

We may be honest, but if others think us dishonest, our influence with them will be the same as though we were actually dishonest. We must therefore not only be honest, but we must so live that our honesty will be seen and known. The fact that our influence for good depends upon our reputation or what others think of us, is the very reason why we should not be despised. Our influence is our talent and must not be hid. The napkin may be our own and we may keep it safely, but our reputation is that with which we are to influence others for good and must therefore be used.

But is it not true that if we had a good character we will have a good reputation? Not necessarily so. It is possible to have a good character but a poor reputation, or a good reputation but a poor character. Or in other words we may seem better than we are, and we may be better than we seem. It is this fact that leads the Apostle to caution his brethren to be very careful and not let their good be evil spoken of. He was conscious that our good could be presented in such a way that it would not seem good to others. Paul was exceedingly careful of his reputation, because he had a burning desire for the salvation of men; for this reason he became all things to all men that he might win some.

He was confident that God would take care of his character, if he was wise in caring for his influence in winning others to Christ. When our self-interest becomes so prominent that the respect and good of others are forgotten, we have then lost our influence for good. We are then despised and our reputation tarnished, "our good is evil spoken of."

There are few, if any, who cannot see a mistake, in looking over their past life, in this particular; times when they made unfavorable impressions on the minds of others by undue prominence to some peculiar view or notion, which really in itself was of no saving value whatever and thereby destroyed their influence. How necessary it is therefore that we should heed the above injunction, and that we should be as "wise as serpents and as harmless as doves." We should study to show ourselves acceptable to men as well as "approved of God." We should not be too reserved in our nature. We need heart power, a genial frank and confiding nature that yearns to bind itself with others for their good.

Our selfish desires must not draw us away from the needs of humanity and from the current conditions of men in their common trials and interest. The man who loves and respects others most will be loved most. It will ever remain true that a "touch of nature makes the whole world kin." When we lose touch with toiling, struggling, sorrowing humanity we lose their respect. Some one has said: "That the bulk of men care very little for the relation of religion to science, but they are interested in the relation of religion to their wants and their salvation."

We often allow ourselves to suppose, that if we could find our proper sphere of labor we could be influential in doing good; but we must not forget that it is not so much our sphere, as Dr. Robinson says, as the man in the sphere. It is not so much where we are as what we are to the world. Let us not be satisfied with having the light, for we may possess it and it may not be seen. The shining light is what is needed. When the light is covered with a bushel of our own peculiar selfish interest and notions, and the bushel is more prominent than the light, it is then we are despised and our light or good is rejected. The world will not respect only that which is useful. When we have outlived our utility we will be laid aside to make room for others. On the other hand the world will welcome those who are serviceable. Every arm that helps support the weak, every voice that helps the sighing of distress, every one who can "spare one cord from its own grief" to soothe the woes of others, will find a hearty welcome. The

world cares little for our doctrine unless they can see in it that love which seeks not her own but another's good. The world may not understand our motive, and our religious views, but they can read our lives; every word and every action has to them a meaning and from them they get their impressions of religion. We should therefore be very careful lest Christ be wounded in the house of His friends. If our peculiar views are to us faith let us "have it to ourselves before God" and not exalt it as a standard of faith for others. When we become so fond of indulging our own individual will that we will give liberty to the infirmities of our nature we then sacrifice our influence on others. Let us remember, however, that it is the duty of the Christian to always be lenient and generous in our judgments towards those of such unfortunate infirmities. "Let the strong bear the infirmities of the weak."

When our adherence to our conscientious convictions destroys our usefulness to others, we may then doubt the utility of the convictions. It is not so much my honesty and faithfulness to my convictions as my faithfulness and usefulness to others that will assure the "well done" from the Master. "He that doeth my commandments shall have a right to the tree of life and shall enter through the gates into the city." Here are some very important commandments. "Comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." "Ever follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men." "Let all bitterness and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem each other better than themselves." "Be of the same mind one toward another." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love," in honor preferring one another." To follow these and others of like nature, will secure to every professor the confidence and respect of others and a Home in Heaven.

H. MURRAY.

A CREED THAT DOES NOT NEED REVISING.

"Simon Peter answered him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." John vi. 68.

There was a creed-creating age. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were especially fruitful in confessions. From the Augsburg Confession, made in 1530, down to the Cambridge, and Boston, and Saybrook platforms, made in the last half of the seventeenth century theologians did little else than fabricate creeds. The mere catalogue of these creeds is startling to the ears of present day people. The creeds, for the most part, are unintelligible. Christians now, who know anything about them, wonder what they were ever for. It is only when we remember the "odium theologicum" inherited by Protestantism from Romanism, that we can understand the creation of the creeds. The old Roman spirit was not yet dead in the world. It was supposed that the sword, the spear, the fagot, and the rack, had more power over the minds of men than truth, and love, and reason. From the assaults of reason and of God's word, orthodoxy was protected by the fagot. Roman Catholicism may rewrite history to suit its present day tastes, but the bloodstains of the Inquisition will forever stick to it. Romanism has a bloody record, and if it dared would make it bloodier still. The last resort of a bigot beaten in argument is to some form of brutal force — the fist, the fagot, the pistol or the dagger.

Now, while the early Protestants seldom resorted to force, they were not entirely free from the feeling that faith was a matter subject to compulsion. They thought that majority votes in councils ought to settle the consciences of the minorities. State theologians fabricated the creeds for the state churches, and the edicts of the kings or emperors were supposed to make these documents legal tenders for all consciences. Somehow or other, through all this business of creed building, there runs the idea of authority, power — of force even. In order to religious fellowship somebody higher up had to domineer over somebody lower down. If the Protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had outgrown the inquisitorial system of guarding our orthodoxy, they yet kept about the police of great names and church councils, and royal edicts; they still used nick-names, and were not above personal abuse.

Further than this; heterodoxy had been made such a bug-bear in the history of the church that men were afraid to approach their fellow men religiously except through the medium of a hard and fast system of belief. Each virtually said to the other, "Though you are casting out devils in the name of Christ, yet because you follow not with us, you are not of us; we forbid you." The heroes of the Reformation had not learned, could not learn, that Christ is the only essential in the Christian's creed, and the unity in Him means charity for a multitude of opinions. They were therefore conscientious in their creed creations, but this age pronounces them mistaken. As they moved away from Rome, so we are moving away from them.

Of late years we have heard much about the revision of creeds. It is not many years since one highly respectable body presented the world with a new and simplified statement of its belief. Another great body has its discipline subject to periodical revision. Still another has its Prayer Book in the hands of a committee, said to make its report at the end of three years on the matter of revision. Still a fourth well known people is filling the world with the noise of its "pros and cons" as to the revision of its antiquated confession, which confession was born of the Westminster Assembly in the middle of the seventeenth century, after a labor of four years, six months, and twenty two days, in which it held one thousand one hundred and sixty three sessions. This Assembly was held in opposition to the wishes of King Charles I., and shaped its confession after the manner of the Synod of Dort. The Canons of Dort were shaped in the beginning of the seventeenth century in opposition to the teachings of Arminius, and are thoroughly Calvinistic. England was at that time under Arminian influences, and James I. forbade the Calvinistic faith. Today our neighbors are trying to rid themselves of that which King James forbade well nigh three hundred years ago. It would seem that nobody cares much now for that old creed, except either quietly to forget it, thus burying it in the grave of oblivion without even a respectable funeral, or else so to change its ancient style of dress that the nineteenth century pulpit will not be ashamed to present it to the nineteenth century pew. One would hesitate to talk in such a style about it if the example were not set him by the confessors themselves of the creed in question. Here is a paragraph which all the papers have quoted from Dr. Paxton of New York. "A man who could preach some of the Articles of our faith would not be a contemporary of the nineteenth century. He must have walked out of the seventeenth century. He would be a survival and not of the fittest. We cannot breathe with Abraham's lungs. We cannot look at God through Calvin's eyes. Calvin looked at God and saw nothing but His terrible sovereignty. We see that His name is Love."

Some are in favor of wasting no time on creed