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IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINAL TRUTH IN RELIGION, AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS BELIEF.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON BY BISHOP D. W. CLARK.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. xvi, 25.

"He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isia. xliv 20.

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie." Rom. i. 25.

"Beloved, . . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

That there is a right and a wrong in human actions is one of the earliest and most abiding convictions of the human mind. That there is a distinction equally marked between truth and error is also an unquestioned axiom of the intelligence of man. The wrong in human actions often results from the error in human judgment "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.' "A deceived heart hath turned him aside;" he hath "changed the truth of God into a lie." He has, to place the matter in its mildest light, mistaken error for truth. And thus seen through the false lens of his deceived heart, him wrong becomes to right, and he never once dreams that *there is a lie in his right hand.*

The navigator who is working his vessel by a false theory, or is guided by an erroneous observation does not perceive that his ship is gradually changing from her true course; and he is, perhaps only dreaming of successfully completing the voyage, up to the very moment when she dashes upon the sunken rocks. Bunyan says, "The *other side* of the Hill of Error is very steep." Beyond it are the dismal quagmires of doubt, darkness, despair, ruin.

We come to speak of the *importance of doctrinal truth in religion, and man's responsibility for his belief.*

The necessity for this discussion is apparent Infidelity has assumed a new phase. Professing to receive Christianity as a system of religion, it takes issue against doctrinal creeds, and against any religious faith founded upon Revelation and authenticated by historical evidence. Defeated and routed in its olden conflicts, when it attacked Christianity from without, it now seeks to get foothold within the fortress it would destroy. It cries. "*Hail, Master!*" that the betrayal may be more effective and deadly.

These are the men who are doing more than any other class to imperil the Christian feeling and life of the age. They reach the public through unsuspected channels and by stealth. They are seeking to impregnate the popular literature of the day with this marked infidelity. The embellishments of poetry and of fiction are employed to give it currency. Some of our popular magazines have been made vehicles for its transmission, conveying insidiously into the public mind this poison of the age. Christian ministers become their agents, and the spiritual atmosphere of Christian homes is tainted by their presence.

Perhaps there never was a period in all the history of the Church when the right presentation of this subject was of more vital moment than now. Even among many professedly Christian people the clear and sharply defined doctrines of the Gospel seem to have lost much of their edge and point. With them Gospel *truth* has lost its savor. A religious sentimentalism, vague and undefined as it is spiritually and morally weakening, has usurped the place of a sound religious faith; an empty *humanitarianism* has supplanted the love of God; the practical life of faith in Jesus Christ, allying the soul to God and Heaven, and recognizing as Christ did, the brotherhood and claims of the race on the broad ground of creation and redemption is altogether ignored by them, or is subordinated to subtle human theories, which, though they fascinate the imagination and gratify the pride of human intellect can never redeem the race nor save a soul.

Not merely is doctrinal truth ignored, but issue is taken against it. Creeds and articles of faith are held up as fetters of the intellect, trammels of free thought. Dogma is scouted as a scarecrow to intimidate weak minds. Christian doctrine is considered antiquated; a dead mummy, coming down from former ages, and not the unfolding of either intellectual or spiritual life. Its preaching belonged to an earlier age and less cultured people, but has now become effete and worthless. Nor do these men stop even here, but boldly proclaim that "In order to religious progress intellectual creeds must be destroyed. We have witnessed the sad spectacle of a National Conference" of a Church claiming to be Christian, in solemn conclave proclaiming itself as having so far relinquished the very idea of doctrine or creed as to welcome all forms of unbelief as well as belief to its fellowship and work.

But be not deceived; these men have a creed and they are exacting and proscriptive to the last degree. *It is the creed of unbelief.* The man who stumbles among them without subscribing to this creed will soon find that their boasted liberalism means merely the *freedom of unbelief.* They rest on no certain foundation, recognize no authority in matters of faith, and receive no truth as ultimate or permanent religion. In a word, they believe *everything* or *nothing; gulp down all creeds, or spew out all truths,* just as the case may be.

"But what is the fruit of this "rational faith," this "no-creed" religion? One of its boldest and ablest advocates makes this remarkable confession: "Hitherto this rational faith has stood almost a barren trunk, leafless and flowerless of prayer and praise, and fruitless of the rich crop of deeds of charity it was planted in the soul to bear." Christianity at the very outset blossomed in the beauty of prayer and praise, and has borne through all ages its rich crop of deeds of charity! Let us then, remain in the sacred fold! At least, let me know, before I go forth to unite my fortunes and blend my destinies with the new faith, that it is not a desert, whose sands are struck with perpetual barrenness—a desolation relieved by no blossom of prayer or praise, enriched by no fruitage of charity or deeds of love! Alas for those whose "feet stumble upon the dark mountains!" They "feed on ashes." The power to deliver the soul is lost—it may be forever!

Men may not see to what this is tending. The pernicious fruit into which it must inevitably ripen they may have failed to apprehend. But who can be so dull as not to perceive that its tendency is to unsettle all the foundations of religious belief? It claims to be religious. But it is that religion which ignores the Bible, and repudiates the personality and the authority of the God of the Bible. It is that religion which exalts and deifies human reason, although perverted and darkened by a corrupted heart, —precisely that religion which was worshipped by the Revolutionists of France through all their bloody work. If this skepticism should again become triumphant, and the same results are not reached to darken again the annals of the world, it will be because genuine Christianity had developed a higher type of human culture before these dragons' teeth of modern time were sown. What is passing strange, the votaries of this "Rational Religion', all the while claim to be Christians—Liberal Christians!—but untrammelled by creeds and doctrines—this is, I suppose, not very much tinctured with Christianity!

But after all that is said in disparagement of "Traditional Faith" and "Historical Creeds," that is, a *faith* built upon *testimony*, and a *creed* built upon *revelation*—after all that is said in their disparagement, history proclaims that in no age and by no people has God been acknowledged and worshipped except on the supposition of revelation of himself in some form or other. Nowhere in all history, have we a single instance of the devout recognition and decorous worship of Almighty God by the great mass of men, until they were moved by a revelation from God, authenticated and sustained by testimony. Thus revelation has actually done for our humanity what "Internal consciousness"—what the boasted "institutions of reason"—have never been able to effect among any people or in any nation, on the face of the earth. Nay, what they have never been able thoroughly and constantly to effect, *even in a single mind*, since the fall or Adam.

Thus history in thunder tones sweeps away the refuge of lies! It demonstrates from the experience of all ages and all people, that a revelation authenticated and verified by testimony, instead of being revolting to human reason, is the very form of religion demanded by the wants of our nature. It is adapted to the structure of the human mind as none other is.

There is, then, a responsibility connected with human belief—with the reception of truth or error. Hence a sound Christian indoctrination is not a mere empty theory, but a practical utility. Its reception is our true life; its promulgation the life of the world. The doctrines of Christianity are not empty and inane things, dry and withered branches, but the robust boughs upon which the fruit of the "tree of life" buds, blossoms, and ripens for the soul's healing and strength. * * * * * * *

If we would indoctrinate our people, *we must begin with the children.* Instead of trying to interest our children by telling them pretty stories and making amusing speeches, let us interest them by instructing them in the doctrines of religion. Fortify them against the temptations to infidelity that shall beset them in coming years by teaching them how firm are the foundations of religious faith.

Teach them the catechism. Let it be introduced into all our Sunday-schools. Let all our scholars study it; commit it to memory; master it. How strong would they become! What heroes for the truth! Many a Sunday-school class that had been thus instructed would show a more practical mastery of the doctrines of religion, than many a fledgling who has drizzled through an entire theological course. It is to my mind the sublime idea of the Sunday-school that children be taught the doctrines of religion, and the best possible way to effect this is for them to learn the catechism. Shame on the men who see no beauty in this grand epitome of the doctrines of religion! You tell me that it is dull, dry, and that the children will not learn it! Why is it dull and dry to the *scholar?* I will tell you. It is because it is dull and dry to the *teacher.* His own heart has never yet been made joyful by the rich marrow of this hidden manna. Brethren, let us try to bring our Sunday-schools up to this standard. It will soon tell upon the whole Church.

Let us see to it also that the *distinctive books of Methodism are circulated among our people;* that our own periodicals are not supplanted by the semi-infidel literature of the *Atlantic Monthly* and our *Young Folks;* that the stirring biographies of our earlier and later Methodists—everywhere radiant with spiritual light and life, are not supplanted by the effusions of modern novelists; that Wesley does not succumb to David Copperfield, Fletcher to Dombey & Son, Hester Ann Rogers and Lady Maxwell to Margaret Fuller. These precious biographies, so rich in the very marrow of Christian experience, can never lose their relish in the Church so long as vital godliness remains.

Also, *the doctrines of religion should enter largely into all our preaching, especially the distinctive doctrines of Methodism.* I do not mean that we should preach these doctrines in a controversial or polemic manner. But we should apply them in their spiritual significance to the hearts and consciences of men. He that cannot dwell upon the all glorious theme of redemption, its universality, the wonderful fact that God wills the salvation of every soul of man, without belaboring the dead carcass of Calvinism, or entering into a regular polemic fisticuff, has sadly failed to realize the glory of this revelation of God in Christ. Christ's saving power; the adoption of the believer into the family of God; the witness of the Spirit; the dwelling of the believer in God; his relation to the Spirit, work and kingdom of Christ; the resurrection of the dead; the work and bliss of immortality—how sublime all these themes! how wonderful their applications to the thought, the feeling and the hope of the world! How infinitely do they transcend all the petty questions and philosophies of the age.

Bring back then the old doctrines of the cross. Handle them in a strong, manly way; let both your hearts and sermons be vitalized with their power. Even the world will soon come to feel that these doctrines are not dead, but alive.

3. *The doctrines of the Gospel must be preached to effect the salvation of men.* The mellow essays of humanitarianism, with their quaint thoughts and quainter words, may do good in some respects. If they do not lead men to *break off from* their sins, they may inspire a disgust at the *grosser forms* of wickedness. If they do not save sinners from sin, they at least tend to refine their manners, so that they may become fastidious as to the mode of sinning. They come to *sip* it down genteelly, and stand aloof from their grosser brethren who *drink* it as the ox drinketh down water. They draw it gently with golden chains, while the common herd of sinners drag it as with a cart rope. It is something to save men from the beastly *deformities* of sin.

But this is only the human side of the question. What, after all, is this refinement without Christ, but refinement *in* sin! It does not cure the disease. It is like the maiden, wasting away with consumption, who attempts to restore the fading beauty of her cheek by the application of paint and cosmetics. They overspread the cheek with a false glow, but they impart no luster to the eye, no vigor to the heart.

4. *If you would bring sinners to Christ, press home upon them the doctrine of repentance and faith.* Let it come with no uncertain sound. Preach it as Christ preached it, as the early Methodists felt and uttered it, and the dead would awake, the dry bones would again become tremulous with returning life.

Some good men, and even some preachers, have got the idea that these old doctrines of the Cross have lost their virtue, and that the age demands a new class of ideas, and can be better reached and moved by a new class of motives and a different style of address. Brethren, that is our weakness, our want of faith. The weakness is in us, and not in the doctrine. God's truth remains the same. The plan of salvation is unchanged. And the preaching of repentance and remission of sins through faith in his blood is not merely one of *our* modes of thinking about God, but it is God's mode of saving sinners—his eternal, unchanged and unchangeable mode.

The fathers preached it, and the word spoken by them was in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. With this sharp edge of truth they cleaved right down through the brazen armor of the sinner, striking home to the conscience and the heart. The truth has lost nothing of its edge, and point and power! Blessed be God! He has never repealed it. Heaven has has never revoked it. It sustains the same relation to impenitent dying men that it did two thousand years ago. It has the same inherent energy, the same hidden sources of life-giving power, it had in the days of our fathers.

What is wanted, then, to stir its activities, to rouse its dormant energies, to make it move again the great deep of our humanity? It needs only to be preached as our forefathers preached it; preached under a full consciousness of its present power, and the world would move! Nothing else could so stir the great heart of humanity! Nothing else could so arouse a sinful world from its sluggishness and unbelief! Nothing beside could so lift up, enlarge and move forward the great work of human redemption!

Go forth, brethren, under the felt presence and sanction of God. Preach the great doctrine of redemption and remission of sin through faith in the blood of Jesus. By and by you shall return filled with wonder at what God has wrought through you, and exclaiming as did the 'seventy" when they returned to Christ, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." If the human race is ever redeemed, it salvation is ever carried to the ends of the earth, it will be done by the preaching of the cross of Christ.

5. *Again, if you wish to make men holy, preach the doctrine of holiness.* Don't let it trouble you that the doctrine has become old, that men have tinkered upon it, and patched it over with the unseeming patch-work of human invention. The good old doctrine remains the same, carved upon the very door post of the narrow gate through which we enter heaven. Behold, O ye heavens! O earth, read the wondrous inscription, tremble and adore! "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14.

Jesus Christ is the same now that he was in the Apostles' day. The efficacy of the blood to cleanse away human defilement is as complete now as it was when the fountain was first unsealed by the cross. The old medicine has not lost its virtue. Quacks and charlatans may pervert its use, and abuse its application. But bring it out afresh; take it from the word of God. First, incorporate it into thine own heart till it becomes a *living verity*, glowing like fire shut up in the bones! Then shall Christ the great Purifier, be revealed to the yearning faith of the believer—longing for holiness of heart! Then to all the world shall be made demonstration of the all-glorious truth that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John i. 9.

6. *Finally, it is the preaching of Gospel truth and doctrine that is to carry salvation to the ends of the earth.* Only men of deep and strong convictions of Gospel truth can feel the pressure that will send them out as heralds of salvation to dying men. Only this can arouse the dormant energies of the Church of God. Only this can enlarge her sympathies, call forth her benevolence, and make her a living, working Church.

Just as you lessen the magnitude and moment of doctrinal truth, just so much you take away the motive power of the Church. And just in proportion as these sublime truths of the Gospel of the grace of God enter, as a vital element, into her deep and earnest convictions, just so much is added to the motive power of her life and work. Under their impelling power her missionaries shall multiply and go forth with the blessed messages of mercy and love, into all lands.

Hail, wondrous mystery of the Cross! As thine advent filled heaven with wonder, and awoke the exultant song of angels, so the proclamation of "God in Christ" shall bid our humanity take heart and hope again. It shall lay the foundations of a deeper and more abiding faith in all the earth. The systems and philosophies of men, like the misty clouds that cap the mountains, shall be lifted up and float away. And then blessed be God! the golden light from heaven shall tip their summits with celestial brightness, and pour its radiance down through all the vales of darkness, sin and death, below, filling every heart with the joy and gladness of salvation. Then truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven, and the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord. (Isa. xi. 9.)

"Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus."

AMEN.—*Chris. Advocate.*

HEAVEN.

How sweetly strange will be the day
When we shall no more kneel and pray
For daily bread; but, wondering, say,
"We hunger now no more!"

When we shall hear the cooling rill,
And feel the fountain's freshness fill
The vital, balmy air, and still,
Thirst not for evermore!

When we shall fly on errands vast,
And pore o'er secret wonders past,
While heaven's revolving ages last,
Yet we no older grow!

When we shall plan for endless years,
And joy in God and know our fears
Lie in the sole tomb that appears,
The tomb of all our woe!

When service shall be wrought aright,
Forever banishing the night,
Love the sole motive. O thou Light!
Thou shalt make all things new!

There, beckoning to some shining throne,
Our suffering darlings, crowned our own,
Shall fold us in a bliss unknown:
The patient, tried, and true!

And if, obeying Love's command,
Among those ransomed ones shall stand
Some soul uplifted by our hand,
What praises will be due!

And O, to see our Saviour smile,
We being certain all the while
The sin that did our souls defile,
And made us cry "*Unclean,*"

Is blotted out; as from the sky,
When the great sun goes shining by,
Are the dark clouds that threatening lie,
As if they had not been.

So that He whom our souls adore
Can look us through, and o'er and o'er,
Nor find one stain forevermore;
And we can look on Him,

Nor shrink, nor strive to hide, nor sigh,
But find it heaven's joy to lie
Full in the light of His pure eye,
Made pure *like Him by Him!*

And now, though words may fail to tell
The whole of heaven; yet it is well
That Hope within the veil should dwell
And sing of the unseen.

—*Evangelist.*

THE LAST DAY.

Everyone thinks sometime on the last day. It is wrought into the consciousness, history, and literature of man. As the oldest mythologies copy the Sacred Scriptures in giving man a beginning, so they imitate them in ascribing him an end. Now and then a man arises in the light of Christendom, blind enough to assert the everlasting perpetuity of the human race upon the earth. But the ocean currents of human conviction flow steadily towards the final abyss. "Thou turnest man" as a race to destruction, and sayest, 'Return, ye children of men.'

Every day warns us of this event. It comes to an end. Every hour and moment is equally faithful. The capacity to mark time, the very consciousness of time, are proofs of the end of the race. Eternity should be without conscious note of time. It would be infinitely burdensome to count the seconds of ages. When we are blisstully employed, we lose this consciousness. Pain makes seconds into years. Pleasure obliterates years, as well as seconds.

"When we are pleasantly employed, time flies." The last day is vividly brought to mind in the closing day of the year. It is the terminus of a long journey. The earth has gone over a path almost six hundred millions of miles long. She has struck the very point from which she started. Not a hair's breadth, not a mathematical conception does it fail in its accuracy. "It goeth about continually and returneth again, according to its circuits." Its return marks a unit of measure for the Greater Year, the Year of Earth and Time. We stand on this point between the two unbounded seas of eternity, and look upon ourselves, our past, our future.

"We take no note of time,
But from its loss. To give it then a tongue,
Were wise in man."

That tongue speaks to you to-day. "It is the last time," cries the apostle. It was. No time of a diverse sort has succeeded that in which he lived. We are in that very age, the age of the Holy Ghost. The same dispensation of God under which he acts, we act under "It is the last time." But this last day of this last year, this last time is especially noticeable at this moment. Eighteen hundred and seventy-one years have rolled over the earth since Christ wept the first tears in sympathy with a fallen race, to whose company, condition and doom He had voluntarily subjected Himself. The last of these many years has gone. It had its blisses and its banes, its life and death, its sin, and its salvation. Have you repented of those sins? Have you secured the salvation? Blessed are the promises to the sin-sick soul. "Happy are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted;" "ye shall!" The Lord is Lord of grief and gladness. He kills, and makes alive. Hasten to Him. Lay the burdens of the year on Him. Implore grace for the year to come. It may usher you into the world unseen. May it usher you into the world of glory. That word means brightness, joy, peace, all springing from purity. Seek that purity here and now. Seek it ere this year shall end. Seek it in the Blood that cleanseth; seek it with all your heart, and you shall find. May the last day of this year find you in that state in which you shall wish the last day of life to find you, happy and holy in the Lord your Redeemer. If you have neglected this great salvation to this hour, let "the last day!" ring in your ears. "The Last Day! The Last Day." That last day is at hand. It may be this day. It will be some day. You are full of business. Are you about your Father's business? You are full of pleasure. Do you do the things well-pleasing unto the Lord! You are after honor. Are you rejoicing in the fulfilment of that promise. "Whosoever will serve Me, him will My Father honor?" You are young. Is God the guide of your youth? You are old. Is He your portion in age, your portion forever? Come to Christ while it is called to-day. This last day. Let it be the last of your sin, your neglect, your unregenerate state. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts?

"Soon, borne on times's most rapid wing,
Shall death command you to the grave;
Before His bar your spirit bring,
And none be found to hear or save.

Now God invites, how blest the day,
How sweet the Gospel's welcome sound;
Come, sinner, haste, O haste away,
While yet a pardoning God is found."

—*Zion's Herald.*

[From the Christian Union.]

OUR FINANCIAL PROBLEM SOLVED.

MY DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Most of your readers will have forgotten all about our little church at Wheathedge, and some of them perhaps will never have heard of it. But you will remember us, I am sure, and will be glad to know that we have solved our financial problem, concerning which I have written you more than once in times past. And this is how we did it. But first let me state in figures

THE PROBLEM.

Here is our annual balance sheet as it appeared at the last annual meeting of the Society in 1870:

Cr.	
Pew rents	$1,850.00
Sunday collections,	425.25
Raised by a Ladies' Fair,	113.34
Contributed by the trustees ($25 each)	225.00
	$2,613,59
Dr.	
Minister's salary,	$2,000.00
Organist,	200.00
Sexton,	250.00
Interest on a mortgage,	700.00
Fire, lights, and incidentals,	225.25
Commission paid for collecting pew rents,	75.75
	$3,451.00
Deficit,	$837.41

Of course, the minister's salary was behind; and of course the minister was behind to the gsocer, and the baker, and the butcher, and the dry goods dealer; and, of course, everybody felt blue, and the minister felt like leaving straightway. Mr. Hardcap wanted to decrease his salary. Mr. Wheaton wanted to raise the pew rents. Mr. Leacock thought Mr. Wheaton could afford to give up his mortgage on the church. Mr. Line proposed to take up a subscription, and pay the balance off on the spot, and begin the new year afresh. Mr. Gazbag thought it ought to be left to the ladies to clear off the debt with a concert or something of that sort Mr. Cerulean thought (though he said it very quietly) that it we had a minister who could draw better, we should'nt have any difficulty. The minister kept his own counsel.

But the next Sabbath morning he preached a sermon on the text, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them." In this sermon he advocated a free pew system. His arguments were not fresh or new—(there is not much that is new to be said on the subject)—till he came to the close. Then he startled us all by making the following proposition:

"The chief objection," said he, "to the free pew-system is the question, 'Were shall the money come from?' From God, I answer, I believe if we feed his poor, he will feed us. I, for one, am willing to trust him, at least for one year."

It slipped out very naturally, and there was a little laugh in the congregation at the preacher's expense. But he was very much in earnest.

"I propose to this society to throw open the doors of this church, and declare the pews free. Provide envelopes and papers, and scatter them through the pews. Let each man write thereon what he is willing to pay for the support of the Gospel, and whether he will pay it weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-quarterly, or annually. Give these sealed envelopes to me. No one shall know what they contain but myself. I will pay out of the proceeds the current expenses of the church myself, except the interest. Whatever remains I will take as my salary. The interest the trustees will provide out of the plate collections and with the aid of the ladies. This is my proposition. Consider it earnestly, seriously, prayerfully, and come together next Wednesday night to act intelligently upon it."

Next Wednesday night (a year ago, understand) we had the most interesting meeting of the Society that I have attended for a long while.

Mr. Wheaton was at first utterly opposed to the plan. He thought it was tempting providence to make no more adequate provision for our debts. Six of us quietly agreed to assume the mortgage debt, that is to say, to insure him that the plate collections and the ladies together would pay the interest promptly. That changed his view. He said that if the minister had a mind to risk his salary on such a crazy scheme, very well, and at the final vote, he voted for it.

Mr. Hardcap thought it was a first rate plan. It was noticed afterward that he moved from a plain seat in the gallery to a cushioned and carpeted seat in the centre aisle. Whether he paid any more contribution than he had formerly done for pew rent, nobody but the parson knows. But nobody suspects him of doing so.

Mrs. Potiphar thought it was horrid. What was to prevent any common, low-born fellow, any carpenter's son, right from his shop, coming and sitting right alongside her Lillian? She could'nt sanction such communist notions in the church.

Deacon S. warmly favored the minister's idea—was its most earnest advocate, and was the man who first started the plan for buying Mr. Wheaton's acquiescence.

Mr. Line had'nt a great deal of faith in it. This was not the way the church used to raise money when he was a boy. Still he wanted to support the minister, and he wanted to have the poor reached, and he had'nt anything to say against it.

Squire Rawlins said, "Go ahead. The minister takes all the risk, don't you see? He's a big fool in my opinion. But there's no law agin a man makin' a fool of himself if he wants ter."

Miss Moore organized that very night a double force to carry the plan into effect. One was a ladies' society to pay the interest; the other was a band of workers, young men and young women, to go out on Sunday afternoons and invite the people who now do not go anywhere to church to come to ours.

The minister's plan was carried out, and during 1871 we have had a free-pew system at Wheathedge. The church has never been so full. The prayer-meeting has never been so well attended; and the minister attributes the revival we had last spring to the change, whether rightly or not I won't undertake to say. But Mrs. Potiphar turned up her nose (methaphorically I mean—the natural nose is turned up all the time) at that revival. "It didn't reach any of our set," she says. "Why, bless you, I don't believe it added fifty dollars to the church income."

One would think to hear her talk that Mrs. Potiphar supported the church. If she does, her right hand does not know what her left hand is doing.

The ladies worked with a will. We had a concert that winter, a flower festival in the spring, a fair in midsummer, and a series of tableaux in the fall. They nettled altogether $431,75, according to the report. But, of course, nobody knew what the envelope contributions were, and nobody but the Trustees, what the plate collections were; and when on Tuesday evening (December 26) we gathered to hear the minister's report for the year 1871, and to decide whether we would continue the plan another year, there was a good deal of eager, expectant curiosity. The parson had kept his own counsel well. Some of us had offered him financial help, but he had declined. "I said I would trust the Lord," said he, "and I will." If you want to add to your envelope contributions, very well. But I don't want anything more than that will give me."

Last Tuesday night we had our report. And here it is. The minister prefaced it by two explanations. "The organist," says he, "has contributed a quarter of his salary as his share toward the church expenses. The Sunday collections have fallen off somewhat,—I suppose because the people did not want to put both in the envelopes and in the plates. The ladies' fund and the Sunday collections being more than enough to meet the interest merely, they are included in the general credit account, and the interest is charged in the debit account:

Cr.	
Envelope contributions,	$2,450.59
Sunday collections,	894.63
Ladies' collections,	431.75
	$3,276.88
Dr.	
Organist,	$150
Sexton,	250
Interest,	700
Fire, lights, and incidentals,	233.00
	$1,330 00
Leaving for minister's salary,	1,946 88
	$3,276.88

"I will be one of ten," said Deacon S., "to make the minister's salary up to the 2,000." "I'll be another," said Mr. Lines. I offered myself as a third. Then came Mr. Leacock, and Mr, Wheaton, and so in five minutes the $2000 was made up, and we begin the year 1872 without a voice (except that of Mrs. Petiphar) against the free pew-system, and without a debt to be cleared off or to be wearily borne.

I cannot say how the plan would work in other communities, but it has worked like a charm here in Wheathedge.

Yours, sincerely,

LAICUS.

Wheathedge, N. Y.

WHY ENGLAND RETAINS INDIA.

FROM DR. BUTLER'S "LAND OF THE VEDA."

It has been asked, why did not England let India go when she threw off her allegiance, and free herself from the care and risk of governing a people who thus disclaimed her rule? Two answers may be given to this question. One would be the secular reason of men who valued India for what she was to England in the way of profit and power. Millions of British money were invested in the funds and reproductive works of India; then there was the vast, increasing, and lucrative market for English goods, one item of which alone will express its importance. The clothing of the Hindoo is not very voluminous, yet, what a business was it for Lancashire to have the right to supply cotton cloth for one-sixth of the human family! But, besides the merchant and the manufacturer, the politician, the military, and the educated man had a deep interest in the retention of this "brightest jewel of the British crown;" for here was furnished the most splendid patronage that ever lay in the gift of a statesman. Hundreds of the cultured classes of England had careers of position and emolument as civil servants of the government, under "covenants" that secured them munificent compensation, and which enabled them, when their legal term of service expired, to retire on pensions equal to about one-half their splendid pay; so that Montgomery Martin estimates that the money remittances to Great Britain from India averaged five million sterling ($25,000,000) per annum for the past sixty years.

Landed property in England has been largely enhanced in value by the investments of fortunes, the fruit of civil, military, and commercial success in Hindustan. A nation controlling the resources of such a dependency, with such a noble field in which to elicit and educate the genius of its youth and display the ability of its commanders with the profitable employment of its mercantile shipping in the boundless imports and exports of such a country as India, could not lightly resign, or throw it away without a mighty struggle for its retention.

But, the man who would present no further reasons than these, for British resolution to keep India in its control, would do injustice to the better section of English society, and to many of her noble representatives in the East. There is another and a better reason than what was measured by the pounds, shillings and pence of mere worldly men, underlying the determination of England in this matter. The Christians of Britain hold firmly that, the Ruler of heaven and earth, in so wonderfully subjecting that great people to their rule, has done so for a higher than secular purpose, that He has given them a moral and evangelical mission to fulfil in that land for Him; and that it is their high and solemn duty to maintain that responsibility until, by education and Christianity, they shall attach those millions by the tie of a common creed to the English throne, or fit them for assuming for themselves the responsibilities of self-government. For such men Montgomery Martin (one of their most voluminous Oriental writers) speaks when in his last edition of his "Indian Empire," (four volumes, octavo,) dedicated by permission to the British Queen, he so distinctly declares to his Government and countrymen their high accountability before God and man in this respect, when he asks, "On what principle is the future government of India to be based? Are we simply to do what is right, or what seems expedient? If the former, we may confidently ask the Divine blessing on our efforts for the moral and material welfare of the people of India, and we may strive, by a steady course of kind and righteous dealing to win their alienated affections for ourselves as individuals, and their respect and interest for the religion which inculcates justice, mercy, and humanity as equally indispensable to national as to individual Christianity."

Those who know India best, know that I speak the truth when I assert that these words are represented by deeds as honorable in the lives and devotion to India's weltare, of many of the men who represent Great Britian there. I do not known a community of public men where you can find a greater number of "the excellent of the earth," than among the civil and military officers of England in India; men who have stood up for Jesus and for humanity, loving the poor degraded race whom they ruled, and pleading, toiling, and giving munificently for their elevation to a better condition. Such names as Bentick, Lawrence, Herbert Edwards, Havelock, Muir, Tucker, Ramsey, Gowan, Durand, and scores of others, amply justify this statement. The Annual Missionary Reports of the Methodist Episcopal Church (and this is equally true of the other missions as well) bear witness to this fact for many years past. During that time such was the sympathy for the work which attempted in helping them to educate and enlighten the people of our own mission field, that noble-hearted Englishmen in all stations of life, from the Governor General down to the private soldier, have aided us as freely as though we were of their own nation or Church, so that their contributions since 1857 will be found to aggregate over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in gold to our mission alone; while this assistance is all the time increasing, and is also equally extended by these good men to the missions of any Church or nation which goes there, and whose labors are aiming to elevate the benighted natives, and prepare them by education and a public conscience for self-government.

THE ONE FOLD.

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring."

Look from the sphere of endless day,
O God of mercy and of might!
In pity look on those who stray
Benighted in this land of night.

In peopled vale, in lonely glen,
In crowded mart, by stream and sea,
How many of the sons of men
Hear not the message sent from Thee!

Send forth thy heralds, Lord, to call
The thoughtless young, the hardened old,
A wandering flock, and bring them all
To the good Shepherd's peaceful fold.

Send them thy mighty Word to speak
Till faith shall dawn and doubt depart;
To awe the bold, to stay the weak,
To bind and heal the broken heart.

Then all these wastes—a dreary scene—
On which with sorrowing eyes we gaze,
Shall grow with living waters green,
And litt to heaven the voice of praise.

—*Bryant.*

LONELY WORKERS.

Many Christians have to endure the solitude of unnoticed labor. They are serving God in a way which is exceedingly useful, but not at all noticeable. How very sweet to many workers are those litle corners of the newspapers and magazines which describe their labors and successes: yet some who are doing what God will think a great deal more of at the last, never saw their names in print. Yonder beloved brother is plodding away in a little country village; nobody knows anything about him, but he is bringing souls to God. Unknown to fame, the angels are acquainted with him, and a few precious ones whom he has led to Jesus, know him well. Perhaps yonder sister has a little class in the Sunday-school; there is nothing striking in her or in her class; nobody thinks of her as a very remarkable worker; she is a flower that blooms almost unseen, but she is none the less fragrant. There is a Bible-woman; she is mentioned in the report as making so many visits a week, but nobody discovers all that she is doing for the poor and needy, and how many are saved in the Lord through her instrumentality. Hundreds of God's dear servants are serving Him without the encouragement of man's approving eye, yet they are not alone—the Father is with them.

Never mind where you work; care more about how you work. Never mind who sees, if God approves. If he smiles be content. We can not always be sure when we are most useful. * * * It is not the acreage you sow; it is the multiplication which God gives to the seed, which will make up the harvest. You have less to do with being successful than with being faithful. Your main comfort is that in your labor you are not alone, for God, the eternal One, who guides the marches of the stars is with you.—*Spurgeon.*