

Original Contributions.

"RAISE THE STANDARD."

R. MURRAY.

This was the burden of Dr. Reid's remarks before the C. E. Union in Exmouth Street Methodist Church, St. John, February 14th. Very forcibly and emphatically did he show that the standard of Christian life was too low, and was constantly being lowered, on the part of many.

There can be no question in the mind of every honest lover of God that the standard of piety and devotion to Christ is deplorably low. The ways, and fashions, and spirit of the world are influencing the church and destroying the spirituality of its members. We cannot conform to the world and be transformed into the love and life of Christ. When the professed followers of Christ cannot get time to attend and enjoy the prayer meeting, but can find time to attend places of amusement, they should understand that they are lowering the standard of the cross and trailing it in the dust. The various forms of evil and vice are too apparent to be glossed over with the tinsel of a formal profession of religion. To pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven, and then live a life of worldly pleasure, contrary to the will of God, is a formalism devoid of any power or godliness. When this low standard of piety takes the place of earnest devotion and hearty activities, the chill of winter must and will, settle over the church. To contemplate the fact that the standard of the Christian life is being lowered must cause feelings of anxiety and sorrow on the part of every earnest Christian. We don't wonder that Dr. Alex. McLaren, in his letter to Dr. Cuyler, said, "Many times I am ready to thank God, when I see the deadness in the church, and the awful problem that has to be faced, that I am nearer the end than the beginning of my course."

The standard of Christian life is the full surrender of the will and life to the will of God. Our life must correspond with our prayers. There is no more salvation for a professed saint, than for a sinner, unless he is a better man. He who wilfully rejects the will of God is not saved now, and cannot be in the next world, as heaven is where its subjects are in perfect subjection to God's will. What better is the person who absents himself from the "Lord's Supper," on the Lord's day, than the person who refuses confession and baptism? In either case the person is out of harmony to the will of God, and right dead in the teeth of His commandments.

Some one has said, "That man was the glory of the world, and the soul the glory of man." This being true we can understand the importance of the work of redemption—that the greatest work on earth is the salvation of man.

Every true disciple should emphasize the need of raising the "standard" of the Christian life—a closer walk with God, a more

sacred fellowship and communion with Him. If the church is not lifting its members to a higher plane of living, they will be lowering the standard of the church to the level of the world. The question was asked: Why were not more persons uniting with the church? The answer was: "Because there were so many church members uniting with the world."

Let the professed followers of Christ "Raise the Standard," and cease following the "shadowy phantoms" of this life, and deep on the spirituality and piety of the Christian life, then all the friction between the world and the church will disappear. The Christian should be one who is raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places, and that means to be unseated in the earthly. Let all who love the Lord work and pray for a revival of grace, a higher standard of Christian life, and then will we see precious souls accepting the offer of salvation.

MODEL COMMUNITIES AND THE COMING CRISIS.

O. B. "ROCKFORD."

Since her institution the church of Christ has had many difficult problems to solve. These problems have been peculiar as to time, place and race; for Christianity is adapted to every department of life. The progress of humanity has been obstructed at times through the misinterpretation of Scripture; but when a fair test has been applied our Divine religion has always been equal to the emergency.

Though many difficult relations in life have been adjusted, much yet remains to be accomplished.

According to many indications we are on the threshold of a century which shall demand of us greater reforms than has the present or any past age. The great material and intellectual progress of the present century make this imperative.

Besides questions of a more distinctively religious nature, such as Christian union and how to reach the masses, we will shortly have to face, seriously, the relation of labor to capital, the equitable adjustment of property, the apportionment of wealth, co-operation in labor and commerce, suppression of the liquor traffic, the purification of politics, elevation of better men to positions of public trust, and other questions of a social and political nature.

It is a disgrace to the church that these questions are not nearer solution. But for ignorance and lack of consecration on the part of Christians we would not have the selfish, corrupt and unjust state of affairs which exist at present. Christians, generally, are reconciled to existing conditions. Some go so far as to tell us that they cannot be remedied. Others claim that the followers of Christ should not take any part whatever in these matters.

It is the duty of every disciple of Christ to imitate his Master in rebuking all injustice, and suppressing, as far as possible, all evil.

Unbelievers are charging us with inability to better present conditions. On the other hand they are setting up reform systems of

their own—systems, in some cases, with enough Christian principles to deceive many. But propositions which do not begin and end with Christ will not have a good, permanent effect.

From the days of Luther to the present time the followers of Christ have been slowly removing the misunderstanding concerning the Bible which traditions have surrounded it with. Nevertheless, no body of people yet strictly follow the teaching of the New Testament.

The Disciples of Christ are strong in doctrine. The Quakers and kindred bodies excel in simplicity of life. No denomination, however, takes as active and aggressive a part as they should in the reform of social and political evils. The great majority of Christians are very negligent in respect to their duties as citizens.

The plans formulated by the Campbells, Stone, Scott and others would, if carried out, settle these vexed questions. They advocated a return in *doctrine and life*, to the teaching and practice of the church at the beginning. We have a clear conception of the doctrine; but if we have a good understanding of our duties in life, we frequently fail to put it into practice. We might learn much from the Doukhobors, who have lately come to Canada, in the matter of purity of life. Then we should add to this purity of life and our present doctrinal position the discharge of responsibilities resting upon us as citizens. It will require a strong body to preserve the ethical teachings of Christ, and at the same time take an aggressive part in the duties of life. But such a body is needed; and if the Disciples of Christ do not unite these two principles we will have to give way to others. We will never have Christian union until we all carry the principles of our religion into every act, word and thought.

Undoubtedly the mission of the church is make disciples of all nations. But the work of a Christian cannot be separated from what is commonly called secular occupations. Christianity is something more than a profession in word and church worship.

The great hindrance to an advance along the line above indicated is that Christians believe it impossible. The only way to remove this wrong impression is by demonstrating the contrary.

While we possess our present nature, example must always be a potent mode of education. It gives something more than a mere intellectual training; it imparts a life-governing force.

There is a certain class of knowledge that the masses can only learn through object lessons. A fondness exists in a large portion of our race to follow beaten paths. Human conduct is forcible when it becomes fairly uniform, because it creates in the minds of the majority a concurrence of opinion in favor of its correctness. Many, very erroneously, go so far as to limit the judgment of God upon the consensus of human opinion and action. These, and perhaps other reasons, unite to give example a powerful influence.

Our Saviour's sojourn among mankind is the perfect illustration of the true model. In fact, apart from the desire to give us a perfect life type, we cannot find any other