

## Original Contributions.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT.

That every effect must have a cause, and that every effect must partake of the nature of the cause, all admit. Why is it not right, therefore, to judge of the cause by the effect? If the effect is good must not the cause be good? If the water is sweet must not the fountain be sweet? Can we get sweet water from a bitter fountain? We are frequently asked whether it was right, "to do evil that good might come," we answer no, indeed, from the fact that our labor would be lost; as all know, it is impossible to get good out of evil. But, says one, "Why all these interrogations, as every one admits the cause is to be known by the effects?" Don't be too hasty in your conclusions. It may seem very strange, not to say stupid, that any one could condemn a cause that produced a good effect, yet, nevertheless, such is the stern fact.

We read in Luke xiii. 11-17, that when Christ was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and when Christ saw her He called her to Him and laid His hand on her and loosed her from her infirmity. This wonderful cure and unspeakable blessing caused the woman to glorify God. We would naturally suppose that every one who had any love for humanity would rejoice in seeking such mercy granted to the sick; but strange to state, some were present who were indignant, and talked and acted as if our Lord Jesus Christ had committed some heinous crime in healing this unfortunate woman. And what was all this indignation about? One would think that such a grand effect on humanity could not be the result of lawlessness. But not so, the ruler of the synagogue claimed the right to raise the question as to soundness and consistency in doing good on the "Sabbath day." His idea of keeping the Sabbath was the standard of right for all others. It made no difference how many suffered or died, they must not be healed on "the Sabbath." His construction of the law must be right, however much He may stretch the law beyond its intention; and anything that is a violation of his little one idea, construction of law, is wrong. "Cause and effect" have no weight with the ruler. Christ's interpretation of the law was of no consequence whatever. The Saviour showed plainly that to do good was keeping the law of the Sabbath, and that the great design of any of God's laws was the good effects on humanity, that keeping the law was determined by how well it kept man, that all law must be determined by its effects. Joseph Cook says that "New religions are to be judged, not so much by the men who make them as by the men they make." This is the true principle by which we judge what is right. If the law of God did not produce a better type of manhood we would have no place for it. That Christ was a better man than the ruler of the synagogue is evidence that He had the correct interpretation of the law, and was not breaking the law of the Sabbath, but was fulfilling its true design. A man's life is the best interpreter of his creed. We pay little or no attention to what a man believes unless his faith produces a better condition of manliness. The world to-day is judging of cause by effect. If they see a good effect they will accept the cause that produces it. But the Ruler in question was so wedded to His idea of keeping the Sabbath that He was blinded to the true design of the Sabbath and to the good of man, and did not see that His adherence to what He supposed was right was having no good effect on others, and was producing a very poor type of manhood in himself. Here is where many make a mistake, in thinking they are keeping the law of God, in attending simply to the form or letter of the law. It is

possible to have the form without the power. What we need is adherence to the law or the truth in such a way that the truth will so adhere to us that it can be seen and felt in our life, and that others can also see and feel its effects.

Very often we find persons who differ from us, and they may be honest in their convictions and we should be willing to grant to them sincerity of purpose. But ought they not allow to us the same sincerity of purpose in our convictions? But how are we to decide which is right? And should I tolerate my brother in that which I think is wrong? These are important questions. I am free to confess that I know of only the one way to answer them, i. e., "cause and effect." But, says one, "should not a thus saith the Lord settle our differences?" Most certainly, in all questions, when we have a thus saith the Lord. There are many questions, however, that are good, of which the Lord has not spoken, that are found in the "whatsoever" of the Apostle Paul. (Phil. iv. 8) These are the questions that must be settled by "cause and effect." Take for an illustration the work of the Sunday-school. I read, in one of our papers, of a church that had been without a Sunday-school for twenty years, because its members, or some of them, thought it was wrong, on the ground of the silence of the Bible on the question of the Sunday-school. If this is true and right, then the law of "cause and effect" is wrong. We are compelled to admit the good effects of the Sunday-school. There is a class of six young ladies in the Sunday-school. Their teacher is faithful to them. Week after week they are taught the word of God. In the course of time they are led to accept Christ and become faithful workers in the church. And now I am asked to believe that this grand effect is the result of an evil cause. I am told this, perhaps by a brother who spends his Sunday afternoon at home on the lounge asleep or out doors looking after some secular interest. My brother is justified for not doing good on the Lord's day, and I am condemned in doing good, because, forsooth, the Bible does not mention Sunday-schools. It is plain to be seen that the ruler of the synagogue still lives, that the mind to-day can be so perverted by its own peculiar ideas of right that the law of "cause and effect" has no weight whatever. To such evil appears good and good appears evil.

We have heard the "Christian Endeavor Society" condemned on the same ground, i. e., the silence of the Bible in regard to it. A number of young people have united themselves to the church but have not become active members. The good brethren have urged upon them the necessity of being workers, but all to no purpose, they still remain inactive. Two or three of the brethren conclude they will form a "Christian Endeavor Society." The young members of the church join it and become earnest workers, and soon they are efficient workers in every department of church work. Is not this a good work? Is it not therefore right? Can a thing be wrong and yet be good? But, says one, "we have no account of such societies in the apostolic days." My answer to this objection is about the same as the answer to a friend who objected to baptism, because the thief on the cross was not baptized. "He was not baptized because not necessary. Baptism, that is Christian baptism, was not yet given; when it was necessary it was given, and then, of course, it would be good, but not till then." There were things commanded in the apostolic age on the principle of "cause and effect." When the good effect ceased the command ceased. The "holy kiss" was commanded on account of the good effect because of the usages of society, but when the good effect ceased and the effect became evil then the commandment was no longer obligatory. It is subjected to-day on the ground of "cause and effect." Our relation to God never changes, there-

fore, the principles of godliness are always the same in all ages. But our relations towards others are constantly changing; different nations and different ages brings different duties, hence, the principles of righteousness often change. Paul did not act always the same. He became all things to all men. He did not change the gospel or the system of godliness, but in his dealings with men he did the things that would have the best effect. He knew that some things under some circumstances would not have the same effect as under different circumstances. Herein we see his marked wisdom in leaving these matters to the sanctified judgment of his brethren. In his benediction to the Thessalonians he desired that God might comfort their hearts and establish in them every good word and work, leaving it to their wisdom to follow "whatever was good." We will not get far astray from the word of God when we seek to bless our fellows. Any love for God and His word that does not inspire us to work for humanity in every possible way to do them good is not the love of God. The effect we have on others determines the worth of our religion.

H. MURRAY.

## LOVE.

John, first letter, iv. 8, 16: "God is love." John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," etc. Matt. v. 44, 45: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven," etc. Paul also writes to the church at Rome, xiii. 10: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

It may be asked: Of what law?

Ans. Of all divine law, and, of all good human law.

Why?

Because, love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Because, love worketh good to his neighbor. Because, "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Gal. v. 22, 23.

It is not, usually, difficult to love those who are near to us—it may be the members of our own family, the amiable in our own church, the friendly and good in our own community, or those of our own political party who may be just to our own liking. But, says one, it is simply impossible to love the unlovely; man can not direct his love.

We should ever bear in mind that Jesus said to His disciples, *while Judas was among them too*, "Love one another." And He also said, as noticed above, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," etc.

Not much need to tell that father to love that noble boy, his pride and hope. Little necessity of enjoining on that mother the duty of love for her first-born. The father does love the boy; the mother her first-born. Nature did that already—the God of nature, unconditionally, placed there the law of love; and the, almost, impossible is, for the parents not to love the children.

But do you ask that father, who loves his boy, to love his enemy? Do you ask him to, unreservedly, bless the man who curses him? do good to the man who hates him? to pray for the man who despitefully uses and persecutes him? Imagine, if you can, the change which will immediately come over him; the soft lines on the face will harden into coldness and resolution, the light of the eye will be changed. Can he love his enemy? What claims to love has his enemy on him?

Can we, from our low position, fully understand a picture, or a reality, where malice the most bitter is maintained on one side, and love, full, free and continuous, is manifest on the other?