

The Pierced Hand Divine.

BY THE REV. L. C. CARTWRIGHT.

One only Hand, a Hand divine,
Enfoldeth me and all that's mine;
A hand from which I cannot move,
'Tis marked so deeply by His love.

A Hand that "holds all nature up,"
Yet paints the tiniest flower's cup;
And, so amazing, designs to be
A refuge, strength, and guide to me.

O! had I still those hours to give
Now lost—yes, lost beyond retrieve—
How glad I would, at His command,
Put all, and more, into that Hand.

But since the past may not return,
And none the future can discern,
With glad and unreserved vow
Into His hand I place my "now!"

And as the moment comes and goes,
In joy so swift, in sorrow slow,
May I remember 'tis His grasp
That keeps, and not my feeble grasp.

O, loving, pierced Hand divine,
So fold Thou me and all of mine,
That in the midst of sin and strife
We'll feel the quickening of Thy Life.

Then yonder, with life's battle o'er,
The victory ours for evermore,
We'll sing, a saved and happy band,
The praises due Thy pierced Hand.

Chris. Advocate.

The Church and Society.

The fatal mistake of the Protestant church of to-day is its failure to take hold of and transmute human society into God's kingdom of righteousness. The prevalent, controlling conviction seems to be that Christian effort has to do with individuals only, and that if those who compose society are personally right with God, society will be right. As well might it be said that if the individual soldier citizens of the nation are healthy, able-bodied, and patriotic, they will be effective in the defense of the country without being organized into an army, and without being led, as an army, against the enemy.

To truly save the individual, the society composed of individuals must be saved also. To inaugurate and perpetuate the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of individuals, it must be inaugurated and perpetuated in society, which is composed of individuals; and to effect this inauguration in the true sense the church must take hold of and transmute society. To do less than this is to fail of attaining the high purpose for which the church was instituted and for which it is permitted to exist.

And right here is the trouble with the situation to-day, especially in our cities. The church is busying itself with the individual and letting society go to the dogs. It is busy looking after its specific interests, as classes and denominations (all of which is right and proper, provided effort did not stop there), while the forces of evil, in their various organized forms, have society by the throat, literally dragging it each year to lower depths of immorality and social pollution, despite all that the church is doing. That such is the condition is not a pessimistic hallucination, but a bald, alarming fact, known and read of all who are willing to open their eyes and see.

How can this condition be changed for the better? Only by the church's awakening to the fact that it has to do with society as well as with the individual; and that to the extent that it does not bring its power to bear for the uprooting of the organized evils that are ruining society to that extent it is responsible before God for the demoralized condition of our social life.

The sin of the church at large to day is moral cowardice and strategic blindness. It has the men and the equipment sufficient to effectually assail and completely overthrow and drive out all the forms of legalized iniquity which are working such ruin in our cities; but it lacks the heroism and the ability to organize its forces and lead them against the common foe. The fear that it will make itself unpopular, that public sentiment will pronounce it "cranky," that "leading men" will denounce it for departing from its legitimate sphere to meddle with temporal affairs, that it will suffer loss in members and money—these; we are sorry to say, are some of the principal forces and considerations that the church of to-day has not the courage to defy. As if battles for righteousness could be fought without risk and loss! What would have been the consequences to human liberty if our forefathers had been actuated by such cowardly considerations!

It is the same mistake of which the prophet of old complained. The watchmen on the walls of Zion are "crying peace, peace, when there is no peace." So long as human society permits the saloon, the assignation house, the gambling den, the variety theater, the Sunday casino, the Sunday base ball game, the Sunday club-house and dancing pavilion, with their open doors

and their baser attachments of infamy, so long is society in open league with the devil, no matter how many who compose the same society are members of the church. And so long as such a condition of things obtains in society, so long will a certain large per cent. of the boys and girls of the Sabbath schools, young people's societies, and Christian homes of our cities annually be dragged down to infamy, as is the case at present, despite all the singing, praying, preaching, and exhortation that can be done in the churches.

And the marvel is that the pastors, deacons, and elders of the city churches, many of whose children are being ruined by society, do not open their eyes, get together and organize for taking hold of and revolutionizing society. They complain of the indisposition on the part of the masses to attend church. Their congregations are comparatively small. The seats are but half filled. The men, especially, are absent. This condition of things they deplore and attribute to the natural depravity of the human heart.

The fact is, it is the result of the overmastering, drawing power of the depraved condition of society. Why are not the young men who, ten years ago, were diligent, faithful scholars in the city Sunday schools, present to-day at the morning and evening preaching service? Because the Sunday baseball game, the Sunday club-house, with its open bar-room and lascivious side rooms, the Saturday and Sunday evening park, casino, and other forms of vicious dissipation have gotten hold of them and so infatuated and enchained them that they have now no time nor inclination for the services of the house of God, in which their younger life found delight. Society, demoralized, secular, and vicious, and upon whose organized evils the church has cowardly refused to make war; society, which the church has failed to transmute, uplift, and save, because it was too much absorbed in uplifting and saving individuals, has virtually robbed the church of those who but a few years ago bid fair to be its chief pillars and ornaments.

What would be thought of an army that, because its officers feared they would lose men or munitions of war if they attacked the enemy, remained in camp drilling and holding dress parade, while its deadly foe was gradually but surely closing in on it, picking off its pickets and constantly depleting its ranks by inciting to desertions and cutting off reinforcements? The only salvation for such an army would be in bravely taking the risk of loss in battle and going out and fighting the enemy. So, to-day, the only way for the church, the only possibility of its being saved from being overcome by the world as represented in the organized evils of society, is in its various branches getting together as one army and bravely attacking the wickedness in society. And so long as the church will not take this risk and go out thus and give its great enemy battle, so long must it signally fail of accomplishing its mission in the world.—Rel. Telescope.

Up Stream.

Keep her head up stream, Jack, and you'll be all right," sang out a cheery voice as a young man shot out from the river bank in a slight skiff pulling with strong, steady strokes in the direction indicated. I stood and watched them, wondering where he was going, who he was, and numerous other things not worthy of mention. I saw that his intention was to cross the river, but ever was the boat's head kept up stream, and the solution was easily seen. A strong current was running, and unless he kept her so he would inevitably drift down below his landing place, but following the directions given, he made his way to the wished for point. Hard work it was, but he was young and strong, and the exercise only quickened his blood and brought a glow to his cheek. I passed on, but could not forget those cheery, ringing words, "Keep her head up stream, and you'll be all right."

"Keep her head up stream!" It is easy to float with the current, not only on the river, but in everyday life. No effort is required, no exertion of our whole strength and being, nothing but the mere passive allowing of ourselves to drift along, but is it wise, is it manly? The most careless observer will answer, "No," will say it is a strain on our power of intelligent knowledge, a disgrace to our manhood, a sure loss of everything worth prizing. To gain any good or distinction we must work for it, must toil incessantly, must keep our head up stream else it will never be ours. And what man is there who does not prize justly earned distinction?

But it is not only the world's praise for which we should aim; we should remember those words in everyday life, in all our act and thought,

should always, have them in mind, and never deviate from the rule. When Duty seems hard, when sorrow stricken, when temptation meets us, when despair almost overwhelms us, then, must we, if we would triumph, "keep her head up stream," aye, and bend to the oars manfully, keeping the strong, steady stroke, looking neither to the right nor the left, but pointing ever forward and upward. If we rest one moment, the current will carry us swiftly downward, and there is nothing so hard as regaining lost ground. In life's battle, "lost ground" means lost opportunities, and the gaining of those is beyond the power of poor, struggling humanity; once lost they are gone forever.

Every life has its own current to stem, we do not know the peculiar power that bears on our neighbor, but we do know our own; we also know our own short-comings, and where, generally speaking, the shoals and rocks lie hidden in life's swiftly flowing stream, then it is our duty as we steadfastly toil toward the landing place on the Golden Shore, to avoid these. No good seaman unnecessarily thrusts his ship into danger, much less should we, the frail craft that we are striving to guide to the "better land."

Sometimes, wind and current are both against us, and it seems with our utmost efforts we are making little or no headway, by dint of hard, incessant toil, we bravely hold our own, while the storm lasts. We must thank God if we are able to do that, if we have weathered the gale without losing ground, even though almost spent with the exertions we have put forth. How many similar craft have sunk to rise no more, have been overwhelmed and lost, while we have ridden out the storm in comparative safety? Think of it, think of the many young lives which started fair, and even with us, in the race for life, and then think of what many of them are to-day. Some have drifted down, down, down, till utter darkness shrouds them from sight; some have spurred feebly, but made little or no headway; others seem to have no definite landing in view, and daily here and there, as if "time and tide" were only the playthings of an hour, not the grand highway to eternity; some, but they are not many, are pulling nobly for that fair haven.

"Where the wicked cease from troubling, And the weary are at rest."

My friend, are you one of that number? Have you steered a straight course through the foam and breakers of the current? Can you look with clear, undaunted eyes on your past, and forward with reverent hope to the future? Are you, Heaven forbid! dallying your golden moments in idle pleasures, or soiling them deliberately with sin, or are you of those unfortunates who are drifting out into utter darkness of ruin and desolation? There is only one course for us to pursue in the future if we would not wish to see "A Wasted Life" carved on our tombstone, and that is indicated in those cheering words, "Keep her head up stream." With God for our beacon-light, and Heaven for our destination, these words will carry us safely home.—New York Observer.

The Discipline of the Tongue.

I think that most of us must feel that James had a far graver sense of the moral and religious importance of words than is common even among Christian people. For him words are deeds; they are decisive tests of the real quality of life. He had laid to heart the solemn declaration of our Lord, that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words"—not by thy actions alone—"thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

I suppose that if we are to discipline the tongue, we must, first of all, endeavor to make real to ourselves the seriousness of speech. We should think about it day after day, until by God's grace we feel, as we have never felt before, that our words are really a very large part of our moral life. For example, we should think of the suffering which has been inflicted on ourselves by careless and bitter words; of the injury which we know that such words have done to other men. We should think of words that have stung us to passion; of words which have filled our imagination with foul shapes, that haunted us day by day and refused to be banished; of words which have shaken our faith in God and destroyed our comfort in His love.

We should think of words which have created unjust suspicion of the integrity or the sobriety of other men, and have led to the loss of the confidence of their employers and to the ruin of their families. We should remember those words in everyday life, in all our act and thought,

their husbands and of husbands for their wives. We should think of how we ourselves have been misled and involved in serious troubles by the careless inaccuracy of the words of men whom we trusted. In every way that we can we should try to bring home to ourselves the truth that words which are lightly spoken may be a grave offense against justice and against charity.

We should further consider seriously the great warning of our Lord, that for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment. "Idle words" are words that are spoken carelessly, indolently, without any moral effort to avoid sin; if they are sinful, our moral insensibility to their sinfulness will be no excuse for them. These are words against which Christian people have to watch most carefully. When challenged about them, they say they never thought that what they said would do any harm; but it was because they never thought that their words were idle words. They say they never meant any harm, but they did harm; and if they had considered what they were saying they would never have said it.

And if "idle words" we must give account in the day of judgment—and Christ Himself, who warns us, will be the judge—much more shall we give account of words which are not idle, careless, thoughtless; but which are deliberately false, uncharitable, and revengeful. And even if, through God's grace, we are not shut out of the city of God, false words, uncharitable words, revengeful words, idle words, that pained and wronged other men, will impoverish our eternal reward and lessen our eternal joy.—The Christian.

Prayer For Others.

Christianity is essentially altruistic. The scoffers at the cross said more truly than they knew, "He saved others, himself He cannot save." Himself announced, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." This is the spirit inculcated in the divine teaching, and begotten in the divine quickening of life. In harmony with this essential spirit of Christianity is the frequent exhortation to pray for others. Paul often tells of his unceasing prayer for others. He seeks the prayers of others on his own behalf, and enjoins upon them the duty of praying for all men. Prayer for others should manifestly have a large place in Christian life, and is a large factor in all Christian progress.

What, then, constitutes real prayer for others? It is needless to say that the mere utterance of words in the form of petition does not constitute prayer. It is to be feared that this fact rules out of the category of prayer no small portion of our praying. God knows the heart perfectly, and only that which comes from the heart is prayer to God. We can pray for others only when they have a real place in our hearts. Jesus could pray for those who crucified Him, just because He kept them still in His heart, and for them as for the rest is willing to give His life. If then we would learn truly to pray for others we must learn to give them a place of real interest and desire in our hearts. This is conditioned, first of all, on the possession of the Spirit of Christ. Having this, we must come into touch with other lives, so as to appreciate their condition and need. For example, we can pray for the heathen only when we have come to appreciate their emergent spiritual necessities, and have, in the Spirit of Christ, taken them into our hearts.

This in turn implies that we are holding ourselves ready to do what we can on their behalf. In his "Studies in Theology" Dr. Denney claims that intercession for another implies that we have made common cause with him. He says, "We do not truly intercede for a man unless we put ourselves at God's disposal for that man's service." If this is true, and we believe it is, is not the range of our real prayer for others narrowed down to small proportions? Are we holding ourselves at God's disposal for service to our unconverted friends and neighbors? To the unevangelized in our own country and in far-off lands? If not, we cannot truly pray for them. In the plan of God prayer and willing service are inseparably linked together. Neither can have being without the other. For both we should seek the largest possible place in our lives.—Can. Baptist.

Well-Doing.

Well-doing begins in the heart. The very first step in a life of well-doing is to give the heart to God, and thus render unto God the things which are His. It is vain to attempt to live a life of well-doing while the heart, the foundation of all our thoughts, words, and deeds, is alienated from the Fountain of a good man's

Can one whose heart is not good be good? Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?

It is not right to say, as some have said, that everything an ungodly man does is sinful. When an unbeliever gives bread to the hungry it is not a sin. A good work is good by whomsoever it be wrought. But this is true: A wicked man cannot do good in the highest sense, from the best motives or with the richest results. There is a field of usefulness into which he cannot enter at all. He cannot lead the sinner from the error of his way into paths of righteousness. This is the highest form of well-doing. All other good works grow pale in the presence of this. What substantial help can an ungodly man give to one who is struggling with sinful habits and passions? Spiritual help can only be afforded by men who have some spiritual strength.

There are multitudes of spiritual idlers in the Church because their spiritual vitality is low. A paralytic is idle as a matter of course. He has no strength. When there are fields to cultivate, harvests to reap and gather into barns, battles to fight, men do not look to invalids to do the work. To produce physical results physical vigor is necessary. To produce intellectual results intellectual force is required. An imbecile cannot teach science and draw out the latent faculties of the young. For this work a mind stored with knowledge and rendered strong by study is required. Neither can spiritual results be produced except by spiritual forces. Whoever will lead a soul from darkness to light, and carry on the work of the kingdom of God in the earth, must have spiritual understanding, spiritual wisdom, and spiritual strength. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness."

Dancing and Prayer Don't Agree.

The worldly young men of Knobnoster, Mo., thought it would be a fine joke upon the Christian ministers to invite them all to attend a dance. Accordingly every preacher in the town received an invitation. The dance was held, and nearly all of those invited attended. In the midst of the revelry Rev. Frank Russell, pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and Rev. F. H. Brigham, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church, entered the hall. They said they were there by special invitation, and asked part of the dancers' time. Rev. Mr. Russell then read a chapter from the Bible, and Rev. Mr. Brigham offered a fervent prayer. All the dancers were requested to participate in the services. Several of them did so, and the services lasted about forty minutes. Then dancing was resumed, but the party was adjourned long before the program was completed.

The despatches do not state why the dancers adjourned their revelry, but the inference is easy. Dancing and prayer don't go well together.—The Evangelical.

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