive; transactions which would be of no value unless they did deceive, are simply frightful.

It is also a fact that many reputable men, especially in the newer parts of the country, make a business out of the necessities and embarrassments of their fellow-men. They are money-lenders, not only at a high rate of interest, which a corresponding risk might justify, but upon securities, worth far more than the debt. The loan completed, the power and resources of the lender are then vigorously employed, not in aiding his debtor to discharge his obligation, but in embarrassing him, perhaps in leading him still deeper into debt, till his securities are forfeited, and this Christian Shylock has seized the coveted property, and turned the poor debtor homeless and penniless upon the world. The records of such transactions, in some Western towns especially, could they be made public, would read like tales of the Robbers of the Rhine. If you inquire for these carrion birds, the chances are that they will be pointed to you perched, bald-headed, gray-haired, and venerable, at the head of the best broad-aisle pews, the chief "supporters of the gospel." "Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord, and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this!"

It is also a fact that positions of trust are used extensively for personal benefit from the building of churches, and the control of college endowments, up to the gigantic frauds of Tweed and the Canal Ring. These judiciary peculations are of every grade, in every shape, and of all degrees of directness and indirectness. They are justified under all sorts of names, and by all sorts of subterfuges, but they all have in them one constant element of fraud: they use official power over trust property, to promote personal ends. And the worst feature of it is, that such transactions are not reckoned dishonorable among large classes of business men. The writer can testify with great satisfaction, as the result of a pretty wide observation, that ministers of the gospel, can, as a class, be depended on for the administration of trust funds upon the highest and strictest principles of integrity. This cannot be said with the same emphasis of business men as a class. There are individual exceptions on both sides, of course, but as a general rule, men in secular callings have become so accustomed to dealings in credits and ventures and expeditors and commissions and fees, that the nicest sense of honor seems to have become obliterated, while the instances of gross and unquestionable perversions of trust are unhappily so numerous as to be a feature of the times. If this seem a hard saying to any, he is to be congratulated on his freedom from a very painful experience.

It is also a fact that Churches and School Boards often show a wonderful callousness to the dictates of the Golden Rule, in their dealings with literary men. Committees are authorized to treat with ministers and teachers whose verbal representations and promises, after they have served their purpose in securing desired services, are unhesitatingly repudiated by the bodies they represent. Salaries are pledged, which are cut down without hesitation as soon as the party sought is so settled in his place that he cannot well escape. The writer, while penning this article, was informed by a Presbyterian elder of a case in which a Church Trustee quieted the objections made to the liberal salary he had offered a popular clergyman in their behalf, with the ingenious suggestion, "Just offer it now, and after we get him we can put it down easily enough." The discussion in the Presbyterian Church now on the tapis concerning the rule of one of its Boards, that an aided local Church shall contribute to all the benevolent enterprises of the General Assembly, and the antagonistic requirement of another Board that it shall appropriate such contributions, if necessary, to its own support, is itself a curious case of ecclesiastical casuistry and has brought out some curious facts. Dr. Ellenwood, the Secretary of Foreign Missions, gives, in the Independent, as examples of the high-toned Christian honesty of the period, the case of a prominent wealthy Church which is seriously discussing the question of diverting its missionary collections to cover unpaid pew rents; of another that appropriated three hundred dollars of money actually collected for missions, to meet its own expenses; of many Sabbath schools that have been led to use for themselves collections "meant for mankind;" of one exemplary board of trustees who put into their own treasury, money raised by ladies for heathen women. Any minister of wide experience can add to this list facts equally or more startling. A prominent clergyman recently said at a large dinner party, "It is a lamentable fact, and yet it is a fact, that Churches are often among the most slippery and dangerous parties for unsuspecting and inexperienced men to deal with." Men of wide experience in ecclesiastical matters have been known to advise young candidates for the ministry to have all the legal papers connected with their settlement submitted to a competent lawyer before they are accepted. At the breaking out of the war, Churches, without an exception, so far as known to the writer, paid their ministers in legal tender currency worth perhaps fifty cents on the dollar, while they required their ministers to pay them a double price for the goods they bought from their parishioners. The Comptroller of the State of New York refused to pay the debts of the State in such manner, because he declared that common honesty required that they should be paid in coin, according to contract. At about the same time a prominent deacon in a Congregational Church publicly urged the immediate liquidation of an old Church debt because, as he said, "It could be discharged for fifty cents on the dollar." Such facts certainly indicate that ethics has not risen to the rank of an exact science even among Christians and Churches.

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Last, but not least, our State and National Governments have set a frightful example of falsehood and dishonesty. The record is a sickening one, and it is seldom read continuously or attentively by our citizens at home. A better service for the nation could not be done than the publication of a compact and vivid sketch of governmental dishonesty in this land, beginning with the green-back lies which are passing for money among us, and the shameless violation of the nation's pledge in the imposition of the Income Tax, down to the nauseating story of the recent doings of the State of Alabama in the case of the Chattanooga Railroad.

Mr. Moody did well in opening his revival labors in this country the other day, with some very plain words to the farmers of Northfield, concerning "the failure of not a few of them to keep their word, and to pay one hundred cents on the dollar." We need another John the Baptist to preach to our modern publicans: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you," and to the people: "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none, and meat likewise." We need another Finney to lay bare men's secret and social

iniquities. The baptism of repentance must precede the reign of grace. "Defraud not," should ring out from our pulpits. "Lie not one to another," should constitute the burden of our exhortations. For we are undoubtedly living in the age of knavery.—Golden Rule.

THE FAMILY.

COULDN'T STOP.

This is the way a good many boys get into difficulty—"they get a-going and they can't stop." The boy who tells lies began at first to stretch the truth a little—to tell a large story—till he came out as a full grown liar!

Two boys began by bantering each other, till they got a-going and couldn't stop. They separated with black eyes and bloody noses! Did you hear about the young man stealing from his master's drawer? He came from the country a promising boy. But the rest of the clerks went to the theatre and smoked, and he thought he must do so too. He began thinking he would try it once or twice. He got a-going and couldn't stop. He could not resist the temptation when he knew there was money in the drawer. He got a-going—he will stop in prison.

Some young men were, some years ago, in the habit of meeting together in a room at the public house, "to enjoy themselves"—to drink and smoke. One of them, as he was going there one evening, began to think there might be danger in the way. He stopped and considered a moment, and then said to himself, "Right about face!" He dropped his cigar, went back to his room, and was never seen at the public house. Six of the young men followed his example. The rest got a-going, and could not stop till they landed most of them in a drunkard's grave. Beware, boys, of the first cigar or chew of tobacco. Be sure, before you start, that you are in the right way, for when you are going down hill, it is hard to stop!

One night a miller was awakened by his camel trying to get his nose into the tent. "It is very cold out here," said the camel, "I only want to put my nose in." The miller made no objections. Soon the camel asked to have his neck in, then his feet, and meeting with no opposition from his master, he soon had his whole body in. This was very disagreeable to the miller, who complained of the camel's conduct. "If you don't like it you can go," answered the camel; "as for me, I have got possession and shall stay; you can't get rid of me now."

Boys, this ugly camel represents the evil habits and little sins which, if not continually watched, creep into your lives unawares. The dram, the quid, the cigar, get hold of a boy or a young man, and say to him, "You can't get rid of me."

IN A TUNNEL BUT SAFE.—At Stuttgart a man came to me in the depths of gloom, saying, "Oh, Mr. Smith, I was so filled with joy in the meeting yesterday, and now it is all gone—all and I do not know what to do; it is as dark as night!"

"I am so glad," I quietly remarked. He looked at me in astonishment—"What do you mean?" "Yesterday," I remarked, "God gave you joy, and to-day he sees that you are resting on your emotions instead of on Christ, and he has taken them away in order to turn you to Christ. You have lost your joy, but you have Christ none the less. Did you ever," I continued, "pass through a railway tunnel?"

"Yes, often." "Did you, because it was dark, become melancholy and alarmed?" "Of course not," he said. "And did you," I asked, "after a while come out again into the light?" "I am out now," he said, interrupting me—"it is all right, feelings or no feelings.—R. Pearrell Smith."

THE name of Jesus to a believer is as honey in the mouth, music in the ears, or a jubilee in the heart.—St. Bernard.

THIS NOT OUR REST.

"Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest." MICAH II. 10

Not here! not here! we seek in vain With weary feet, and out-stretched hands Amid these ever shifting sands. The rest with which we sigh to gain.

The morning breaks with sounds of strife; The moon with clangour rude is filled, The conflict rages on unstilled, Even to the setting sun of life.

Here is the rest, we learn the truth, From hoary Patriarchs and Seers Who lived and wrote in long gone years No rest for aught—No rest for youth.

We learn it from our own brief day, The struggles of each passing hour The weary tug for wealth and power The sore defeat—the sad delay.

The echo come from every zone— From islands in the far-off seas— In dropping shower, and pulsing breeze,— In earthquake's voice, and ocean's moan.

No rest have we, no fixed abode, No human garden where the flowers Unlighted bloom; no halcyon bowers, No care-free tent along life's road.

We hear the words arise, depart, And yet with halting steps we go Thinking to find our rest below Despite the canon: in our heart.

Vain thought, vain hope, and frail as vain; Continuing city we have none, Our rest is past the setting sun, Beyond the shadow and the pain.

Happy who look beyond the years, Where souls amid the pain and strife, Reach forward to the sheltered life That waits beyond this veil of tears.

Happy are they, blest of the blest Who wait the day-dawn of the skies, Until the Master saith "arise, Depart, for this is not your rest."

Shubenaedie, Oct. 18, 1875. P. A. M.

THE CURSE OF GOD.

The curse of God is on the liquor traffic. If the history of the families of rum-sellers could be spread out truthfully before us it would ever after take a man of brazen face and desperate wickedness to dare to begin to sell liquor. When practising medicine in Rhode Island I was called to attend a girl of fourteen who was dying of consumption. She was a dear, good child, and when she sat with pale, almost transparent face, lustrous eye, and flushed cheek, patient and sweet in sickness it took only a little imagination to transfer her among the angels. She seemed almost an angel to me. One morning I went to find her sitting in a chair, shaking. At first I supposed it was the effect of disease and weakness and I said: "Anna, why do you not lie in bed?" "I ached so bad that I couldn't," she answered.

"Why," said I, "do you shiver so?" "I am so cold," she replied. "How long have you sat up?" "Most all night," she answered. "Why did you not call your mother?" "I did, but she had drunk so much I could not make her hear."

Both the father and mother had been drunk all night and the poor child had been left to suffer. I went to the liquor-seller, who claimed to be a respectable man, and told him that the curse of God would fall upon him as the agent of so much sin and misery. He put on a bold face to justify himself. My indignation grew hot, and I said:

"I could not believe in a supreme, just God, if I did not expect that judgment would sooner or later overtake you." I continued, "I don't know how but it will in some shape. It may be in the ruin of this boy of yours." His smart boy was there and had just begun to tend bar. Years went on and that boy was educated, studied medicine and began to practice in the very place where I lived. The educated man died in all the horrors of a drunkard's death.

A gentleman deposited a package in the safe of a Saratoga hotel and asked for a check for it. The clerk gave him a cheque which he invented and put in vogue at Saratoga, fifteen years ago. Hastily writing the gentleman's name on a square of paper, the clerk as hastily tore it in two. He gave the gentleman one half and pinned the other part to the package. This was the check, and an unforgeable one it is. For observe: often as you may do this thing, to duplicate it is impossible. You might succeed, perhaps, though with extreme difficulty, in making an exact reproduction of your own writing; but to tear apart two pieces of paper in the same way so that a fragment of one will fit a fragment of another is something you can't do.

BEREAN NOTES.

Nov 7.] LESSON VI. [John 16, 7.] THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

HOME READINGS. MONDAY—John 16, 7-14. TUESDAY—Ezek. 1, 15-25. WEDNESDAY—Ezek. 37, 1-14. THURSDAY—Acts 2, 1-13. FRIDAY—Rom. 8, 1-18. SATURDAY—1 Cor. 2, 2-16. SUNDAY—Rev. 22, 13-31.

TOPIC: Sending the Spirit to teach Truth. GOLDEN TEXT: He shall teach you things. John 14, 26.

GENERAL STATEMENT. The words of this lesson, like those studied, form part of Christ's interview with his disciples upon "the same in which he was betrayed." The Text well states the subject we are to consider. The *Work of the Spirit*, what this work is, so far as disciples are concerned, is stated in the GOLDEN TEXT. "He shall teach you all things." The work of Jesus as presented by the Topic is of Sending the Spirit to teach the Truth. The DOCTRINE to be considered is: Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit is a person, and does work, and this work is, according to OUTLINE: 1. COMFORTING; 2. REPRISING; 3. TEACHING. Let us also study that very common discourse, if not piety, by which this divine person, Holy Spirit, or the Comforter, is spoken of as a mere thing, and referred to by pronoun "it." "He" is the proper noun, just as when alluding to the Father or the Son.

[See LESSON COMPEND. Also FOSTER'S PROSE ILLUSTRATIONS: 3002, 3000, 2989, 2986, 2992.]

Where in this lesson do we see— 1. THAT JESUS CHRIST IS OUR VERY BEST FRIEND? 2. THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR VERY BEST TEACHER?

OUTLINES, NOTES, AND LESSONS. I. OUTLINE. 1. The Comforter Promised, verse 7. 2. The Comforter at Work: 1.) In the world, verse 8-11; 2.) In the church, verse 12-14. The Comforter sent: 1. By whom? 2. To whom? 3. For what? The work of the Comforter: 1. In the world; 2. In the church.

2. NOTES. NEVERTHELESS, verse 7. This point back to the sorrow which had filled the hearts because he had told them of his going away. See John 16, 5, 6. But the sorrow did not deter him from telling them the truth. It is a false tenderness which conceals the truth lest its disclosure be painful. IT IS EXPEDIENT, better beyond doubt; FOR YOU, and for them, was ever thinking and acting. What was for their good he well knew and constantly pursued. But what was expedient for them? THAT I GO AWAY. The very thing which grieved them was for the good. But how could this be so? He gives the reason: FOR IF I GO NOT AWAY, etc. Jesus had ever been a precious Comforter to his people. He had stood by them, advised them, spoke for them, pleads for them. In their sorrow at his departure he had promised "another Comforter." One like himself to take his vacant place. See John 14, 16, 17, 26. A little later in his interview he again alludes to the Comforter. John 15, 26, 27. In verse 7 of our lesson he discloses the fact that this Comforter "will not come" unless they except Jesus first depart and see him.

... In John 14, 16, 26, the Comforter presented as sent by the Father: John 15, 26, as sent by the Son; John 16, 7, as acting for himself while sent by Jesus, Father, Son and Spirit all combine in carrying out the scheme of salvation.

HE WILL REPROVE THE WORLD, etc. We sometimes reprove with no effect; but when we convince the reprovéd one we accomplish more, and this stronger idea more accurately describes the work of the Holy Spirit here.

OF SIN, BECAUSE, etc., verse 9. On human sinfulness, see Rom. 3, 10-20. On human sin, as aggravated by the rejection of Jesus, see John 3, 18, 19.

... Doubtless there was sin of every kind, and to speak truth, nothing but sin, sin that deserved judgment. By the rejection of Christ, put the whole world under one common judgment.—Darby.

The cry of the heathen, "Let us break the bands asunder," etc. Ps. 2, 3; and the cry of the Jews, "Noli crucifigi," etc. John 8, 44. These are echoed through the nation to this day.

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE, etc., verse 10. To meet the claims of law and justice against man Jesus died. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him," etc. Isa. 53, 4-6. He died under the righteous law of God, and it was a righteous death, having died, he should be exalted to the right hand of power above. The righteous government of God is illustrated, or righteousness for sinners proclaimed, the fact, that by way of the cross and the grave Jesus went to his Father, and was no more seen in the world. Jesus' death that his Father "might be just, etc., Rom. 3, 26. See also Acts 17, 31, etc., Rom. 8, 3, 26. See also Acts 17, 31, etc., Rom. 8, 3, 26.

OF JUDGMENT, BECAUSE, etc., verse 11.