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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Selfishness is one of the most serious sins in the sight of God. Sometimes God finds it best to withhold His blessings from us for a time in order that He may break up our selfishness and refresh our memory concerning the claims that He and His Kingdom have upon our life and service. When Joseph's brethren visited Him in Egypt, He found it wise to withhold His identity from them until they repented. So God sometimes seeks to bring rich blessings to our lives by withholding from us for a time some gifts that He is anxious to bestow.

Broken homes are the cause of a large percentage of criminals, according to the testimony of state boards of charities. Among the men incarcerated in reformatories and penitentiaries the cause most frequently given for their commission of crime has been the lack of godliness in the home, or the failure of parents to exemplify in their lives and to inculcate in their teachings the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This fact ought to lead the Churches to press with all earnestness and zeal efforts to revive family religion and to reclaim the home for Christ.

The providence of God is rapidly preparing the way for the dissemination of the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the English language in almost every nation of the world. For the past fifteen years English has been taught in the public schools of the Philippine Islands. There are now 621,000 Philippine pupils in the public schools, all of whom are taught English. In India, China and Japan, pupils in many schools are taught English. The return of many of the young people of these countries from American schools and colleges is making the English language more and more a channel for the reception of the truths of the Gospel.

Do you understand the Bible principles of "Christian Stewardship?" At no time in the history of the Christian Church has there been a more persistent and intelligent purpose to put these principles into practice in the life and work of the Church. As an incentive to a more careful and thorough study of the subject, the General Assembly's Campaign Committee on Stewardship has inaugurated a "Christian Stewardship Contest," divided into five sections. The "Christian Observer" has been requested to conduct Sections II and III. Section II is for all officers and laymen, with a first prize of \$100, and a second prize of \$50; limit 2,000 words. Section III is for all women, with a first prize of \$100, and a second prize of \$50; limit 2,000 words. It will be necessary for all who desire to enter the contest to write Rev. R. L. Walkup, Secretary, Jackson, Mississippi, for entry blank and all information. A serial number will be furnished each contestant, and this number will appear on the essay to be submitted instead of the name of the writer. If you desire to enter either one of the contests write at once to Mr. Walkup, get entry blank promptly, and select the particular phase of the subject upon which you desire to write.

Since the endorsement of the Christian Endeavor organization by the General Assembly of our Church last May, a tremendous revival of interest in the organization of the young people of the Church for effective Christian work has taken place. In many churches Christian Endeavor Societies have been organized and in other churches societies that have been lagging in interest have been revived and stimulated. The thirty-sixth anniversary of the organization of the General Christian Endeavor Society will be celebrated throughout the world, January 28 to February 4. It is proposed that this celebration shall culminate in a general offering for missions, both home and foreign. A special message to the young people from Rev. John I. Armstrong, D. D., Educational Secretary for Foreign Missions, will be found on page 6 of this issue.

The Executive Committee of Home Missions at the request of Karl Lehmann, Southern States Secretary of the Christian Endeavor Society, has assigned to the Christian Endeavorers of the Southern Presbyterian Church a specific object upon which they can unite in home mission effort. After considering the claims of various phases of home missionary activities, the Executive Committee decided upon Beechwood Seminary, Heidelberg, Kentucky, as the work to receive the united support of the Christian Endeavorers of the South. This worthy home mission school is in care of Rev. A. L. McDuffie and Mrs. McDuffie, assisted by a corps of live teachers. In a statement published on page 7 attention is called to the fact that this school has its own Christian Endeavor Society with a membership of from seventy to one hundred at different seasons of the year. On January 28 all Christian Endeavor Societies will have the claims of this important work presented to them. This is an opportunity for the young people to establish a definite personal connection between themselves and our mountain mission work.

Rev. Mark B. Grier, one of our missionaries to China, died at the home of his brother in Due West, South Carolina, January 6. Mr. Grier returned to the United States last spring on account of ill health and for a time his condition showed improvement. He was one of our strong missionaries, located at Hsuchowfu, one of the stations of the North Kiangsu Mission, and had charge of the boys' school at that place. Mr. Grier was born at Due West, January 3, 1867, was graduated from Erskine College in 1885, and studied at Erskine Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. He was ordained by the Presbytery of South Carolina, July 21, 1892, and the next year sailed as a missionary to China. For almost a quarter of a century he labored unceasingly in this needy field. The sympathy of the entire Church will be with Mrs. Grier who is at home on furlough now. She had charge of the woman's hospital at Hsuchowfu, being a graduate physician of recognized skill.

Rev. Rutherford Rowland Houston died on January 5 at the home of his daughter in Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Houston was born in Smyrna, Asia, May 20, 1836. His father, Rev. Samuel Rutherford Houston, was at that time a missionary to Scio, an island in the

It is not money, as is sometimes said, but the love of money—the excessive, selfish, covetous love of money—that is the root of all evil.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

BY REV. JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN, D. D.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE TO US?

Topic for Wednesday, January 24, 1917.

Suggested Scripture Readings: Romans 15:4 and II Tim. 3:15.

This topic offers a fine opportunity to make the prayer meeting what it ought to be, not merely the pastor's but the people's meeting. Let the pastor or leader of the meeting get as many as possible to read their favorite text or passage of Scripture. Then, if possible, let them be persuaded to tell why it is their favorite. In many cases the passage itself will reveal this. In many other cases it will be still further illuminated by what the pastor knows of the past experiences of the one reading it.

Then the pastor, instead of making his remarks at the beginning of the meeting, can do so at the end; and those remarks can be in the nature of a classification of what the meeting has thus, by the method of induction, disclosed the Bible to be to his flock. Such a classification might be arranged in an ascending scale.

The Bible is first of all

I. A. Great Literature.

To quote Marcus Dods: "It contains biographies which immortalize their heroes in a form more monumental than brass; songs of victory and of love, hymns wrung from souls subjected to every species of human distress and agony, and psalms which serve for every age to utter its praise and its penitence, and its thirst for the living God; the sayings of the worldly wise, and the inspired warnings, denunciations and encouragements of the prophets of God; we have drama and essay, the simple Gospel story, the earliest annals of the Church, and the letters of friendship and counsel that passed from the founders of their churches. If you bound into one volume Knox's 'History of the Reformation,' the Olney Hymns, Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' Savonarola's Sermons, the sayings of Samuel Johnson, Cowper's letters and Hamlet, you would not have a volume more miscellaneous in form than the Bible;" nor, we may add, from the standpoint of mere literature even anything that could stand any comparison with it.

Frederic Harrison was an agnostic, but he wrote some time ago for the "Nineteenth Century Magazine:" "I need hardly tell you to read another and a greater Book. The Book which begat English prose still remains its supreme type. If you care to know the best that our literature can give in simple, noble prose, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Holy Scriptures in the English tongue." When the literary men of England had voted John Ruskin their greatest writer and went to tell him of it he said: "Why do you give the credit to me? Give it to my mother. It is all due to the fact that when I was a boy she made me commit great passages from the Bible."

Perhaps every minister has known men in the common ranks of life, men who have had no education or any intellectual opportunity, but who being driven to the study of the Word of God, primarily by a spiritual need, have through meditation on its great truths and mental contact with its great style, developed a real intellectual life and power of thought that would have done credit to any one. Every intellectually ambitious young man or woman seeking feverishly to be well read ought to be apprised of the fact that some of the greatest intellects of the world have pointed to the Bible as the one piece of literature and intellectual study fitted to sharpen and strengthen the mere intellect as no other book in all the world. A man's mind grows strong through being put into contact with great truths much more than with small ones. That is the intellectual secret of the Bible. The study of almost any one of its books would be worth intellectually more to a man than a whole term at college.

The Bible furnishes secondly,

II. Our Most Exalted Code of Ethics.

It is so for the nation. Chancellor William Dindwiddie says: "No nation without the Bible has ever had a sound system of ethics." And he cites testimony very remarkable as coming from the following men among others: Count Okuma of Japan who says, "The fatal defect in the teaching of the great sages of Japan and China is that while they deal with virtues and morals, they do not sufficiently dwell on the spiritual nature of man, so the origin of modern civilization is to be found in the teachings of the Sage of Judea, by whom alone the necessary dynamic is supplied;" and Huxley who wrote, "I am perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of moral conduct, is to be kept up . . . without the use of the Bible." No greater mistake was therefore made by any state, simply from the basis of patriotism and political economy, than the exclusion of the Bible from its schools.

And the Bible is no less such a code of ethics

for the individual conscience. It is simply impossible to measure the influence it has had in that capacity on all the lives about us, even those which are not professedly or actually Christian. There is no more subtle or powerful influence in a life than a tacitly adopted code of ethics, unless it be the companions one keeps.

Now the Bible is both of these things to all of us, a great literature and an acknowledged code of ethics. The fact that we are Christians does not rob us of the Bible in these incidental or lesser meanings of it.

The Bible is thirdly,

III. God's Word of Salvation.

This is the highest meaning of the Bible. And it is in this sense that the Bible is wholly unique, a book apart. It is a word of salvation. For in the presence of irremediable trouble and death and sin, with all our literature and all our exalted ethical code, we are still obviously lost men in a lost world. And what we need most is not a literature, however great, nor an ethical code, however exalted, but a sure and worthy and inspired Word, if there be any, about a salvation. That is what the Bible is.

The Bible does not give us this salvation but it gives us the knowledge, the divinely assured knowledge, of it. That is what Paul asserts in both of the suggested passages. In the one to the Romans he says: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." And in the one to Timothy: "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

As literature the Bible will be to men merely a human book. As a code of ethics it will be to many both human and divine. But the man who finds in it the Word of salvation will not be apt to make any mistake about the fact that it is God's Word. It contains the divine disclosure of salvation.

But a man might take it as such without still being a Christian. There is still a higher function than this which it bears. So, continuing still with our ascending scale, we must add that to the man who receives it as such it becomes the means of grace. As James puts it: "Wherefore, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls."

Now it is to men who have so received it that Paul is writing. And to such men he says that the Bible is first of all

(a) **A Word of Hope.**—Naturalism in the face of sin and irremediable trouble and death has nothing to offer. If it can be called a religion at all, it is a religion of despair. Buddhism has nothing to offer but sympathy. But the Bible, being God's Word of salvation, is a Word of hope.

It is said that the grandson of General Booth once seeing a cartoon in the "War Cry," the official paper of the Salvation Army, of his grandfather in the back of a life boat stretching out his hand to drowning mariners all about, said to his mother, "Mother, what is grandfather doing? Is he only trying to shake hands with those men?"

Now that is all that Naturalism or Buddhism can profess to do, to shake hands in sympathy with men. But it does not answer their need.

The need is of a sure Word of hope. That is what the Bible brings. How it rings the changes on this Word in the presence of trouble (Psalm 42:5); in the face of death (I Thess. 4:13); in the conflict with sin (I John 3:3).

What a great Word it is even in our natural life, to the sickbed watcher, for example, or the wrecked sailor seeing a ship in the distance. Now to every redeemed soul the Bible is the Word of Salvation because it is the Word of Hope.

And there are two aspects of this hope mentioned by Paul in the text from Romans. The first is the passive aspect. Its quality, its patience. It enables a man to bear with poise and calmness the sufferings and trials of life. And some of the favorite passages read in the meeting will no doubt belong to this class.

But this hope has also a more positive and active aspect. For Paul here adds to the word "patience" the word "comfort." And this word may be translated "encouragement." It comes from the Greek word "parakaleo," which means "to summon," and so has a battle ring to it. It is in that battle spirit of hope that the soldier of Christ can go forth to conquer sin both in himself and in the world. The leader of the meeting should be quick to notice and commend any favorite passages containing this sentiment.

But the Bible as a Word of Salvation is not merely a Word of Hope. It is also

(b) **A Word of Faith.**—It is this element which Paul emphasizes in the second passage, the one from Timothy. Paul once tells us that love is greater than hope and faith. He did not go further and make an evaluation between hope and faith. If he had, he probably would have said that faith is even greater than hope, especially if it be the warm, intimate thing, which faith in a personality comes to be. The faith of the sickbed watcher in the physician, of a soldier in his general, of a scholar in a great teacher, is perhaps even more of a sustaining, moving force than the hope of success or reward.

Now the Bible's Word of faith is of faith in a Person and in no less a Person, than God's incarnate Son. Paul writes in this passage to Timothy: "Through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The climacteric function, then, of the Bible, the highest round of its meaning in the ascending scale, is that it is the Word, the only one we have, about God's Saviour for the world, Jesus. As Jesus Himself said: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me."

It may therefore be considered as evidence that the Bible as a means of grace has accomplished some of its choicest results in a human soul when a man's favorite passage is such an one as: "For I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Louisville, Ky.

Young People's Societies

BY REV. WM. M. ANDERSON, D. D.

FRUITS OF THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TREE.

Prayer Meeting Topic

For the Week Beginning January 28, 1917.

Rev. 22:1-5.

(Christian Endeavor Day.)

DAILY READINGS.

M., Jan. 22. Decisions. Exod. 32:15-26.
T., Jan. 23. Service. John 12:20-26.
W., Jan. 24. Workers. Matt. 4:18-25.
T., Jan. 25. Organization. Eph. 4:11-16.
F., Jan. 26. Fellowship. Mal. 3:16-18.
S., Jan. 27. Devotional spirit. Matt. 6:1-15.

The Christian Endeavor tree has really been a tree of life to the Church, like that tree in the midst of the city of God which bare twelve manner of fruits; "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." "Water of life, clear as crystal," symbolizes life-giving influences. A tree planted by such a river will never know drought, it will always bear "its fruits in its season."

The fruit is the test of the character of the tree, and the influence of the Christian Endeavorer will enable us to determine the character of the organization. It was born in the heart of prayer, under the impulse of a strong desire to reach and develop the young life of the Church. The pastor who started it was not alone in seeing that there was much force going to waste in the unused life of the young people. Many had been thinking along similar lines, many local organizations had been formed, of course great good had been accomplished, but the correct conception of the broad work had not been reached. Every effort on the part of any Church in this direction results in leading the unsaved to Christ, induced Christians to begin active service, in helping the cause of the ministry, and in fostering loyalty to the Church; but a larger work yet remains to be done.

One of the first traits of Christian Endeavor is its character-making influence. It leads to the deepening of Christian life, and awakens the young people to a consciousness of responsibility and reveals to them how they are to think and act in the spirit of Jesus and for Jesus. The rapid support of this movement throughout the nations of the earth has meant a rapid development of this fruitage, which is very evident to all observers.

Another fruit of Christian Endeavor is that it has developed personal evangelism to a high degree. It has showed to its members the need of soul-winning, and that they were to be soul-savers. It has given them fresh inspiration daily regarding their duties. It has set in motion various forms of instruction and practice that they might be prepared to meet the opportunities of soul-winning. It has called for the preparation of books, tracts, cards, and leaflets. With these in view the activity of the Church has been greatly emphasized by this process.

It has deepened the spiritual life, not only of the young people themselves, but it has deepened the spiritual life of the remainder of the congregation who have observed their activities. The Christian Endeavor is not a club or a social organization, which lives by pink teas, dime socials, and ice-cream suppers; but it is a religious organization, fostering religious gatherings for the purpose of advancing the cause and glory of Christ. "It is first intensive, then extensive."

Another fruit of the Christian Endeavor is its influence in deepening the civic life of the community and nation. It recognizes that the Christian life is to count in all directions. It must help to rectify the wrongs of government, and influence society toward right aims and ends. He sees wrongs in his community and in his nation that need correcting. He firmly believes that no problem is settled until it is settled right, and that the standard of right is the opinion which Jesus taught.

Another Christian Endeavor fruit is the aggressive spirit of activity which has been given to young people. A true Christian Endeavorer cannot sit around, "and wait for something to turn up." He believes in turning things up. A