

# The Church Guardian,

A Weekly Newspaper published in the interests of the  
Church of England.

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## LENT.

### IV.—SIN AS INFLUENCING OTHERS.

It has pleased God to place us in the world as a state of probation. He has surrounded us with a thousand causes which influence our conduct. The Church, our parents, teachers, companions, institutions, literature; these all away us, help to form our character, and fix our habits. Perhaps none of us realize to what extent this is the case. We often take credit for being original. It would lower our vanity to see clearly how little is really born of ourselves.

Now as a rule we admit all this. We will even allow it. But we hide from ourselves the other side of the matter, which is that *we react on others*. Recognizing the influence of others on us, we must also face our responsibility for our influence on others. And here again we fail to see the extent of this. A chance word or look, much more a premeditated one, may have an effect we little imagine. In good things we are happy to think our influence is great. With a horrible self-complacency we rub our hands, saying "I think I was able to persuade so and so," or "I trust my influence was sufficient to prevent," etc., etc. O thou blind Pharisee! There is another phase of the question.

It is of the nature of wrong-doing to perpetuate itself. It speedily passes out of the power of the wrong doer. Will the deepest repentance recall it? Will the hardest self-punishment efface it? Nay, it will go on reproducing itself in myriad ways when thy sinful body moulders in the grave. An evil deed once done, God Himself cannot undo it. In that evil deed Eternity is bound up. The whole energy of the soul may be applied to cut off its consequences. The whole life may be devoted to reparation. But the act cannot be removed.

And the consequences to whom? It would be bad enough did they only affect one's self. But very few acts either good or bad end with the doer. A soul is on its trial. It hesitates at an evil act. It is on the verge of refusal. Then a sneer, or a mocking laugh, or even a mere questioning of motive, meets that soul. For years that influence keeps him from good, or madly urges to evil. He who was guilty goes on his right way, forgetting. But that sneer, or that laugh of ridicule has meantime proved the ruin of him who heard it. "He died, and made no sign. O God forgive him!"

A profane man invents a new form of swearing. It is a pressure to him to repeat it. It sinks his

soul in deeper pollution. But a little boy is passing by and catches it up. It is his first lesson in blasphemy. The profane swearer repents. From the bottom of his soul he abhors the evil of which he has been guilty. His repentance may be accepted. He may be saved so as by fire. But the hearer and the imitator may die unrepentant 50 years after the guilty originator has been consigned to the tomb! An evil book is written (and the literature of the day is nine-tenths of it clever devil-worship.) The book is attractive in form, but only in proportion to its faithful delineation of sin. It palliates impurity. It glorifies immorality. It is not infidel, not even rationalistic. It is only lax, impure in suggestion. The writer may repent. He may write and speak in counteraction of his wicked work. He may recall the issue and destroy all the copies he can get. Not that he generally does this. He for the most part lives on the profits of his villainy and dies in the odour of sanctity. But he may. Nevertheless the evil he has done lives after him. It lives in hundreds of souls that have imbibed the poisonous miasma. And they go down to an unsorrowing deathbed, in spite of their destroyer's repentance.

A man goes through life godless. He is not notoriously immoral, he is not even profane, or actively irreligious. He is simply passively non-religious. He attends to his family duties, is an affectionate parent, a kind friend, would rather do any one a favour than an injury, is pleasant and agreeable. But he does all this simply because it is his disposition to do it. It is not done "as to the Lord." His children grow up in the same way. The father comes to see things in the right light. At the end of life he perceives that so far as Christian influence is concerned, so far as the world being the better for his having lived in it he has *wasted his life*. With agony of soul he implores pardon of a merciful God. But his children live and die as he lived. They die in godlessness, for which he is largely responsible.

A murderer in the heat of passion strikes down his victim to an instant death. In the felon's cell, awaiting the hangman's hateful duty and his own swiftly coming fate, he repents. Sympathetic clergymen attend him to the scaffold, and exalt him almost into a hero, so effusive are the accounts of his repentance and conversion. But the soul of the murdered man, violently hurried to its account without time for a prayer, where is that? Will a few maudlin tears wash away the guilt which has sent a probably unrepentant soul into the presence of its Maker, filled a home with anguish, and consummated an evil which in no realm of God's universe can by any possibility be undone?

"These cases are extreme." True. But they are types, all of them. And the less forcible instances do not strike us. Can any man say he is responsible for no evil influence on another? that *no one* is the worse for his example or words?

It is the shallowness of modern religionism that it dwells on the good there is in men. That it cautions about the "humanity" in man, and preaches that if there is a spark of good in any one he will ultimately be saved. It concentrates its gaze on the "manhood" of the world. It has lost the vision of God's white righteousness, and of the precept "be ye holy, for I am holy." It proclaims that a seat upon a penitent bench for a few moments under flaming gas lights and the power of stentorian lungs is sufficient to for ever remove the guilt of individual sin, and is discreetly silent

about the thousands shivering on the cold shores of a joyless eternity, cursing in their impotent remorse the dire example of professing saints, who can never recall the effects of former sin.

This is a terrible world. Its issues are those of life and death. The echo of it will ring throughout the halls of Eternity. The sinner may not doubt God's mercy. That mercy may extend when it pardons a sin, to the pardon also of all consequences thereto belonging. Yet, let the sinner, when he is tempted to wrong, reflect that no future repentance can probably undo the past; and that the sin of which he may earnestly repent, and which he may spend his life in endeavouring to repair, may have hurled many a soul to everlasting ruin. For

"NO MAN LIVETH TO HIMSELF, AND NO MAN DIETH TO HIMSELF."

## THE CUP IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ATTENTION was called some time since by our Toronto correspondent to a valuable series of letters by the Rev. John Carry, then appearing in the *Toronto Mail*, upon the question which has been agitated of late by a certain extreme section of the Teetotal organization respecting the use of wine in the Holy Communion. We have procured Mr. Carry's letters, and after a careful perusal of them, we think it will be much to the advantage of our readers that they should have the opportunity of reading them also. Accordingly we begin to reprint them in our columns to-day.

It might surely have been thought impossible that any clergyman of our Church could be found venturing to tamper with 'so Divine a thing' as the symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ. The words of our Lord in ordaining them stamp the sacramental elements with a sacredness before which one would expect the rashest and most self-willed of men to stand still in awe. And this awe is surely not diminished by St. Paul's words warning thoughtless Christians that by any irreverent use of those elements they not simply become liable to, but '*eat and drink judgment to themselves.*' Mr. Carry however furnishes evidence too ample for doubt that this grave evil is forcing its way even into the Church.

Now, how does the matter stand? The Divine Head of the Church has instituted wine as the outward visible sign of His Blood, and the means whereby we receive the same. This is being daringly set aside, and something else—we know not what to call it, a syrupy substance of some sort, in any case, a thing of human invention—is being substituted in its place. We will not here anticipate the learned investigations of Mr. Carry. All that we desire in this article is to invite the attention to this subject of our Bishops, our Clergy, and especially of the devout Laity. We would, in passing, remind the Church Wardens that both the fabric of the Communion Service and the Twentieth Canon of the Church of England, impose upon them conjointly with the Clergyman the duty of providing "good and wholesome wine" for the Sacrament. But apart from this, the Laity of the English Church have a right to demand that they be not under any guise robbed of that "cup of the Lord," the vindication of their right to which was one of the best fruits of the English Reformation. And we beg respectfully to remind our Bishops that when a question of the maintenance of the discipline of Christ, "as this Church hath received the same," is raised, all eyes instinctively turn to them.

## SACRAMENTAL WINE & TEETOTALLERS.

To the Editor of The Mail.

SIR,—At first sight your readers may think that this subject might be more fitly discussed in a "re-