

which seems to us unwholesome, we will go behind the effect to the cause, we will ascertain the reason for its existence, we will pour our cruise of salt in at the fountain-head. Extreme views are the normal fruit of controversy. A swing of the pendulum of thought beyond the perpendicular of truth, suggests a previous swing on the other side. "Action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions" among men as well as among molecules. Do we not recognize, in the case before us, the operation of nature's law? Has there not been in the past and is there not oftentimes now, a grave deficiency in the preaching of the gospel? Has not faith been emphasized at the expense of love, justification, at the expense of sanctification salvation from punishment at the expense of salvation from sin, future happiness at the expense of present holiness? Do we not agitate our hearers more about getting to Heaven than about "living the rest of the time in the flesh to the will of God?" Have not the doctrinal chapters of the Romans been expounded with greater zeal than the practical? Candor compels our assent. And the recoil from such a defective presentation of the truth has manifested itself in a preaching equally imperfect and, if possible, more dangerous. Faith is the root, love the tree, righteousness the fruit of the tree. Too many husbandmen have given their attention to the culture of roots to the neglect of fruit; and now a school of agriculturists has arisen amongst us, advocating a new method. "Away with roots altogether," they cry; "give us only fruit-bearing trees."

The condition of Christian work to-day requires a preaching that is balanced as well as positive. "To get behind the rabbis to Jesus" in a true sense, to build our theology fairly upon the New Testament which is His word, would be to heal many of the Church's disorders. Were the stress laid by us now as it was by Christ and His Apostles, reactionary views would not be so prevalent. Practical righteousness is the end of God's plan. The mission of Jesus was to "save His people from their sins." The Christian's supreme business is to be holy, and that now. The Sermon on the Mount and the character of Jesus are His goal. But it is one thing to see the goal, another thing to reach it. Before a man's life can conform to the Sermon, he must be furnished with an adequate motive and an efficient power. Ability without disposition, or disposition without ability is dead. The motive and the power alike originate in the Cross. Christ crucified enkindles our affections, supplying the motive. "We love because He first loved us." Christ crucified pours forth His Spirit supplying the power. The loving purpose and the strength to follow Jesus come with pardon; pardon comes from Calvary. A place must be found, then, both for the sermon and for the Cross. They stand related as means, and end. The end will not be attained by disregarding the means, nor yet by disregarding the end. In these days of controversy and heated argument we must be careful of our emphasis. In avoiding one extreme we involuntarily rebound to the other and only perpetuate error. It is next to impossible for us to grasp more than one idea firmly. The various denominations are magnificent monuments to man's constitutional onesidedness. Let us hold up the life of Jesus as a rule by which men are to walk; let us faithfully present the Cross as the only instrument by which they can be crucified to the world and the world to them. Let us make up our minds to know two things and no more, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Let "Christianity both a creed and a life," be our watchword. We shall then prove for ourselves and to the world that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

There are few temptations more common to ardent spirits than that which leads them to repine at the lot in which they are cast, believing that in some other situation they could serve God better. If each such man had the spirit of self-surrender, the spirit of the cross, it would not matter to him whether he was doing the work of the mainspring, or one of the inferior parts. It is his duty to try and be himself—simply to try to do his own duty.

THE JAPANESE A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO.

"Thirty years ago," says Chauncey Depew, "I was appointed United States minister to Japan. That country had just been opened to the commerce of the world. Its government was a pure feudalism and of the type of the period of Louis XI. The feudal lords had their armies and their castles, and the tillers of the soil were little better than slaves. To-day Japan is governed by a constitutional monarchy and a congress of the representatives of the people. It has an enlightened press, railroads, trolley cars, and electric lights. Then its army fought with spears and bows and arrows, and its soldiers were clad in armor. To-day it has the most efficient navies and best trained and most effective armies in the world. It has utilized every advantage in modern warfare, and in its attack upon China demonstrated that upon land and sea the army and navy of Japan are equal to those of the most advanced of the warlike nations of Europe. Japan is a superb illustration of this age of electricity. It took six hundred years for Europe to progress from feudalism to constitutional liberty and parliamentary government, and from armor and lance to the torpedo and the machine gun. Japan has accomplished the same progress in a little over a quarter of a century."—*Scientific American*.

The Christian Endeavor Pledge.

BY REV. CHARLES A. DICKINSON, D.D.

The pledge is unquestionably the pivot around which the phenomenal success of the Christian Endeavor movement has swung. Other things being equal, the society whose members have been faithful to the requirements of the pledge has been stable, spiritual and aggressive, whereas the society which has omitted the pledge, or allowed it to become inoperative, has, as a rule, been either short-lived or inefficient as a spiritual power in the church. From the time when Jehovah became known as a covenant-making God, as one who was willing to pledge himself to do certain things for man, there has been a mysterious and potent relation between the pledge, or vow, and the moral and spiritual life.

The men who have done much for the world in a moral or religious way have been the men who have vowed unto the Lord, and performed their vows. The crusades and the great temperance movements have all hinged upon a pledge. The Church itself stands upon a solemn covenant. The religious vow is the sign of a quickened conscience, a keen sense of duty, and a resolute purpose. It implies that the person making the vow has recognized some great obligation, has taken into account the difficulties besetting it, and in spite of all opposition has determined to discharge it. Half the battle is the attitude of the soldier. A determined man is more formidable than a glistening bayonet. A man bound by a vow to do a thing rises at once above the mass of careless men as a conspicuous force for good or evil in the community. His vow is his drawn sword, his levelled bayonet, his sign of aggressiveness.

No man can make much of himself, or do much for truth or humanity, who is not constantly in this pledge attitude. The moral and spiritual life is, in the root sense of the word, a devoted life; a life lived under a most solemn vow, a life separated from every form and force of evil, and actively hostile to them. Taking the Church covenant, signing the temperance pledge or the Christian Endeavor pledge, are merely the public acknowledgment of obligations which rest upon all true men and women, and which it is their duty to discharge whether they pledge themselves to do so or not.

A good many young men and women do not join the Christian Endeavor ranks because they do not believe in pledging. They do not feel like committing themselves to a promise which they at times may find it inconvenient or incompatible with their feelings to keep. And yet these same young people are living and moving daily as citizens and social beings in the midst of a most complicated network of pledges and promises. These promises constitute the very framework of our social and commercial life, and in proportion as these promises are violated or kept we approach financial panic, anarchy, and barbarism. Commercial credit, business confidence, civil prosperity,—all these things are the result of pledges kept inviolate. The man who uses a railroad ticket, or passes a dollar bill, or accepts a promissory note, or makes a contract with an employer, is depending on an individual or corporate pledge. The breakfast he eats, the house he lives in, the furniture he uses, the clothes he wears, are in one form or another the results of promises and pledges.

Some years ago there were in my congregation a young man and a young woman of excellent Christian character whom I tried to persuade to join the Society of Christian Endeavor.