

Original Articles.

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MARITAL PURITY.

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There is no doctrine that is not in danger of being hurt by the advocacy of over-zealous persons or those of immature judgment. Especially is this true of the doctrine of holiness. Would it be well to condemn the doctrine because it is embraced by the youthful element of society? Its enemies might do this, but not its friends.

In pronouncing anything scriptural or otherwise there are many "proof texts that do not prove," and these are invariably sought out by opponents of a wholesome doctrine. There are many texts plainly enjoining the use of wind and stringed instruments in the praise of God, and distinct reference to singers as a class, yet, as a church, Free Methodists will not allow choirs or instrumental music in their services. The scriptures certainly favor dancing, yet Methodists in general condemn it. There is no reference in scripture to betting, playing cards, attending theaters, circuses, horse-races, etc. Yet the Methodist disciplines prohibit these. By common sense and observation not only Methodists but spiritually minded people of all sects have condemned certain practices not mentioned in the scriptures, because in their use they have become so perverted that, though once proper, they are no longer done "for the glory of God."

Science, properly understood, does not conflict with the scriptures, but is in harmony with it; for science is "knowledge gained and verified by exact observation and correct thinking" (*Standard Dictionary*).

Thus before entering upon the discussion of marital purity, we have anticipated the points made by its opponents. We are aware of the delicacy of this theme, for society has so far deviated from righteousness in this matter that false modesty has permeated even "the very elect," till one is stigmatized who dares to "cry aloud and spare not" regarding sexual sins. Sometimes our best friends will turn the "cold shoulder" to us when it is known that we hold certain views on social sins. So strong has this false modesty grown that the holy Bible has been pronounced an unfit book for children to read.

The most of our civil laws are absolutely male-made, not man-made; hence necessarily one-sided when pertaining to sex. So we cannot use them as an argument for or against. Science, *i. e.*, exact observation and correct thinking, shows that animal life, in distinction from vegetable life, is reproduced from an egg. In the lowest orders of animals countless myriads of eggs are formed, as thousands are never hatched. As natural intelligence (instinct) is superseded by the powers of acquired intelligence the waste of their eggs is infinitely diminished and foetal life ensues. The lowest grades of these animals capable of acquired intelligence mature several eggs at one birth, while those most useful to man rarely exceed one. Thus in the lower grades the mother can, by supernatural wisdom, care for several at one birth, while in the higher grades there could not be such care. The mother nourishes the young with milk at the same time that she is creating a pre-natal life; but in that species of mammals known as *bimana*, or the human family, God has made it a rule that the matur-

ing of the egg and the secretion of milk do not occur at the same time under normal conditions. In the species capable of the highest intelligence and containing the immortal nature, the utmost of maternal care is given by the Creator, and the mother can only provide life for one child. By studying up the physiological reasons for the age of weaning we find that the pre-natal and nursing periods combined cover from twenty-one to twenty-four months. Children born within a shorter period than this have an abnormal birth, *i. e.*, they are not well-born, for some one wilfully or through ignorance has transgressed the laws of nature, which are the laws of God.

We here record in substance the testimony of one who speaks from experience: "I was the first-born. My mother was unwilling to say why she so soon deprived me of the food my Maker intended for me. My sister, sixteen months younger, shared with me for a while the mother-life, and in later years both are paying the penalty physically. My parents never read an article like this, hence did not know they were transgressing God's laws. Every day I pass the picture of a man thirty-seven years of age surrounded by eleven single-birth children, all having one mother; and the thought comes that scholastic attainments often leave an incomplete education."

Allowing that children are never born in closer proximity than once in two years, the *normal period*, there is (I blush to say it) a worse curse placed upon the helpless infant. It is generally well known that impressions made upon the mother during gestation are more or less indelibly stamped upon the child, and that it may influence its whole future life. If at this time the mother be subjected to sexual excitement is it to be wondered at that the child develops a tendency to lust? The milk of a nursing mother is very susceptible to thought force. Fear or intense anger has brought sudden death to her innocent babe, and who is able to say what results follow sexual excitement at this critical time? Verily "the iniquity of the fathers [and mothers] is visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

Reader, what is the conclusion of this matter? It is absolute prohibition for the space of two years, because you owe it to the child who is not born of its own will, but of yours. Let the writer refer to his own experience. He did not inherit strong sensualism. His father's family were all Josephs. Yet he knew the force of impure thinking, and of looking forward to marriage, deferred thirty-two years, as the happy consummation. Conversion in childhood and the safeguard of a virtuous mother's teaching made it possible for him never to give impure act, word or look to the gentler sex. Total sexual abstinence practiced two years because it was necessary to the future well-being of his children made it easier for other wise reasons. There was a righteous self-control, but freedom came only with sanctification. The writer is "physically strong;" his wife is not. He regards these conditions as no extenuation for infidelity nor for loving any other woman. He regards the term "necessity" as an insult to his sex. Neither physical, mental, nor moral powers have, as a result, deteriorated, but the opposite is true.

We do not presume to say that it is a sin to use this God-given faculty only for procreation, nor do we presume to be censor for another's conscience; but we do presume to say that one who has not practiced continuous abstinence is unqualified to take the neg-

ative side of this argument. We are not prepared to believe the strictest doctrine of continence, *i. e.*, for procreation only, but we are open to the truth.

"Amen to the truth; even so let it be.
Amen and amen, for the truth maketh free.
Amen and amen from the pulpit and pen;
God's truth, let us have it, again and again."

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

FORGIVENESS—PARDON.—NO. 2.

J. S. M' GEARY.

The church is the representative of God's moral government in the earth. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). See also Matt. 16:19 and Jno. 20:23. The church is here fully empowered by her divine Master to act as his representative in the earth in all cases where it is necessary to pronounce against sin and unrighteousness, and in purging and keeping herself free from these. Moreover, when, with a single eye to his glory, she approves righteousness and condemns sin, her acts are ratified in heaven. The church should act in all things as realizing the high prerogative in this regard with which God has endowed her.

The laxness in the enforcement of church discipline everywhere prevalent is no doubt due to the fact that the church has lost sight of this. The church instead of being viewed in this light is regarded rather as a kind of home or retreat for moral invalids, in which they can to a great extent hide their moral infirmities and disabilities and for a consideration have them very tenderly dealt with.

Here too the same error is found as prevails in regard to man's relation to God. Violations of church discipline, and the moral principles involved therein, are looked upon in the light of mere personal trespass and are lightly passed by. As a result of this the church as an institution has to a great extent lost her power and influence in the conflict against the wrong and in favor of the right, so that if perchance her voice is raised against wrong outside, the ready and, alas, too pertinent reply is, "Physician heal thyself."

Every act of the church in the exercise of discipline is a judicial act in her representative capacity, and to fail to keep this in mind and act with reference to it is to destroy the confidence of men in her integrity, administration and administrators. Only when it is clear that it can safely be done should executive clemency be exercised toward the offender. Especially should the church be careful to be free from the charge of being lax in the enforcing of discipline against those who are wealthy or influential.

We have not as a people been free from blame in this particular. The writer has been alarmed sometimes to see manifest a disposition lightly to pass by serious breaches of our Discipline and of Christian conduct. In dealing with offenders against the Discipline of the church we must not forget that the offense is not against individuals only, but against the local society or conference as a case may be, but against the cause of God. Hence while it might be proper in a case of personal trespass to overlook the matter on confession of the wrong, yet where the offense is against the church of God and the work of God the church can not lightly let it by. A member of the church may say deeply that though he may confess his wrong even then the church can not afford to pass it by. For the sake of God's cause he must be dealt with. A minister may fall into sin