

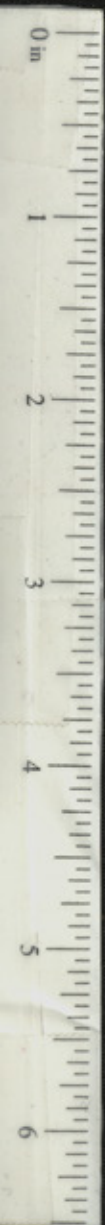
Address

before the Christian Endeavor
Convention, Cincinnati, O.,
July 7, 1901.

No. 28, Vol. 8

Subject

Our New Propriety
(Religions)



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OUR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.

My young friends:

Since the incoming of the work of what is called "higher criticism" and during the last two decades of theoretic evolution, taught to our young men in the academies, high schools and colleges, and extended occasionally with controversy to our Theological Seminaries, it has become the fashion to lay stress on all public occasions, upon the earthly life -- the naturalistic life of men, women and children here and now.

Even in our best sermons, we miss the Old Testament scriptures. There is little reference to the patriarchs, the kings, or the prophets. Illustrations abound which show more reading of other books and less study of the Bible. One often hears entire Sunday discourses, delightful lectures, which have no reference whatever to our Lord and Savior, to his parables or his inimitable teaching. It seems to have become the custom, with our younger clergymen especially, so far as my observation goes, to reverse the old method of instruction which our Savior laid down when he said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Ministers treat, whether wisely or unwisely it remains to be seen, the children and youth as they do plants. Their environment is studied, the development is begun and continued, passing along through regular gradation and combinations and co-relations from babyhood to the Kindergarten; from the Kindergarten to the Grammar School, with the industrial thrown in; from the Grammar School to the High School; and from the High School to the college, Academic, professional, trade or commercial stage. Superposing all this development, and as a last resort, the individual has come into full manhood or womanhood, being urged to put on as a crowning glory an upreaching after God. It is, indeed, in each case an edifice where the last stone of the arch shall be, -- will naturally be, a union with the Divine. All this seems a

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labored attempt to unite perhaps to consolidate naturalistic and scriptural theories of development by a double elimination, throwing out the actual, natural, and the scriptural.

Your speaker is three score and ten and it is forty-four years since his conversion, which indeed should have been accomplished without doubt at least twenty years sooner, perhaps twenty-six. Pardon him for his frankness in saying a few things that he believes. His conviction is strong that one cannot too early teach the Bible phrase common indeed and very old coming from the time of Abraham, to wit, "Thou God Seest me." First, a child is never too young to realize the constant presence of God's spirit. I mean of God himself. So that I would begin right here with this truth and put it first into the heart and mind and life of the child. (General Howard told the story of the child and the graft in illustration.)

Second, I would endeavor to get into his mind as I once found the seed-thought in the mind of a little boy when asked what the Savior meant when he called little children to him and blessed them; the child answered: "Let little children come to me, and don't drive them away." The child caught the real meaning. Our Lord and Master is thus to be found abiding in his own words in the Bible from the prophecies about the Emmanuel and the earliest blessings promised to mankind until the last revised edition of the Holy Scriptures. Think of Timothy, whose grandmother taught him in his early life the blessed scriptures. Therefore, let us put our Lord's seed thoughts of the Bible into children -- imbed^ding them in the memory.

Of course as a third suggestion in connection with this, it is not hard to make a child see and feel in his soul the presence of the Comforter whom Jesus sent to be present with his children, near his children, nay, in his children from the time of his departure from the earth till to-day.

"When the Comforter cometh he will show you all things and bring all things to remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (General Howard illustrated by Peter

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before Jesus left him and after the day of Pentecost.)

This second Presence is surely what the Messiah came to reveal.

My fourth suggestion is that as a rule in the development-theory, real sin with all its sinfulness is eliminated. The trouble is like a plant -- a plant may have bad soil, bad air, too little water, not enough of sunlight and so may be pale, weak, decaying and at last dead, but there is no sin imputable. I have often been associated with a class of people who are faithful and hard working but who have the theory that with tribes of men and women the nearer you get back to nature, as with the plants and animals, the purer and better they are. Therefore, if you can begin early enough and secure a proper environment, and wholesome teaching, there will never be any departure worth mentioning from right conduct and so salvation comes from a natural birth, growth and realization. In fact salvation itself is eliminated because heavenly conditions obtain from the beginning of a life of a child and continue, without interruption, till he enters into glory.

Of course these dear people do not believe that sin entered into the world and spiritual death through sin.

Independent of the Scriptures, however, I have a few potent facts. I know of a section of a country near the Pacific coast where an infidel publication was circulated, and from which the Bible was practically excluded. There virtue did not prevail. Lying, cursing, Sabbath breaking, robbery, murder and the violation of every marriage tie became prevalent and the community was growing worse and worse until our missionary societies went in there and carried the scriptures, and with them a few godly families, the Sunday School, the minister and all the active work of religious example and Christian Endeavor.

Another instance. The great missionary from London, Mr. Duncan, who was the instrument of bringing one of the lowest and worst tribes of Indians up to the plain of a

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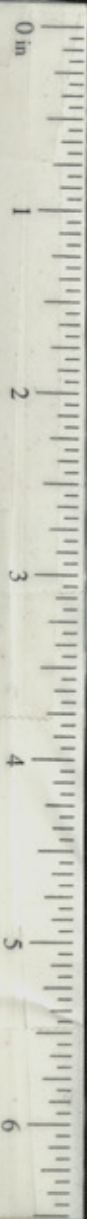
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Christian civilization, was asked by a prominent unbeliever thus: "Mr. Duncan, how did you do it?" Duncan's answer is significant. "I first learned the Indian language. I then planted the word of God in their minds, and you behold the results." It would have taken two hundred years of hard and faithful work by the naturalistic methods, under most favorable circumstances, to have produced with such a people any reasonable fruitage. I doubt if it could have been done at all, unless the children had been all taken away and put with families which were living good, honest, civilized lives. In Arizona Mr. Cook, the famous Pima Missionary, first learned the Pima language and then taught the children the simple truths which Jesus taught his disciples and the result, in a brief period, was the change of hearts of children and parents and the upbuilding and comparative civilization of the tribe. Beginning thus with the children and laying proper foundations, the structure of a Christian civilization becomes possible.

We have also had many examples since the days of John Howard, the philanthropist, of efforts to raise up the criminal classes and make them honest and useful citizens. But the failures up to to-day stagger men who love their kind but have made a hobby of the naturalistic educational development theory. Rodney Leigh could only hear the groans of the unfortunate and perceive the fierce hatreds of criminals. He labored faithfully for their betterment and would not intermit his strenuous and persistent effort till he had gathered them from every source and brought them into a large and beautiful asylum of his own construction where the environments were made perfect. After those whom he had helped most began to do him injury, burnt down his asylum, laughed at his enthusiasm and finally balked all his efforts by striking him blind with a burning timber, then did Rodney Leigh confess to his cousin that he had begun to unravel at the wrong end of the skein. The two cousins agreed, while the birds were singing their sweetest songs and the sun was shining, though not for him, and the breezes were fanning their brows, while they sat together, they both agreed that if we would raise men we must begin by raising their hearts and minds and converting their souls, and that in

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this work man is most man who, with tenderest human hands, worketh like God in Nazereth. The teaching of Jesus is primary and of the utmost importance when he says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and when he further says: "Ye must be born again."

Understand that I do not object to the severest criticism of the scripture text and the most searching investigation as to what Holy men of old really wrote when they were moved by God's holy Spirit; but I do distrust all fierce triumph ^{which} some men manifest when they try to show or think they have shown that Washington was not a good man; that William Shakespeare did not write the books imputed to him and that all the letters imputed to General Grant were not his, and that Moses was not the composer of the Pentateuch. I object to the partisan spirit which undertakes to wrench from us that which we have loved and trusted and believed in, and worked with, from our spiritual childhood to our spiritual manhood.

Jesus said: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." Now, what is the disciple of Jesus really doing who is endeavoring not to lift him up, but to pull him down; not to magnify him ~~place~~ as Emmanuel but to minimize his position and influence. Truth we want. Truth we welcome. So let us have the whole truth and send forth men and women into the field as missionaries and Endeavorers who exalt the Savior Jesus Christ in their hearts, and who are able to teach the simple truth which men and women need, and proclaim the good tidings of great joy continually and without reservation to those who are in dark places and to those who are yet too simple, too ignorant and helpless to comprehend the meaning of extraordinary criticism, or to follow in any way the philosophic teachings of grand theoretic evolution.

As Christian teachers we do not object to any new theories which are sincere or scientific. They are like long lines attached to posts upon which to hang all the minutiae of new phenomena; but let us always remember that these new theories are not Divine and that thousands of them have failed to be long enough and high enough to contain

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all the phenomena relating to the subject at issue. (General Howard illustrated by an old acoustic theory.) When a theory contradicts a known and acknowledged commandment of God why should we not reject it? And why should we not reject its tendencies when those tendencies contravert the plain teachings of Holy Writ or the acknowledged teachings of our Divine Master? To reject such theories or parts of theories is to contend for the faith delivered to the saints. Still, dear brethren, as we proclaim the truth in our enlarged possessions, in all our sparsely settled country, amid the new and ignorant and superstitious populations, far away in Hawaii, from shore to shore of Cuba, and among the Porto Ricans and the eight millions of the Filipinos obeying our Master's last command to preach and teach everywhere what he taught his disciples, let us see to it that we give no uncertain sound; that we deliver no uncertain tidings, no lame and weak proclamation but the glorious old truths that must lie at the foundation of every solid structure, that must be the base of campaign and conflict, -- of course always speaking the truth in love. Heeding this method, the old and well-tried method, the successful method, we shall have abundant fruitage because God in his wisdom has opened to us new fields, and Christ his special manifestation, the Son of his love, has promised to be with us always unto the end.

An overwhelming, outpouring of the Holy Spirit abundant as the mountain streams in springtime and overflowing like the Columbia in midsummer, is now needed to refresh and help the seed-sowing in all our new lands. If we, Christian Endeavorers, who are here have only sufficient faith and are true in the asking, the work will not be too large and the fruitage will be more abundant than we dream.

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