

### WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

(A paper read before the Young Woman's Christian Association of the Presbyterian College, Charlotte, N. C., by Miss Diaz, formerly a teacher in the Mexican Mission School, at Laredo, Texas, and now a student in the Presbyterian Hospital, Charlotte. Published by request.)

I consider it a great pleasure and a privilege to stand before you, not that I think myself worthy of being heard, but because I know I am before those who have an ambition and a longing as I have. We are not—alike in nationality, but we are alike in having longings, yearnings and strivings. We are alike because we profess the same faith. It is an honor to belong to such an association as this, for that letter "C" means a great deal. Means forgetfulness of self, faithfulness, patience and over all it means Christ likeness, which embraces all the virtues that exist. My poorly described subject is: "Woman's Influence."

Woman being an individual of the human race, exercises certain attraction by her manners, her education, her beauty or her ability in certain things. From the happy and smiling age of girlhood woman, or rather the girl with the attraction that characterizes her, draws toward her the brother, the playmate, and makes him obey her innocent precepts; as she grows this attraction grows stronger. As God gave man more force, more vigor and more serenity, He gave woman the power of influence. The longing to act and to have others act as we do; the power that our deeds have over others; that which inclines us to imitate each other is what we term influence. This subtle fluid of our acts is carried from the magnificent palace to the most humble cabin, from a village to a country and from that throughout the whole world. Everything created was so ordained by God that without the action, therefore, or influence of one thing toward another we would not be as happy as to possess them. The atoms and molecules that constitute matter are united by the influence of Cohesion; this influence is destroyed by another which has greater power over it and successively so with everything in nature. Things influence each other either to improve or destroy their natural condition. Man has something to influence him to. This influence invisible half the time, is due to woman. If we look back to the history of human race we can see the influence a woman had by the tiny act of taking a fruit. Satan came to her, not because she was the weakest, but because he knew she possessed the power of influence, and with her help he could accomplish his object. Eve innocent and anxious to make of her companion a God as Satan told her, made use of her gift. Woman inaugurated her influence by a bad act, but later her seed brought forth the victory. Woman is the cohesion that unites humanity; she is the agent that moves millions of men that wander in uncertainty on our globe. To increase woman's influence she must be educated religiously and scientifically. Religiously, for having her soul saturated in God's confidence, she will love her duties, she will listen and obey the voice of conscience. Scientifically because science develops our mental faculties, beautifies our thoughts and cultivates our speech. The child being a part of the woman's being, inherits her ignorance or her talent, her activity or her stupidity. I can now recall the words of one of our greatest men of the past century, he said: "Give me good mothers and I will give you good citizens." Woman's duties are sacred, for she has to watch over her children from the moment Providence puts them in her care. She is responsible for each of their acts. The first impressions of right and wrong are received at home, and are with great difficulty or perhaps never forgotten. The young babe finds in his mother his guardian angel and his example. There at home is where our influence begins, then at school and then everywhere. Education is necessary for the educated woman will be the fairy that will lead the brother, scholar or son to the altar of knowledge. She will inspire the child with love for God, for country, for economy, and order, finally she will guide him in the path of progress. Seeing and knowing the importance of our influence we should pay more attention to our actions and be more grateful for our opportunities.

Geneveva Diaz.

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### THE IDEAL SOCIETY.

By Rev. Henry van Dyke, D. D.

[No address at the recent New York Inter-Church Conference on Federation received more general approval and was more enjoyed by the audience than this of Dr. van

Dyke's. It had all the fineness of literary finish associated with his writings, and at the same time went straight to the root of great current evils in American life. Its picture of the aimless life of the idle rich is drawn with relentless accuracy. We are glad to reproduce the address in full.—Editors.]

The ideal society is the true goal of all the churches. The religion of Jesus proposes to each man, not a selfish salvation from death, but a brotherly redemption to life; and that life is not solitary but social, seeking the glory of God in the establishment of a heavenly commonwealth, in which all men shall be useful, all joyful, all peaceful, all devoted to God and to one another. The man who wants to be saved alone is on the way to be damned. No religion can really do anything for me which does not make me do something for you. A federation of churches without a social aim would be a convocation of traitors to humanity and infidels to Christ. The star of Christian hope is an ideal society for mankind in the world which now is, as well as in that which is to come.

When that goal is reached both Church and State will have completed their functions. There will be no more churches or preachers, for all will know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. There will be no more courts or lawyers, for every man will love his neighbor as himself. There will be no more police or armies, for war and violence will cease, and all men's good will be each man's goal.

And universal peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land  
And like a lane of beams across the sea.

### Far from Realization.

But this ideal society is apparently some distance away. There is no electric elevator ready to raise us, when we push the button, to its lofty level. There is no power in human nature to spring swiftly into its large liberty. The fools who would proclaim its freedom before anybody is fit for it are not its friends, but its unconscious enemies—to destroy the world that is, gives no guarantee of ability to create the world that ought to be. The blowing out of the candle does not illuminate are-light. Only through the removal of human ignorance, the betterment of human character, and the gradual improvement of human nature, can we climb the steep path that leads to the perfection of social life. A golden age cannot be built out of brazen hearts. The way to the ideal society lies through the association of idealists, and the guide of Christian progress is the word of Jesus, "The kingdom of heaven is within you."

What, then, are the aims and works of this idealist society, through which alone the world can ever rise to the ideal society? That is the present question, the practical question, the question to which the churches ought to attend. It is all very well to hope for the millenium and to talk about it, on our idle days; but on our working days the thing that concerns is what we are to aim at now; what we are to do to-day; what we are to desire for to-morrow, in order to help the coming of a better time for all men.

### Individuals, not Masses, the Goal of Effort.

1. The idealist society, as Jesus reveals it to us, is a society of persons. It was John the Baptist who spoke to the classes, and good advice he gave them. But Jesus came alone and spoke to individuals, saying, "Believe, love, forgive, give, pray, do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you." The foundations of his kingdom were laid in the personal will and character. We are tempted to-day to abandon his method. We talk of the masses of mankind, forgetting that they have no real existence, except in the men and women who compose them. We plan for groups of humanity, saying that they ought to do this, or that, forgetting that the groups will never do anything save through the good will and right action of the persons who make it.

The first step to social betterment is not through the heart of humanity, but through the hearts of men. Every soul that lives is a distinct factor in the problem of advance. You can do nothing for all until you do something for one. Charity is broader and better organized to-day than it ever was before; but if the personal impulse, the personal aim, the personal touch goes out of it, the world will suffer more than it gains. Education is making more elaborate schemes and programs, but the only thing that counts is the living

contact of the live teacher with the live scholar. The Church is splendidly equipped; its organization is magnificent; but the great thing needful is that one man should say to another, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and let me help you."

#### Inward Renovation the Crying Need.

2. The idealist society, as Jesus reveals it to us, relies upon moral principle rather than upon legal enactment, for the improvement of the world. The dream of making men good by statute is one that has often glittered before the eyes of enthusiasts—it would be an easy way were it possible. But there is no law that man has made that man cannot evade, and the chief reason why society is not better is because so many men are bad. Make what legal enactment you will against theft, men who are dishonest at heart will go on stealing, dividing up profits which they have not earned, pocketing moneys which are given to them in trust, and covering up "graft" with craft. Make what legal enactments you will against the liquor traffic, men who are without self-control will still go on making beasts of themselves with drunkenness, the reckless sensualists treating it as a jest, the sullen fatalists protesting that they are driven to it by heredity and environment.

So with a score of other evils. Legislation cannot reach the roots of them. Cut them down here and they come up yonder. There is no legislative magic by which materialists can be combined into an ideal society, or lumps of selfishness fused into a brotherhood of love. It will be an ill day for the Church when she yields to the delusion that the world can be reformed from the outside. She must lay her emphasis upon conscience, upon the will to do right, upon faith translated into virtue, according to the teaching and example of Jesus. She must condemn the enemies of society who are out of prison as much as those who are in prison. She must appeal to the higher instincts which law can neither regulate nor reward, to the sense of justice, the sentiment of kindness, the power of self-restraint. She must say to men, "By goodness and mercy, by sobriety and purity, by integrity and fair dealing, by doing more than the law requires and less than it permits—thus only can you hope to enter the kingdom of heaven." The society in which these teachings are honored and prevail, whatever its form of government and code of laws may be, is an idealist society. It is the upward path.

#### The Outward Embodiment Equally Important.

3. But does this mean that the idealist society is indifferent to the laws by which men are governed, or the still more potent forms and customs by which their common life is molded? Nay, to these things it is profoundly sensitive, for the sake of that noble personal life which it desires for all men. No law which is unequal is a good law. No form or custom which makes it difficult for men to be fair and kind to each other is a good custom. No social or industrial order which pushes multitudes below the line where a decent and happy human development is possible is a good social order. A society in which the Golden Rule seems impracticable is certainly not a Christian society. With all these things the Church is bound to be dissatisfied. From all these things she must pray and work to deliver the world, in order that the kingdom of Jesus may not be kept back.

What shall we say then, my brethren, of the modern system of business and trade, which those who know it best call a state of war, disguised as competition? Say, as Charles Kingsley said, that it is based upon "a narrow, selfish, hypocritical, anarchic, atheistic view of the universe," and that it ought to be reformed. What shall we say of the modern industrial order, in which one man in ten is doomed to helpless poverty, and the right to live is imperiled for many by the impossibility of getting work, and the right to be happy is blotted out for thousands of families, herded in a single room and hungering for daily bread?

Say that it is out of joint and that the religion of Jesus was born to set it right. Say that the conditions of human life and labor must not be fixed by the commercial law of supply and demand, but by the Christian law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Say that the question of "the living wage" is a vital question, spiritual and moral, as well as economic, and that the Church will never be satisfied until it is settled so that if any will work he shall also eat, and his children shall eat, and the gate of a happy life shall be open to them.

#### "Society's" Follies and Rottenness.

What shall we say of the modern social language, which degrades the very word "society" into a title for a few

hundred people, chiefly occupied with their own amusement, and refers to the rest of mankind as "the masses"? Say that it is a corrupt language which betrays a heart rotted with vanity and folly and imbecile falsehood. Say that the idle and selfish rich and their parasites, who spend life in the closed circle of costly pleasures, are really "them asses," and that society means the broad fellowship of all sorts and conditions of men, co-operating with each other in common toil, and learning from each other in common intercourse. Say that the Church repents of every idle word of that false language of The House of Mirth that she has ever taken into her mouth, and that henceforth she will speak the language of Jesus, acknowledging those who do the will of the Father in heaven as her brothers and her sisters, and honoring men, not for what they have, but for what they are and what they do.

My brethren, who that reads the signs of the times can doubt that changes are coming in the present civil and industrial and economic and social order? Who that feels with Christ can doubt that they ought to come? when the weight of human misery preponderates over human happiness and the lands of oppression are bound with iron; the change is coming with blind rage and violence and terror, as in Russia. Where the majority of men are prospering in liberty and only the minority are in want and suffering—the changes are coming through sympathy and the sense of justice and wise love seeking to equalize burdens and opportunities for all men, to unlock the closed doors and open the barred stairways in the house of life. And if they come thus in our own country, what attitude shall the Church of Christ take towards them? What part shall she play in the era of experiment and social transition?

The attitude of sane idealism, according to the precepts of Jesus; the part of those who hold fast to the old only because it is good and welcome the new only because it is better. Against every proposal that threatens the security of the family, weakens the sanctions of honesty, industry and thrift, or tends to force all men to the same level, without regard to character or work, she must protest in the name of Christ and humanity. With all laws and customs that promote fair play among men, and protect the poor and ignorant and helpless, and cut the claws of clever greed, and distribute the rewards of work more justly according to its real usefulness to the world, and make it easier for each man to deal with others as he would have others to deal with him. She must feel and show a true sympathy in the name of Christ and humanity. In her judgment on these points, no doubt, she has made and will make mistakes—but the most fatal mistake would be indifference.

The Church must remember her distinctive mission, her supreme task, is for the inner life of man. She must remind the world again and again that the real root of human sorrow is human sin. She must declare,

By the soul  
Only, the nations shall be great and free.

She must preach the life of the Spirit. She must hold up the character of Christ as the divine pattern of goodness, immutable, supreme, imperishable, the human life of God. No social change will ever make that message superfluous or rob it of its power.

#### Jesus Still the Standard.

I read the other day, in the words of a modern reformer, the amazing impertinence that "Jesus would have accomplished more if he had worked for economics and science rather than religion." O, who has ever accomplished half so much? Amid the conflict and confusion of the past he stands out as the strength and the stay of noble and generous living. His name has been the inspiration of the best that has been done for the world. The peace and the welfare of the future depend upon his power to make men like himself.

Back to Christ was the cry of religious thought a few years ago. Forward to Christ must be the cry of social hope today. Forward to Christ to purify our social standards and our ways of living. Forward to Christ to learn the immortal worth of a simple manhood and womanhood. Forward to Christ to realize the breadth and wisdom of his heavenly love, for all now. Forward to Christ to permeate our laws and our social order with his spirit. Forward to Christ to find in him the Master, as he was the founder, of the ideal society.—The Congregationalist and Christian World.