

yet, so far as its real spiritual essence is concerned, attract universal attention. But it is operating, and it will continue to operate silently and effectively, until the whole mass of humanity shall be brought under its converting power. We see signs now of this happy consummation. Then shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the King of kings.

#### EVOLUTION DOES NOT EXPLAIN IT.

The leaven which is to transform the world is placed in it from without, not evolved from within. It is the gift of God, not the product of the human mind, nor the result of worldly forces. Progress there is, but a beginning there must be. Christianity was introduced into the world from a source external to the world. Jesus Christ came into the world that it might have life, and more abundant life. The parable of the leaven teaches that just as the meal did not develop its own yeast, so the world did not evolve the Christian faith. The woman put the leaven into the meal, and Christianity was put into the world; it was a revelation to man—its origin was external to humanity although adapted to human conditions; it came from Him of whom it is said, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

#### CHRISTIANITY A VITAL FORCE.

1. *Christianity is really alive.* Careful investigation has shown that the process of fermentation entirely depends upon the presence and growth of certain living organisms forming the ferment. Christianity is itself a living presence, not a mere dull, dead principle—a life, not a book; a person, not a set of rules; a present power, not an absentee sovereign.

2. *Christianity is at work, as well as alive.* It is the habit of leaven to show an incessant desire for activity. It is a type of marvellous work and increase. Huxley says that the coxswains which float in yeast are living organisms. They multiply with great rapidity by giving off minute buds, which attain to the size of their parent. Yeast will increase indefinitely when grown in the dark. So Christianity is incessantly at work, and constantly increasing by its own inherent life. So should all professors of Christ's religion exhibit unremitting activity in behalf of the doctrine and principles in which they believe. A listless, idle, lazy Christian is an anomaly.

3. *Christianity works in a congenial sphere.* Leaven is hid in meal, the material which has an affinity for it, and upon which it is specially fitted to act. The leaven is placed where it is wanted, where it can work, and where it can work with success. But mark! leaven is not better suited to work in meal than Christ in men's hearts for their salvation, and in this world for its rectification.

4. *Christianity transforms men.* Leaven changes meal in which it is placed, and Christianity regenerates and reforms men; it makes them like Christ by filling them with the life of Christ. Christ, who is a spiritual life, puts His life into each part of a man: (a) the life of His thoughts into his thinking; (b) the life of His love into his affections; (c) the life of His righteousness into his conscience; (d) the life of His obedience into his will. Old things pass away and, behold, all things become new.

#### FLASHLIGHTS.

1. Christianity transforms into its own nature that with which it comes in contact.

2. Christ's best, most powerful work is unseen; it is in the soul. It proceeds in its conquering power from inside outward.

3. You are in the world for two purposes at least: to make yourself good; to make others better. And one way to become better yourself is to try to make others better.

4. If you want to uplift men, get on higher ground than they. You are always working against the downward gravity of sin.

5. Do not despair of your society if it has two or three earnest workers. That is all any society needs to become efficient. It will not long remain two or three. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

6. Leaven is continually working upon that which is next to it; it works from particle to particle. So each true Christian, leavened by Christianity, operates as divine influence upon his neighbor.

7. Living, active, consecrated Christianity has a measureless transforming power. It has already leavened the governments, the commerce, the business, the social customs of the nations of Christendom, and it is still working.

8. The parable illustrates the history of every Christian soul; for Christ is hidden in the soul, and becomes the secret source of its life, until the whole man is brought into submission to the will of that central authority.

9. Young people, take hope and courage from this parable. It indicates the final triumph of Christianity, despite all opposing forces. You are not connected with a losing cause; you are on the winning side, and one day, if faithful, with the victors you shall be crowned.

#### POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

This parable was selected for topic study less than a year ago. But such suggestive, inspiring truth will bear repetition. Have some one prepare a brief paper or address on "The great growth of Christianity." You will find data in April Epworth Era, page 105. Have another brief paper or address prepared on "Christ's Kingdom, its central life." Suggestions for this will be found in the foregoing exposition under "Christianity a vital force." Have the "Flashlights" read by the younger members of the society. Hold a brief testimony service, having as the object of thought, "How the leaven of Christ's kingdom is influencing my personal life!" Have your music, scripture and plan of service arranged beforehand. Have everything bright, brief and spiritually helpful. If any work should be done well, it is Christ's work.

#### STRAWS.

"Why didn't you keep that boy?" asked one merchant of another, referring to a boy who had applied for a position in his office.

"I tried him, but he wrote all morning with a hair on his pen. I don't want a boy who hasn't sufficient gumption to remove a hair from a pen."

"That is a very slight thing for which to condemn a lad."

"Pardon me, but I think it a very sufficient reason. There was a hair on the pen when he began to write, for I put it there to test him. I am satisfied that I read his character from that one thing."

"I didn't keep her because her finger nails would turn her down anywhere," said one member of a law firm to another in response to a question about a stenographer and typewriter whom he had had on trial. "She was a competent person, I think, but her nails"—he shrugged his shoulders and the subject was dropped.

"Oh, yes, she wrote a good letter," said the same man, speaking of another applicant. "There was one thing I didn't like, and that more than counterbalanced the good points in her application. I don't want a typewriter who is careless about her machine. Her letters were blurred; her machine needed cleaning. If she wasn't careful enough to clean her typewriter when writing a letter of such importance to herself, she would be sure to be slovenly in her everyday work."

"I can't stand his voice. I'd as lief hear a buzz-saw," said a man about a boy who applied for a position in his office.

"Tell that young woman we can't take her. Make up a good-sounding story if you can. She wears too many rings for us," said an editor-in-chief to his associate, speaking of a lady who was seeking a position as sub-editor.

One might go on indefinitely quoting similar cases. Trifles, perhaps some young man or woman may call them. But in reality there are no trifles, and in the business world nothing is trifling. Even straws may serve to show which way the wind blows. *A. L. R., in Wellpings.*

#### TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORK.

At the silver mine of Königsberg, in the south of Norway, a curious custom is observed. When the weekly wages of the miners are paid the overseer reckons up in his book the amount due to each man, and, causing the laborer to turn round, he writes with chalk the sum on the back of his coat. The miner then goes to the cashier at his office, who looks at the figures in this strange position, and at once pays the wages named there. The man himself does not know the sum that is written on his back; and he has no chance of asking another and altering it on the way. It may be smaller than he calculated or expected, but he must carry his unknown amount behind him on his back to the cashier, and receive the money in silence, without any right of appeal or hope of redress. This curious custom belongs to a very primitive condition of society, when dates and sums were recorded by making a notch on a wooden tally or a chalk mark on a door. But it is an extraordinary feature of that old custom to make, as in this instance, the workman himself a tally, and to record on his own person the value of his work.

This manner of paying the Norwegian miners is a striking illustration of the way in which the final awards of the day of judgment shall be given. The wages which each human being has earned by his life-work on earth will be inscribed, so to speak, on his own person, and will therefore be unimpeachable. We carry with us, not on our back, but in our memory, unknown to ourselves, the record of all we have been and done. Every action is faithfully registered; every moment of time is accurately accounted for. We have forgotten many things, and imagine that they have ceased to be. But they have only gone into our deeper consciousness, and they need only that our memory should be revived to start up in all their original freshness before our minds.—*Chassante.*

#### A QUESTION ANSWERED.

It was at a Sunday School convention, and there had been considerable discussion of the vexed question as to whether the Sunday School teacher should always be a Christian. Considerable time had been given to the discussion, when some one said: "Let us have the opinion of Brother B— on this subject. He has had larger and more valuable experience than any one else in this room. Will you answer the question for us, Brother B—?"

Brother B—, a venerable man, whose appearance would have entitled him and anything he might have to say to respect in any congregation, rose to his feet and said slowly and so distinctly that every word was heard in all parts of the room: "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?" That was all he said, but its value was greater than all else that had been uttered during the entire discussion. Who shall give a better answer to this question?—*Baptist Teacher.*