

CHRISTIAN WORK



THANKSGIVING - 1897

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CHRISTIAN WORK

Weekly---Continuing the Christian at Work.

Volume 63

New York, Thursday, November 18, 1897.

Number 1605

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IT is highly gratifying to know that the aim of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Canadian Minister of Marine, in their visit to Washington which will continue throughout the present week, has to do not alone nor chiefly with the seal fisheries, but is an endeavor to effect a settlement of all open controversies between the Dominion and the United States. The matters beside the sealing dispute which cause irritation and misunderstanding between Canada and the United States comprise the passage of alien laborers to and from Canada, the influx of United States citizens into the Klondike and other mining regions of British North America, the North Atlantic and Great Lakes fisheries questions, the dispute over rights in the Frazer River, Puget Sound and British Columbia, the matter of bonding privilege granted to Dominion railroad lines and of reciprocal trade arrangements. Many of these subjects are of long standing, and as time goes on they are likely to lead to greater complications unless they are adjusted. It is assuring to know that the overtures and suggestions that our Canadian visitors may make will be received in a conciliatory spirit. And they should be so met, for notwithstanding his repeated protestations of unswerving fidelity to Great Britain, the Canadian Premier has always been a staunch advocate of closer relations between Canada and this country, and the recent sweeping victory which the Canadian Liberals scored over the Conservatives was largely due to the known friendliness of Sir Wilfrid toward the United States. This is a distinct passport to American confidence and good-will for Sir Wilfrid and his ministerial colleague. By the enactment of a general reciprocity provision and by the patience it has shown in its various controversies with Canada, our own Government has repeatedly attested its desire to meet the Dominion Government half way. We see no good reason why all points of difference between the two countries should not be settled at one time, and there is no time like the present. All of them are suitable subjects for arbitration, and it is not to be doubted that a competent commission earnestly bent upon maintaining amicable relations between the United States and Canada could unravel the snarl in which the countries have become entangled, and give us an era of peace and perfect good will in place of the spirit of acrimony which has so often prevailed.



The Seneca Indians, in this State, are among the few tribes of the red men who are virtually relegated to State control. It has been known for some time that their affairs have not been well managed. This is due to the provision by which under the laws of this State sole jurisdiction in land matters is conferred on what are known as the Peacemakers Courts of the Seneca Nation. These courts are designated by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from observation of their working as "tribunals of established ignorance and alleged corruptibility."

The defeated parties usually appeal to Washington, and it is difficult to make the Indians understand that the Indian Office cannot interfere. Now we have the news that the agent among the Senecas has been directed to prepare a petition for signature by the Indians, asking the Legislature to give the State courts appellate jurisdiction in land cases, and when the petition is submitted to the commissioner it will be sent to the New York Legislature with strong recommendations. It is earnest cause for hope that the Legislature will give this matter attention. In fact, a thorough examination ought to be made into the affairs of the Indian tribes in the interior of the State for the purpose of correcting existing abuses, which, unless all reports are wrong, are many and serious.



We cannot account for a decrease of nearly six hundred—586—in the average attendance for the last year at the Indian schools, although it is probably due to the transitional period—the fact that the end of Government aid to the contract schools is already in sight, and the consequent lessening of the activities for securing the attendance of the Indians and the appropriations which the attendance carries. But quite apart from this decrease, an average attendance of over nineteen thousand Indian pupils [19,121] for the year out of an enrollment of 23,572, certainly furnishes ground for much encouragement. Considering, too, that twenty years ago, in 1877, there were but 131 schools, against 288 to-day, and that then there was an attendance of about 3500, against over five times as much now, the progress is apparent. At that earlier date, too, an appropriation of \$20,000 for Indian education was thought sufficient, and in 1882 it was only \$135,000, whereas for the year on which Commissioner Jones now reports it reached the unprecedented figures of \$2,517,265—an average of \$125 per capita, which brings Indian instruction pretty high. The first fruits of this work are already plainly seen in the elevation of the Indian race, and it will be further seen as we respect the treaty rights of the red man and look after his well-being, while we induce him to substitute for the tribal relation that of the family with the tenure of land in severalty.



The very quiet manner in which the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the Westminster Confession has been celebrated in several localities is as significant as the mere fact of the commemoration itself. In fact, it emphasizes more its historic than its religious aspect. And then it is undeniable that the Confession has ceased to be preached from the pulpits of the country as it once was two and a half centuries ago. Then what has been called "the Pauline theology" dominated all Protestant Christianity. But the Episcopal Church has given it up, while the Methodists, who went out from that body, never had it. This may not be subject for deep regret so long as a life saving Gospel is preached. In fact, the handling of the theme of Predestination and its correlative reiteration in the hands of the unskillful and immature has not

"A Merry Heart Doeth Good."

A Talk for Thanksgiving Day.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

IT has been quite customary to deliver political discourses on Thanksgiving Day; but instead of politics we offer both a prescription and a provision. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." In the Revised Version it reads, "A merry heart is a good medicine." In a previous verse of this Book of divine Proverbs we read that "he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." So that the same thing is recommended to us both as meat and as medicine.

The word "merry" here is not the synonym of reckless jollity; it is not the mere effervescence of animal spirits or the product of sensual stimulants. It is the same word which Paul used when he told his tempest-tost shipmates in the Adriatic to "be of good cheer." There is a broad difference in the Bible between joy and jollity; the one often comes from above, and the other quite too often from beneath. The cheerfulness which God's Word commends is not dependent on outward conditions or circumstances; for some of the most miserable people in our land may be eating their sumptuous dinners to-day off of silver and porcelain in splendid mansions. It is not *where* we are but *what* we are that determines our real happiness. Christian cheerfulness is that sunshiny, happy frame which comes from health of heart; it is the invariable symptom of heart-health.

Such a temper of mind has a most potent influence upon the bodily health. Many a lean dyspeptic who has no appetite for his food, and no refreshing rest in his sleep, is simply dying of worry and peevishness. The acrid humors of the mind have struck through and diseased the digestive organs. The medicine he needs is not from the physician or the pharmacy. A good dose of divine grace, with a few grains of gratitude for God's mercies, and a frequent bracing walk of benevolence in helping other people, will do more to quicken his appetite and put healthy blood into his weazen frame than all the drugs of the apothecary. Not only is a merry heart a wonderful tonic to the body; it is a clarifier and invigorator of the mind. The mental machinery will work longer and far more smoothly when the oil of cheerfulness lubricates the wheels.

It is worthy of note that many of the giants in the Christian Church have been men of exuberant cheerfulness. Stout old Martin Luther had in him a huge capacity for laughter; he came home from his stormy public conflicts to make merry with his household around his Christmas tree, and to enjoy music and song with his wife Katherina. Lyman Beecher was as indigenous an American product as the hickory or the buckeye tree; like Abraham Lincoln he tasted of the soil. His heart-health was of the most robust character. With work enough for five men on his shoulders, he was ready to go off and spend a whole day with his boys gathering chestnuts,—filling the forest with his laughter and glee. At the close of some of his most powerful revival services, he came home to prepare for a wholesome night's slumber by a romp with his children, or a few lively airs on his violin. This same sunny hearted cheerfulness has been the characteristic of Spurgeon, and Phillips Brooks, and Newman Hall, and Guthrie, and many other masters in Israel—the swing of whose minds, like the swing of a great wave at sea, threw off sparkling jets from its foaming crest.

Let me ask the men of business who read these lines—how many of you manage to lubricate the wearing machinery of life with this oil of a cheerful spirit? How many of you come

home from the exacting care and tear of your daily calling to make your fireside bright and your household happy? I fear that we who profess a religion of joy and hope are too often so chafed by the frictions or worried by the cares of life that we bring but little of the "merry heart" into our own homes. I have known some specimens of a piety that shone in the prayer meeting, but smoked sadly at the fireside. If you Christian fathers and mothers do not make your homes attractive and winsome and cheerful, your children will seek other places of attraction that may be by-roads to perdition! A lively Thanksgiving dinner once in a twelvemonth is all very well; but far better is the cheerful heart that is a "continual feast" all the year round.

How shall this temper of mind that is both meat and medicine be secured and maintained? A few simple prescriptions may not be amiss. In the first place, look at your mercies with both eyes, but at your troubles with only one eye. Look at your mercies and your privileges often, and at your troubles when you cannot help it. If adversities press heavily, draw all the honey you can out of the hard rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. Saadi, the Persian poet, tells us that he never complained of poverty but once, and that was when he had no money to buy shoes; but meeting a man who had no feet, he became contented to go bare footed. If a heathen could keep cheerful by his philosophy, why should a Christian believer ever complain who is the heir through Christ to a magnificent eternal inheritance?

Strive to reach Paul's secret—"In whatsoever state I am, I will be content." In these days of extravagance, keep down the accursed spirit of grasping. By all means live within your means. You do not need all the coal in Pennsylvania to heat your little oven. Most of my readers may have as large possessions now as they can give good account of at the Day of Judgment. Godliness with contentment is great wealth. A millionaire once said to me, "I never got any real happiness out of my money until I began to do good with it." Be useful if you want to be cheerful. Always be lighting somebody's torch, and that will shed its brightness on your own pathway too.

Finally, make a loving God your trustee, and commit your soul to his keeping. *Take short views.* If you have enough to meet your legitimate wants, and something over for Christ's treasury, don't torment yourself with the fear that your cruse of oil will give out. If your children cluster around your thanksgiving board to-day, enjoy the music of their voices without racking your hearts with the dread that one may be carried off by the scarlet fever, or another may come to disaster. Faith carries present loads, meets present dangers, feeds on present promises, and commits the future to a loving Heavenly Father. Again I say, take short views. Do not attempt to climb the high wall till you get to it—or fight the battle till it opens—or shed tears over sorrows that may never come. Be careful lest you lose the joys that you have by the sinful fear that God may have trials awaiting you. He promises grace sufficient for to-day—but not one ounce of strength for to-morrow. You cannot create spiritual sunshine any more than you can create the morning star; but you can put your soul where Jesus Christ is shining. Thanksgiving Day is a fitting time to inventory your mercies and blessings. Set all your family to the pitch of the one hundred and third Psalm; and hang on the wall over your Thanksgiving dinner these mottoes—"A merry heart is a good medicine"—and "He that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast."

BROOKLYN, N. Y.