

A Hymn of Trust.

Thou sweet, beloved will of God!
My anchor-ground! My fortress hill!
My spirit's silent, fair abode!
In Thee I hide me, and am still.

Upon God's will I lay me down,
As child upon its mother's breast;
No silken couch, nor softest bed,
Could ever give me such sweet rest.

Thy wonderful grand will, my God!
With triumph now I make it mine,
And Love shall cry a joyous Yes
To every dear command of Thine.

Thy beautiful, sweet will, my God,
Holds fast in its sublime embrace
My captive will, a glad some bird,
Prisoned in such a realm of grace.

Within this place of certain good,
Love evermore expands her wings;
Or, nestling in Thy perfect choice,
Abides content with what it brings.

O sweetest burden, lightest yoke,
It lifts, it bears my happy soul,
It giveth wings to this poor heart;
My freedom is Thy grand control.

—Madam Guyon.

One Sided Christians.

The world contains vast numbers of what may be termed one-sided Christians. When any misshapen creature is exhibited in a museum or menagerie, it is generally viewed with at least some slight feeling of pity, as well as with much curiosity.

These one-sided Christians, however, deserve much less pity than almost any other living monstrosity, for the reason that every possible provision has been made for their complete and symmetrical development. It may be true, yes, it is more than probable, that they were born with a constitutional tendency toward this particular kind of deformity; but Christianity offers them the means of over-coming that tendency. It is the province of Christianity to produce men and women of the most beautiful and symmetrical type, to transform sin-distorted beings back into the very image of God. But the one-sidedness of Christians is not only avoidable; it is peculiarly censurable and deplorable, because the critical observer, on perceiving that one side of their Christian nature is missing, is very prone to conclude that the other side is missing also, and that their Christianity, therefore, is one of those shadowy things whose most tangible substance is a name.

There are, it is to be feared, a good many different varieties of one-sided Christians, in all styles and stages of unshapeliness; but the class of which this article will treat is one of the largest and most clearly defined, and may be studied with much profit. Specimens of this particular variety are found in nearly every Christian community, and are noted, despite their lamentable shortcomings in other respects, for their decided and austere disapproval of dancing, theater-going, and other like amusements. What else they may tolerate, they cannot look without a stern frown of reproof upon any popular pleasure that is evil, or even questionable, in its tendency. This one side of their Christianity is well developed and robust, and if it were supplemented and held in equilibrium by the other side, would be most admirable. In fact, nothing is more needed in the present age than healthy, robust, Bible-fed Christianity. But the Christians who form the subject of this article, though they are rugged and strong in their denunciation of sinful amusements, nevertheless show their one-sidedness by committing, both in social and business life, sundry little acts which verge too closely upon meanness to be truly honorable. They are acts which often escape the censure which they deserve, because, like the acts of cunningly mischievous boys at school, they generally seem near enough to the line between right and wrong to make it a little hard to prove that any rule of conduct has really and undoubtedly been broken. Grown-up people, in the same spirit as school children, are quite apt to calculate just how far they can go without actually and flagrantly transgressing any moral law; and hence they are often wandering to and fro on the borders between right and wrong in a way which is anything but praiseworthy or reputable. It is thus that these one-sided people distort their own Christian growth, and bring reproach upon their religion. Many of them are true Christians, no doubt, just as a larch-tree is still a larch-tree, though its branches all hang 'on one side in the most uncouth and unattractive way. But, alas! they are such a deformed species of Christian that only those whose eyes are opened by charity can recognize them.

As has already been hinted, these one-sided individuals are not open to rebuke because one side of their Christian character is full-grown and stalwart, but because the other side is so utterly shriveled and bedwarfed. One

side, to all appearances, at least, has reached the full, gigantic measure of the Christian stature; but the other side has remained in Liliputian littleness. And is it worse than useless for people whose own growth has been so ill-proportioned and unsightly, to attempt to teach others how to grow. It would be of little avail for a hunch-backed, bandy-legged man to give lessons in symmetrical physical development, unless he had some forcible way of exhibiting his own deformities as solemn warnings, not as beauties for his pupils to imitate. But object lessons of that kind are exceedingly rare; and these one-sided Christians have no thought of adopting any such humble method. They seem, rather, to invite attention to themselves as models of Christian comeliness. At any rate they receive attention enough, whether it is invited or not,—searching, eagle-eyed attention, from a "great cloud of witnesses;" and many voices hastily pronounce judgment upon them about as follows: "Either Christianity itself is a sham, or they are sham Christians." And this judgment is not so unfair to those who are judged as it is disastrous to those who judge; that is the saddest phase of the whole matter.

These one-sided Christians hold themselves aloof in righteous horror, or disgust, or contempt, as a masquerade procession passes along the street; yet they live in such a way as to create a suspicion in many minds that Christianity itself is a grand masquerade in which all professing Christians "march and wear masks."

They knit their brows in a dismal frown at sight of a game of cards; yet they themselves use a kind of ingenious card-playing in their business, by managing words and circumstances in such a way as to secure a favorable deal. They of course do not mean to be guilty of actual cheating; if the process were known by that offensively explicit name they would be sorely conscience-stricken and ashamed. They simply handle their cards more skillfully than the person on the opposite side of the table. It is all-important, sometimes, to apply the right names to things.

They are ceaseless and unsparing in their condemnation of dancing. But, though in their own daily conduct there is nothing of the giddy whirl of the dance, nothing, indeed, but sedate and dignified walking, yet there are discernible in this same walking little twists, and curves, and dodges, that seem more blame-worthy in the eyes of many than the dance's giddy whirl. Their walk is not straight-forward, but swerves to and fro in obedience to the silent music of selfishness. But they who denounce the windings of the dance should see also that there are no windings in their own daily walk.

They abhor theater-going, with all the abominations of the stage. Yet on the stage of life, where all men are necessarily actors, they perform their parts in such an improper way as to disgust some and mislead others, in such a discreditable way as to cause a strong suspicion that they have never received any deep, heartfelt training from the great divine Dramatist.

They manifest more than ordinary annoyance at frivolous or extravagant talk, especially if that talk is well variegated with slang; and they seem to be shocked to an unusual degree by any form of profanity.

At this point the reader may be ready with the remark, "It is not customary, surely, to include profanity, and the use of slang in the list of popular amusements. Why, then, are these faults of speech mentioned here?" They are mentioned, reader, because it would be impossible otherwise to present a complete, full-length, life-sized portrait of these one-sided Christians. It is desirable to make the portrait so accurate that none can fail to recognize it.

Yes, these one-sided Christians are much distressed, as they should be, by the disorderly conversation of others; but while watching the unruly behavior of other people's tongues they often neglect to bridle their own. In both social and business life, and especially in the ardor of making a shrewd bargain, their tongues are either left unbridled or held with a very loose rein, so as not to be confined too strictly within the bounds of the truth. The way of absolute truthfulness is a very straight and narrow one, and they require its full width, at least. At times they unbridle their tongues and set them loose in some neighbor's reputation; and the fair reputation, sacred inclosure as it is, is irretrievably laid waste and despoiled.

These one-sided Christians are conspicuous and exemplary as zealous participants in all the services of the church, and they may be heard urging sinners to "flee from the wrath to come." In many of the aggressive, onward movements of the church they may be found in the front ranks, at

times even trembling with restless impatience at the slowness of the march. In all this, moreover, they are evidently sincere, to a greater extent, at least. And yet, when they step out of this circle of religious duties, which is so likely to show the best of man's nature, into the heated, seething, tumultuous arena of secular life, which like a great, universal crucible tries men's souls, and shows the dross as well as the gold,—when they do this they appear in a much less favorable light. The dross of their souls reveals itself in all manner of little inconsistencies in their lives.

Little inconsistencies! Yes, call them little if you will; but remember that these little inconsistencies, taken as a whole, are by far the worst blot on Christianity's fair reputation, and by far the worst hindrance to Christianity's progress. When a professing Christian is guilty of some notorious misdeed, he is generally dealt with in a summary manner. The church,—if the church itself is not a rotten organization,—faithfully and prayerfully investigates the matter, and follows this investigation with further action which is marked by honest firmness as well as compassionate prudence. Unless there is hope of bringing the culprit to genuine and speedy repentance, he is quite likely to be promptly expelled, like a leper from the camp; and the outside world, censorious and lynx-eyed as it is, can find little fault with the church's course. The church may possibly dispose of a case like that with some degree of honor to itself. These heinous wrong-doers are not usually regarded as a real part of the church, but rather as hypocritical intruders. But the one-sided Christians often remain in the church as an actual part of it, and help to constitute the character of the church, as viewed by the keen, cold eyes of the world. The great transgression which the church-member commits, is like a huge rock in the pathway of Christian progress,—a rock which by strong effort may be entirely removed; the little inconsistencies of church members are the sand and filth which are continually flowing in and accumulating in the pathway, making the onward march of Christianity a constant, slow and severe struggle. No Christian, perhaps, is perfectly consistent, since nothing is perfect except what comes straight from the unerring hand of God; but these habitually inconsistent Christians (if Christians they are) are a perpetual disgrace and incumbrance; and all their active labor, praiseworthy and necessary as such labor is, cannot compensate for the inconsistencies of their lives. The silent Christian neglects an important part of his duty, and will be held accountable for such neglect; but nevertheless, it is infinitely better to live Christianity without preaching it, than to preach Christianity without living it. Oh! those inconsistencies! those little inconsistencies! How the Christian ought to hunt them to the death! "The foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines."

This portrait of one-sided Christians is now as nearly a complete one as the allotted space and the painter's ability will allow. Not a very prepossessing picture, is it? Don't let any of us try to imitate its deformities.—*Christian Inquirer*.

Just Three Things.

I once met a thoughtful scholar, says Bishop Whipple, who told me that for years he had read every book he could which assailed the religion of Jesus Christ, and he said he should have become an infidel but for three things.

"First, I am a man. I am going somewhere. To-night I am a day nearer the grave than I was last night. I have read all such books can tell me. They shed not one solitary ray of hope or light upon the darkness. They shall not take away the guide and leave me stone blind."

"Second, I had a mother. I saw her go down into the dark valley where I am going, and she leaned upon an unseen arm as calmly as a child goes to sleep on the breast of its mother. I know that was not a dream."

"Third, I have three motherless daughters"—and he said it with tears in his eyes—"They have no protector but myself. I would rather kill them than leave them in this sinful world if you blot out from it all the teachings of the gospel."

Perhaps there are other persons who would do well to think of these three things. Infidels think they can destroy the Bible. What of it? Many good things have been destroyed. A child can smash a crystal vase, which all the power of men could never restore. An incendiary can, with a match that does not cost a hundredth part of a penny, burn down a palace on which thousands of men have toiled for years. A slanderer can smirch a spotless name with stains that may never be effaced; but what is gained by such exploits? Infidels have vainly tried for ages to destroy the Bible and Christianity. They have not succeeded. Suppose they now give us a rest,

and go to work and produce some better book and some better religion. *The Armory*.

Prayer.

How many, even among Christians, neglect the duty of prayer. Men often suffer long, and hardly know what course to pursue, when if they would but go to a throne of grace, they would generally find relief. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee." No matter how severe or varied our afflictions are, we are directed to the one Father in heaven, who will hear and answer our prayer. In whatever condition we may be placed, however numerous our wants may be, we are told "in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make our requests known unto God." One prayer, or half a dozen even, may not bring the desired blessing. It is earnest, importunate, persistent prayer, that will prove effectual. Dr. Payson once said, "A man may pray ten times and be denied; and yet by praying ten times more, obtain the blessing." We have heard of Christians who sought the Lord for years, and the favors asked came at last. Sometimes the fervent prayer is answered immediately, as when persons are in peculiar straits, "Lord save or I perish," uttered from the heart often brings the desired relief. Of one thing we may be certain, that "praying breath is never spent in vain." The answer may not come at the time, nor in the way we expect, but certain it is that no sincere, importunate prayer will be lost. Says one, "The answer of prayer may be approaching, though we discern not its coming. The seed in winter that lies under ground, is taking root in order to a spring and harvest, though it appear not above ground, but seems dead and lost." Let all be encouraged to persevere in sincere and earnest prayer, and in the end the blessing will come. We have the sure word of God to this effect and none should question this high authority.—*Religious Herald*.

Keep Your Temper.

Calm demeanor under provocation is wisest and best. A ruffled temper is no help to anybody. The greater the offense, the more need of considerate decision in respect to it. Be slow to wrath. Conquer your irritability. Learn to speak as quietly and calmly to a threatening foe as to a loving friend. He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. Time will come when you will be thankful that you held your anger in check. Harsh words and fierce deeds never yielded their speaker or doer any permanent satisfaction. God has endowed us with reasoning faculties, with the design that we should use them. Storm and bluster seldom have any reason in them. Thoughtfulness and consideration are becoming to the Christian. The only vengeance the man of God may indulge himself in is that of charity in return for wrong, and kindness in exchange for violence. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Good deeds by you will be to him like coals of fire on his head. They will melt him down. But perform your good deeds in the right spirit. Let no vengeance be your motive. Angry charity may prove a boomerang. Approach not your opponent in a Christian's garb but with a devil's heart. Get right within, and the outward bearing will take care of itself. Be Christ-like, and you will appear Christ-like. Hate the sin, and yet the sinner love. Make it the one grand aim of your life to put down evil and save the evil-doers, whether personal friends or foes.—*Michigan Advocate*.

Why Men Fall.

Few men come up to the highest measure of success. Some fall through timidity, or lack of nerve. They are unwilling to take the risks incident to life, and fail through fear in venturing on ordinary duties. They lack pluck. Others fail through imprudence, lack discretion, care or sound judgment. They overestimate the future and build air-castles, and venture beyond their depth and fail and fall. Others, again, fail through lack of application and perseverance. They begin with good resolves, but soon get tired of that, and want a change, thinking they can do much better at something else. Thus they fritter life away and succeed at nothing. Others waste time and money and fail through ruinous habits; tobacco, whisky and beer spoil them for business, drive their best customers from them, and scatter their prospects of success.

Some fail for want of brains, education and fitness for their calling; they lack knowledge of human nature, and of the motives that actuate men. They have not qualified themselves for their occupation by practical education.—*School Supplement*.

Giving in Faith.

An heiress who was about to marry a man comparatively poor, was advised to have her property settled upon herself, lest her husband should squander it. She replied, indignantly, "Cannot I trust my purse where I trust my person? Yet there are Christians who confide in Christ for the saving of that treasure which he himself declares is worth more than the world—the soul; but cannot trust him, or those whom he has appointed to represent him, with a little gold—no, not when he makes himself personally responsible for the payment—taking that which we give to the poor as a loan to himself; Proverbs xix. 17. In the light of this inspired statement, how strangely inconsistent is the position of the close-fisted Christian. God comes to him, saying, 'Do you believe in me? O yes, is the quick and glad reply. You are my covenant God and keeper. You are able to save me. You have promised to, and I expect to die in peace, pillowing my head upon your promises. Very well, then, if such is your confidence in me, give that poor neighbor five dollars and charge it to my account. But, Lord he has no business to be poor. He should have worked and saved as I have. I have earned my money and it is mine! I don't want to give it away. I am not asking you to give, but only to lend. Am not I good for the amount? Will you confide in my promise of a home in heaven, and not in my promise to repay a loan of five dollars?—*Interior*.

Relative Number of Christians.

The number of Christians has increased century by century until now they far outnumber the adherents of any other faith. The ordinary statistics by which Buddhists are made to outnumber Christians are totally misleading. The difference between Quakerism and the Church of Rome is trifling as compared with the difference between sects who are all classed together as Buddhists, but who have almost nothing in common except the name and a few merely outward and material resemblances. To call the Mohammedans Christians would be very much more than to consider as adherents of one religion all who call themselves Buddhists. And this is not all, for in China, which contains most of adherents of Buddhism, this is only one belief among many, and the same man is often Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, and the ancestor-worshiper all in one. Taking Christians and Mohammedans together, it is probable that there are from five to six hundred millions of people who believe in one God, Creator and Governor of the world, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, while it is extremely improbable that even a third as many are agreed on any other creed.—*Church Review*.

Courage.

In Christian character courage is a prime quality, forming a sort of substratum for all the other virtues. Next to love, it is the dominant element, giving unity, consistency and strength to character. Of ordinary men it makes heroes, and renders practicable what would be otherwise impossible. To make a complete Christian, rounded, compacted and armed for the hard service to which one is called in an evil world, no quality is more indispensable. In all parts of one's earthly course it is brought into requisition. To meet the great troubles of life is hardly more difficult than to cope with the minor ills, difficulties and vexations thereof. If no one of them is overwhelming, the flow of the current is steady, constant and overbearing. To rise against, one requires the stoutness and resolution of a great heart, who, in the path of duty, never stops to count the cost, but proceeds at once to storm the enemy's works, carrying all before him, as Samson bore away the gates of Gaza.—*Zion's Herald*.

Too Good to Keep.

A New Zealand girl was brought over to England to be educated. She became a true Christian. When she was about to return, some of her playmates endeavored to dissuade her. They said, Why do you go back to New Zealand? You are accustomed to England now. You love its shady lanes and clover fields. It suits your health. Besides, you may be shipwrecked on the ocean. You may be killed and eaten by your own people. Everybody will have forgotten you.

What! she said, do you think I could keep the good news to myself? Do you think I could be content with having got pardon and peace and eternal life for myself, and not go and tell my dear father and mother how they can get it, too? I would go if I had to swim there. Do not try to hinder me, for I must go and tell my people the good news!—*Exchange*.

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