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Secular and Religious Papers

R. R. THOMPSON.

It was the wise man Solomon who said, "of making many books there is no end," and the same truth is applicable to the publication of papers. This is an age of newspapers and of newspaper reading. The only literature which may give attention to it is that found in the columns of daily or weekly journal. It is better that they should read this than not read at all. Very often Christian people are discovered perusing the pages of a newspaper each day at a greater length of time than they spend searching the Scriptures. The newspaper occupies an important place in the affairs of life. It is almost indispensable. No doubt there are times when we would be better if not to know the news which it furnishes us. But one should be careful of the quality of papers which he reads, for there is a moral character about a newspaper which will either benefit or injure those with whom it comes in contact. There is no way by which one can keep abreast of the times, know current events so well, as through the medium of the newspaper. In a few moments we may know the history of the world which has been made the previous day. Newspapers are moulders of public opinion. Upon many subjects, especially of a political nature, people act according to the thinking of the newspaper editor rather than their own. The minister, no matter how busy he may be, should take time to read a daily newspaper if available. They should, like all others, do so judiciously.

But in these modern days there has arisen a kind of journalism known as the religious papers which, though giving space to temporal matters, deals more with those facts pertaining to Christianity, its influence and progress in the world. This kind of journalism is on equality with the secular papers as to importance. It is an essential factor in Christ's kingdom, aiding the Christian in growth of character and knowledge, and the church to do its work. If we view the religious paper aright it is both evangelical and sanctifying in its effect. The power of the press to do good is herein demonstrated. The religious paper meets not only a Christian need, but a denominational one, so that there is no denomination without one or more papers published in the interest of disseminating its particular belief in Christian doctrines. Besides these there are many non-sectarian papers issued, and which find a large circulation.

While there is an abundance of religious papers going forth each week from our printing presses it is surprising and sad how large a number of Christian homes are without one of these papers. You may enter them and find plenty of reading matter from secular papers, but not one line may be read from a religious journal. Should any ask them why they do not take the paper the answer will be, "I cannot afford it." And yet papers are coming into their homes costing from two to three times as much as a religious paper would. Again, many of these persons will say they can find no interest in reading a religious paper, and yet they are professing Christians. It is quite probable that many church members do not take a religious paper because they have never been educated as to its value. Here is where, perhaps, the pulpit has failed to do a work. A sermon on the worth of religious papers might not only increase such a paper's subscription list, but would result in a blessing to a church. Christian people should know about the progress of Christ's kingdom beyond their own bounds, they should be informed of the movements of their chosen denomination, they should know the thoughts of Christian thinkers in their age, and they cannot have these things without the help of a religious paper.

Christians can take only one religious paper should be one of their own denomination. Excellent, indeed, are some of our undenominational journals, but these should not win us away from subscribing for our own denominational paper. These papers have a mission.

Baptist journals are to make better Baptists and better Baptist churches. They have a right to live; they should have our support that they might do so.

The fault which many Christian people find with religious papers is due to themselves. We, to a certain extent, make our denominational papers what they are. Religious papers cannot be run without money. The more money a paper has the better paper it can publish. The editor realizes this, but what he wants is the people to feel it and express their feelings by subscribing for the paper. The editor of one of the largest religious papers in this country stated not long ago to a large audience: "The cry is give us a cheaper paper. There is only one way, my friends, that we can do this, and that is give us a larger subscription list." Is not this what every editor says as he hears the cry ringing in his ears as he sits in the sanctum? "Your paper costs too much, give us a cheaper one."

Would that, as Christians, we might feel the need and worth of a religious paper in our homes, and especially one published by our own denomination. They are not mere money concerns, but have a God-given work to perform. They are here to help us, to enlighten us in the Holy Word, to give us knowledge of the Spirit's work now in the world. We should appreciate their labors and do all we can to sustain them.

WYOMING, PA.

We fully indorse the above article. But there are other reasons why many Christian homes are without a religious, or a denominational paper, than are stated in Bro. Thompson's complaints. Whether his remedy for bettering the character and contents of our religious papers would remove all objections from the minds of Christian families or not is not quite so clear. For many of our religious, and denominational papers that have a large and wide circulation still retain some very offensive and objectionable matter that honest and pious people dislike to see in religious periodicals. We refer to the bulletins of political partisanship in which some religious papers indulge. All religious denominations are divided on politics; and nothing of a partisan nature can be said in a paper without offending either one section or the other. All political discussion should be relegated to the secular press. Another objectionable and offensive, yea, and abominable lot of statements found in most of the religious papers of today are the patent medicine advertisements, and testimonials. They are mostly false, deceptive, written by experts at the business, who make a living by preparing them for the manufacturers and the vendors. The parties interested in the sale of these preparations refer the columns of a religious paper for advertising their money making frauds because people generally suppose that a religious paper states nothing but what is true, and therefore are more easily victimized. The sever press of today is largely supported by the patronage of patent medicine manufacturers; and it is a burning shame for the religious press to have a hand in the nefarious business. Many people are being disgusted with the entrapping way they are being decoyed into reading many of these designing statements. We unhesitatingly affirm, that there is no greater imposition perpetrated upon mankind today than the patent medicine business. The sick and the afflicted are made to believe by these manufactured testimonies that there are sure remedies in these potions, and are thereby induced to try them, when they need the money spend for them for other necessities of life. And in nine cases out of ten they receive more injury than benefit by the use of them. We hope the day is not far distant when the religious press will cleanse itself of this pollution. As we said in our prospectus of this paper, there are two things that shall never stain nor pollute the pages, viz: politics, and patent medicines; which already has given popularity to the paper. We are receiving many commend-

ations for the non-appearance of these lying advertisements. Therefore, brethren and sisters, if you want a clean sheeted paper to visit your homes, send us your subscription for the HOME MISSION JOURNAL."

The Christian Life.

JOSEPH A. BENNETT.

The Christian life as taught by the Christ is not fragmentary but full ordered. It is not a single ray of the spectrum, but all the rays harmoniously blended, producing the white light of a pure and perfect character. It is not a single battle, fought and won, but a long and arduous campaign; and warfare in which there is and can be no discharge until the last battle is fought and the victorious troops march to the city of God. It is not a single note or monotone, but a grand and glorious anthem, in which all the notes blend and merge, whisper and thunder. The great need of the church and the world to-day is more Christians, like the orb, well-rounded and symmetrical; like the light, bright and luminous; like an army, contending and victorious; and like the anthem, sweet and harmonious. The great temptation of a Christian is to live a fragmentary life that is: Do one duty and leave others undone; obey one command and forget or slight others; serve God and man one hour or day during the week, and give the rest of the time to the service of the world and self. But if we will fully trust God and measure up to the standard which is set for us then we shall not be single-rayed Christians, flashing but one virtue, but we shall gather all the rays from the sun of righteousness, and shine with a light that shall in truth be a revelation. The sunlight—what is it, but a revelation? We see not the light, but the things on which it shines. Even so the perfect life reveals not itself, but the things of God. "And His life was the light of men," can be said of every Christian, in proportion as they reflect their Lord. If we thus lived this perfect life, what an army we would be, going forth to fight with blades of flashing light, dispelling the darkness of sin and kissing into bloom the fruits and flowers of a spiritual life. And more, as we march to the fray, it would be with songs, glad and joyous. There is more music in a real Christian life than the world has ever dreamed of. Have you heard the great organ in the cathedral peal out its notes, making the lofty arches ring with its harmonies? Did you hear the mighty chorus roll forth its waves of harmony? And did you say it was grand. Ah, I can tell you of grander music than ever came from organ or chorus, grand as they may be. If you had ears sufficiently attuned to catch the strain, you might hear coming from the heart that forgives an injury received, sweeter music than ever came from angel harps. To forgive a wrong; to pray for those who despitefully use you; to patiently suffer and silently bear insult and injury, is to strike in the human breast a keyboard whose notes will reach highest heaven and make the song of the angels but a minor strain. It is hard to understand this? It will not be, if for a little while you stand before the cross of Calvary; you need not gaze upon the awful scene; I would rather you would close your eyes just now, and listen, while the heart of God's Son is smitten. Do you hear the ring? It is the ring of self-denial. It is the ring of a heart that loves unto death even his enemies. Ah, my Christian friends, there is your pitch; hear the ring of suffering love; it is to be the key-note of your life. When your spiritual tone runs low, listen at the cross for the ring of the Master's heart. So shall you be full orbed Christians, scattering sunshine, winning victories and filling the world with heavenly harmonies.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.