

But the son was not discouraged, and continued to labour and pray for the conversion of his aged parent who must soon leave this world, and, unless prepared, go down to a hopeless grave.

At length the labours and prayers of the young man were effectual, and the aged father was led to an acceptance of Christ as his only hope of salvation.

He joined the Church at Yamaguchi, and was a most happy and earnest Christian. It was his constant desire to lead others to that Saviour that had brought such peace and comfort to his heart.

He was very fond of poetry, and was accustomed to write poems and Christian hymns as a common diversion. He loved the Bible very much; and especially enjoyed the beautiful and poetic thoughts that it contains.

Not long since he was taken sick and on his death-bed found great comfort in reading God's Word and composing hymns in which he could express his love and gratitude to God for His great goodness to such a sinner as he.

Just before he died he wrote as follows: (Translation.)

I soon from this body of sin shall be free,
But the angel of death has no terrors for me,
I then shall behold the God of all grace,
And dwell evermore in the light of his face.

Like the bright petaled flower, that blooms for a day;
Or the dew drop that glistens, and passes away,
So brief is our life, and hastens to its end;
And vain is man's power his days to extend.

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THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

ITS ASSIMILATING POWER.

In Christianity which is the personal delineation of Christ and Him crucified, there stand out before us several things pregnant with significance in regard to the point at issue. The first is the idea that Christianity possesses the power to mould us into a likeness of Christ so that the Word of God is to us the law, the strength and the delight of our soul. This was the experience of David when he exclaimed in the language of inexpressible appreciation, "Oh, how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." The Word of God penetrates into the deep recesses of the soul, touches the springs of action in the heart, and engages the understanding in reflective meditation. Such is the experience of all who know the truth in the love of it. The second is the idea that Christianity carried in it power to control events, to dispose things and to utilize circumstances in order to accomplish the gracious purposes of Christ in the economy of grace. In this respect, marvellous are the manifestations of God in the evolutions of Providence. Amazed therewith, Paul exclaims from the depths of his soul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" The third is the idea that Christianity is so comprehensive as to embrace everything founded on fact and to lay everything so founded under contribution to promote the highest interest of man. The aim of Christianity is the intellectual, the moral and the spiritual good of man and Christianity harmonizes with everything that runs in that direction or which tends to dispel the darkness of ignorance, to diffuse the light of knowledge and to better the condition of man for time and eternity. Towards this end Christianity uses the judicial ability of Moses, the dramatic talent of Job, the versatile genius of David, the metaphysical acumen of Solomon, the vivid imagination of Isaiah, the deep wail of Jeremiah, the simple narrative of Matthew, the abrupt brevity of Mark, the fine polish of Luke, the intuitive insight of John, the vigorous logic of Paul, the passionate address of Peter, and the practical turn of James. The assimilating power of Christianity, which has just been set forth in its general import, may now be considered under the peculiar aspects.

1. The pervasive influence of Christianity. The light of the sun is everywhere present on the earth, enters into the essence of things, clothes things with all the hues and colours of the rainbow and stands out before us with all the beauties of nature; in like manner Christianity, which is Christ the Sun of Righteousness, is the Light of the world, is in and around us in the unspeakable riches of grace, becomes a consti-

tuent part in our thoughts, in our sentiments and in our actions, appears with characteristic prominence in our manners, and in our customs, and in our laws, stands out with unique effect in our asylums and in our reformatories and in other similar institutions in our midst. As like produces like in strict accord with its own condition and environment, so Christianity diffuses itself in every direction among men and things without regard to public gaze and noisy throng, or Christianity works in secret and in silence with glorious success in the advancement of man's spiritual and material welfare. It has succeeded, and is succeeding as no philosophy the world ever saw could do. It is permeating and purifying from year to year the whole intellectual, moral, and social life of the human race. The subtle influences of Christianity which act with such benign effect on men and things are set forth by Moses with expressive as well as beautiful imagery, when he thus describes the truth in its modes of operation. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass." There is here placed before us the endless and nameless influences of Christianity together with their native effects as suggested by similar effects in the processes of nature. The effects of Christianity, which we have just seen under figures of similitude, are indefinite in number, variety and beauty. Well, since it is so and there is no limit to it either in time or space, what amount of influence must one age exert on another in the culture of mind and in the refinement of taste as well as in purity of heart and sanctity of conduct through the practice of the truth which came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? The influence of inspired men over men uninspired is a marvellous fact; and in the annals of literature, as well as elsewhere, it presents most interesting and vivid reality. Aside from the material contents of their books, we cannot see how Bunyan, Baxter, Milton and Shakespeare could have been the men they were, but for this indirect agency of the inspired authors of Scripture as a silent and unconscious efflux into their souls. So far from decaying, it seems to be increasing. Take the vast breadth of its range, and modern thought is permeated to the core of its heart with this subtle spirit. Not that all our statesmen, scientists, poets and historians acknowledge it any more than Plutarch, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian acknowledge it; but, nevertheless, the fact stands, that the world would have had a very different Plutarch, Aurelius, and Julian, had not Paul and John lived.

2. The transforming efficiency of Christianity. Divine agency is a necessary factor in Christianity and without that agency there can be no personal vital religion, but, with it, the soul is in health and prosperity. Hereon, thus God speaks, "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." Under divine agency, which acts on the mind through the doctrines of the cross, it is clear how the soul grows in grace and expands into all the beauties of holiness. Again, the transforming efficiency of Christianity stands out before us in the processes by which the life of God is carried on in the soul. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." We behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and are thereby transformed into His image. The effect of the truth on the mind of men is the same in all ages, from Enoch to Paul, and from Paul down to our own time. As then, so now Christianity eliminates what is evil out of things, adopts what is good in things and brings things into harmony with itself; brings order out of confusion, beauty out of deformity, and sweetness out of bitterness; governs the passions, regulates the desires, and conforms the will to the will of God; changes the soul from sin to holiness, from darkness to light, and from barrenness to fruitfulness; uplifts the soul to God in devout contemplation, in glowing adoration and in longing anticipation of heaven our eternal home. Christianity is, indeed, an efficient factor in our material, intellectual and moral good. No other religion, no system of philosophy has so high a claim for our regard if we merely rest it on what Christianity has done. To tell that volumes would be needed.

It has changed the face of the world, altered the aspects of history, created a new religious language, formed a calendar of time, introduced a new and higher art, inaugurated a new realm of literature, permeated society with new graces of culture and refinement, done much to alleviate pain by its benevolent institutions, and brightened human life as nothing else could do. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

3. The universal adaptability in every age and in every quarter of the globe. Christianity is everywhere adapted to the depraved condition and spiritual wants of men whether old or young, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. Christianity enlightens the philosopher as well as the peasant on the subject of redeeming love, makes the sage as well as the ignorant wise unto salvation, directs the sovereign as well as the subject in the duties incumbent on them in their respective relations. The truth, which sets forth Christ as the Mediator between God and man, is the same in effect on the human mind amidst all the diversities of talent and circumstances of men on the face of the earth and will continue to be so till the consummation of all things. Besides, it is the genius of Christianity to embrace whatever is good and true in the culture of the people that differ widely from each other in their habits of thought on religion in their modes of life and in their environments. Perhaps the most marvellous feature about Christianity from the human point of view is its incorporativeness. Transcending as it does all nationalities, it reaches that transcendence not by expelling the nations, but by gathering them in. Professing to supersede the religions of the past, it has yet within its Pantheon given a place to these religions. Within the portrait of the Son of man are embraced the lineaments of all those antecedent faiths which He purposed to transcend. Here sleep the Brahmin's sense of mysticism, the Parsee's sense of sin, the Buddhist's sense of sacrifice, the Confucian's sense of empire, the Jew's sense of holiness, the Greek's sense of beauty, and the Roman's sense of justice. Here repose side by side instincts hitherto deemed the most diverse and the most irreconcilable. Why is it that many are to come from the east and from the west to sit down in the kingdom of God? Hitherto the east and the west had been terms expressive of the very poles of human thought. The east was restful, gentle, quiescent; the west was strong, muscular, active. It had always appeared to men as if a great gulf had been fixed between them. But in this central figure of Bible portraiture there was found a meeting place of reconciliation. Within the life of the Son of Man the east and the west met together, for within life of the Son of Man gentleness and strength embraced each other.

The Son of God,
Only begotten and well beloved, between
Men and His Father's justice interposed;
Put human nature on; His wrath sustained;
And in their name suffered, obeyed and died,
Making His soul an offering for sin:
Just for unjust and innocence for guilt,
By doing, suffering, dying unconstrained,
Save by Omnipotence of boundless grace,
Complete atonement made to God appeased;
Made honourable His insulted law,
Turning the wrath aside from pardoned man.
Thus truth with mercy met, and righteousness
Stooping from highest heav'n, embraced fair peace,
That walked the earth in fellowship with love.

E. C.

ONE IS YOUR TEACHER.

The following is the sermon preached at the opening of the Presbyterian Council by the Rev. Oswald Dykes. The text selected was Matthew xxiii. 8-12, (Revised Version.)

It was the avowed object of our blessed Lord to set up a religious commonwealth or kingdom of God on earth. The idea was far from a novel one; since, in point of fact, religion had always been conceived of in the ancient world as the internal bond or cement of society that gave cohesion to civil life. But in various ways the Christian commonwealth was to stand in profound contrast to every sacred society previously existing among men; and perhaps the central contrast of all may be discerned underlying this passage of the Gospel. Superficially read, this utterance of