

(SERMON SERIES.)

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAINTS' HERALD.

LAMONI, IOWA, MAY 27, 1893.

[Reported for the HERALD by E. Stafford.]

ADDRESS BY PRES. W. W. BLAIR,

DELIVERED AT THE DECATUR DISTRICT SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION,

LAMONI, IOWA, FEBRUARY 26, 1893,

Subject, SOCIAL PURITY.

THE speaker said: We read as a lesson for the hour the teachings of Jesus as found in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew. We may notice, before reading, the remarkable coincidence that when God sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel out of the land of bondage and bring them into the land of Canaan in order to raise them up a righteous, holy people, the very first and most important thing he did, when Israel came to the borders of Canaan, was to give them the law of ten commandments, upon the mount, which appertained more directly to the moral life of the individual; and, that when Jesus was baptized and had passed through the temptation in the wilderness and was about to enter upon his ministerial work and establish the gospel dispensation, he, too, went up into a mountain and there delivered the principles or morality which constitute the basis of the Christian religion. It is noteworthy that these two prominent Bible characters should have laid the foundation for the moral conduct and character of the people right in the very first work they did, and upon a mount. (The preacher read chapter five of Matthew, commencing, "And seeing the multitude he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him," etc., after which he said):—

I have been requested to make some

remarks this morning on the subject of social purity, and were I to close right now and here, I have given you the foundation from whence you may derive the most important lessons touching this vital and all-important question. Social purity, as I understand it, is a very broad, far-reaching, and somewhat intricate subject. It signifies pure society, in contradistinction to impure society; pure associations, in contradistinction to impure associations. It reaches out and touches every department of society; the sick and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young; and wherever there are sentient beings, it touches them, and has its influence there. This question reaches the entire body politic, so to speak, of the human race; and for one to undertake to exhaust the subject in one discourse, would be absolutely vain, and to attempt to present one half of its salient points would result in failure. It involves the heart and the life of the individual and the masses. If the heart be pure, as a consequence that which proceeds out of it—the conduct of the individual—will be pure also; for as are the impulses of the heart, so will be the deeds of the individual. The heart's desire is simply the mainspring; thence come the impulses that lead a man out in word and deed. If there was not another word said in

regard to this subject, these instructions of our Lord should guide us to social purity.

What a wonderful work is this! Every rational being ought to ponder it well, consider it thoroughly, and seek to bring himself into harmony with its requirements. For when this is done, such will be the moral conduct of the individual, whether child or adult, whether male or female, that his life will be ordered in the ways of purity and righteousness. As the heart is, so is the life and conduct of the individual. This appertains to the child as soon as it begins to develop sufficiently to understand the affairs of life and can reason in regard to them. It will follow on to manhood, and to womanhood, and so on to old age.

In the Sunday school, in the home associations, in all the affairs of men, these lofty sentiments, these divine teachings of Christ should be emphasized and constantly presented until they have had their perfect work, which perhaps may not be until our feet shall have touched the dark Jordan of death.

Social purity is a subject that should always be with us; it should be written as frontlets upon our brows; it should be written on the doorposts; instructors should teach it to their pupils, and parents should teach it to their offspring. Persons in all the various affairs of life should teach and practice pure morals and constantly seek purity of heart. There is no place where this work can be done more successfully than in the schoolroom, whether it be a Sunday school or the day school.

Upright and pure-minded teachers are indispensable. The individual not moral, is not socially pure in conduct, and should not have anything to do with the training of children, never ought to go inside of a schoolroom and undertake to establish discipline and carry forward the work of teaching. It would be like sending a person diseased with smallpox, or other foul contagion, into a community free from such evils. Childhood is the most susceptible, impressionable period in all the life of the individual; children

are more receptive than are older persons. They are apt to take in the moral atmosphere about them, just as readily and thoroughly as the physical atmosphere. It is a great evil I repeat, for teachers to be employed in instructing and forming the character of children, whose character is not in harmony with social purity. There is impurity, in a social way, even in a look, or gesture, even as in a word or deed. All this goes to make up the character of the teacher. Where you find one assiduously engaged in reaching the judgment and the moral nature of the child, whose own life is largely in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ, you will find a good work being done, whether it be, as I have remarked, in the day school, college, or in the Sunday school.

We pass on to notice briefly the affairs of home. Every home should be so established and builded that it shall be just as near a heaven as any place on earth can be. As a consequence, here should be moral purity in every high sense of the term, and, I may assume, in the broadest sense of the term. The state of all society is dependent upon and commences with the home circle. Its influences sweep out into all departments of society. What an individual is in respect to purity of morals at home, so will his or her influence be in the state of society at large. When an individual is pure in home affairs, in everything that pertains to home associations, he will carry that influence out into society and it will be as a rich perfume, and will be inhaled by those by whom he is surrounded; it will carry with it life, and health, and moral strength to those with whom he associates. Social purity is a very important thing; the perpetuation of the love of husband and wife is dependent upon this. If this were strictly adhered to, there would be no cause for divorces. Keep the heart pure and you will have the conduct of husband and wife pure. The influence of such individuals accomplishes great good. Such an individual is a light to the world; as Jesus says, he is like that beautiful tower of light,

the Pharos of ancient Alexandria, to lighten the mariner safe into harbor. The influence of an individual's conduct who is thoroughly committed to purity of heart and life will be felt in the home, and especially in families where there are small children; for as are the parents, so, largely, will be the children. It is true that the children may have good examples at home, the moral atmosphere there be all that is desired, and yet outside of that home they may come in contact with evil and imbibe the evil, but that does not signify; for the first duty of parents is to so fill their position in the home society that the children will inhale constantly the high moral influence, the goodly social influences that shall develop them into men and women prepared to resist the evil which they may meet outside of home. It is very important, I remark again, that in the home the father and mother should be careful as to their conduct, their words, their manners, lest evil corrupt the family. Evils that find root in the family, and abide in the hearts of the children, will afterwards develop; you will see the fruit of it by and by, if you do not right here. It will surely manifest itself in process of time.

There are a great many reasons why the children should be looked after. The welfare of the home is dependent upon it. So is every class of society that comes in contact with those home influences. They are very far-reaching and go out everywhere, directly or indirectly, to the vast body of society at large. There is a great deal of responsibility resting upon us individually as regards the home life, in respect to home purity,—pure associations. You will pardon me, I am sure, for adverting again to the influence of teachers in respect to this question of social purity, for they have a very important and onerous duty laid upon them. They should by all means, so far as lies in their power, without being obtrusive, learn the habits and the very thoughts and purposes of their pupils; learn them as best they may, and take prompt and efficient steps to correct the evils they may find lurking there. Sometimes

just a few words, a little chiding without any other chastening; that may suffice to start the child to thinking of the evil of his ways and work a really practical reform. That child will rise up in after years and call you blessed, and well he may.

We heard it here last evening—and we have heard it elsewhere—that children start off in habits, little by little, that in themselves are impure, that tend to corruption, that tend to impair their moral, intellectual, and physical natures. That statement will commend itself to the understanding of every one who has arrived at the years of accountability and who has eyes and ears to observe what is passing. The teacher, whether it be in the Sunday school or elsewhere should learn—so far as practicable, and without being obtrusive—the character and moral make-up of the children with which he has to do, and where he sees there are evils, be prompt and energetic, yet tender and loving in seeking to remove the blemish in due time, that these evils be not further developed in the by and by. You know that in the case of the fruit before it develops, frequently an insect deposits an egg where the fruit is expected to grow; and that by and by that egg develops into a worm. The result is the fruit is harmed so that, possibly, it may drop from its limb prematurely, or, if it retains its hold you will find on cutting open the fruit that it is damaged more or less, and in many cases is worthless. Now, if the insect could be kept away, and the fruit develop according to the laws of nature—the laws of God—you will have beautiful, healthy, fine fruit, will you not? To be sure you will. The teacher and parents should watch over the children, and see that these evil traits and imperfections are not planted in the heart and life of the little ones. They should look after it, watch, and so prevent the evil. It is a great deal easier to prevent evil than to root it out after it has a strong foothold.

Now in respect to these Sunday school teachers, (and manifestly there are a great many here,) my advice to them is, to study the character and conduct of the children under their

charge, and where they discover blemishes as to word and act, in any respect, seek to overcome that in good time, and plant instead thereof the principles of right doing. For this will bless the child; it will bless the one that teaches it, it will bless the parents of that child. It blesses the society in which that child may be reared; it blesses society at large, and the child becomes an honor to God and to all ranks of the human family.

This question is of the highest importance to every individual. You take the business man; he is one that should exhibit in his conduct the excellence of social purity. I do not care what that man's business is, whether it be farming, setting type at the case, writing editorials, or whether he stands behind the counter with his yardstick, or is an accountant, architect, engineer, builder, or any other,—in whatever situation, from the humblest to the highest, in any department of business, this question of social purity is a matter of importance to him. It should be studied; it should be carried into effect in all associations, in civil as well as in social government. All should maintain social purity in thought, in word, and in every department of conduct. Men should carry it with them in whatever position they are called to fill, in whatever department of business they may be engaged.

This applies to the minister as well as to his flock. The person called to the pulpit, his life should be plain, simple, and pure. His entire character should be pure; his speech should be pure; his deeds likewise should be pure. Everything appertaining to him as an individual and as a minister should likewise be pure. He will have a hard battle to fight with the evils that are in the world, as well as those in himself. There is, as the apostle says, "a law in" our "members, warring against the law of" our "mind," and "bringing" us "in subjection to the law of sin and death." The minister is more responsible than the members of his flock. Some are more tempted by evil than are the members of the flock; that has been so always. David, the shepherd king, the sweet

singer of Israel,—and he was a most wonderful man, a man of noble and elevated aspirations that reached to the very heavens; a man that could penetrate the various avenues of the affairs of life and seemed to comprehend and understand them clearly; a man of rare qualities in some respects,—and yet he was encompassed with evil; he was moved by impulses that caused him to err in many respects and caused him to sin after a grievous manner. And as much may be said in regard to other prominent persons. And let me suggest right here, my dear friends, that in all the days of your life you never knew a prominent man, you never knew a prominent woman,—you will never know them until the coming of Jesus Christ, until mortality is swallowed up of life,—you never knew a man or woman of character but what were moved and impelled by powerful impulses at times. And these that have made their mark in society have had their aspirations and ambitions; they have their temptations and trials. In many respects they are very susceptible. You will never find persons who have made their mark in life by mighty efforts but what are possessed of mighty aspirations and exalted ambitions, and are possessed of powerful impulses and strong passions. Hence it is not surprising that that class of men entering into pulpit services should be found having a great battle in life, a great battle with "number one;" right in their own hearts, in their own conduct.

I go back to my boyhood days; born in Western New York and reared mainly in the western regions of Illinois, without the privilege of Sabbath schools; once in awhile a wandering preacher would come along. Our schoolhouses were very small buildings; we had seats made out of split logs; the desks were of a very rude character, made up of frames to which were nailed rough boards of native lumber; such were our schoolhouses with their wide and open fireplaces built of stones and sticks, and having a hole cut through the roof out of which passed a rude stick chimney. The preachers had to go forth, and

the lecturers likewise, in these early times, to these rude houses, coarse as they were. As I remarked we were in those times without Sunday schools. Each boy and girl "grew up," just about like Topsy.

It was common in those early times to have whiskey, but the whiskey was not as bad then as now; it did not "kill at forty rods." Some preachers drank it; even some of the women drank it. It was considered good for the ague; and it was good for fever; it was good when one got very wet, to help him dry out; it was good when he got very cold to warm him up. There was scarcely anything but what whisky was good for. I was reared among a people of that class; I had an appetite, naturally, for strong drink. Some people say they cannot use it because "it is nasty." Well, it may be for them; but from my childhood I have had an appetite for strong drink. I quit it away back about 1850; I saw it was a curse; I saw its ravages; I put my foot on it, so far as using it myself, and it has been there ever since. That is the only way for you, for me, and for all to do to rid it out of society. I cannot say but what those early impulses, those early habits, affect my appetite now. I will not say but what they tempt to wrongdoing now.

Again, there are times when I feel hot indignation at the evil actions of some. It is hard at times to restrain my temper from resenting such doings. There are times when I feel evil impulses rising within that require the greatest of patient effort and the grace of God to counteract them.

When I came preaching, in 1859, to where Pleasanton now is, a couple of men came to me on the road near Bro. Morey's home, between sundown and dark, and inquired if I was a minister, and had come from Nauvoo. I told them I was a minister and came from near Chicago. They asked if I was the one that was baptizing that day at Trembley's Mill, and being answered in the affirmative they commenced cursing and threatening what they would do with me,—they were sent out from "Nine Eagles" (now Pleasanton), and they declared I could not remain; that

no Mormons should remain there. The old Adam rose within me, and the first impulse was to violently resent the insult. I knew I needed help from God to control my spirit in harmony with my profession; my heart was raised to God for his Spirit's help; I knew what its effects were upon the human heart,—and right there the Holy Spirit fell upon me and filled my heart and my entire being. The Spirit of love and quiet restfulness came to me, and as sudden as could be my passion was all gone; I began talking to them in a kind and gentle way, and in less than ten minutes they were in my power, and begged my forgiveness. Yes, by kind words, used by the Spirit of God, they were completely humbled and subdued. I speak of this to show that the natural passions and impulses will lurk in our natures. It is wonderful, too, how they will assert themselves from time to time. If permitted they would bring the individual down into moral degradation.

Now, social purity, such as we are talking about this morning, if cultivated in the child from the time it begins to think until the child reaches mature age, it would weed out and will nigh entirely remove those impulses to do wrong; those passions that rack the mind, destroy the soul, and send devastation and death abroad in the land.

In view of what has been said, it becomes a matter of great importance that the teacher shall study the mind of the child intrusted to his or her care; that they implant principles of purity and all that is comprehended in the word *purity*. Ten thousand things might be suggested under the definition of that word. One of the best remedies against social impurity is to not give countenance in the least degree to the individual guilty of moral or social impurity who will not repent, turning altogether therefrom. It is the duty of God's people, and of every well-meaning man and woman, to withdraw from their society, and have nothing to do with them until they exhibit a fixed purpose to reform. This is according to reason; it is common sense; and it is Christian duty likewise. If in a room found to be

infected by smallpox or other contagion, would you not as soon as you ascertained the fact, quickly withdraw from it? If there was a house infected with diphtheria and the yellow sign was put up, would you not keep yourself and family away from that vicinity? You know that is the wisdom of this world; they see the evil and keep from it. Just so in regard to social impurity, wherever it has obtained root, and where the individuals will not remove it themselves, then the only remedy is to remove from such society just as a health-loving man would remove from the society of the leper.

I want to read you another passage of Scriptures; it is Paul's instruction to the Saints—Romans 16: 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." That is to say, have no fellowship with them; have no union with them; treat them kindly, do not treat them as enemies, do good to them as far as you have opportunity; but withdraw from their fellowship and companionship; do not be brought into such contact with them that you will participate in the evils of their conduct, or such that you will be held responsible for strengthening the hands of evildoers. For a person who stands by and sees an evil done, is, in some sense, responsible if he does not take steps to correct it. The person who sees evil done in any form should use prompt measures to overcome that evil, and should be careful to not strengthen the hands of evildoers; for the moment you do that you are helping the evil. John says: "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that bid-deth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." He is giving aid and comfort to a wicked man in his evil doings. It is the same general idea as that laid down by the Apostle Paul, "Mark them which cause divisions

and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Of course, that would be on the ground that they will not turn from their evil ways. Avoid them; do not have companionship with them; partake not of their evil deeds.

In 1 Corinthians 5: 9 there is valuable instruction: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." These texts contain some of the most salient, prominent thoughts touching social purity. The apostle in the eleventh verse of this chapter says that we are not only not to keep company with such characters outside of the church, but the same injunction is placed in the word concerning those guilty of the same impurities in the church; if they will not repent and reform, the apostle says they are to be cast out of the church; that we are to withdraw from their fellowship, and from having company with them.

2 Corinthians 6: 14-17, reads: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers [Does not this relate to marriage?]: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore *come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.*"

As we said at the outstart, it would require a great many sermons to exhaust this subject, or anything like it; but we have endeavored to present some of its prominent points that the address may be a benefit to all our

hearers. I go back again to the words of Jesus Christ, that wonderful teacher, whose like had never been on earth before him; and we may never expect another like unto him. He was the express image of God, and upheld all things by the word of his power, and he has said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Let us strive to attain that excellence, to manifest it in our lives; and let us disseminate the same to our children.

I thank God when I look back over the history of our nation and see what wonderful work has been done by those early reformers who first landed on our shores. I rejoice when I look back to the time when that Puritan, liberty loving people, landed on the inhospitable shores of Massachusetts. And notwithstanding the errors that obtained among them, from the time their feet touched the wave-washed rocks of Plymouth, clear down to our own day, the spirit of social purity that they brought with them has swept out like the light of the morning to all the various parts of America, and has

been manifest, not only in matters of religion, but in all social affairs. Thank God, this light that has shone brightly in America for these two hundred years or more,—ever since the first settlement of the Puritans,—that light has been reflected back to the old countries; they are feeling its thrilling touch, so that Europe to-day, and large portions of Asia and Africa likewise, are in more favorable conditions socially, politically, and industrially, than when the little band of Pilgrims came. Kingcraft and priestcraft are falling; justice and freedom are on the move forward, and social purity is winning its victories.

It is the duty of every individual to be engaged in this great work, and to prepare for the coming of Christ, when he shall appear to reign in righteousness; when it shall be no more said, "Know ye the Lord;" for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. That we may do this is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE BEST SLEEP FOLLOWS REGULAR LIVING AND CALM MIND.

FAMILY nervousness predisposes to nightmare, which thus becomes related to the thousand and one ills which we inherit from our ancestors. The most potent cause of bad dreams has yet to be mentioned. This is worry, which is one of the most fatal disorders which attack mankind. For one who is injured or killed by hard work a hundred are struck down by worry. Girls who are preparing for examinations often worry themselves into a fever which prevents sleep or else causes it to be broken by horrid visions of unsolvable problems or impending failure. Remember also that we go to bed to sleep and not to review the events of the day. Don't think in bed. This may seem to be impossible advice in many cases, but it is certain that we can dismiss thought if we make a sufficient effort to do so. Reading in bed is a bad habit, which ought never to be con-

tracted, or if it has been contracted it ought to be given up resolutely. It is a habit sanctioned to some extent by the example of many eminent people, but it is radically wrong for all that. Finally, no words are strong enough to point out the danger of slow poisoning by drugs which are often taken to produce sleep, whether it be an alcoholic nightcap, morphine, opium, chloral, or any other. The medical man has recourse with reluctance to these as a last and temporary resort, and only he can tell how many lives are wrecked by the ill-timed use of them and their subsequent abuse. And of all horrible dreams, none are so awful as those which assail people who habitually use these false comforters. Better than all the drugs in the world for procuring sleep are simple food, a regular life, and a calm mind.—*Cassell's Family Magazine*,

DEFINITIONS OF HOME.

THE London *Tid-Bits* offered a prize for the best definition of home. Here are some of the best of five thousand answers sent in:—

The golden setting in which the brightest jewel is “mother.”

A world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in.

An arbor which shades when the sunshine of prosperity becomes too dazzling; a harbor where the human bark finds shelter in the time of adversity.

Home is the blossom of which heaven is the fruit.

Home is a person's estate obtained without injustice, kept without disquietude; a place where time is spent without repentance, and which is ruled by justice, mercy, and love.

A grand old mirror, through which both sides of us are seen.

That source of comfort which youth does not fully appreciate, which the young men and maidens lovingly desire, which the middle-aged generally possess, which the old rightly value.

A hive in which, like the industrious bee, youth garners the sweets and memories of life for age to meditate and feed upon.

The best place for a married man after business hours.

Home is the coziest, kindest, sweetest place in all the world, the scenes of our purest earthly joys and deepest sorrows.

The only spot on earth where faults and failings of fallen humanity are hidden under the mantle of charity.

An abode in which the inmate, the “superior being called man,” can pay back at night with fifty per cent interest every annoyance that has met him in business during the day.

The place where the great are sometimes small and the small often great.

The father's kingdom, the children's paradise, the mother's world.

The jewel casket containing the most precious of all jewels—domestic happiness.

Where you are treated best and grumble most.

Home is a central office of love into which run innumerable wires of affection, many of which, though extended thousands of miles, are never disconnected from the one great terminus.

The center of our affections, around which our heart's best wishes twine.

A little hollow scooped out of the windy hill of the world where we can be shielded from its cares and annoyances.

A popular but paradoxical institution, in which woman works in the absence of man and man rests in the presence of woman.

A working model of heaven with real angels in the form of mothers and wives.

The place where all husbands should be at night.—*Selected.*