

Our Young People

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THE C. E. TOPIC—July 24.

HOW TO BREAK DOWN THE SPIRIT OF CASTE.

James: 2:1-9; Matt. 23:8-12.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

I cannot better illustrate the subject than by quoting, though it must be at length, Tourgueneff's Christlike little story, "The Beggar:"

"I was walking in the street. A beggar stopped me—a frail old man.

"His inflamed, tearful eyes, blue lips, rough rags, disgusting sores,—oh, how horribly poverty had disfigured the unhappy creature!

"He stretched out to me his red, swollen, filthy hand. He groaned and whimpered for alms.

"I felt in all my pockets—no purse, watch, or handkerchief did I find. I had left them all at home.

"The beggar waited—and his outstretched hand twitched and trembled slightly.

"Embarrassed and confused, I seized his dirty hand and pressed it. 'Don't be vexed at me, brother; I have nothing with me, brother.'

"The brother raised his bloodshot eyes to mine; his blue lips smiled, and he returned the pressure of my chilled fingers.

"'Never mind, brother,' stammered he; 'thank you for this—this, too, was a gift, brother.'

"I felt that I, too, had received a gift from my brother."

The very essence of the gospel is in that little story, and the spirit of it, once enshrined in the soul, will destroy the spirit of caste. For caste is the feeling of essential differences among men, but Christianity is the feeling that all men are of the same family, and brothers.

Christianity does not deny that there exist among men the differences which caste perceives so clearly; but it denies that they are essential differences. One hand is clean and the other is filthy; but the filth is on the surface, and may be washed off, while beneath the skin flows and pulses the same blood as beats in our veins. We will clasp the hand, in spite of the dirt, for it is our brother's.

If this is Christianity, then the spirit of caste should be at the very farthest removed from our Christian practice; but how sadly it is present every observer acknowledges with shame. How do servant girls fare in our churches

and Endeavor societies? What chance among us has a criminal after he has served his term? How much brotherly love is thrown around the pauper? What cheer and welcome in Christian homes conquers for the drunkard the boon companionship of the saloon?

- But the servant girl may turn presumptuous? The thief may steal from us again? The pauper is a pauper because he is shiftless and worthless? The drunkard would bring corruption with him into our homes?

Yes; ah, yes! The hand is, indeed, filthy. There are probably disease germs on it. The highest Christian work is not always pleasant, or without risk. We also must touch the leper's sores. We also must press wet clay upon blind eyes. We must also walk through angry waves to reach the sinking ships.

But we have our orders. We are not to be respecters of persons. We are to be men's servants. We are to gird ourselves and wash their feet.

Since the Lord of heaven and earth thought it no indignity to do this, dare we do less? Nay, rather, shall we not count such deed our crown of glory?

A CHURCH ENTERTAINMENT.

BY NANNIE J. REA.

"Clara, you are making such a hermit of yourself with your books and kindergarten, that I have dropped in to invite you to go with me to the entertainment to-morrow night. Mark will be away nearly a week, and I know of no one whom I should find so congenial—so be ready."

"You are very kind to think of me, and I thank you for your compliment and invitation, but I cannot go."

"Now, Clara, I know your aversion to the theatre, but this is nothing of the kind, simply moving pictures representing a beautiful and instructive book, and an elegant reader to enhance the enjoyment of the scenic effect; besides a part of the proceeds will go to the church. In fact, our church made the arrangement for the entertainment to pay for the new carpet. In view of all this, there can be no grounds for your refusal."

"Your arguments seem plausible, dear, but the premises are false. Under ordinary circumstances, I would gladly accompany you, for I am extremely fond of moving pictures, which I regard as one of the most wonderful discoveries of this age of inventions; but the one fact that the entertainment is given under the auspices and by the instigation of the church, and a part of the proceeds to be used for God's cause, will debar me from going."

"Well, Clara, you are justly called 'peculiar' by a great many people. How can there be any harm in this? I am perfectly astonished."

"I am aware of the fact that I am called 'peculiar,' but the unusual compliment has ceased to affect me in any way. Since I have become a close and careful student of the Bible, I endeavor to have a 'thus saith' as a foundation for my conduct. The majority of people do not reason either in spiritual or secular affairs, but like a duck, 'quack,' because the other ducks set the example, and anyone, especially a woman who dares to think for herself, is set down as a 'crank.'"

"Well, even though you may not think this way of raising money for the church exactly right, where is the harm, and how could you be injured by looking on?"

"This 'no-harm' theory is universal, and true Christians must walk carefully

or they will be beguiled into becoming, by their example and influence, advocates of an erroneous belief. I verily believe that this tendency to see no harm in anything which the church wants to do, is more hurtful to the cause of Christianity than apparent evils like the saloon and gambling houses."

"So, Clara, you won't go!"

"No, but as you are my dearest friend, I should like to preach a little sermon, although I know they are rarely acceptable outside of the pulpit, and frequently not in, when they are diametrically opposed to our pet desires."

"Go ahead, Clara! I have half an hour to spare, and that is as long as anybody ought to preach."

"Your father is a man of high social standing and considerable wealth. He permits you to live in one of his lovely homes which would easily pay him a rent of fourteen to twenty dollars per month, but which he lets your husband have for five dollars, not so much because he desires to take even so small an amount from his daughter, but as you have told me, he thinks he should do this to be just to his other children. Now, instead of paying this sum out of his salary, which your husband is quite able to do, suppose he and you should be instrumental in getting up an entertainment at the opera-house occasionally, in order to pay your father this rent, and suppose you should have it announced in all the papers something after this style:

On the 24th of July, Mr. and Mrs. Canton will give an entertainment at the opera-house for the purpose of raising money to help Mr. Boyden. All are urged to attend and assist in this good work.

"Clara, I am almost indignant. Do you for a moment imagine I would so insult my father? The idea! Why, it would be nothing more or less than making him an object of charity!"

"Lora, dear, I am glad you so readily see the point. Our Heavenly Father has sent us a letter with plain directions concerning all our conduct towards him and our fellow-creatures. In it he has said: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, but he allows the privilege of using this beautiful world, only taxing us with one-tenth of our income, which he says or implies is amply sufficient to carry on his work here. In fact, he says if we will bring him our tithes, his storehouse will have meat in it, which seems to indicate that there will be enough to carry on his gospel work. Now according to his repeated statements in different parts of the Bible, this is the only way in which we can honor and obey him in regard to raising funds to carry the tidings of salvation; and lest we should adopt some other method, he has promised to reward us liberally for following his suggestion, or command in this particular. In Malachi, he says: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.'"

"That is all right, perhaps, but what harm is there in any other way, and are other methods denounced in the Bible?"

"I will answer your inquiry with an illustration, as all preachers use them pretty freely. Your husband is a travel-

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ling man, and his house pays his expenses, usually directing his course. Knowing the route from St. Louis to Pittsburg is more speedy by rail than by any other way, he is told to go on the train, but in his own mind, he decides to go in a canoe. Some friend reminds him that he was advised to go by rail. He says: 'Yes, but they never told me not to go in a canoe.' God has, in line upon line, and precept upon precept, told us just how he prefers that we should raise money to carry on his gospel work in the world, and simply because he has not plainly stated that we are not to give ice cream and strawberry festivals, get up fairs, entertainments and other man-invented devices, by means of which we may always receive an equivalent in worldly or social pleasure out of everything we do for him, is no evidence that he wants us to do these things. In fact, because he makes such numerous repetitions of the system of tithing, is an indication that this is his own and only appointed way of receiving the assistance of his children in money matters. And yet many say that this system is null and void under the new dispensation. They would certainly hesitate before making such an assertion, if they would read the Saviour's reply when the Pharisees boasted of tithing: 'These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.'"

"Clara, your illustration was not good, as you see my husband would lose time as well as money by making such a wild-goose-chase trip!"

"So we do lose both time and money in our devices for helping the church. How much do we really clear with our various church functions? If each member would make it the rule of his life to pay one-tenth of his income, the church treasury would always be running over, and the one who would thus pay his debt of honor to the Lord would be blessed. 'Honor the Lord with thy substance and the firstfruits (one-tenth) of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.' I have noticed that in small churches where one or two of the members adopt this method, they are largely responsible for the success of the church to which they belong."

"I b... you ha... I soler... through... in ord... God ha... of was... pleasur... for him... the tru... new... is mor... spend... grant... society... laughin... —Chri...

The... were t... fidentia... on her... makes... plied, ... help a... childis... of boy... grace... hearts... and, e... lot." ... stood... therefo... that th... pains... confide... lead th... ways... once o... ister t... begin... old is... years... the m... three... From... beginn... mthe... God... gins, ... plastic... wards... And v... scious... consta... Godw... mothe... and t... less k... their... verb... is wo... deed... Wo... and h... Canad... could... ly ins... Christ... could... ren f... then... omnip... bring... and a... make... societ... God... ent, ... honor... when... childr... mothe... mothe... Heri... herite... check... of w... comm... this p...