

The Sentinel

A GOOD PAPER IN A GOOD TOWN
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CAN RELIGION BE TAUGHT?

When I came to look over the Atlantic's table of contents for the present month, the title that interested me most was "Can Religion Be Taught?" In glancing down this table of contents I had not noticed who wrote this article; but no sooner had I turned to it than I saw the name of an old friend at the head of it, from whom I had not heard for years. Indeed, though I learned to know him well and admire him greatly, I had before I knew him read his little story, "In His Steps," which he had read to his people at the Central (I think that was its name) Congregational Church in Topeka, Kansas, where I was attending the legislative session of 1899. How time flies! That is already over a quarter of a century ago, but I can't imagine Mr. Sheldon as an old man. He was young then, and I was much interested in his statement that he didn't think his congregation needed to be preached to twice a week, and so had read them the little romance he had written, on Sunday nights as the principal feature of the evening service.

Some time later when I was at home at Independence again, I was surprised by Mr. Sheldon's doing another unusual thing. It seems that he had got into a discussion with J. K. Hudson, then the well known editor and publisher of the Topeka Daily Capital, now the property of United States senator Arthur Capper, as to how a newspaper should be run, or rather edited. The result of this talk was probably not expected by either of them. It was ended in Hudson offering to turn his paper over to Sheldon to run it for a week exactly as he thought it ought to be run—or more exactly just as he thought Christ would run it if He were here on earth today. I have read within recent years, I think also in the Atlantic Monthly, Sheldon's own narrative of the strenuous week that followed. The special subscriptions received that week by the Capital so far outran the capacity of its presses that a part of its issue for those hectic days was printed in Chicago and a part in New York.

Visiting newspaper men from all over the country that week interfered very much with Mr. Sheldon's work in their eagerness to get special stories about it for their own papers. When the last issue of that week was made on Sunday morning, all the work on it was done Saturday night, and then there was little in it except reprint from the bible, as I remember it.

Of course, the man who could do such a stunt as that—turn an ordinary newspaper into one edited as Mr. Sheldon thought Christ would have done it, if He had been on earth, made a peculiar paper—and thousands of people all over the country were anxious to see it.

The Sentinel writer knows that this is a rather overlong introduction to Mr. Sheldon's article on the teaching of religion, but it will at least emphasize the fact that he is a unique personality. And he certainly has something new to say on his subject. Hear him:

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

It makes no difference what our position is today on the question of religion as a part of the education of a human being, so far as this astonishing command is concerned, for the historical fact is that these unlettered disciples of Jesus went out into the pagan world and began to obey the command of their teacher. And they obeyed the command so well that what we know as Christianity was established as a ruling force in the history of the human race.

Was the thing that Jesus told His disciples to teach the whole world religion? How about that? What were they to teach? What had He commanded them to do?

If we are going to be able to answer the question, "Can religion be taught?" we must first of all find out what Jesus told His disciples to teach. When we bring it all together we are amazed to find that the greatest of all religious teachers did not teach any system of theology. All He taught was life as it ought to be lived. That to Him was religion. It was all condensed into two articles of one creed: supreme love of God, and love of one's neighbor.

But wait a moment. Of course this creed had some detail. It could be expanded into a number of things to be taught. And we find on expanding this teaching that it includes every item of human behavior. This simple thing known as religion means purity, meekness, mercy, peace-making, justice, kindness, righteousness, brotherhood, forgiveness, faith, redemption, God, future, hope, love—the basic virtues of mankind, about which there cannot be any doctrinal dispute. And in his Epistle we find James defining religion after this teaching of the Teacher:—

"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

But what has the human race done to this teaching of the Teacher of religion? It has woven into His basic teaching about human behavior the most intricate tangle of philosophy and metaphysics. It has made certain credal statements necessary to salvation. It has divided the Christian world into sects and denominations, some of which have violently denied to others the right to call themselves true Christians. It has magnified the importance of certain words and theories about which Jesus Himself never uttered a word. It has involved the basic matter of human behavior toward God and the neighbor with non-essential and trivial discussions over doctrines that have nothing whatever to do with the way a man behaves. It has built up a system of forms and ceremonies about the thing called Christianity that are as far removed from the teaching of Jesus as He was removed from the scribes and Pharisees of His own time. Jesus never said a word about evolution, about His own birth, about the inerrancy of the Scriptures, about the necessity of assenting to a long doctrinal creed before one could be called a Christian and be saved. In His tremendous picture of the Last Judgment He based the final destiny of mankind on the way mankind behaved, not on doctrinal or theological beliefs. But mankind has not been willing to accept a religion so basic as the religion of Jesus, because it means doing things He taught. It is, indeed, easier to give assent to the Westminster Confession than to love one's enemies. It is not so hard to believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures as it is to practise the brotherhood of man.

It is because the whole definition of religion has been obscured and debased by all this doctrinal and formal treatment of it by theologians and controversialists that the problem of introducing the teaching of religion into an educational system has become a matter of debate and fierce argument, and refusal to acknowledge the right of religious training except in the home and the church. The State has excluded Bible instruction from the public schools, not because the teachings of the Bible are harmful to the children, but because the interpretations put upon its teachings are so involved in doctrinal dispute and sectarian jealousy that it has been declared to be impossible to teach religion without at the same time teaching vast error and creating endless trouble.

If the reader will pardon a very personal illustration of this amazing fact in our educational life, I will relate what happened a few weeks ago when I was invited to address a high school in a certain state which I shall not name, although it is in the class with eleven other states of this country where the mere reading of the Bible is absolutely prohibited in the school room. I accepted the invitation from the principal, and we were about to go into the assembly room where the students were gathered when he called me back into his office and with some embarrass-

ment said, "I forgot to tell you that we are not allowed to say anything about religion in the schools of this state. You will, of course, in your address, bear this in mind."

"But," I protested, "I am going to talk to the students on the subject, 'Some Results of a True Education.' How can I talk on a subject like that and leave religion out? Religion is the very foundation of true education."

He looked more embarrassed than before, and replied, "It will make trouble for me with our school board if you mention religion in the course of your address."

Then I said, "I did not invite myself to speak to your students. The invitation came from yourself. But I do not see how I can talk about education and leave religion out. I will save you from all embarrassment or criticism by not making the address at all."

At that he looked thrice embarrassed. The hour had struck and the students were assembled. Finally he said, "Well, go ahead and I'll risk it."

And I went ahead, and risked it for both of us, and if I remember correctly I said more about religion to that school than I have said in a long time. It seemed to me that they needed it, and I have not heard up to date that the principal has suffered from it.

BRINGING IN MONEY AND TIN

Oregon Voter
Bert E. Maling made Portland business men sit up and take notice when he gave them some figures the other day. Maling is president of the Ray-Maling cannery at Hillsboro, which he asserts is having this year the largest output of any fruit and vegetable canning plant located in the two states of Oregon and Washington.

In 1924 the canneries of our two states received \$18,000,000 for their product, and of this amount only \$360,000 worth was consumed in the home states. This means, said Maling, that \$17,640,000 in real money was brought into Oregon and Washington from their operations.

Part of this money has to be sent out again—\$1,440,000 for sugar, \$1,350,000 for tin plate, \$840,000 for brokerage and discounts and \$135,000 for insurance. These amount to \$3,865,000, leaving \$14,235,000 at home, which was distributed as follows:

Growers (farmers)	\$5,760,000
Labor in canneries	2,160,000
Labor making cans	1,560,000
Dealers	1,020,000
Fuel	540,000
Repairs, replacements	540,000
Financing, interest	900,000
Depreciation reserves	360,000
Insurance agents	45,000
Dividends and surplus	900,000
Taxes	180,000
Total	\$14,235,000

"All this," said Maling after giving these figures, "was done without depleting the resources of our two states. Land, vineyards, orchards and berry patches are left in condition they will go on producing for years to come. Nor does this industry receive any federal subsidy, federal aid or federal assistance in propagating or planting raw products for future consumption.

"We feel that this industry has been one of the direct causes for \$160 land to become worth \$400 to \$2,500 an acre, as in the case with pear orchards. An industry that brings in \$14,000,000 without subtracting anything from the land and also adds value to the land is an industry worthy of notice."

In a paper just received from our boyhood home on Long Island, we note that a Bridgehampton woman had just been fined in the federal court at Brooklyn for illegal possession of such beverages as rum and gin. The amount of her fine for this seemingly trivial offense was the smallest we have ever seen recorded—just one cent. Her husband, though, had to pay \$50 for the same offense. Their names were Ross and Mike Julians, which sound Italian. In the same paper we read that beach property on the ocean there, about a hundred miles from New York City, is selling at the rate of nearly a thousand dollars an acre, in tracts approaching 200 acres. Some time in the future we see no reason why property fronting on the Pacific ocean in this county should not command prices just as high.

to be seriously hampering business in Chinatown.

The housewife, who has an electric washer, ironer, cleaner, and fan to help her about the house, may not realize it but they together are just about as powerful as an athlete in the "pink" of condition. Exact studies made at Yale with members of the famous 1924 Yale crew show that man during these tests developed power equivalent to from .45 to .55 per cent of a horsepower.

The Sentinel senior has all the electric helps mentioned in his home, save the fan, which we seldom need here, and in addition an electric range.

At Pasadena yesterday an ordinance went into effect forbidding roosters over four months old from approaching any residence nearer than 100 feet. Chickens, geese, turkeys and rabbits must be kept 35 feet from a dwelling under the "barnyard" ordinance.

Seven vessels sailed from Coos Bay last Saturday, carrying about ten million feet of lumber. This sets a new high record for lumber shipments there.

It used to be believed that sugar was always highest during the canning season but it is said to be lower now than since 1922.

Slight earthquake shocks were reported at San Francisco and Oakland, California, at 7:30 Wednesday morning.

Ruining Our Rivers

The rivers of Oregon belong to the people as a whole for public use and benefit. They are highways the same as a tree-bordered county or state road. Our streams are for bathing, boating and other forms of recreation. These waterways are the homes of different species of trout and salmon which are important food products. The rivers of Oregon are therefore, among the most valuable resources of the State. It is the plain duty of every citizen to protect his interest so that he may share in the benefits.

With the building of mills, factories manufacturing plants and the growth of towns and cities along our waterways, some Oregon streams are facing ruin and others are threatened. The wastes of industries and the combined filth of municipal corporations are dumped into public waters to such an extent that some streams are like open sewers, spreading disease to people and destroying fish life. It is time to call a halt.

A private or municipal corporation that dumps filth into a flowing stream transfers corruption to people lower down. It is like a man who dumps his dirt over the back fence into the yard of his neighbor. The practice is wrong both legally and morally. The people of Estacada pollute the Clackamas River, one of the most beautiful streams of the State, by dumping in their sewerage, while lower down the people of Gladstone use the water of this same river for drinking purposes.

The common practice of polluting our public waters if not corrected will in time destroy trout, salmon and other food fishes, the very misfortune that has fallen to many of the rivers of the Atlantic coast. Water to a fish is what air is to a person. Fish are subject to disease as people are. They cannot live in filth. A river can digest a certain amount of sewage, but if the stretch is fed a stream year after year in increased quantities, the river overtaxed breaks down and the water is poisoned for trout and salmon.

What is to be done? It is the duty of a manufacturing plant to take care of its waste products. A sawmill is always summoned into court for dumping sawdust in a river. Why is a pulp or woolen mill allowed to wash its acids, dyes and other waste into public waters? It is the duty of the officers of a municipal corporation to take some steps toward relieving our rivers from their load of filth. Bend, Redmond, Pendleton, Ashland and other cities have faced the problem and disposed of their sewage in a hygienic way. The Commissioners of the City of Portland have recently taken the first steps to correct the abuse of the Willamette River which has grown up through many years, and they have the biggest problem in Oregon. When will other cities along the Willamette like Oregon City, Albany, Salem, Corvallis and Eugene cease polluting public waters? A start must be made sooner or later. Why not now?

The general laws of Oregon for 1921, Section 70, Chapter 153, clearly provide that it is an offense against the State for any person or corporation to corrupt or impair the quality of public waters so they cannot be used for domestic or municipal purposes.

Oregon State Game Commission,
By E. F. Averill, Secretary.



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