

# Sunday Reading.

## SOME VERY COMMON SINS.

Only Those Free From Them Can Cast Stones at the Sinners.

If we apply the law, "Thou shalt not steal," as interpreted by Christ and his apostles, how few men among us could honestly say, "I have never violated that commandment." When Paul exhorts the Romans to be honest in the sight of God and men, he is simply interpreting and enforcing the old law, which said, "Thou shalt not steal." In the new Testament, honest means honorable, but in the ethical code of modern commerce, it means simply conformity to the letter of a bargain. To be honest in the truest and noblest sense, is to be true to the largest spirit of social duty. The honest man considers an unwritten obligation just as sacred and binding as one that is written, signed, sealed, and delivered. He is just as careful to pay a debt of ten cents as one of a thousand dollars.

I have a track of land, on which my neighbor discovers a rich vein of gold. Knowing me to be ignorant of the real value of the property, he makes me an offer for it, which I accept. For a thousand dollars he gets from me something which he knows is worth a hundred thousand dollars. In this transaction, while he violates no law of the state, he transgresses the divine code, which says, "Thou shalt not steal." "Provide things honest." Under the laws of the state he is not chargeable with theft, but according to the law of God as understood and accepted by honest men, he is no less a thief than the man who runs away with the contents of a bank-vault.

A man makes a piece of counterfeit money, and buys something with it; or, he signs the name of some merchant to a commercial note, which he afterwards gets discounted in a bank. Is that man a thief? Yes. What is it that makes him a thief in the eyes of the law? It is the one simple fact, that he got another man's property without paying for it. Apply the same principle to other transactions, and you will convict thousands of men whom no court has ever indicted. According to this principle, every gambler is a thief. Every seller of fraudulent goods is a thief. Every corporation that gives a fictitious value to its stock, is a combination of thieves. And the great commercial wreckers, who combine their capital to depress markets, and to get other men's property for half its value, are monumental thieves. Every form of deception by which men get the advantage of each other in business, is theft. The biggest, most persistent, remorseless, and incurable thieves, are not in the convict-camp, but in mansions, where they fare sumptuously every day. If all the thieves were put into the chain-gang tomorrow it would make gaps in the business world to tattle to contemplate. It would almost wipe out Wall street; it would destroy half of the manufacturing offices; it would suspend half of the city water works, cancel a majority of street-paving contracts, and ruin many men in the plumbing business. It would thin the ranks of the legal and the medical fraternities, and so reduce the representation in congress that no quorum could be obtained until after the next election.

In view of these facts, when we look upon a young man convicted of embezzlement or forgery, and about to be sent away to a felon's prison, we cannot afford to spurn him and anathematize him, because his crime is the product of corrupting influences which pervade the whole commercial world, and for which every one of us is in some degree responsible. Tried by God's Standard of honesty, that young man is not more a criminal than thousands, who stand high commercially and socially. Let him among you who never planned anything crooked in his business, or winked at crookedness in others, and who is no way responsible for the spirit of dishonesty in the world of trade, step forward, and hurl the first anathema at that young man, who stands before the tribunal of human justice convicted of theft.

I stand aghast to-day, not as I look on a criminal like that, but as I look upon the great army of colossal thieves, who walk abroad unwhipped of justice, and whose example and influence have led thousands of people to think, that dishonesty is respectable and desirable, only when it is punished by the State. It is the conduct of these imperial rogues, that is spreading and strengthening the doctrine of the Anarchist, that "all property is theft," and that is hastening a revolution which will make the bloodiest picture in the book of time.

If that adulterous woman had been a murderer, Christ would have said just what he did say to those Pharisees—"He that is without sin among you; let him first cast a stone at her." Why would he have said it? Because he looked into their hearts, and saw that the spirit of murder was there. That spirit made them murderers, under the law of God, long before they laid wicked hands on him, and crucified him between two thieves. The act of taking a human life, is not in every instance, murder. It is what is in the heart,—the motive of the slayer, that gives character to the deed. If then we take Christ's interpretation of the law, which says "Thou shalt not murder," and in the light of it, look into our own hearts, we shall have grave doubts of our own innocence, and regard with less scorn, and more compassion, the man who is about to be executed for murder.

War, may be a just and sacred necessity, in some instances. Christianity does not annul the right of self defense. But war inspired by revenge, or the lust of conquest and spoils, in murder. Every man who falls in battle, defending his home and country against an unrighteous invasion, is a murdered man; and the crime of taking his life, belongs to all who either joined or encouraged the invasion.

Look, too, at the victims of the polished devils of men, who are still allowed to move in what are called, "the highest circles of society." The world is dotted all over with the graves of deceived women—women who were robbed of virtue and deserted, and who, in the madness of their despair, sought refuge in the arms of death. The destroyers of these women are murderers, and yet, they are neither punished by the State, nor criticised by people who claim to be the very cream of our social life.

Look also at the human lives that are sacrificed by men to gratify their greed of gold. Go into a great factory, the property of a millionaire, who revels in luxury, and you will find frail women and delicate children, standing all day long in a room whose atmosphere is laden with poisonous impurities, and patiently, but painfully, toiling for wages that are barely sufficient to prevent starvation. In God's record-book the name for such cruelty is murder.

I would not fail to mention that class of men and women to be found in every community, whose characteristic wickedness is slander. Their purpose is to elevate themselves on the ruin of others. Where they are too cowardly for open assault, they secretly beslime and blacken the reputations of their political or commercial or social competitors. When you destroy the good name of a good man, you destroy him; and such destruction is murder.

It there be one among you, in the light of the principles and facts presented in this discussion, feels that he is absolutely innocent of the sins which I have named, he, and only he, can afford to cast stones at those who have stumbled and fallen in the race of life. Seeing how much of the essence of sin and crime there is in our own hearts and lives; seeing how we have tolerated and even honored and exalted men, who, according to divine law, are as guilty as those upon whom the state has laid its iron hand and dragged to the bar of justice; and knowing how nobly we have opposed the agencies and influences which corrupt the minds and lives of men, and hurry them to disgrace and ruin, what ought to be our spirit and attitude towards those who have been branded as criminals and outcasts? What treatment of them does christianity require of us? And what do the interests of society and the state demand? These are very practical questions, because the class referred to is large very large and rapidly increasing. I am sure that christianity does not require us to apologize for their offenses, or to shield them from punishment by the state. It would be hurtful to them, and a wrong to society, to persuade them that they do not deserve punishment. There is a sickly sentimentalism, in regard to crime and criminals, that is foreign to true religion as it is to common sense. The author of christianity is a God of law. God hates sin, and all sin is punished, either in the sinner, or in his divine Substitute. The dignity and stability of the state, and the peace and security of its subjects, require the punishment of those who violate its laws.

But while we uphold the state, our attitude towards those who have fallen into the disgrace of vice and crime, should be one of sympathy and helpfulness. A sense of our own sinfulness, and the consciousness that we are in a large degree responsible for their downfall, should remove from us every vestige of Phariseism. We should remember, too, that though wretched, degraded and disgraced, they are still human beings, still our fellow-men, still children of the same God to whom we look up, and say: "Our Father who art in heaven." The same Christ who died for us, shed his blood for them; the same mercy through which we look for salvation from the wrath to come, can save them; and the same divine Spirit that made us new creatures, is able to transform them into lovers of truth, virtue and God.—Rev. J. B. Hawthorne.

## Be Careful of Your Words.

The Rev. J. M. Buckley, D. D., editor of the "Christian Advocate" in closing a sermon before the students of Cornell University, gave an impressive illustration of the dangers attendant upon the acceptance of certain destructive theories of bible interpretation. He said: "A series of sermons were published in Scotland, teaching that almost everything held to be fundamental to Christian faith had, by the researches of modern scholarship, been found untenable, and speaking of what remains in an indefinite way. These discourses were republished in the United States. Among those who read and accepted them was a woman in the city of New York, of great intelligence and intellectuality and of high culture. A year or two later she removed to a suburb upon the Hudson river, continuing to attend the presbyterian church, but frankly informed the pastor that she had lost faith, and attributing the change to those discourses. Afterwards she became ill and died of a lingering disease. During the months of her steady but not rapid progress to the grave, the pastor frequently visited her, making every effort to re-establish her faith in the simple provisions of the gospel, but in vain.

"To the last she said that she knew nothing, and was not able to believe anything positively. So much had been shaken that she was not certain there was anything that could not be shaken.

"Less than a year after this woman's death, the author of these sermons was summoned to trial for heresy. When the charges were submitted, he asked a little time for reconsideration and submitted a statement that when he prepared those discourses he believed them, but further reflection had convinced him that he had erred in taking many things for granted that had not been proved, deducing conclusions that were not warranted even by his premises, and expressing himself in an unguarded manner, and that he desired to retract several of the discourses in whole, and in part but one or two.

"But the woman who had given up her faith in the essentials of the gospel for faith in him had died in darkness."

## Names of Good Friday.

Good Friday is one of the best and most musical of the forms which the name of this day in Holy Week has assumed. In Bohemia it is called "Great Friday," in Southern Germany "Black Friday," in Denmark "Long Friday," and in Wales it is "Friday of the Lesson of the Cross." In some places also on the continent it is called "Still Friday."

## LESSONS TAUGHT BY EASTER.

The Idea of the Resurrection the Basis of All Spiritual Growth.

The idea of resurrection life lies at the basis of all spiritual growth. It has a twofold aspect; one affecting the christian himself and the other influencing the world. One who has died in Christ, who has so completely identified himself with his Lord that his flesh has been crucified with its affections and lusts, is in truth a new man, in a new resurrection life. His past is set far behind him and his connection with it is one of memory only. If any question of the supernatural origin of christianity were mooted to such a man, he need look no farther than his own soul for the proof. There is no human power, no power in circumstances, that could work the change in him that has been worked. It must be of God. Certain studies and pursuits may awaken new kinds of enthusiasm and turn the intellectual life into new channels; new conditions of life, such as the sudden acquisition of fortune, may give new standards of taste and feeling, but they do not change the man. They do not make him feel different towards his fellows; they do not give him new motives or new ideals. The spiritual change does these. The man who has experienced it lives a new life. The things which were formerly his delight are now tasteless and insipid. His love goes out to every one. He strives after attainments which were former meaningless to him, and his hopes are centred on higher objects. The life of the animal, content with the sunshine and abundance of food, is not farther from him than his old life of fleshly pleasure. The man is born again, he has died to his past and is living a resurrection life.

The change within has an outward manifestation. Resurrection life is recognized by the world. Explorers like Livingstone, philosophers like Newton, philanthropists like Peabody, shed their light far forward to succeeding generations. Their spirit is in their successors, who carry on their work. Their bodies die, but their spirit lives on in the men that follow them. Elisha inherits the spirit of Elijah, and works like wonders. So, in infinitely degree, is it with Christ's spirit. "The works that I do," Christ said, "shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." The life that he puts into his followers is a mighty force. It is ever finding new outlets and new spheres of operation. Christ's resurrection may be doubted by the sceptic, but he cannot shut his eyes to the fact that Christ's spirit is working in the world. He sees it everywhere, in the efforts to relieve suffering, in the kindness which goes to the rescue of affliction, in the condemnation of cruelty and oppression, in the ever growing hatred of selfishness. Christ rises anew in every generation; and his people show him in their lives. The savage wonders at the kindness of the missionary, at his loving disposition, and at his self-denial. It is Christ in the missionary, that he sees and admires, and though he knows him not, he is prepared, by what he sees, to recognize the Master in the servant. It is the resurrection life, Christ risen again in his people. So, in the daily life of the humblest christian, Christ may live in acts of helpfulness and mercy and magnanimity.

## A Disturbed Compass.

A naval officer recently back from a long cruise relates a remarkable experience. He says that one morning it was discovered that the ship was a long way out of her course. The quartermaster was questioned, but he insisted that he had accurately followed his instructions. The captain lectured him sharply and impressed upon all the men the need of greater care. The next night there was a similar deviation. The officers became alarmed and their perplexity increased. On the third night the course was given out as usual, but the captain waking up in the night was horrified by seeing that the ship was evidently out of her course again. He rushed on deck, almost overturning the quartermaster at the wheel, and there saw to his surprise that the compass indicated that the ship was on her right course. He perceived that the compass might be wrong. He therefore sent the quartermaster to call the captain. After the quartermaster went on his errand the needle quivered for a moment and then swung around in the right direction. In a short time the quartermaster returned with the captain, as the former approached the compass, the needle was again deflected. The captain being informed of the strange phenomenon, questioned the quartermaster and insisted on knowing what he had advised him that could affect the compass. At last the man said he was wearing an electric belt. This explained the perturbation and the mystery was solved. The inconsistencies in the course of some professing christians often have an analogous cause. A defect in early training, the existence of some strong propensity or some cherished secret sin perverts the conscience and leads them to call evil good. —(Acts 26:9.)

## Phillips Brook Was Kind.

Among the many fine traits of Phillips Brooks character was that of kindness, selfishness as to his own comfort or convenience. An illustration of this is given by a gentleman who was once a fellow traveller of Mr. Brooks on a journey to Bar Harbor.

They went by boat, changing at Rockland in the early morning for the Mount Desert steamer, which leaves as soon as possible after the arrival of the Boston boat. Mr. Brooks' baggage consisted of a small travelling bag and a steamer trunk. On landing at Rockland he looked about for an expressman to transfer the trunk to the next wharf, only a short distance.

The only man there who seemed at all inclined to earn a quarter was lame, and had sort of wheelbarrow, in which he assured Mr. Brooks he could easily manage the small trunk.

Mr. Brooks looked at the poor cripple for a moment, and then, handing him the bag, said: "All right; you just run along with this bag, and I'll manage the trunk;" and taking the steamer trunk by a grasp on the strap, he walked toward the Bar Harbor boat, followed by the lame man, who was glad to earn his money so easily, but was not aware that the gentleman carrying the trunk was Phillips Brooks.

When a man is going down, don't increase his trouble; when everybody is blaming him, don't swell the chorus of censure.

## Messages of Help for the Week.

"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands; sing forth the honor of his name. . . Come and see the work of God. . . Come and hear, all ye that fear God." Psalm 66.

"The secret of the lord is with them that fear him." Psalm 25:14.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe, in God, believe also in me." John 14:1.

In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1.

"We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3:26, 27.

"And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." 27th Verse.

## A Convert to Missions.

"I am a convert," said Mrs. Bishop, at the recent Keswick convention, "to missions through seeing missions and the need for them. Some years ago I took no interest whatever in the condition of the heathen. I had heard much ridicule cast upon christian missions and perhaps had imbibed some of the unallowable spirit. But the missionaries by their lives and character, and by the work they are doing wherever I have seen them, have produced in my mind such a change and such enthusiasm, as I might almost express it, in favor of christian missions, that I cannot go anywhere without speaking about them and trying influence others in their favor who may be as different as I was before I went among heathen countries."

## The Model Prayer of The Ages.

O Thou, our Father, dwelling in heaven! Not circumscribed, save by the larger love Which to thy love's first offspring must be given, Who from the first have dwelt with thee above! By every creature hallowed be thy name. And praised thy goodness, as for man was meant To render thanks to thy benignant flame: May to our souls thy kingdom's peace be lent, For of ourselves we could not come thereto With all our intellect, unless 'twere sent: And even as of their will thine angels do Chanting Hosanna sacrifice to thee, So to thy will may men their own subdue: Our daily manna give us this day, Without which we lie, through this rough wilderness, Who strive to go forth backward on his way. And even as we forbear us to redress The wrong from others which we have to brook, Pardon thou us, benignant One! and less On our deserving than our weakness look; Try not our virtue, ever prone to yield, 'Gainst the old enemy who spurs it so; Deliver us from him and be our shield. Dr. T. W. Parsons trans. from Dante.

## The Easter Lesson.

The Lord is risen, ye say in the air, Faith triumphs over prejudice and pride, God's voice hath spoken—and the Cross is there On Calvary's crest where Truth was crucified. Not to the Tomb where Heaven was disclosed, This mother came that primal Easter day; But to the Cross where sorrow self-imposed To life eternal glorified the way. And there beneath the Easter's radiant skies, Her mother heart swayed by the hour's control, Up to the cross she pressed her infant's face, To have the memory graven on his soul. Thus has it been since that first Easter-tide, The Christian mother seeks the Cross this day To show her child Faith's glory and its guide, And pierce its light may lead him to Heaven's way. Rev. C. S. O'Neill, in Donahoe's Magazine.

## Lilies of Lent.

Ye tell us that spring is a hastening come— That winter is past and his passion is past— That glory and gladness will dawn with the summer; But ye will not live for it, lilies of Lent. The fields will be green and the grass will be growing When manifold blossoms in beauty are blent; But ye will not know that the zephyrs are blowing And opening the rose-petals lilies of Lent. Ye cheer us on days that are darksome and dreary, And die ere the summer seasons are sent; Then can we of singing your praises grow weary, For all ye have done for us, lilies of Lent? When roses their fulness and fragrance are giving, No thought shall we waste on your shape or your scent; Which is but the way of the world that we live in, And we are its citizens, lilies of Lent.



M. Hammerly, a well-known business man of Hillsboro, Va., sends this testimony to the merits of Ayer's Sarsaparilla: "Several years ago, I hurt my leg, the injury leaving a sore which led to erysipelas. My sufferings were extreme, my leg, from the knee to the ankle, being a solid sore, which began to extend to other parts of the body. After trying various remedies, I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and, before I had finished the first bottle, I experienced great relief; the second bottle effected a complete cure."

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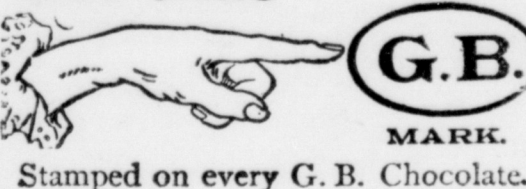
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