

Home Life Among the Indians.

Mrs. Alice C. Fletcher contributes a paper with this title, one of the series on similar subjects to the June Century. Mrs. Fletcher says: One would hardly suppose that there could be particular rules as to the manner of sitting upon the ground; but here, as in every other part of Indian life, there is a rigid observance of custom. Men may properly sit upon their heels or cross-legged, but no woman may assume these attitudes. She must sit sideways, gathering her feet under her, and make a broad, smooth lap. When working she may kneel or squat, and when resting she, as well as the men, may sit with legs extended; but at all other times men and women must observe the etiquette of posture distinctive of sex. To rise without touching the ground with the hand, springing up lightly and easily to the feet, is a bit of good breeding very difficult to one not to the manner born. Careful parents are particular to train their children in these niceties of behavior. Among the Winnebagoes the little girls are drilled in the proper way of standing when under observation on dress occasions. Their position of hands and feet is also the proper one for the women in certain religious dances. While among the Sioux, a mother with a good-sized family of boys and girls, propounded to me the question whether white women did not find their daughters more-trouble than their sons; she was sure she did. "Look at those girls," said she; "I have their clothes to make, their hair to braid, and to see that they learn how to behave. Now, my boys are no trouble." As I glanced at the group of children, the glossy braids of the girls falling over their single smock, and the boys, naked but for the breech-clout, their miniature scalp-lock ornamented with a brass sleigh-bell surmounting a snarl of frowy hair, I recognized the kinship of maternal perplexities the world over.

Prayer Meeting Topic for September 19.

"The Only Satisfying Good," Isa. 55: 1-3.

NOTES BY REV. A. A. SHAW.

Thouison in his Land and the Book III. 388 describes an eastern water carrier. He is usually wretchedly clad and carries slung over his back a goat skin bottle and in his hand two saucer like cups which he clinks together, while all the time he cries out in Arabic. "Ho ye thirsty come to the waters."

Equally universal with bodily thirst is soul thirst. With many it is but an indefinite longing for an unknown good, while with others it finds expression in the words of the psalmist, Ps. 42: 1, 2. With many it is only an indefinite craving for the only satisfying good. With others it is a definite longing after the only satisfying God. There are desires and aspirations in our souls that no earthly thing can satisfy. Money, honor, power, pleasure, all these with anything and everything offered us by the world fail to fill our hearts or quench our soul thirst. All this is spending our money for that which is not bread and our labor for that which satisfieth not. All these are like a mirage in a burning desert to a thirsty traveller. In the excitement of the thought that water is near his thirst is forgotten until he finds that the pools of water toward which he was eagerly running are but glowing sand, and his thirst is doubly intensified by the fruitless efforts.

To meet this longing soul we have pointed out a satisfying Saviour. "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters," etc., Jo. 4: 37, Isa. 41: 17, 18.

- 1. It is a living fountain; does not dry up nor freeze over, and remains pure and undefiled, Jer. 2: 13.
2. It is a full fountain; if anyone, Ho every one, all ye that labor, it is a supply for every need, Ps. 107: 9.
3. It is a free fountain; He that hath no money, without money and without price. Compare this with the eastern water carrier who for a price quenches thirst. The satisfied soul is (a) one who comes to Christ, the fountain.

Come with all your wants and wounds,
Your every burden bring;
Here love, unchanging love, abounds,
A deep celestial spring.

(b) One who drinks, Jo. 4: 10-15. See hymn, "I heard the voice of Jesus say," etc. Benjamin Kohlmeister, a poor Moravian mechanic, for 34 years a missionary in Labrador looking back, at 83 years of age, upon his missionary experience wrote "that the Lord has counted me, one of the poorest of his children, worthy to serve him in weakness amongst the heathen is a favor for which I hope to praise him through eternity."

Prince Tallyrand, a millionaire on whom highest honors were lavished, the companion and counsellor of kings, born about the same time as Kohlmeister wrote at the age of 83, "Behold eighty-three years have passed away! What cares, what agitations, what anxieties, what ill-will, what sad complication, and all without other result except great fatigue of body and mind, a profound sentiment of discouragement for the future and disgust of the past." One had found the only satisfying good, the other failed to find it.

God is ready to make an everlasting covenant with us, to be the eternally satisfying good.

The Young People

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Prayer Meeting Topic for September.

- C. E. Topic.—Losing one's life and finding it, John 12: 1-8, 20-26.
B. Y. P. U. Topic.—The only satisfying good, Isa. 55: 1-3.

B. Y. P. U. Daily Bible Readings. (Baptist Union.)

- Monday, September 20.—Ecclesiastes 5. The careless fool (vs. 4, 5). Compare Prov. 13: 16.
Tuesday, September 21.—Ecclesiastes 6. A fool's conclusion about death. Compare Eccl. 8: 7.
Wednesday, September 22.—Ecclesiastes 7: 1-10. The fool's bubble (vs. 5). Compare Prov. 15: 2.
Thursday, September 23.—Ecclesiastes 7: 11-29. A defense against fools. Compare Prov. 24: 7.
Friday, September 24.—Ecclesiastes 8. The fool's idea of life (vs. 15). Compare Eccl. 5: 18.
Saturday, September 25.—Ecclesiastes 9: 1-10. The fool's balancing of good and evil (vs. 2). Compare Eccl. 8: 14.

The Formation of Christian Character.

Outline of address delivered by Rev. J. D. Freeman, at the B. Y. P. U. Convention, August 19th, 1897.

"Character" is a Greek word. Primarily it signified "a graving tool;" then "an engraver" and ultimately "an engraver or impressed device." The word is found but once in the New Testament, Heb. 1: 3, where Christ is declared to be "the very image" of his Father's substance. Christian Character then, is the image that is the mind the spirit, the temper of Christ wrought into the substance of the human soul.

With utmost confidence I affirm that Christian Character represents the Alpha and the Omega of things. Almighty God cares more for Character than for anything else in heaven or on earth. Character is the grand goal of Creation, (see Col. 1: 16), and everything in the physical universe is servant to it, from the molecule to the milky way, from the flowers to the firmaments. Character is the grand goal of redemption. Listen to this! "For whom he foreknew, he also fore ordained, to be conformed to the image of his son" Romans 8: 29. There is redemption as it existed in the purpose of God, with Character for its goal. But mark how the apostle takes hold of both ends of the redemptive plan and binds them together over this grand goal! "and whom he foreordained, then he also called; and whom he called, then he also justified; and whom he justified, then he also glorified." From foreknowledge and fore-ordination in the ages past, up to our calling and justification in the present, on to our glorification in the future, God's one thought is conformation to the image of his son. Another steadfast look at the scriptures and we learn that Character is the grand goal of Providence.

It is for the sake of character that God gives us pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, laughter and tears. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose . . . to be conformed to the image of his Son." Let us then hold these massive facts in mind; Character the goal of Creation, of Redemption of Providence. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, constituted a joint-stock company for carrying on the Character-making business. Through all the aeons of time that has been the one supreme controlling purpose of the Godhead. Character is the stuff out of which God is building the Holy City of the skies. Everything else is scaffolding and refuse. When the end of the age shall come and God makes a bonfire of the worlds, Character, God-like and glorious will stand forth the one enduring monument of time.

Grasp now, these further truths about Character. 1. Character is not to be confounded with Culture. Character is something more than Culture. Wealth of culture often co-exists with weakness of Character. Strength of Character may be found where there is little culture. Culture means development, Character means Constitution. Culture has to do with form, Character with substance, Culture may give polish to the surface and keenness to the edge of the sword, but Character the temper of the steel. Culture makes for quantity, Character for quality. By culture the acorn becomes an oak, but no amount of culture can bring a pear tree out of an acorn. The acorn becomes an oak because the acorn has been characterized by the parent oak on which it grew. We say of Character, therefore, that it lies at the heart and soul of things, whereas in the germ, directs tendencies, establishes affinities, determines capacities and possibilities.

From this it is evident that: 2. Christian Character must find its Genesis in Regeneration. The great truth about regeneration is this, that it is God seating himself at the centre of our being and becoming within us the soul of our soul, the heart of our heart, the life our life. Regeneration means

the implanting of the Christ characterized life germ. "That Holy Thing" which was begotten in the womb of the virgin is begotten in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. "Christ in us" is our "hope of glory." True, there may be some approximation to Christlikeness in life of the unregenerate, as there is outward resemblance between burdock and rhubarb. We recognize most gladly the beautiful traits of character in those who own not Jesus as their Lord, but "the very image" of Christ is only possible to those who have the very life of Christ beating within their breasts. Imitation of Christ may be carried far without regeneration. But at best it is merely a veneer. To conform our life to Christ's full image, Christ's life must be transmitted to our souls. Christ must dwell in our hearts through faith. We must be born again.

3. Christian Character building is continuous and progressive.

At regeneration Christ gains access to the soul and begins his work of transformation, but as it takes the sculptor weeks and months and years to work his mind and heart and will into expression in the marble, so Christ requires time in which to work out his grand ideals in the soul. When England conquers territory she annexes it to her empire. Then she sends her wealth, her art, her literature to civilize the land and bring it into sympathy with the genius and spirit of the empire. When the heart is regenerated and the soul accepts Jesus as Lord, the entire being is annexed to the Kingdom of Grace. Christ says of such an one "He is mine and I am his." But there is still-room for the sanctifying influences of heaven to do their work before the soul is ready for the mother city and capital of the empire, or Christ can set us "before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy."

4. The formation of Christian character may be wonderfully hastened by consecration.

In the 12th chapter of Romans, St. Paul pleads for entire consecration in order to complete transformation. Just as we give Christ sphere in us by the surrender of the area of our lives, so will he stamp us with his likeness. Character comes by contact. In a furniture factory I saw smooth boards pressed tight against a warm revolving metal die, taking the impress of the pattern carved upon it. Christ is the heavenly die, stamped with the very image of God: We only need to unfold our hearts to him and press up close against him to receive his image in deep clear lines. This is why suffering saints often manifest such maturity of character. They are hard pressed, but they are pressed hard against Jesus, and the contact leaves the beautiful tracery of his perfect loveliness upon their hearts.

5. Character in Destiny.

It is often said that "character determines destiny." We approach nearer the mark when we say character is destiny. Milton struck a deep true note when he wrote:

"He that bath light within his own clear breast,
May sit in the centre and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the middle sun;
Himself is his own dungeon."

We have an echo of the same large truth in Longfellow:—

"Not in the clamour of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat."

Mr. Emerson also chimes in with these strong words:—

"Deep in the man sits fast his fate,
To mould his fortunes mean or great."

These sayings of the poets are in fullest harmony with what the Bible everywhere teaches, that to enjoy God we must be like God. In its last analysis salvation is character. There is no trick about this matter of salvation. Heaven is no mere accident of happy chance. It is an assemblage of holy affinities. Heaven will consist of God and his Christ and all whom God through Christ has characterized into his likeness. Surely a consideration of these solemn facts concerning character will lead us to pray more fervently and understandingly than we have ever done before.

Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee:

N. S. Western Associational B. Y. P. U.

Fellow Unioners of the Nova Scotia Western Associational B. Y. P. U. a word from your Sec. Treas will be considered in place. It will be remembered that at our last annual meeting held at Milton (Queens Co.) the executive were instructed to provide an associational prize banner; to be awarded to the Local Union making the best record in the C. C. work for the year 1897-98.

We are glad to inform our Union that the new banner will be a beauty, and will be well worth capturing. Let it be remembered that it will require careful and persistent study to obtain the prize. Be sure that you begin at the beginning. This further announcement, your Sec. Treas. will give a silver medal suitably inscribed to the individual within the bounds of our Association, who will write the best original essay on "The History of the B. Y. P. U. Movement." This contest will be open to any member of the B. Y. P. U. not including our Pastors. The medal will be awarded at the annual meeting. The essay must be in the hands of the judges before the 1st of May next.

Bro. Archibald our genial President will name the judges.

Let every Union try for the banner,—and let every individual try to capture the medal.—Now all together and may our God bless the efforts. Yours heartily,

B. H. THOMAS,
Sec. Treas.