

**Sunday Reading**

**What is 'Christian Training'?**

In all ages, under every civilization found within the limits of each religion, there has been an upward yearning of the spirit of man—an attempt to find union with the Divine. It matters not what the special form of religion to which the devotee may belong; it matters not under what particular name he may worship Deity, it matters not, so far as the inward struggle is concerned, in what way he may try to express or carry out these longings, the significant fact is, that the yearning is there a constant witness of the truth of the spiritual life.

The foregoing strong and truthful words are quoted from a Hindu lecture upon Yoga, and are full of the generous sentiment of an unprejudiced mind, and the same writer, in drawing a just contrast between the Christian and Hindu religions, goes on to say:

'Take one of the modern religions, that which is prevalent in the West under the name of Christianity and you will find there exactly the same attempt toward union ('with the divine') that you will find carried out so methodically in the most ancient of all religions, the Hindu. You have the aspiration in Christianity, but you have not, as a rule, the training.'

I was so strongly impressed by this new thought that it set me speculating upon its truth, and the question at once arose to my mind. 'Have we not, indeed, the training necessary for our Christian life? And what is meant by Christian 'training'?' Is it the preparation of ourselves for that great change in our hearts, and for that union with Christ, and if so, who among us is fit to claim kinship with him?

Prompted by that 'upward yearning of the spirit,' many of us cry aloud, 'We would see Jesus,' and never stop to question whether we are fit to ask for a revelation of that wondrous vision to our souls. Now, the Hindu is taught that he must prepare himself, step by step, before he is worthy to receive what the Christian terms 'the beatific vision,' and a long and severe trial awaits the disciple who would advance in Yoga. Does the Christian realize that the same course of discipline awaits him in his religion?

The writer already quoted says, further, 'The first step that is always laid down as a preparation for Yoga is the ceasing from wicked ways.' And so with the Christian. That first decisive step that bids him pause and reflect, is followed by the resolution to lead a new life—'God helping me!'

This is the second step toward heaven, and the second in his Christian training. But, mark you, let that step be taken under only the calm deliberation of careful thought which has brought him to a full knowledge of his need of a new life and a Saviour, else the feet of the Christian will stumble in a path that is unfamiliar to him.

No one starts over a new route without first making careful inquiries as to the means of travel, and it is just as unwise for the Christian to start out upon his new life without first knowing something of what is before him; for, argue as one may, the 'training' of the soul is not an easy matter. It means constant, prayerful, indomitable watchfulness of self. It means the persistent annihilation of little habits of 'selfishness' that are the growth of years and may be dear to our hearts. It means a revolution in our thoughts, in our speech, in our manner toward others and in our judgment of their faults. It means, in fact, such a spiritual housecleaning as shall make the windows of our souls shine with the atmosphere of purity and loveliness within.

And with all this in mind is it surprising that we say that to begin this training it should be after calm, deliberate thought on our part?

So often some of us wait that moment of inspiration which comes only in ecstasy, under the influence of the words of some powerful preacher, or the physical effect of music, and in the rapture of that thrilling moment we say we are 'converted,' or 'our hearts are changed,' but, alas sweet and solemn as that period is, how often is it worn away by contact with the little 'rubs' of daily life, and we awake from that state of ecstasy to find that we have merely floated upward for a time without having progressed a step.

And with what dismay are we filled by this discovery! How we try again—first vainly waiting for the stimulus of that moment of exaltation—but, alas, with the same disheartening result! Let this not surprise us, for after awhile we learn that true Christianity cannot thrive on the emotions alone, any more than the body can thrive on stimulating tonics.

We well know that no athlete would enter upon a competitive race without

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the careful training demanded, and shall we not say also that no Christian should attempt to start his race with sin without first being 'trained' for it? The slow growths are most lasting—this is a comforting thought for the disciple of the Nazarene.

Have you ever paused to consider the years that have passed since Christianity was born into the world, and of its comparatively slow yet steadfast growth? Other religions, perhaps dozens of them, have sprung into great prominence since the birth of Christianity—they are now dead almost forgotten. But, slowly and surely the world is being prepared and 'trained' to receive Him when he shall come to claim it for his own.

Do you not recall how Moses pleaded with God to be permitted to see his face, and how when the most high passed, he placed his loving hand over Moses as he stood in the cleft in the rock, 'so that he saw that glory only in part? Why was it? Was it not because Moses was not fully prepared for that glorious vision? And are the unaccustomed feet of the Christian, who longs to spring with one bound into the highest spiritual life, so steady that they will sustain him at that dazzling height?

It may be a mistaken theory, but it is at least, a practical one, that to live a true and enduring spiritual life while here in the body, the Christian should put himself through a course of training, systematic, sincere, that shall need no ecstasy, or religious fervor, to sustain it, but shall be, rather, the daily subjection of self to that, as yet, unveiled divinity within him.

That divinity is part of God himself and has been left in our keeping as a loan upon which he rightly expects interest from us until he recalls that loan to himself in the hour of our death. And the payment of this "interest" must not be a mere perfunctory attention to what the Church requires of us, it must be the 'daily dyings of self,' as some one has tersely expressed it.

Thus, little by little, will be engendered the habit of holiness, which is purity, until, growing weaker under repeated resistance, evil will fall away from us and be less difficult to overcome. When that happy time arrives we will find ourselves far advanced in Christian training which will embolden us to think that we are at all fitted to look upon the beauty of his glorious face.

**BOWERY IKE.**

His Conversion was True and his Life a Noble Example.

It was 'Rummy' who first called Mr. Hadley's attention to Bowery Ike. That was in September, 1884 Ike was one of the most alert thieves in New York. He made it his 'specialty' to go into buildings where carpenters were at work, and steal the watches from their coats when these are hanging up. In describing his prowess, Rummy said enthusiastically: 'Why, I have known him to swipe eight watches at a time! Yesterday he got pinched. 'Twas too bad, for he had a number one gold tucker in his pocket he was going away with.'

The outcome of the interview was, that Mr. Hadley, the 'friend of the wicked,' went to the Tombs next morning, and persuaded the judge to give the thief only six months on the Island. There Mr. Hadley visited the boy many times, and began to like him very much. He interested his wife in his newly found protegee, and she began to pray for the bad boy's redemption.

Many people thought that she might as well pray for the moon, for Ike was born a thief. He had been arrested many times, and often imprisoned. His only education had been received in the New York Juvenile Asylum, from whence he escaped. He was a petty sneak-thief. It is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for that kind of thief to reform.

When Ike was released, Mr. Hadley got

him work. He did well, was trusted, and rose to a place of responsibility, where larger or smaller amounts of money passed through his hands. In this place he did not at all, but the monotony of such a life became intolerable to his active temperament, and one day he disappeared.

Some time passed before he came to the surface again—as suddenly as he had vanished. He presented himself to Mr. Hadley, asked him for work, and began at the bottom once more. At one time a business rival of Mr. Hadley, hired Ike, thinking he had stolen away Mr. Hadley's 'mascot.' But Ike stole his clothes, his watch, his money, and would have stolen his store if he could. Detectives were employed to hunt him down. Six months after that, he came to Mr. Hadley again.

'Ike, why did you rob that man?' was the first question.

'Oh,' he said, 'I had to. He watched me.'

A great love had sprung up in Mr. Hadley's heart for this poor criminal. He determined to save him, if love and prayer could do it.

While serving time for his last offence Ike promised his benefactor that he would forsake his vicious ways, and lead an honest life. He kept his promise. Mr. and Mrs. Hadley had their reward, after the hopes and prayers of years.

The redeemed thief gave convincing evidence of a changed purpose in life, and he did not withhold his public testimony. His old chums would drop in at the Water Street Mission to make sure it was Bowery Ike who spoke there, as if he had really stopped stealing. The habit of truth-telling came hard to the new convert, and when he transgressed, his deep remorse would cause him to get up in meeting and openly call himself a liar, and then to fully state the truth. But he never stole again, and his life continued clean, although his old companions not infrequently urged him to return to the excitements of his former life.

He was finally sent to the Moody Bible School in Chicago, where he developed an unusual knowledge of the Bible. He had charge for eighteen months of an out-of-door mission in that city. Just as he was ready to return East to his Water Street Mission, he suddenly died of heart-disease. Bowery Ike's conversion has been considered an unusual case. It took ten years of faithful and prayerful effort, under the most discouraging conditions, to lead this apparently hopeless thief into the higher, better life. It was as much of a miracle as the turning of water into wine, but to call it 'unusual' is a mistake. Such miracles of transformation are going on constantly all around us. There is no life that has ever been lived, or ever will be lived, too vile to be made pure by allegiance to the Divine Teacher, to whom poor Ike was led to give his love and the faithful service of a contrite heart.

**THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THINGS.**

There is a virtue in Yielding and Being Easily Pleas'd.

'John,' said the busy mother, 'put some wood in that stove, and don't grumble about it.' 'Why, mother,' was the reply, 'you know I had just as lief put the wood in as not; but I vow I must grumble.' 'I wish to introduce you to my friend's wife, said our mutual acquaintance, 'but you must not take offense at one thing. She will greet you with affability, and welcome you to her hospitality, but she will contradict the first statement you may make, whatever be its character or certainty.' And she did.

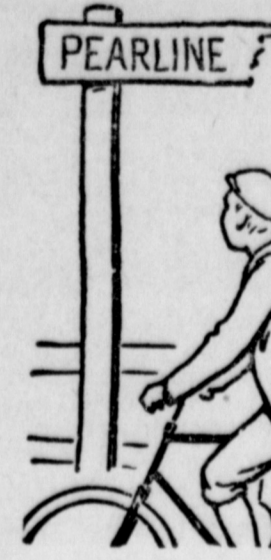
It reminds us how people fall into the habit of taking the negative side in all councils and conversations without being at all conscious of the habit which has enthralled them. Charles Lamb tells us that in his boyhood he was a diligent reader of

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the old family Bible, under every verse of whose text was printed a comment consisting of objection and refutation of objection. Like the paired animals that went into Noah's ark, so throughout the whole sacred Scriptures marched assertion and denial, until, as Lamb says, he got into the habit of looking for the objection whenever the Bible was mentioned or quoted.

But without any such early schooling there are persons who from mere perversity of nature are twisted the wrong way. Not only like the newly imported Irishman who voted against the administration because he was on principle 'always ag'in the government,' do they find it easier to oppose than to investigate, but the most obvious of all truisms and commonplaces they will qualify with serious rebuttal. In the fairest June day they will meet your pleasant salutation of 'A beautiful morning,' with the counter assertion that 'There are signs of rain before night.' You congratulate them upon their very apparent health, and are told that they have not been well for weeks. The most precious ointment of life has in it some dead fly; and the fairest flower in the garden, some worm in the bud. As Oliver Wendell Holmes once put it, they stand at an acute angle with the rest of the world.

It requires no genius to take the negative side; for every obverse has its reverse if we choose to seek it. 'I am dreadfully set in my way,' said a dear friend to us the other day, as if it were a virtue. The virtue lies upon the other hand, the being easy to please and cheerful to yield. He who goes through life stroking every cat the wrong way will find the world sharpe clawed. The life which knows the most happiness, and conveys the most, is that which reserves No for emergencies, but Yes for every day use.—The Interior.

**MORE ROULETTE PLAYED.**

Faro is on the Decline and There are Fewer Big Gamblers Than Formerly.

'I am frequently in gambling houses,' said the manufacturer of fine cabinet furniture; 'but, notwithstanding, I have never ventured a cent in a game of chance in my life.'

'Just like to go and look on!' suggested a friend.

'Indeed I do not,' returned the manufacturer with some sharpness. 'It is business pure and simple which takes me into such places; and a business I transact as soon as possible and get out. The more gambling, though, going on the more money I make, which may be said of several other men in my line. It's an ill wind which blows nobody good, and by that token, when gambling is flourishing, more and more implements are required. These are supplied by the makers of fine cabinet furniture, and our business is a sort of gambler's barometer. You can always correctly estimate the amount of gaming going on in the country by the number of orders which we cabinet makers have to fill.'

'What's the state of the barometer now?' pursued the friend.

'High,' replied the manufacturer. 'Nearly every man in my line is busier to day than he has been in years, and most of us are away behind in our orders, although running with an extra force. These orders are principally for tools used by the roulette houses, to whose already ample number, it seems to me, daily additions are being made. There are six factories in this city, which have no time to turn out anything but faro and roulette tables. Many smaller concerns are making the accessories, such as layouts, spreads, racks, cases, boxes, markers, chips and the scores of trifling little essentials which are found in gambling rooms. However the trade in faro tables and outfits are not so large by any means as the business in roulette materials. The game of faro seems to be waning in New York in particular, and there are really comparatively few gambling houses here which support it. Roulette has the call, and the reasons for this is obvious. The gambler who once staked thousands on the turn of a card or bet hundred dollar stacks of chips is passing away and in his place steps the young man who has a great deal of money to win and little to risk in the acquirement. Faro does not appeal to the youngster who has only a dollar, or perhaps, five at

a time to wager. It is to swift a game for him, whereas he can find scores and scores of roulette games where he can buy a stack of twenty chips for \$2 and, playing them one at a time, makes his expenditure go further than in a faro game where the smallest sum represented by a check is likely to be twenty five cents.

It is on these young men that the gambling-houses are beginning to depend for their support, nowadays. There was a time when their presence was barely tolerated. They represented little in the profits of the house and stood for a considerable part of the house's expenditure for cigars, liquors, &c. That was the day, however when something like tall gambling was going on. But with the passing of the tall gamblers the fortunes of the gambling houses began to wane, and several of the shrewdest among the managers saw there was a profit to be made out of the young men with only a few dollars at a time in their pockets, although the profit was considerably less than that to which they were accustomed. So they began to cater to the young men. They reduced the price of their chips and made features of those games which seemed to appeal most to the young men's fancy.

'When a man has little money to risk, of course he is apt to stake it upon that game which offers the largest opportunity for gain. Dollar for dollar, the chance offered by faro, does not strike the fancy of the majority of young fellows, but roulette with a chance to make 3500 per cent. on a single bet is alluring; so roulette has become the popular game. However we may have regretted the games of which tens of thousands were won and lost, this little gambling, as it is technically known, is far more pernicious and far-reaching in its disastrous effects upon the morals of the community; for the majority of the patrons of the modern gambling houses are young clerks on small salaries, car-conductors, porters, salesmen, and men in other trades mercantile pursuits or professions whose pay is small. It is very easy for most of them to play away a week's wages within half an hour, and when they must meet current expenses, desperate means are often resorted to as a direct result of their patronage of the roulette wheel.'

'When a new gambling house is opened what furniture is required?'

'The usual complement consists of a couple of roulette wheels, twenty four inches in diameter, which cost anywhere from \$75 to \$150 each; two or three poker tables, each on a carved pedestal of mahogany or other hard and stable wood, worth about \$75 apiece, and 10,000 chips and racks to hold them, worth in all about \$150. The capital required to start the business depends a great deal upon the nerve of the promoter. Some roulette banks have opened with no more than \$500 in their till and flourished. I should think between \$2,000 and \$5,000 will help a professional gambler to succeed. This is much less than the capital formerly required to bank a faro game. In the old days there were many banks going here that had to stake from \$25,000 to \$50,000 behind them. Some had four and five times \$50,000. Perhaps the fact that so insignificant a capital is required to bank roulette makes that game popular with gambling house keepers.'

'Most of our heavy orders for tools come from the West and are given through commission houses which are now recognized agents. They are the wall between the gambler and the manufacturer of cabinet furniture, much to the relief of the latter. These commission houses pay the manufacturer his money, and it is invariably spot cash, and collect from the gambler in advance. They never lose.'

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