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Daily Appeal.

Moral Aspects and Moral Responsibilities of our Social Life.

From the National Intelligencer, March 6.

It is very seldom that we have been called on to give a place in our paper to a pulpit discourse, such productions being, in general, more appropriate for the columns of religious than secular journals. But a sermon which was delivered on Sunday last, by one of our able divines, being addressed particularly and forcibly to the alarming social disorders and tendencies of the time, we enter an exception in its favor by yielding to the request of a number of respectable citizens to give it a place in our columns.

To the Editors of the National Intelligencer:

GENTLEMEN: The sermon preached this morning by the Rev. W. D. Haley, was of such excellence, and so well suited to do good, especially at this juncture, that we respectfully solicit the favor of its publication either in your influential journal, or in pamphlet form, on request, placed the sermon in our hands; should you, therefore, give a favorable response to this request, it is at your service.

Respectfully, yours,

[*Signed by twenty respectable citizens.*]

MORAL ASPECTS AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SOCIAL LIFE.

A Sermon, preached in the First Unitarian Church of Washington, March 6, 1859, by Rev. W. D. Haley.

Scripture Lessons.—Luke, x: 25, *et seq.* John, viii: 1-11, and Matt. xxv. 31, *et seq.*

John, viii: 7.—He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at him.

1st Cor. xii: 26.—And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Recent events have furnished a sermon which you have doubtless heard already in your souls, from which it is proper that I should gather a few of the most prominent points, rather to place them upon record here in the church, than with the expectation of offering anything new.

Let me speak to you frankly of what, looking at them through the powerful lens of the Gospel, seem to me the two very serious moral aspects and moral responsibilities of our social life; and when I use that phrase, I beg that it may not be construed down to any local limits; that as Washington, being a certain part of the year, is the representative city of America, I wish to be understood as speaking of that period in which period all American cities, and in only less perceptible in proportion to the magnitude of extent and density of population which furnish greater opportunities for concealment.

The providential impulse, which, after many severe trials—trials, the memory of which have become the brightest of our glories, and almost our only inspiration and promise, bordering on they do so nearly on the miraculous as almost to justify the belief that Providence has work for our country, to do for the world, which even our enemies can no more prevent than did the mighty powers arrayed against the old Thirteen—that providential impulse which established our Republic, so far as it was a mere adoption of its history, was designed to create on this continent an eclectic nation, a great people, who, gathered from all the lands of the East and the West, and the North and the South, should leave behind them their vices and bring with their virtues. Of the marvellous results, that strangest of miracles, American history, I have had frequent occasion to speak, but you will pardon me for recalling the theme long enough to indicate that upon us, from the possible change of being a more moral essay, and for establishing its claim to the title of a good society.

The moral life of American society, judging from the providential indications which are strewn all along the line of our march, should mean no more than that of the best of the Christian nations. The strong honesty of Great Britain, the hard common sense of Germany, the chivalry of France, the generous love of woman which redeems France from the imputation of brutishness—these, and the other desirable national characteristics prevailing in the countries from which the emigrants to this land originated, should all join together to demonstrate that the theory of self-government is only the first step towards the perfecting of humanity.

In order to comprehend what the merciful words of Christ, which I have taken for my first text, would not fall upon dull ears, or be construed into a mission limited to Judea, and quite behind the requirements of the nineteenth century; also the wise words of the Apostle Paul, which from my second text, would become a special law, powerful enough to protect virtue when human law was powerless; and enough to stop the ears which now, when crime becomes public, are eager for revolting details; and bright enough to blind with its beams the eyes which now glare with morbid curiosity, and, feeling of clear vision, make up in imagination for what they do not see.

But, alas! for us, we prove to be no better than the empires over whose graves we have marched, and in whose forsaken temples we have chanted our hymns of triumph. Experience We prove to be no better than our brighters, and turn aside from the narrow but out-path of rectitude in simplicity to enter the broad road, crowded with those who have gone before, with trees whose blossoms are delusive bubbles and whose fruit is death. With growth and expansion has come wealth in the train of wealth luxury in its train, and luxury, and luxury like most, conflict, ranges in the vices which wealth desires to indulge in; and this degeneracy, crime, domestic virtue, are the results and remorse are the pall-bearers that march with the body to its grave.

We have for several years stopped the importation of foreign virtues and vices, and borrowed of all nations to come in duty free. Pugilism, the brutality which makes it a peculiar boast that it is "the noble British art of self-defence," has become so common that it can support its weekly organs, and some of its champions are clothed in fine linen and fare sumptuously every day; but the fact of things that suggests a parable, the closing portion of which might not be out of place. From Germany we have introduce large quantities of manufactured articles, which are foisted in voiced "theology," but prove, on examination, to be insipidly; and from France we have encouraged the social philosophy of evils, foremost among them those loose ideas of the marital relations, which have already established if as a decree of the exclusive circles of Fashion that it is dangerous for married woman to be accompanied to a ball, theater, or church by her own husband. In this latter matter, as manual with us, we have advanced somewhat further than our European models in the dress of female training (whatever may be its practical results) is that the young woman, established and introduced to the world during her pupilage, receives such careful discipline that, when upon her marriage she emerges into society, her moral powers are strong enough to place her above temptation; but, as such efforts and expertise of children; we thrust into "the dangerous arena of fashionable life, to contend with wild beasts, girls of fifteen or sixteen; and then when some startling event causes the hidden fire to gleam out of the mountain's side, we are amazed at the fury of the volcano, whose flames we have been feeding, and with some pious burlesqu of pharisaic moralizing, we strive to quench it.

Great crimes, like other great events, are not permitted by the Almighty only to excite wonder, or to demonstrate the possibility of a repeat what Jesus said: "Those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish." They assure us that, despite our arbitrary distinctions, the existence in the heart for each of such that if "one member suffer all the members suffer with" him; that a great calamity reaches beyond family lines out to the entire community; that the wailing of a woman which redeems France from the imputation of brutishness—these, and the other desirable national characteristics prevailing in the countries from which the emigrants to this land originated, should all join together to demonstrate that the theory of self-government is only the first step towards the perfecting of humanity.

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