

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL
VOLUME 3

by Charles H. Spurgeon, editor

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JANUARY 1, 1871.

TO YOU

A VERY little boy was taken to the Tabernacle the other Sabbath, for the first time in his life. There he went through the experience which Mr. Millais has so well depicted in his well-known painting, "My First Sermon." Turning to his nurse he inquired in childish accents, "*Is Mr. Spurgeon talking to me?*" Bless the young heart, our prayer is that very speedily the Lord may speak to him through the preacher; and meanwhile, we only wish that all our hearers and readers would ask themselves the same weighty question. When a passenger arrives at the Great Western terminus, at Paddington, he hastens to the long counter divided into portions of the alphabet from A to Z, he looks for his own initial, and beneath that sign he watches for his own personal luggage. What matters it to K whether Q has a huge tin box, or B a horsehair trunk, or W a warranted solid leather portmanteau? The first concern of K is to search out the treasures which he can claim as his own. In common life there is no need to urge this. Number One usually secures its just share of attention, and a little more. Is it not strange that, when we enter upon higher realms, where weightier matters are concerned, we find men avoiding the personal application of truth, as if they thought it to be a shell which would blow them to atoms by its bursting, or a boa constrictor which would crush them in its folds? We have heard of a writer who was so egotistical, that when he wrote his own life the pronoun "I" occurred so often in it, that the printer was obliged to borrow it from his brother printer, as his "I's" had run out. The vice is very contemptible, but might it not prove the basis of a virtue? Might we not inculcate the exchange of the nominative for the accusative, and urge persons to be egotistical (would that word do?) so far as to take home to themselves every practical lesson in book, sermon, or providence?

The proud conviction that we are above needing instruction, is one principal reason why we profit so little from the abundant means provided

for our spiritual benefit. There is no teaching those who are beyond the need of learning. A certain worthy of our acquaintance, being out of a situation, made application to a friend to recommend him to a place, and remarked, that he would prefer a somewhat superior position, “for you know, Tomkins,” said he, “I am not a fool, and I ain’t ignorant.” We would not insinuate that the brother was mistaken in his own estimate, but the remark might possibly excite suspicion, for the case is similar to that of a timid pedestrian at night alone, hurrying along a lonesome lane, when a gentleman comes out of the hedge just at the turning by Deadman’s Corner, and accosts him in the following re-assuring language, “I ain’t a garrotter, and I never crack a fellow’s head with this here life-preserver.” The outspoken self-assertion of the brother quoted above, is but the expression of the thought of most, if not all of us. “I’m not a fool, and I ain’t ignorant,” is the almost universal self-compliment, which is here out of season; and this is the great barrier to our benefiting by good advice, which we suppose to be directed to the foolish and ignorant world in general, but not to our elevated selves. The poet did not say, but we will say it for him, “All men think all men *faulty* but themselves.” It would be a great gain to us all, if we had those elegant quizzing glasses of ours silvered at the back, so that the next time we stick them in our eyes, in all the foppery of our conceit, we may be edified, and, let us hope, humbled, by seeing ourselves.

Gentle reader, during the year of grace 1871, we shall hope to make our magazine the vehicle of address to persons unconverted and unbelieving. If you are in such a case, do not shelve the subject, but consider that we are writing especially *to you*. We were in a sick room the other day, and the surgeon, with carefully soft whisper, told us something painful in reference to the case. We caught the glance of the patient, and translated it in a moment, that keen eye said, “You are whispering about me, and my case is a very bad one, pray tell me what will come of it!” It would be well for you, reader, if you were equally sensitive; there are threatenings of fearful import in the word of God; do you never in your heart remember that these speak of YOU? Bare your bosom to the arrows of the gospel, for those whom these shafts shall kill shall graciously be made alive again. Invite the operation of searching truths, which divide the joints and marrow, for their keen edge will destroy nothing but that which would destroy you.

Christian reader, we shall continue by God’s help to stir you up both by examples and precepts to holy diligence in your Lord’s service. Be so good

as to accept each monthly magazine as a letter under our hand and seal directed to yourself reminding you of the claims of Jesus upon your personal effort. It is said that charity nowadays may be described thus: A sees B in want, and is so very kind as to try to get C to help him. We have daily abundant proof that this is true. Half the world comes to the Tabernacle minister for help, and three-fourths of that half only do so to shift their own burden on to another shoulder. A man who ought in all conscience to contribute 50 pounds to the enlargement of the place of worship in which he hears the gospel every Sabbath, puts his name down for ten shillings, and sends off a card to a person who is not a fourth as well off as himself, and who never was within a hundred miles of the spot. Suppose he gets a sovereign from the generous friend, ought it not to burn his hand and make him remember that he is going to offer to the Lord a sacrifice which he has taken out of his neighbor's fold, because he grudged his own sheep? After we have ourselves done all we can, and given all we can spare, we may then honestly exhort others to greater zeal, and press them for contributions, but not till then. The personality of our service enters into the very essence of it. Paul must do Paul's work; and Peter must do Peter's work; but to tax Peter to make up the deficiencies of Paul is a mode of concealing indolence which the Great Master will see through and condemn.

What am I doing for Jesus? is the New Year's question which we propose to every reader. We ask some to begin a work for the Lord and others to enlarge what they have commenced. Oliver Cromwell pulled down the twelve silver statues of the apostles which adorned Exeter Cathedral, and sent them to the mint to be coined, that they might as true apostles go about doing good: many a fine mass of ornamental silver in our churches needs the practical touch, the useful coinage which alone can turn it to account. The man of learning, the lady of property, the woman of education, the youth of quick parts, the aged believer of great experience, are too often more remarkable for capacity than for matter-of-fact usefulness. Purposes too often run away with lives. Plans and purposes are often the eggs of action, and therefore we would not awkwardly disturb those who are hatching them; but really the process of incubation has been so long in hand, that we fear the eggs must be addled, and we are half inclined to deal roughly with the nest; out of which nothing seems to come. We have no time to waste in projecting far-reaching enterprises for others, which will never be carried out till generations have passed away: it is ours

in our own proper persons while the day lasts to perform our own share of God's great work with all our might. Reader! again we press upon you the need of taking stock of your own business, and putting out your own talent to interest for your Lord.

Our constituency of magazine subscribers now numbers a little under fifteen thousand monthly, and our sermon purchasers some twenty-five thousand weekly, and we encourage ourselves in the belief that many of these take an interest in our work, and would be sorry to see it flag; yet because so few remember that the *personal* help is wanted, we frequently miss the aid of loving friends. Our College, Orphanage, and Colportage efforts are capable of great extension, especially the latter, which is left to pine in want. Personally we do all that our mind, body, and purse enable us, and we are not ashamed to say that we leave not a fragment of our ability of any kind unused for God, so far as we know if we could preach more, labor more, and give more, we would do so without being pressed. Our work is for our Lord, and therefore we are bold in asking others to help us in it. We have long wanted suitable rooms for our College, for our Bible Classes, and for our Sabbath School, and we have about a thousand pounds available for that object; but we shall in all probability need four thousand pounds more, and we simply tell this to our friends, that when the Lord prospers them, and they feel inclined to do so, they may, if home concerns do not forbid, help one who is their minister in print, if not by word of mouth. God will move many we hope to say, "Has Mr. Spurgeon's work any claim on me? Have I been a partaker of the benefit? What is my share in the service?"

To you, dear readers, who are so continually aiding us, we offer our best personal thanks, and assure you that our prayers ascend to heaven that you may enjoy a rich return for your liberality and thoughtfulness. Some of you have often eased us when we have been burdened, and been in our Great Father's hands a great strength to our weakness. Trials of our faith you have often ended, though you knew it not, and filled our heart with songs of gratitude, which only the Lord has heard. If you count us worthy of continued confidence, help us still; above all, let us have a warm place in your fervent supplications.

This opening chit-chat of a new volume came into our head through the following amusing incident, with which we close our talk, wishing all our readers

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Sitting down in the Orphanage grounds upon one of the seats, we were talking with one of our brother trustees, when a little fellow, we should think about eight years of age, left the other boys who were playing around us, and came deliberately up to us. He opened fire upon us thus, "Please, Mister Spurgeon, I want to come and sit down on that seat between you two gentlemen." "Come along, Bob, and tell us what you want." "Please, Mr. Spurgeon, suppose there was a little boy who had no father, who lived in a Orphanage with a lot of other little boys who had no fathers, and suppose those little boys had mothers and aunts who comed once a month, and brought them apples and orange, and gave them pennies, and suppose this little boy had no mother and no aunt, and so nobody never came to bring him nice things, don't you think somebody ought to give him a penny? Cause, Mr. Spurgeon *that's me.*" Somebody felt something wet in his eye, and Bob got a sixpence, and went off in a great state of delight. Poor little soul, he had seized the opportunity to pour out a bitterness which had rankled in his little heart, and made him miserable when the monthly visiting day came round, and, as he said, "Nobody never came to bring him nice things." Turning the tables, we think some grown-up persons, who were once little Bobs and Harrys, might say, "Suppose there was a poor sinner who deserved to be sent to hell, but was forgiven all his sins by sovereign grace, and made a child of God, don't you think he ought to help on the Savior's cause? 'cause Mr. Spurgeon, *that's me.*"

THE HAPPY BEGGAR

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me."
Psalm 40:17.

THERE is no crime, and there is no credit in being poor. Everything depends upon the occasion of the poverty. Some men are poor, and are greatly to be pitied, for their poverty has come upon them without any fault of their own; God has been pleased to lay this burden upon them, and therefore they may expect to experience divine help, and ought to be tenderly considered by their brethren in Christ. Occasionally poverty has been the result of integrity or religion, and here the poor man is to be

admired, and honored. At the same time, it will be observed by all who watch with an impartial eye, that very much of the poverty about us is the direct result of idleness, intemperance, improvidence, and sin. There would probably not be one-tenth of the poverty there now is upon the face of the earth if the drinking shops were less frequented, if debauchery were less common, if idleness were banished, and extravagance abandoned. Lovers of pleasure (alas! that such a word should be so degraded!) are great impoverishers of themselves. It is clear that there is not, of necessity either vice or virtue in being poor, and a man's poverty cannot be judged of by itself, but its causes and circumstances must be taken into consideration.

The poverty, however, to which the text relates is a poverty which I desire to cultivate in my own heart, and it is one upon which our divine Lord has pronounced a blessing. When he sat down upon the mountain and poured forth his famous series of beatitudes, he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The poor in pocket may be blessed, or may not be blessed, as the case may be; but the poor in spirit are always blessed, and we have Christ's authority for so saying. Theirs is a poverty which is better than wealth; in fact, it is a poverty which indicates the possession of the truest of all riches. It was mainly in this sense that David said, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me:" certainly in any other sense there are vast multitudes who are "poor and needy," but who neither think upon God nor rejoice that God thinks upon them. Those who are spiritually "poor and needy," the sacred beggars at mercy's gate, the elect mendicants of heaven, these are the people who may say, with humble confidence, "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Two things are noteworthy in the text. First, *here is a frank acknowledgment*, "I am poor and needy;" but secondly, *here is a comfortable confidence*, "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

I. First; here is A FRANK ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Some men do not object to confess that they are poor in worldly goods. In fact, they are rather fond of pleading poverty when there is collection coming, or a subscription list in dangerous proximity. Men have even gloried in history in the name of "the Beggars;" and "silver and gold have I none," has been exalted into a boast. But, spiritually, it is little less than a miracle to bring, men to feel, and then to confess their poverty, for naked, and poor, and miserable as we are by nature, we are all apt enough to say, "I am rich and increased in goods." We cannot dig, and to beg we are

ashamed. If we did not inherit a penny of virtue from father Adam, we certainly inherited plenty of pride. Poor and proud we all are. We will not, if we can help it, take our seat in the lowest room, though that is our proper place. Grace alone can bring us to see ourselves in the glass of truth. To have nothing is natural to us, but to confess that we have nothing is more than we will come to until the Holy Spirit has wrought self-abasement in us. The emptiers must come up upon us, for though naturally as empty as Hagar's bottle, yet we boast ourselves to be as full as a fountain. The Spirit of God must take from us our goodly Babylonish garment, or we shall never consent to be dressed in the fair white linen of the righteousness of saints. What Paul flung away as dross and dung, we poor rag-collectors prize and hoard up as ever we can. "I am poor and needy," is a confession which only he who is the Truth can teach us to offer. If you are saying it, my brother, you need not be afraid that you are under a desponding delusion. But true as it is, and plain to every grace-taught child of God, yet only grace will make a man confess the obnoxious fact! It is not in public that we can or should confess our soul-poverty as we do in the chamber when we bow our knee secretly before God, but many of us in secret have been compelled with many tears and sighs, to feel, as well as to say, "I am poor and needy." We have searched through and through, looked from the top to the bottom of our humanity, and we could not find a single piece of good money in the house, so greatly reduced were we. We had not a shekel of merit, nor a penny of hope in ourselves, and we were constrained to fall flat on our face before God, and confess our inability to meet his claims, and we found no comfort till by faith we learned to present our Lord Jesus as the Surety for his servants for good. We could not pay even the poorest composition, and therefore cast ourselves upon the forbearance of God.

The psalmist is doubly humble, for first he says *he is poor*, and then adds that *he is needy*, and there is a difference between these two things.

He acknowledges that *he is poor*, and you and I, if taught of God, will say the same. We may well be poor, *for we came of a poor father*. Our father Adam had a great estate enough at first, but he soon lost it. He violated the trust on which he held his property, and he was cast out of the inheritance, and turned adrift into the world to earn his bread as a day laborer by tilling the ground whence he was taken. His eldest son was a vagabond; the firstborn of our race was a convict upon ticket-of-leave. If any suppose that we have inherited some good thing by natural descent, they go very

contrary to what David tells us, when he declares, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Our first parents were utter bankrupts. They left us nothing but a heritage of old debts, and a propensity to accumulate yet more personal obligations. Well may we be poor who come into this world “heirs of wrath,” with a decayed estate and tainted blood.

Moreover, *since the time when we came into the world, we have followed a very miserable trade.* I recollect when I was a spinner and weaver of the poorest sort, I dreamed that I should be able by my own spinning to make a garment to cover myself withal. This was the trade of father Adam and mother Eve when they first lost their innocence; they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. It is a very laborious business, and has worn out the lives of many with bitter bondage, but its worst feature is that the Lord has declared concerning all who followed this self-righteous craft, “their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.” Even those who have best attired themselves, and have for awhile gloried in their fair apparel, have had to fed the truth of the Lord’s words by Isaiah, “I will take away the changeable suits of apparel, red the mantles, and the wimples, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails, and instead of a girdle there shall be a rent; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth.” Vain is it to spend our labor on that which profiteth not, yet to this business are we early put apprentice, and we work at it with mighty pains.

We are miserably poor, for we have *become bankrupt even in our wretched trade.* Some of us had once a comfortable competence laid by in the bank of Self Righteousness, and we meant to draw it out when we came to die, and thought we should even have a little spending money for our old age out of the interest which was paid us in the coin of self-conceit; but the bank broke long ago, and now we have not so much as farthing of our own merits left us, no, nor a chance of ever having any; all what is worse, we are deep in debt, and we have nothing to pay. Instead of having anything like a balance on our own account, behold, we are insolvent debtors to the justice of God, without a single farthing of assets, and unless we are freely forgiven we must be cast into prison, and lie there for ever. Job described us well when he said, “for want and famine they are solitary, fleeing into the wilderness, in former time desolate and waste. They have no covering in the cold, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.” See,

then, what poverty-stricken creatures we are — of a poor stock, following a starving trade and made bankrupts even in that.

What is worse still, poor human nature *has no power left to retrieve itself*. As lone as a man has a stout pair of arms he is not without a hope of rising from the dunghill. We once thought that we were equal anything, but now Paul's description suits us well "without strength." Our Lord's words, too, are deeply true, "Without me ye can do nothing." Unable so much as to think a good thought, or to lift our hearts heavenward of ourselves — this is poverty indeed! We are wrecked, and the whole vessel has gone to pieces. We have destroyed ourselves. Ah! my fellow man, may God make you feel this! Many know nothing about it, and would be very angry if we were to say that this is their condition; and yet this is the condition of every man born into the world until the Spirit of God brings him into communion with Christ, and endows him with the riches of the covenant of grace. "I am poor," it is my confession: is it yours? Is it a confession extorted from you by a clear perception that it is really so? I will recommend you, if it be so, to take to a trade which is the best trade in the world to live by, not for the body, but for the soul, and that is the profession of a beggar, certainly a suitable one for you and me. I took to it long ago, and began to beg for mercy from God; I have been constrained to continue begging every day to the same kind Benefactor, and I hope to die begging. Many of the saints have grown rich upon this holy mendicancy; they have indeed spoken of being daily loaded with benefits. The noblest of the peers of heaven were here below daily pensioners upon God's love; they were fed, and clothed, and housed by the charity or the Lord, and they delighted to have it so. How clear is it from all this that none of us can have anything whereof to glory! boasting is excluded, for let the beggar get what he may he is but; a beggar still; and the child of God, notwithstanding the bounty of his heavenly Father, is still in himself alone a penniless vagrant.

The psalmist also said, "I am *needy*." There are poor people who are not needy. Diogenes was very poor, but he was not needy; he had made up his mind that he would not need anything, so he lived in a tub; he had but one drinking vessel, and when he saw a boy drinking out of his hand he broke that, for he said he would not possess anything superfluous, he was poor enough, but he was not needy; for when Alexander said, "What can I do for you?" he answered, "Stand out of my sunshine." So it is clear a man may be very poor, and yet he may not be burdened with need; but David was conscious of extreme need, and in this many of us can join him.

Brethren. we confess that we need ten thousand things, in fact, we need *everything*. By nature the sinner needs healing, for he is sick unto death; he needs washing, for he is the with sin; he needs clothing, for he is naked before God; he needs preserving after he is saved, he needs the bread of heaven, he needs the water out of the rock; he is all needs, and nothing but needs. Not one thing that his soul wants can he of himself supply. He needs to be kept from even the commonest sins. He needs to be instructed what be the first elements of the faith; he needs to be taught to walk in the ways of God's plainest commandments. Our needs are so great, that they comprise the whole range of covenant supplies, and all the fullness treasured up in Christ Jesus.

We are needy *in every condition*. We are soldiers, and we need that grace should find us both shield and sword. We are pilgrims, and we need that love should give us both a staff and a guide. We are sailing over the sea of life, and we need that the wind of the Spirit shall fill our sails, and that Christ shall be our pilot. There is no figure under which the Christian life can be represented in which our need is not a very conspicuous part of the image. In all aspects we are poor and needy.

We are needy *in every exercise*. If we are called to preach, we have to cry, "Lord, open thou my lips." If we pray, we are needy at the mercyseat, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. If we go out into the world to wrestle with temptation, we need supernatural help, lest we fall before the enemy. If we are alone in meditation, we need the Holy Spirit to quicken our devotion. We are needy in suffering and laboring in watching, and in fighting. Every spiritual engagement does but discover another phase of our need.

And, brethren, we are needy *at all times*. We never wake up in the morning but we want strength for the day, and we never go to bed at night without needing grace to cover the sins of the past. We are needy at all periods of life: when we begin with Christ in our young days we need to be kept from the follies and passions which are so strong in giddy youth; in middle life our needs are greater still, lest the cares of this world should eat as doth a canker; and in old age we are needy still, and need persevering grace to bear us onward to the end. So needy are we that even in lying down to die we need our last bed to be made for us by mercy, and our last hour to be cheered by grace. So needy are we that if Jesus had not prepared a mansion for us in eternity we should have no place to dwell in. We are as full of

wants as the sea is full of water. We cannot stay at home and say, "I have much goods laid up for many years," for the wolf is at the door, and we must go out a begging again. Our clamorous necessities follow us every moment and dog our heels in every place. We must take the two adjectives and keep them close together in our confession — "I am poor and needy."

II. The second part of the subject is much more cheering. It is A COMFORTABLE CONFIDENCE — "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

A poor man is always pleased to remember that he has a rich relation, especially if that rich relative is very thoughtful towards him, and finds out his distress, and cheerfully and abundantly relieves his wants.

Observe, that the Christian does not find comfort in himself. "I am poor and needy." That is the top and bottom of my case. I have searched myself through and through, and have found in my flesh no good thing. Notwithstanding the grace which the believer possesses, and the hope which he cherishes, he still sees a sentence of death written upon the creature, and he cries, "I am poor and needy." His joy is found in another. He looks away from self, to the consolations which the eternal purpose has prepared for him.

Note well *who it is that gives the comfort*. "*The Lord thinketh upon me.*" By the term "the Lord," we are accustomed to understand the glorious Trinity. "The Lord thinketh upon me," *i.e.*, Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. O beloved believer in Christ, if thou hast rested in Jesus, then the *Father* thinks upon thee. Thy person was in his thoughts —

*"Long ere the sun's effulgent ray,
Primeval shades of darkness drove."*

He regarded thee with thoughts of boundless love before he had fashioned the world, or wrapped it up in swaddling bands of ocean and of cloud. Eternal thoughts of love went forth of old towards all the chosen, and these have never changed. Not for a single instant has the Father ever ceased to love his people. As our Lord said, "The Father himself loveth you." Never has he grown cold in his affections towards thee, O poor and needy one. He has seen thee in his Son. He has loved thee in the Beloved. He has seen thee —

*“Not as thou stood'st in Adam's fall,
When sin and ruin covered all;
But as thou'lt stand another day,
Brighter than sun's meridian ray.”*

He saw thee in the glass of his eternal purpose, saw thee as united to his dear Son, and therefore looked upon thee with eyes of complacency. He thought upon thee, and he thinks upon thee still. When the Father thinks of his children, he thinks of thee. When the Great Judge of all thinks of the justified ones, he thinks of thee. O Christian, can you grasp the thought? The Eternal Father thinks of *you!* You are so inconsiderable, that if the mind of God were not infinite it were not possible that he should remember your existence! And yet; he *thinks upon you!* How precious ought his thoughts to be to you! The sum of them is great, let your gratitude for them be great too.

Forget not that the great *Son of God*, to whom you owe your hope, also thinks of you. It was for you that he entered into suretyship engagements or ever the earth was. It was for you, O heir of heaven, that he took upon himself a mortal body, and was born of the virgin. It was for you that he lived those thirty years of immaculate purity, that he might weave for you a robe of righteousness. For you the bloody sweat in the garden; he thought of you, he prayed for you in Gethsemane. For you were the flagellations in Pilate's hall, and the mockeries before Herod, and the blasphemous accusations at the judgment-seat of Caiaphas. For you the nails, the spear, the vinegar, and the *“Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani.”* Jesus thought of you, and died for you with as direct an aim for your salvation, as though there had not been another soul to be redeemed by his blood. And now, though he reigns exalted high, and you are “poor and needy,” yet he thinks upon you still. The glory of his present condition does not distract his thoughts from his beloved. He is lovingly thoughtful of you. When he stands up to intercede, your name glitters on his priestly breastplate with the rest of the chosen. He thinks of you when he prepares mansions for those whom his Father has blessed. He looks forward to the time when he shall gather together in one all things in heaven and in earth that are in him, and he counts you among them. Christian, will not this comfort you, that the Son of God is constantly thinking upon you?

We must not forget the love of the *Spirit*, to whom we are so wondrously indebted, he cannot do otherwise than think upon us, for he dwelleth in us, and shall be with us. If he dwells in us he cannot be unmindful of us. It is

his office to be the Comforter, to help our infirmities, to make intercession for us according to the will of God. So let us take the three thoughts, and bind them together. "I am poor and needy, but I have a part in the thoughts of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." What fuller cause for comfort could we conceive?

We have answered the question "*who?*" let us now turn to "*what?*" "The Lord thinketh upon, me." He does not say, "The Lord will uphold me, provide, for me, defend me." The declaration that he "thinketh upon me." is quite enough. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these, things, says our Lord, as if it was quite clear that for our heavenly Father to know is to act. We poor shortsighted and short-armed creatures often know the needs of others, and would help if we could, but we are quite unable; it is never so with God, his thoughts always ripen into deeds. Perhaps, O tried believer, you have been thinking a great deal about yourself of late, and about your many trials, so that you lie awake of nights, mourning over your heavy cares. "alas!" you think, "I have no one to advise me and sympathize with me." Let this text come to you as a whisper, and do you paraphrase in it into a soliloquy, "I am poor and needy, this is true, and I cannot plan a method for supplying my needs, but a mightier mind than mine is cogitating for me; the infinite Jehovah thinketh upon me; he sees my circumstances, he knows the bitterness of my heart, he knows me altogether, and his consideration of me is wise, tender, and gracious. His thoughts are wisdom itself. When I think it is a poor, little, weak, empty head that is thinking, but when God thinks, the gigantic mind which framed the universe, is thinking upon me." Have you attained to the idea of what the thoughts of God must be? the pure Spirit who cannot make mistakes, who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind, thinketh upon us; he does not act without deliberation, does not come to our help in inconsiderate haste, does not do as we do with a poor man when we throw him a penny to be rid of him, but he thoughtfully deals with us." "Blessed is he that considereth the poor," saith the psalmist — those who take up the case of the poor, weigh it, and remember it, are blessed. This is what the Lord does for us "Yet the Lord thinketh upon me, considers my case, judges when, and how, and after what sort it will be most fitting to grant me relief. "The Lord thinketh upon me." Beloved, the shadow of this thought seems to me like the wells of Elim, full of refreshment, with the seventy palm trees yielding their ripe fruit. You may sit down here and drink to your full, and then go on your way rejoicing.

However poor and needy you may be, the Lord thinketh at the present moment upon you.

We have spoken upon who and what, and now we will answer the enquiry *How do we know that the Lord thinketh upon us?* “Oh!” say the ungodly, “how do you know?” They are very apt to put posing questions to us. We talk of what we know experimentally, and again they cry, “How do you know?” I will tell you how we know that God thinks upon us. We knew it, first of all, when we had a view of the Redeemer by faith, when we saw the Lord Jesus Christ hanging upon a tree for us, and made a curse for us. We saw that he so exactly suited and fitted our case that we were clear the Lord must have thought and well considered it. If a man were to send you tomorrow a sum of money, exactly the amount you owe, you would be sure that some one had been thinking upon you. And when we see the Savior, we are compelled to cry out, “O my Lord, thou hast given me the very Savior I wanted; this is the hope which my despairing soul required, and this the anchorage which my tempest-tossed bark was seeking after.” The Lord must have thought upon us, or he would not have provided so suitable a salvation for us.

We learn anew that the Lord thinks upon us when we go up to the house of God. I have heard many of you say, “We listen to the preacher, and he seems to know what we have been saying on the road; the Word comes so home to our case that surly God has been hearing our very thoughts and putting into the mind of the preacher a word in season for us.” Does not this show how the preacher’s Master has been thinking upon you? Then sit down and open the Bible, and you will frequently feel the words to be as much adapted to your case as if the Lord had written them for you alone. If instead of the Bible having been penned many hundreds of years ago, it were actually written piecemeal to suit the circumstances of the Lord’s people as they occur, it could not have been written more to the point. Our eyes have filled with tears when we have read such words as these, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” “fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee saith the Lord,” “In six troubles I will be with thee, in seven there shall no evil touch thee,” “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwelt in the land, and verily thou shall be fed,” and such like, which we could quote by hundreds. We feel that the Lord must have thought about us, or he would not have sent us such promises. Best of all, when we sit quietly at the feet of Jesus in the power of the Spirit of God, in solemn silence of the mind,

then we know that the Lord thinks upon us, for thoughts come bubbling up one after another, delightful thoughts, such as only the Holy Spirit could inspire. Then the things of Christ are sweetly taken by the Spirit, and laid home to our hearts. We become calm and still, though before we were distracted. A sweet savor fills our heart, like ointment poured forth, it diffuses its fragrance through every secret corner of our spirit. Sometimes our soul has seemed as though it were a peal of bells, and every power and passion has been set a ringing with holy joy because the Lord was there. Our whole nature has been as a harp well-tuned, and the Spirit has laid his fingers among the strings, and filled our entire manhood with music. When we have been the subjects of these marvelous influences and gracious operations, if any one had said to us that the Lord did not think upon us, we should have told them that they lied, even to their face, for the Lord had not only thought of us, but spoken to us, and enabled us by his grace to receive his thoughts, and to speak again, to him.

The Lord not think of us! Why, we have proof upon proof. He has very remarkably thought upon us in providence. Should some of us relate the memorable interferences of providence on our behalf they would not be believed; but they are facts for all that. William Huntingdon wrote a book called, "The Bank of Faith," which contains in it a great many very strange things, no doubt, but I believe hundreds and thousands of God's tried people could write "Banks of Faith" too, if it came to that, for God has often appeared for his saints in such a way that if the mercy sent had been stamped with the seal of God, visible to their eyes, they could not have been more sure of its coming from him than they were when they received it. Yes, answered prayers, applied promises, sweet communings, and blessed deliverances in providence, all go to make us feel safe in saying, "yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

At this point we will close our meditation, when we have remarked that those who are not poor and needy, may well envy in their hearts those who are. You who have abounding riches, who feel yourselves to be wealthy in goodness, you who feel as if you could afford to look down upon most people in the world, you who are so respectable, and decorous, so deserving, I beseech you, note well that the text does not say a word about you. You are not poor, and you are not needy, and you do not think upon the Lord, and the Lord does not think upon you. Why should he? "The whole have no need of a physician." "Christ did not come to call you. He said he came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Shall I

tell you that it is your worst calamity that you have such an elevated idea of your own goodness? Whereas you say, “we see,” you are blindest of all; and whereas you boast that you are righteous, there is in that self-righteousness of yours the very worst form of sin, for there is no sin that can be greater than that of setting up your own works in competition with the righteousness of Christ. I bear you witness that you have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for you, being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, go about to establish your own righteousness, and your efforts will end in terrible disappointment. I pray you cast away all reliance upon your own works. Tear up, once for all, all that you have been spinning for these many years. Your fears, your prayers, your church-goings, your chapel-goings, your confirmation, your baptism, your sacraments; have done with the whole rotten mass as a ground of confidence. It is all quicksand which will swallow you up if you rest, upon it. The only rock upon which you must build, whoever you may be, is the rock of the finished work of Jesus. Come now, and rest upon God’s appointed Savior, the Son of God, even though you may not have felt as you could desire your own poverty and need. If you mourn that you do not mourn as you should, you are one of the poor and needy, and are bidden to turn your eyes to the Lamb of God and live.

I would to God that everyone of us were poor and needy in ourselves and were rich in faith in Christ Jesus! O that we had done both with sin and with self-righteousness, that we had laid both those traitors with their heads on the bloc for execution! Come, ye penniless sinners, come and receive the bounty of heaven. Come, ye who mourn your want of penitence, come and receive repentance, and every other heavenly gift, from him who is the Sinner’s Friend, exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. But you must come empty handed, and sue as the lawyers say, in *forma pauperis*, for in no other form will the Lord give ear to you. “He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree; he hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.”

*“Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large;
‘While we can call one mite our own,
We have no full discharge.*

*But let our debts be what they may,
However great or small,
As soon as we have nought to pay,
Our Lord forgives us all.”*

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

FEBRUARY 1, 1871.

A DISCOURSE UPON ONE OF THE MASTER'S CHOICE SAYINGS

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart.” Matthew 14:16.

Of course the Master was right, but he appeared to speak unreasonably. It seemed self-evident that the people very much needed to depart. They had been all day long hearing the preacher, the most of them had not broken their fast, and they were ready to faint for hunger. The only chance of their being fed was to let them break up into parties and forage for themselves among the surrounding villages. But our Lord declared that there was no necessity for them to go away from him, even though they were hungry, and famished, and in a desert place. Now, if there was no necessity for hungry hearers to go away, much less will it ever be needful for loving disciples to depart from him. If those who were hearers only — and the bulk of them were nothing more, a congregation collected by curiosity and held together by the charm of his eloquence and by the renown of his miracles — if these needed not depart, much less need they depart who are his own friends and companions, his chosen and beloved. If the crowds needed not through hunger to depart bodily, much less need any of the saints depart spiritually from their Lord. There is no necessity that our communion with Christ should ever be suspended.

*To walk with Christ from morn till eve,
In him to breathe, in him to live,*

is no mere wish, no visionary's prayer; it may be realized; we need not decline from Jesus. There is no need that the spouse of Jesus should wander from beneath the banner of his love. Mary may always sit at Jesus' feet. There is no law which says to holy fellowship, “Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther, here shalt thou cease!” There is no set hour when the

gate of communion with Christ must inevitably be closed. We may continue to come up from the wilderness, leaning on the Beloved. We need not depart. Yet is it so commonly thought to be a matter of course that we should wander from our Lord, that I shall ask for strength from heaven to combat the injurious opinion.

I. Brethren, THERE IS NOT AT THIS HOUR, to you who love the Lord, ANY PRESENT NECESSITY FOR YOUR DEPARTING FROM CHRIST.

At this moment we may truthfully say of all the saints of God, "They need not de, part." There is *nothing in your circumstances* which compels you to cease from following hard after your Lord. You are very poor, you say, but you need not depart from Christ because of penury, for in the depths of distress the saints have enjoyed the richest presence of their once houseless Lord. Being poor, your poverty at this moment may be pinching you: to be relieved from that pinch you need not break away from Jesus, for fellowship with him may be maintained under the direst extremity of want; indeed, your want increases your necessity to walk closely with your Lord, so that patience may have its perfect work, and your soul may be sustained by the mighty consolations which flow out of nearness to Jesus. Want shall not separate the soul from communion with him who hungered in the wilderness and thirsted on the cross. You tell me that in order to relieve your necessities you are compelled to exercise great care and anxiety; but all the cares which are useful and allowable are such as will allow of a continuance of fellowship with Christ. You may care as much as you ought to care — and I need not say how little that is — and yet you need not depart from him who careth for you. But you tell me that in addition to deep thought you have to spend much labor to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Yes, but you need not depart for that reason. The carpenter's Son is not ashamed of the sons of toil; he who wore the garment without seam does not despise the smock or the apron. Labor is no enemy to communion; idleness is a far more likely separator of the soul from Christ. Not to the idlers in Herod's court did Jesus reveal himself, but to hard-working fishermen by the lake of Galilee. If Satan is never far away from the idle, it is pretty plain that it is no disadvantage to be busy. A toil amounting to slavery may weaken the body, and prostrate the spirit; but even when heart and flesh fail, the heart may call the Lord its portion. There is no service beneath the sun so arduous that you need depart from Christ in it: but the rather while the limbs are weary the spirit should find

its rest in drawing nearer to him who can strengthen the weak and give rest to the laboring.

Do you tell me that you are rich? Ah, indeed, how often has this made men depart!

*“Gold and the gospel seldom do agree;
Religion always sides with poverty.”*

So said John Bunyan, and his saying is true. Too often the glitter of wealth has dazzled men’s eyes so that they could not see the beauty of Christ Jesus but, O ye few wealthy saints, ye need not depart. The camel can go through the needle’s eye, for with God all things are possible. Men have worn coronets on earth and inherited crowns in heaven, he who was the man after God’s own heart swayed a scepter. To grow rich in substance does not make it inevitable that you should become poor in grace. Do riches bring you many responsibilities and burdens, and are you so much occupied by them that your fellowship with the Lord grows slack? It should not be so; you need not depart. You can bring those responsibilities and the wealth itself to Jesus, and communion with him will prevent the gold from cankering, and the responsibility from involving you in sin. Very often the servant of God, who ministers for the church of Christ, finds so much to do in watching for the souls of others, and in caring for the various wants of the flock, that he is in danger of losing his own personal enjoyment of his Lord’s presence; but it need not be so. We can make all our many works subservient to our personal communion with our Lord, and as the bee flies to many flowers and gathers honey from each one, so may we out of many forms of service extract a sweet conformity to him who was ever about his Father’s business. We need not be cumbered with much serving or much suffering. Our surroundings are not to be our victors, but our subjects. We are in all these things to be more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.

Brethren, you need not depart because of anything in Christ Jesus. Those whom we love would not desire us to be always with them, and never out of their sight. A guest is very welcome, but the proverb says that after three days he is stale. A mother does not always want her child in her arms; its face is the epitome of beauty, but at eventide she is glad that those dear blue eyes no longer shine upon her; she is happy to lay her treasure in its cradle casket. We do not always wish for the company of those whom we compassionate; if they will condense their request and do their errand

rapidly, we are best content. But Jesus Christ says to each one of us, his poor dependants, his crying children, “Ye need not depart.” When we are weeping he will lay us in his bosom and give us rest; when we are famishing, he will entertain us at his royal table, till we forget our misery. He is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother in this respect, for we need not in his instance heed the wise man’s caution, “Go not into thy brother’s house in the day of thy calamity,” for we may at all times and seasons resort to him. We may ask, “Where dwellest thou?” and when we receive an answer, we may go forth and dwell with him, and make his house our home. Do you not remember his words, “Abide *in* me;” not merely “with me,” but “abide *in* me.” The closest contact may be maintained with the utmost constancy.

*Ye need not depart, ye may tarry for aye,
Unchanged is his heart, he invites you to stay;
He does not despise nor grow weary of you,
You’re fair in his eyes, and most comely to view
Then wish not to roam, but abide with your Lord,
Since he is your home, go no longer abroad;
Lie down on his breast in unbroken repose,
For there you may rest, though surrounded with foes*

II. Secondly, NO FUTURE NECESSITY EVER WILL ARISE TO COMPEL YOU TO DEPART FROM JESUS. It will always be true, “Ye need not depart.”

You do not know what your wants will be, yet though you be no prophet, your words will be true if you affirm that no want shall ever necessarily divide you from Jesus, because your wants will rather bind you to him. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” We will draw nearer to him in time of need to obtain the grace we want. We shall never be forced to go elsewhere to find supplies for our spiritual wants. There stands another trader over the way, who fain would have you deal with him — his Infallible Holiness, as he styles himself — but, ah! if you want infallibility, you need not wander from him who is “the Truth;” and if you desire holiness, you need not withdraw from him who is the Holy Child Jesus. To gain all that the superstitious profess to find in Babylon, you need not depart from the Son of David who reigns in Zion. They tell us that we must confess our sins to a priest; we will stay at home, and lay bare our hearts to the High Priest, who sprang out of Judah, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. They teach that we must receive absolution from one

chosen from among men to forgive sins; we go at once to him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission. They tell us that we should continue in morning and evening prayers; we do so, and offer our matins and our vespers where no bells call us save the bells upon our High Priest's garments. Our daily office may not be according to the use of Sarum, but it is according to the use of those who worship God in spirit and in truth. They cry up their daily sacrifice of the Mass, but in him who offered one sacrifice for sins for ever we find our all in all. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. You need not depart to pope, priest, church, or altar, for you may rest assured that there dwells in the man Christ Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, all that your spiritual wants shall need for their supply, and on no occasion, for any wants that shall by possibility arise, need you go down into Egypt, or stay yourself on Assyria.

You will experience *great trials* as well as great wants. That young man fresh from the country has come to town to live in a godless family, and last night he was laughed at when he knelt down to pray. My young friend, you need not forsake the faith, for other saints have endured severer ordeals than yours and have still rejoiced in the Lord. Yours are only the trials of cruel mockings; they were stoned and sawn asunder, yet neither persecution, nakedness, nor sword, divided them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord. Many also are those with whom providence deals severely; all God's waves and billows go over them, through much tribulation they inherit the kingdom, and everything in the future forebodes multiplied adversities, but yet they need not depart from Jesus their friend. If, like Paul, you should come to a place where two seas meet; if you should experience a double trouble, and if neither sun nor moon should give you cheer, yet you need not suspend, but may rather deepen your fellowship with the Man of Sorrows. Christ is with you in the tempest-tossed vessel, and you and those who sail with you, shall yet come to the desired haven; therefore be of good courage, and let not your hearts be troubled. The Son of God will be with you in the seven-times heated furnace. "When thou passest through the rivers I will be with thee." This proves to a demonstration that you need not depart.

You will encounter *many difficulties* between here and heaven. Those who paint the road to glory in rose-color have never trodden it. Many are the hills and dales between this Jericho and the city of the Great King. Let who will be without trials, Christians will have their fall share of them; but there

shall come no difficulty of any kind between here and paradise which shall necessitate the soul's going anywhere, but to her gracious Lord, for guidance, for consolation, for strength, or for aught besides. Little know we of the walls to be leaped or the troops to be overcome, but we know full well that never need we part from the Captain of our salvation, or call in other helpers. Death will probably befall us, at we need not depart from Jesus in the hour of our departure out of this world. On the contrary, when the death-dew lies cold on our brow we will sing, "If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now:" "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Straight on into eternity, and on, and on for ever, that word "Depart" never need cross our path. As never in eternity will the great Judge pronounce the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed," upon his saints, so never in his providence, nor in the severest trial, will he render it necessary that the saints should in any sense depart from him.

*Never, O time, in thy darkest hour
Shall I need depart from him,
Though round me thy blackest tempests lower
And both sun and moon grow dim.
Faster and faster each grief shall bind
My soul to her Lord above;
And all the woes that assail my mind
Shall drive me to rest in his love.*

There is no necessity, then, in the present, and there will be none in the future, for departing from communion with the Lord.

III. Thirdly, "They need not depart;" that is to say, NO FORCE CAN COMPEL THE CHRISTIAN TO DEPART FROM JESUS.

The world can tempt us to depart, and alas! too successfully does it seduce with its fascinating blandishments. Its frowns alarm the cowardly, and its smiles delude the unwary, but none need depart. If we have grace enough to play the man, Madam Bubble cannot lead us astray. "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." We need not be taken in the world's traps, there is one who can deliver us from the snare of the fowler. We are not ignorant of the devices of Satan and the temptations of the world; we are not *compelled* to fall from our steadfastness; and if we do

so, it is our willful fault. There is no necessity for it. Many live above the world — many in as difficult circumstances as ours. There are those in heaven who have found as hard hand-to-hand fighting in the spiritual life as we do; yet they were not vanquished, nor need we be; for the same strength which was given to them is reserved for us also. But saith one, “You do not know where I live.” Perhaps no. “You do not know what I have to endure.” cries another. Most true; but, I know where my Lord lived, and I have heard that he endured much contradiction of sinners against himself, but he did not depart from holiness, nor from love to you. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Perseverance to the end is possible to every believer; nay, it is promised him, and he may have it for the seeking. You need not depart, young friend, the world cannot drag you from Jesus, though it may entice you. Yield not, and you shall stand; for there has no temptation happened to you but such as is common to men.

Satan is a very cunning tempter of the souls of men, but though he would fain constrain you to depart from your Lord, you need not follow his bidding. Satan is strong, but Christ is stronger. His temptations are insinuating, but you are no longer in darkness that you should be deceived by him. You need not depart. Even though surprising temptation should assault you at unawares, it ought not to find you sleeping. Has not Christ said, “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch”? You will not be surprised, if holy anxiety stands sentinel to your soul. Prayer and watchfulness will warn you of the enemy’s approach, and therefore you need not be driven to forsake your Lord.

Ay, but, perhaps, it may be that in addition to the world and to Satan, you are very conscious of the terrible *depravity of your own heart*, and, indeed, that is the chief ground of fear. The heart is deceitful, prone to wander, and ready enough to depart from the living God. But you need not depart from the Master because of that. The new-born nature takes up arms against the body of sin and death, the Holy Spirit also dwells within to conquer indwelling sin. Shall not the life which is from above subdue the natural death? Shall not the Spirit purge out the old leaven? You need not depart from Jesus. It is true you have a fiery temper, but it must not prevail; there is a cure for that plague. Perhaps we are inclined to levity, but we need not let our frivolous nature reign; grace can overcome it, and will. Where sin abounded, grace doth yet more abound. There is no unconquerable sin; there is no Dagon that shall not be broken in the presence of the ark of

God, there is no temple of the Philistines which shall not fall beneath the might of our greater Samson. We need not, as the result of temperament, or because of any sin that doth so easily beset us, depart from Jesus, for grace is equal to all emergencies.

Do you call to mind that there may be another force employed beside that of the world, or of Satan, or the corruption within, namely, the lamentable *coldness of the Christian church*? Truly it is to be feared that more have departed from close walking with Christ through the chilliness of professors than from almost any other cause. Newborn children of God too often feel the atmosphere of the church to be as freezing as that of an ice-well; their holy warmth of zeal is frozen, and their limbs are stiffened into a rigor of inactivity, so that it is a marvel that they do not die — die they would were not the spiritual life immortal and eternal. But, brethren, even in the midst of the coldest church we need not depart from a near and elevated fellowship with the Lord. The church of Rome is a church defiled with error trod debased with superstition, but was there ever a nobler Christian woman in this world than Madame de la Mothe Guyon? She did not depart from Christ, though in the midst of a pestilent atmosphere. Remember, too, the names of Jansenius, and Arnold, and Pascal, and Fenelon, which are an honor to the universal church of Christ; who walked in closer communion with Jesus than those holy men? In the midst of the darkest ages there have shone forth fairest stars. There are a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. Often am I told by some brother in a country village, where the minister seems to have gone to sleep twenty years ago and has never awakened since, that he finds it very hard to rejoice in the Lord, for his Sabbaths are a burden instead of a joy. My dear brother, you want more grace, if this is your ease. You must have more vitality within if you see so much death without. You need not depart; on the contrary, by becoming an example of living near to Christ yourself, you may quicken others; for, thank God, grace is contagious as well as sin. At any rate, it is certain that though many influences may seduce us, no force can compel us to depart from Jesus.

*No power in earth or hell
Can force me to depart;
Christ is my strength unconquerable
He fortifies my heart.*

*Fixed in his love I stand,
And none shall drive me thence;
Enclosed I am within the hand
Of Love's omnipotence.*

IV. Regarded from another point, our text may teach us that THERE IS NO IMPOSSIBILITY IN KEEPING CLOSE TO THE BELOVED.

Many believers think that if they have fellowship every now and then with Jesus, with long intervals between, they are quite as much advanced as need be, and have probably reached as far as human nature is ever likely to go. An affectation of superfine godliness is suspicious, but, at the same time, a higher standard of religion can be maintained, and ought to be maintained than is commonly seen among professors at this time. We ought to attain to such a walk with God, to so calm, and serene a frame, that the light which shines upon our pathway shall be constant and clear. Enoch walked with God for hundreds of years, and cannot a man walk with God for twenty years? Enoch lived in the dark age of the world comparatively; cannot we who live under the gospel continuously walk with God? Enoch begat sons and daughters, and so had all the cares of a household, and yet he walked with God; cannot we, who have the like cares, yet still, by divine grace, be enabled to maintain unbroken communion? I know the place is high where they stand who consciously abide with Christ, but will you not strive to climb there and bathe your foreheads in the everlasting sunlight of Jehovah's face? I know it would require most jealous walking, but you serve a jealous God, and he demands holy jealousy from you. Oh, the joy of living in the embrace of Jesus, and never departing from it! Oh, the bliss of sitting always at his feet, abiding with the Bridegroom, and listening to his voice! Surely the gain is worth the exertion, and the prize is worthy of the struggle. Let us not, since the attainment is not impossible, murmur at the difficulty, but rather by faith let us ask that we may begin to-night to achieve the result and continue to achieve it, till we come to see the face of Christ in heaven. Others have done so; why should not we?

Brethren, the way to maintain fellowship with Christ is simple. If you desire to retain in your mouth all day the flavor of the wines on the lees well refined, take care that you drink deep by morning devotion. Do not waste those few moments which you allot to morning prayer. Lay a text on your tongue, and like a wafer made with honey, it shall sweeten your soul till nightfall. During the day, when you can do so, think about your

Redeemer, his person, his work. Seek to him, pray to him, ask him to speak to you. All the day long, lean on the Beloved. During the day serve him, say, "Lord, how can I serve thee in my calling?" Consecrate the kitchen, consecrate the market-room; make every place holy, by glorifying the Lord there. Converse much with him, and it will not be impossible for you to abide in him from the year's beginning to its close. You need not depart. There is no mental or spiritual impossibility in the maintenance of unbroken communion, if the Holy Spirit be your helper.

*'Tis not too high for grace,
Though nature fail to climb;
Rise till you always view his face
In fellowship sublime.*

*'Tis not too much for grace
To hold a life-long stay;
You need not leave the sacred place,
But rest therein for aye.*

V. Once more. We need not depart; that is to say, THERE IS NO REASON THAT CAN BE IMAGINED WHICH WOULD RENDER IT A WISE, AND PROPER, AN GOOD THING FOR A CHRISTIAN TO DEPART FROM CHRIST.

Suppose that the search after happiness be the great drift of our life, as the old philosophers assert, then we need not depart from Jesus to win it, for he is heaven below. You desire pleasure, forget not that the pleasures of God which are in Christ, his joy, the joy that fills his great heart, these are more than enough to fill your heart. I sometimes hear people say, as an excuse for professors going to doubtful places of amusement, "You know they must have some recreation." Yes, I know, but the re-creation which the Christian experienced when he was born again, has so completely made all things new to him, that the vile rubbish called recreation by the world is so vapid to him, that he might as well try to fill himself with fog as to satisfy his soul with such utter vanity. No; the Christian finds happiness in Christ Jesus, and when he wants pleasure, he does not depart from Jesus.

Perhaps it is said that we require a little excitement now and then, for excitement gives a little fillip to life, and is as useful to it as stirring is to a fire. I know it, and I trust you may have excitement, for the medicinal power of a measure of exhilaration and excitement is great, but you need not depart from Christ to get it, for there is such a thing as the soul's dancing at the sound of his name, while all the sanctified passions are lifted

up in the ways of the Lord. Holy mirth will sometimes so bubble up, and overflow in the soul, that the man will say, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth." Joy in Christ; can rise to ecstasy and soar aloft, to bliss. If you desire to wear the highest crown of joy, you need not depart from Christ.

But it is said, "We require food for our intellect; a man needs to develop his intellectual faculties, he must needs learn that which will enlarge and expand his mind." Certainly, by all manner of means. But, O beloved brother, you need not depart from Christ to get this, for the science of Christ crucified is the most excellent, comprehensive and sublime of all the sciences. It is the only infallible science in the circle of knowledge. Moreover, by all true science you will find Christ honored, and not dishonored, and your learning, if it be true learning, will not make you depart from Christ, but lead you to see more of his creating and ruling wisdom. The profoundest astronomer admires the Sun of Righteousness; the best-taught geologist has no quarrel with the Rock of Ages; the greatest adept in mathematics marvels at him who is the sum total of the universe; he who knows the most of the physical, if he knows aright, loves the spiritual and reverences God in Christ Jesus. To imagine that to be wise one needs forsake the Incarnate Wisdom, is insanity. No, to reach the highest degree of attainment in true learning, there is no reason for departing from Christ.

"We must have friends and acquaintances," says one. You need not depart from Christ, to get them. We admit that a young woman does well to enter the marriage state; a young man is safer and better for having a wife; but my dear young friends, you need not break Christ's law, and depart from him in order to find a good husband or a good wife. His rule is that you should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; it is a wise and kind rule, and is an assistance rather than a hindrance to a fit marriage. "But," says one, "I do not intend to depart from Christ, though I am about to marry an unconverted person." Rest assured that you are departing from Jesus by that act. I have never yet met with a single case in which marriages of this kind have been blessed of God. I know that young women say, "Do not be too severe, sir, I shall bring him round." You will certainly fail. You are sinning in marrying under that idea. If you break Christ's law, you cannot expect Christ's blessing. To be happy in future life with a suitable partner you need not depart from Jesus. There is nothing in life you can want that is truly desirable, nothing that can promote your

welfare, nothing that is really good or you, that can ever make it necessary for you to depart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, if this be true, do not some of us feel very guilty? I could weep to think that I have so often departed from close fellowship with my Lord and Master, when I need not have done it. I am cast down and weary and cumbered with much serving occasionally. I know my faith is in Christ; but I have not the calm, unstaggering, faith I desire to have. But I know that with a thousand cares and I have ten thousand, I need not for a moment lose serenity and peace of mind, if I can reach the place which by God's grace I will reach yet. Do you not feel ashamed that your family troubles, and perhaps your family joys, have taken you off from your Savior? Some of you have a great deal of leisure, and yet you slide away from Christ. Let us be ashamed together; but let us remember that if we have departed from Christ and the enjoyment of his fellowship, we can offer no excuse by saying we could not help it while this verse stands true. We do it willfully, we do it sinfully. It is not to be thrust on the back of circumstances; it cannot be laid on the devil, nor blamed to this, nor blamed to that, it is our own fault. We need not depart; there never was any need for it, and there never will be. May God's grace descend mightily upon us, so that we may henceforth abide in our Lord. May those who know him not be led to seek him by faith even now and find him, and then even they shalt not need to depart from him at the last.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

MARCH 1, 1871.

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOLS

IT is believed that since the year 1851 the number of Sunday schools, of teachers, and of scholars, has more than doubled in this country. In America, however, the Sabbath-schools are not only more numerous and more largely attended, but are regarded as of greater importance than in England. All who pay flying visits to that country — and it will soon be a sign of heterodoxy among Nonconformist ministers not to have made a Transatlantic tour — are struck with the large measure of attention given to this important branch of Christian effort. We believe our American brethren are right in holding the Sabbath-school in the highest repute, and regarding it as the pet scheme of their Churches. Our English churches have been too neglectful of the children, and as a consequence, we lose many adults who might be worshippers at our half-deserted chapels. The unceasing devotion of ministers and Christians generally to the Sabbath-schools of the United States is manifested in a variety of ways. It falls to our lot to scan many American religious papers, and there is scarcely any that do not devote one of the pages of their large broad-sheets to lessons, illustrations, and counsels for teachers. The existence of this feature of their religious journalism is essential to an extensive family circulation. Moreover, the handsome, well-lighted and ventilated and furnished school-rooms are a marked contrast to the delightful dungeons in which so many thousands of English children are immured every Lord's-day. In this respect, it is to be hoped that we are improving, if we may judge from the published accounts of new school-rooms opened, or old ones enlarged and rendered more comfortable. An American minister writes in one of the papers, "London has what it calls Sunday-schools, but they are generally only a milder form of inquisition. The school of Doctor Cumming's church was without picture or pleasant sight, and had *thirty-seven scholars*. Spurgeon's school-room is a sepulcher. The seats are narrow and without backs, and remind one of the Irishman's remark on a fine cemetery, that he thought; it 'a very healthy place to be buried in.' The people in England do

not much like to have an American come into their Sabbath-schools. They always apologize, and say, "You are ahead of us in these things."

Now, we cannot vouch for the accuracy of this statement, so far as it concerns the apocalyptic doctor, but we must admit that so far as it concerns the Tabernacle "this witness is true." London grows more foggy and dark every year at its center, as the range of smoke-producing houses extends; and hence huge rooms like ours, built underground, become less and less suitable for school purposes. Would to God the funds were forthcoming for suitable buildings both for the School and the College.

In the matter of literature suited for Sunday-school teachers we are very hopefully progressing. The three hundred thousand teachers in Great Britain have opportunities in the present day of acquiring an amount of Biblical knowledge which was denied to most ministers of the past generation. The Sunday-school Union has in this respect been a source of the greatest blessing to the rising race. Its six periodicals are stated to have a united monthly circulation of two hundred and fifty thousand; and of late, a number of most useful commentaries, magazines of practical Sunday-school information, and bound works have been issued by independent publishers at a cheap price, and have found a large and remunerative sale.

One of the most laborious workers in this field is the Rev. J. Comper Gray, whose compilations have shown marvelous industry and literary skill. His most recent work, entitled "The Sunday-school World" an encyclopedia of facts and principles if not useful in the class, will be valuable to all who need suggestions upon the way in which to improve the Sabbath-school. It is a volume of extracts from writers who have had practical acquaintance with the various departments of Sunday-school labor, and the facts and opinions given will be of considerable service to all who are engaged in this noble work.

It may be a somewhat delicate task, where all the laborers are voluntary and their labor largely self-denying, to offer criticism upon their qualifications. Yet as we believe that every Christian has some sphere of usefulness for which he is qualified, and that he is not qualified for every undertaking, so we think it is possible for him to get into a niche which others are better fitted to occupy, and thus may commit the double mischief of wasting his own energies in a position for which he is unsuited, and keeping another out of the place, who might have been abundantly successful. Every school, small or great, should be well organized, but a

mistake at the outset is sometimes disastrous. How many Sabbath-schools have suffered beyond hope of recovery through incompetent rulers! All the qualifications requisite for a successful superintendent are not often found in one person. A man who rules his own household with discretion and pleasantness may not always be able to guide the affairs of a school with wisdom. The mind must have been somewhat trained to the task; there should be a knowledge of human nature, an aptness to lead, and then familiarity with details, a skill to grasp all the questions that affect the daily working of the school. It needs a special call to make a superintendent, almost as much as to make a minister. A man may be eloquent at the desk, able to present the church with well-prepared reports, and yet be deficient in those qualifications which command confidence in teachers and obedience in scholars. He may be pious, and yet weak; amiable, and yet over-diffident; or he may be vigorous, but offensive; stern, and therefore repelling. The last form of fault is usually one which brings the whole business to a dead lock in a short time, for voluntary workers will not long submit to be addressed in a domineering manner. We have known some cry out for "discipline," who would not be for a week under certain martinet superintendents without rising in open rebellion. Teachers are often a touchy race, and need great discretion in those who are at their head. A superintendent by either ruling too much or too little may damage the school; and there are always a number of mutinous spirits ready to assist in the operation. Much, however, must always depend upon him; for he is the man at the wheel, and to a great degree steers the vessel or lets her drive. His influence will be very great, or distressingly small; and in spite of the willingness of the teachers the school may never flourish when the superintendent is ill-fitted for his office. Our own experience and observation lead us to the conclusion that "it is difficult to raise a Sabbath-school higher than its superintendent." It is not enough that he be a good teacher; he must be a wise administrator; for his gifts to teach will be brought into requisition at odd times and unexpected moments, and his position as constitutional ruler compels him to occupy a post in which enthusiasm must be excited and sometimes curbed. Who will deny there is much truth in the following sketch: — The superintendent "does not forget that the whole body of teachers, old and young, will come late if he is late; and that if he is punctual they will all, excepting two or three incorrigible heedless ones, be punctual too. When he arrives at school, it is understood that he has come with a definite purpose and not to let things straggle along, the best way they can. With courteous firmness he goes about the

business of the school. He, as pleasantly as possible, corrects what is wrong, according to the best of his ability. By some apparent magic he smooths down the crusty teacher, and quiets the turbulent one. He has succeeded in bringing to nought the plans of Mr. Books, the librarian, who in two years had invented fifteen new ways of keeping the library, each worse than its predecessor. He has quieted Mr. Whimsick, the singing man, who bought all the new flash tune books as soon as published, and insisted that the school should sing them all through. And yet he keeps all these people in a good humor." We remember one such superintendent in our days of schoolhood; he is now a minister. Of great enthusiasm himself, he could inspire others with a like zeal; the teachers were his hearty friends, the cooperation was mutual and their kind spirit seemed the shadow of his own. His executive ability won respect, and his unflinching skill confidence; his goodness claimed admiration, and his gentleness excited love. Did not the children like him? for his sake they would obey teachers of less self-control, and greater indulgence; and whenever he had a word to say, all were assured that it would be the right word at the right moment. No aspiring orator who deigned to visit the school, ostensibly to encourage the dear friends, but actually to depress them and talk away all the lessons of the class, was privileged to mount the desk a second time; no critical, sour, church-visitor who must report something, and who felt it his duty to report on anything but that which was pleasing in everyone's eyes, was permitted to dictate, or dishearten the band of workers; the school was the superintendent's family — he had to provide *for* their profit and pleasure, and to provide *against* the numerous accidents which injudiciousness and self will might bring. And, as a consequence, the school flourished, the children received lessons which they now as grown-up people cherish; and there is still a corner in their memories for him who loved so well the souls of his scholars.

Dr. Todd has ruled that a superintendent should be a man of age. We doubt it. As a rule, the man of earnest piety who is in the strength of his manhood, is better qualified to sympathize with the work of the teacher and to understand his difficulties than even the Christian of hoary head and matured experience. But given the necessary gifts, the question of age may be safely left to take care of itself. Some men are wiser at thirty than others at sixty; and in a position requiring physical endurance, bodily strength is no mean requisite.

We have observed a tendency to lament the fewness of really qualified teachers in Sabbath schools. That there is ground for the complaint we are loth to believe, and that some are most distressingly incompetent is evidenced by the failure of their efforts to secure even the respect, of those whom they essay to teach. The common remark is, alas, too true, "These are the best we can get," for the office of teacher is not always an object of ambition to those who are qualified by nature and by grace for the work. But so far from lamenting, we would rather rejoice that so many thousands of Christian young men and women, who have to labor hard during the week, should consecrate the Day of Rest; to the still harder work of Sunday-school instruction. Perhaps, however much of the lack of teachers so commonly deplored in large cities, proceeds from an unhealthy desire to be engaged in other and more conspicuous work. Every city pastor will call to remembrance cases in which young men well qualified for the instruction of growing lads, aspire after street and mission preaching, for which their talents are not well adapted. Exhortations to Christian work need to be somewhat guarded, and it is but kindness plainly to dissuade many from attempting work requiring, not a higher, perhaps, but a more singular kind of ability. It is a mistake to suppose that the work of the evangelist is more honorable than that of a teacher. "The teacher," says a popular writer, "occupies a position midway between the fireside and the pulpit. The teachers are the pastor's assistants in the work of God. They aim at the same object as himself. They are pastors in miniature; they are feeding their future flocks in embryo; they are moulding the generation to come. They are the pastor's right arm. Without them and their labors, however stupendous his abilities, and whatever his industry, he must always come immeasurably short of the results otherwise attainable."

It has never been a question with us that all teachers *ought to be converted persons*, and should be members of churches. Their work is a Christian ministry, and for it piety warm and deep is essential. Archbishop Leighton observed that a minister's life is the life of his ministry, and this is no less applicable to the ministry which the teacher espouses, which is lesser in degree only, not in kind. Decided piety there ought to be in each person, but, we question the wisdom of peremptorily rejecting in every case those of whom we may be hopeful, because they have not as yet openly professed Christ. We would hope that the desire to be of service in this good work is the fruit of an intelligent affection for the truths of God.

Pious feeling there must be in any before they can fitly impart religious truths to the young.

There are two great evils in Sunday-school work which operate sadly against its success; namely, want of constancy and punctuality in teachers. How a teacher can expect to achieve his desire if his place be often filled by a stranger, it is not easy to say. For a minister so to act would be disastrous to any church; it is equally bad in a teacher and damaging to his labors. Inconstancy in the teacher leads to indifference and irregularity on the part of the best disposed child; while no impression of the instructor's earnestness can be left on the scholar's mind, for his own sake we would counsel constancy of service. Fickleness fritters away the best motives and renders worthless the most zealous effort. The inconstant teacher not only undoes that which he has succeeded in doing, but loses all the results which perseverance would have secured. The mischief wrought by want of punctuality is equally grievous. This is an evil due mainly to want of thought, and not of heart. Time for Christian labor is at any season precious; each moment when children are waiting for instruction is golden. Such opportunities are too valuable to be lightly diminished by minutes of disorderly "waiting for teacher." Every teacher should regard these two points of constancy and punctuality as indispensable to his fulfilling his duty with decency, much more with success. Whatever may be the weather, the children who attend will hardly make excuses for a teacher's absence, and there will be the feeling that if a child could be in class, there could scarcely be a sufficiently cogent reason for the absence of the grown-up instructor. Some teachers cannot pledge themselves to this, and for want of others the superintendent is compelled to accept their assistance; there are uses to which these maimed soldiers can be put, but they are the irregulars in the army, and can be treated only as reserves.

Much has been recently said upon the increasing necessity for diligent painstaking preparation for the class. It has been urged that the growing intelligence of the present day, and the changes which the New Education Act will effect, demand a different and a higher kind of teaching. If this kind of tall talk were to be echoed by pastors and superintendents, some of the most useful teachers we know might be disposed, in sheer fright, to relinquish their efforts altogether. Everyone's ideal of pulpit excellence should be high; and the ideal of instruction in the Sabbath-school ought to be proportionately elevated; there should be special preparation for the class, and the best training which can be given by the Teachers' Bible

Meeting; but if in this desire for more learned teachers, the great object of the Sunday-school movement be forgotten — namely, the conversion of the little ones, the pressing home upon the heart and conscience the simple truths of Christ's gospel the change will become a snare. We feel sure that all that is needed is to make as much use as time will permit of the many helps which are within the humblest teacher's reach. The lesson papers, the cheap commentaries, the many publications which explain the customs of Oriental nations, furnish all that a teacher, even in the higher classes, can possibly need. Let the teacher seek by these or other aids, to understand the chapters to be read in the class, and there will be no lack of interest. A St. Louis minister gives on this point some useful advice "Take the subject, early in the week. Think about it. Pray over it. Let it undergo the process of incubation, and by the time you have brooded over it a week it will be warm in your own heart, and be presented warm, fresh, and glowing to your scholars' hearts. Gather illustrations. Jot down incidents in your note book incidents occurring in the home circle, in the street, everywhere. Consider your children their habits, characters, circumstances that you may know what things will most impress them. Adapt your teaching concentrate. Take out the one cardinal thought of the lesson, and press it upon the mind and heart. Study the art of questioning, but never take the question-book into the class. Close the lesson with your best and strongest thought. Keep the best to the last. In brief, yet the lesson, impart the lesson, impress the lesson." Some fail in attempting too much, others in imparting too little; but he who prayerfully keeps his end in view is not likely to miss it. Teachers should be pre-eminently men and women of prayer; without it, they will not gain renewed strength to meet discouragements, or see those fruits of their labors which constitute their best reward.

The evil most intolerable to a child is that of dullness. The teacher ought not to be dull, for the heaviest mind may surely, by due care and perseverance, conquer its prosiness. What a change may be observed in the countenances of children when a dull teacher surrenders his class for an afternoon to a more lively brother! The children are wide awake and volatile, and it goads them to desperation to see a yawning teacher fulfilling his duties in a perfunctory manner. It is a punishment for them to remain under such control the hours are dreary, the teaching a bore, and the school-room a prison, where they are kept for awhile in close confinement, because it is Sunday. Many schemes have been suggested to secure the

interest of the children, but unless the interest be *in* the teacher all means will fail. The man must gain the heart and the willing ear, and the children, so far from complaining of weariness, will only regret the shortness of the school hours. Our female friends are more successful here than our brethren, because, as a rule, they have more tact and life, a nimbler wit, and a gentler manner. They make fewer speeches, eschew heads and sub-heads, deal more in surprises and in the home language of children. The interest which the children will feel in the teacher will be in proportion to the interest which the teacher feels in the children. Great sympathy is needed; for, says an Arab proverb, "The neck is bent by the sword, but heart is bent by heart." Perhaps, however, much of the dullness which adheres to Sunday-school addresses might be relieved by the adoption of some expedients that have long been in use in America. The black board there is almost a mania; indeed, one enthusiast declares that "the motto for all good teachers is — to the black board with everything." "We would not undertake to conduct a Sabbath-school," says an experienced Sunday-school writer, "without a good black board." The board is indispensable to the dayschool, and it may be greatly useful in fixing the eye upon the prominent texts or thoughts of the lessons for the day in the Sabbath-school. Pictures and even objects should be frequently used. As in preaching, so in teaching, all legitimate means must be employed to secure success. Stereotyped plans must be discarded, and old prejudices renounced, if by any means we may save some.

No statistics will fairly represent the direct results of Sunday-school effort. Has it not fostered a greater respect for the Sabbath-day? Has it not improved the public morals, elevated the public sentiment? Unconverted men and women may trace much of that which has helped to make them reputable members of society to the Sabbath-school. The member for Stockport has said that in his borough, where there are many and large schools (one numbers three thousand children), there is a less percentage of crime than in any borough in Britain. We do not know what has been the experience of the Editor of this magazine, but it is no small result of voluntary effort that in twenty years' pastorate Mr. Chown, of Bradford, has received into his church eight hundred persons, one-half of whom ascribe their conversion to the Sunday-school. A writer in the *Freeman* Baptist paper estimates that only ninety-three in every thousand, or a little over nine per cent of scholars in the Sabbath-school, make open profession of faith in Christ; but this is admitted to be a rough estimate, and does not

include the still larger numbers of grown up people who trace their first religious impressions to the Sunday-school. The same writer says that only seventy-five per cent of the teachers have been former scholars, while eighty-four per cent are church members. These figures, encouraging in some respects, may well awaken serious thought and anxious enquiry. Have we tolerated unconverted teachers, and have we neglected to press home upon them decision for Christ? Ought not a special interest to be felt towards such? The fact that they are ready to be of service to the little ones should encourage their fellow teachers to address them on the all-important matter of personal piety.

To all teachers we have this parting word. If you have not succeeded in winning souls, agonize with God until you do. Learn from books and from examples; reform, amend, study, pray, labor, and be not content till you can say to the Lord, "Here am I and the children thou has given me." If on the other hand you have been honored to be a soul-winner, let your watchword be "Onward." We commend to you the following incident which may serve to excite in you a determination that with God's help you will —

*“Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge your way.”*

At the battle of Meeanee, an officer who had been doing good service came up to General Sir Charles Napier and said, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard!" The general looked at him, but made no reply, and turning round, began to speak to some one else; upon which the officer repeated, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard!" The General turned sharp round upon him, and said, "*Then take another.*"

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

APRIL 1, 1871.

ALONE, YET NOT ALONE

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” John 16: 31, 32.

Do ye now believe?” Then it seems that faith held them fast to Christ, but as soon as fear prevailed they were scattered, and left their Master alone. Faith has an attracting and upholding power. It is the root of constancy, and the source of perseverance, under the power of God’s Spirit. While we believe we remain faithful to our Lord; when we are unbelieving we are scattered, every man to his own. While we trust, we follow closely; when we give way to fear, we ungratefully forsake our Lord. May the Holy Spirit maintain our faith in full vigor, that it may nourish all our other graces! Faith being strong, no faculty of the inner man will languish, but if faith declines, the energy of our spiritual nature speedily decays. If ye believe not, ye shall not be established, but “the just shall live by faith,” to the fullest force of life.

This being noted, our meditation shall now be fixed alone upon the Savior’s loneliness, and the measure in which the believer is brought into the same condition.

THE LONELINESS OF THE SAVIOR. Note *the fact of it*. He was left alone — alone when most as man he needed sympathy. Solitude to him during his life was often the cause of strength; he was strong in public ministry because of the hours spent in secret wrestling with God on the lone mountain side; but when he came to the hour of his agony his perfect humanity pined after human sympathy, and it was denied him. He was alone in the garden; though he took the eleven with him, yet must he leave

eight of them outside at the garden gate; and the three, the choice, the elite of them all, though they were brought somewhat nearer to his passion, yet even they must remain at a stone's cast distance. None could enter into the inner circle of his sufferings, where the furnace was heated seven times hotter. In the bloody sweat and the agony of Gethsemane the Savior trod the winepress alone. They might have watched with him, wept with him, prayed for him, but they did neither. They left his lone prayer to ascend to heaven unattended by sympathetic cries. He was alone too when put upon his trial. False witnesses were found against him, but no man stood forward to protest to the honesty, quietness, and goodness of his life. Surely one of the many who had been healed by him, or of the crowds that had been fed by his bountiful hand, or likelier still some of those who had received the pardon of their sins and enlightenment of their minds by his teaching might have come forward to defend him. But no, his coward followers are silent when their Lord is slandered. He is led to slaughter, but no pitying voice entreats that he may be delivered; true, his judge's wife persuades her husband to have nothing to do with him, and her vacillating husband offers to liberate him if the mob will have it so, but none will raise the shout of "loose him and let him go." He was not alone literally upon the cross, yet he was really so, in a deep spiritual sense. Though a few loving ones gathered at the cross' foot, yet these could offer him no assistance, and probably dared not utter more than a tearful protest. Perhaps the boldest there was that dying thief who called him, "Lord," and expostulated with his brother malefactor, saying, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Few indeed were the voices that were lifted up for him. From the time when he bowed amid the deep shades of the Mount of Olives, till the moment when he entered the thicker darkness of the valley of death-shade, he was left to suffer alone.

Here was the fact, what was *the reason for it*. We conclude that fear overcame the hearts of his disciples. It is natural that men should care for their lives. They pushed this instinct of self-preservation beyond its legitimate sphere, and when they found that the Master was taken, and that probably the disciples might share his fate, they each one, in the panic of the moment, fled in haste. They were not all traitors, but they were all cowards for the time. They meant not to desert their Lord, they even scorned the thought when it was put to them in calmer moments, but they were taken by surprise, and like a flock of sheep they fled from the wolf. They rallied after a little, and mustered courage enough to follow him afar

off; they did not quite forget him; they watched him to his later end, they kept together after he was dead; they united to bury him, and they came together instinctively on the first day of the week. They had not cast off altogether their loyalty to their Lord and Master, for he was still keeping those whom the Father had given him that none of them might be lost, yet fear had defeated their faith for awhile, and they had left him alone.

There was a deeper reason, however, for this; it was a condition of his sufferings that he should be forsaken; desertion was a necessary ingredient in that cup of vicarious suffering which he had covenanted to drink for us. We deserved to be forsaken, and therefore he must be. Since our sins against man deserved that we should be forsaken of men, he bearing our sins against man is forsaken of men. It cannot be that a runner should enjoy true friendship. Sin is a separating thing, and so when Christ is made the sin-bearer his friends must leave him. Besides this was one jewel in the crown of his glory. It was said in triumph by the great hero of old, who typified our Lord, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me." To make that true in the severest sense, it was needful that the Captain of our salvation should by his single arm defeat the whole of hell's battalions. His the sole laurels of the war; for his own right hand and his holy arm have gotten him the victory.

Can you for a moment enter into *the sorrow of that loneliness!* There are men to whom it is a small matter to be friendless; their coarse minds scorn the gentle joys of fellowship. Sterner virtues may tread beneath their iron heel the sweet flowers of friendship; and men may be so defiantly self-reliant that like lions they are most at home amid congenial solitudes. Sympathy they scorn as womanish, and fellowship as a superfluity. But our Savior was not such: he was too perfect a man to become isolated and misanthropical. His grand gentle nature was full of sympathy towards others, and therefore sought it in return. You hear the voice of grief at the loss of brotherly sympathy in the mournful accents of that gentle rebuke, "what, could ye not watch with me one hour?" How could they sleep whilst he must sweat; how could they repose while he was exceeding sorrowful even unto death? He showed the greatness of his soul even in its depression when he lovingly excused them by saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

How sad to him it was that they should desert him! The brave Peter and all the rest of them, all taking to their heels! Worse still was it to receive the

traitor's kiss with the word, "Master, Master;" twice repeated, as the son of perdition betrayed his friend to win the bloodmoney! David lamented the villainy of Ahithophel, but the Savior even more keenly felt the treachery of Judas, inasmuch as he was of a more tender spirit than the Son of Jesse. For Peter to say he knew him not and with cursing and swearing to deny him three times in succession, this was cruel. There was such an element of deliberation about that denial, that it must have cut the Savior to the very quick. But where was John — John who leaned on his bosom — that disciple whom Jesus loved — where was John? Did he not say a word, nor interject a single syllable for his dear friend? Has Jonathan forgotten his David? The Master might have said, "Thy love to me was wonderful passing the love of women," but alas, John is gone; he has nought to say for his Master!" Though he remains at the cross' foot to the last, yet even he cannot defend him. Jesus is all alone, all alone; and the sorrow of his lonely heart none of us can fully fathom.

This is a painful meditation, and therefore let us *notice the result of our Savior's loneliness*. Did it destroy him? Did it overwhelm him? It pained him but it did not dismay him. "Ye shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone" saith he, "because the Father is with me." The effect of that solace in his soul was wonderful. Our Savior did not turn aside from the purpose of redeeming his people, though they proved so unworthy of being redeemed. Might he not well have said, "You have forsaken me, I will forsake you"? It would but have seemed natural for him to have exclaimed, "You are types of all my people, you care little enough for me: I have come into this world to save you, but you do not care to rescue me; you have deserted me, and behold I leave you to your fate." But no, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end;" and if they forsook him, yet he fulfilled to each one of them his ancient promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The baptism wherewith he was to be baptized he would still accomplish, and be immersed in the floods of death for their sake.

Nor did he merely exhibit constancy to his purpose: he displayed great courageousness of spirit. He was all alone, but yet how peaceful he was! The calmness of the Savior is wonderful. When he was brought before Herod, he would not utter one hasty or complaining word. His perfect silence was the fittest eloquence, and therefore he was majestically mute. Before Pilate, until it was needful to speak, not a syllable could be extorted from him. All along in patience he possessed his soul. After the first

struggle in the garden, he was quiet as a lamb, surrendering himself to the sacrifice without a struggle. His solemn deliberate self-surrender in his loneliness has an awfulness of love in it, fitter for thought than words. His brave spirit was not to be cowed, though it stood at bay alone, and all the dogs of hell raged around.

Mark, too, not only the constancy and the courageousness of our Savior, but his matchless unselfishness. For while they forsook him and fled, he forgave them in his inmost heart, and cherished no resentment. When he rose again his conduct to these runaways was that of a loving shepherd or a tender friend; he fully forgave them all. If he did mention it, it was only in that gentle way in which he inquired of Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Reminding him of his failure for his lasting improvement and benefit, and giving him an honorable commission as the token that it was all condoned.

Enquire awhile *the reason for this result*. Why it was that our Savior, in his loneliness, thus stood so constant, and courageous, and forgiving? Was it not because he fell back into the arms of his Father when he was forsaken by his friends? It was even so. "*The Father is with me.*" Look carefully at that word. As the Savior uttered it, it was true that the Father's presence was with him, but I beg you to remember that it was not true in every sense all the way through his passion. The Father was not with him on the cross in the sense of manifested personal favor. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" shows that our Savior did not, at that time, derive comfort from any present revelation of the love of God to him as man. The conscious presence and display of love were taken away. There is another meaning, then, in these words — "Because the Father is with me;" and, surely it is this *the Father was always with him his design*. The enterprise he had undertaken was the salvation of his people, and the Father was wholly and ever with him in that respect. In that sense he was with him even when he deserted him. It was but a form of the Father's being with Christ that he should be forsaken of God. We are not intending quite a paradox, and if it sound so, let us expound it. It was in pursuance of their one great design that the Father forsook the Son. Both were resolved upon the same gracious purpose, and therefore the Father must forsake the Son, that the Son's purpose and the Father's purpose in our redemption might be achieved. He was with him when he forsook him; with him in design when he was not with him in the smiles of his face. Furthermore, the Father was always with our Lord *in his co-working*. When Jesus was in

Gethsemane, and the staves and lanterns were being prepared, the God of Providence was permitting and arranging all. When Jesus was taken before Caiaphas, and Herod, and Pilate, and Annas, Providence was allowing all things to be done; the Father was with Christ fulfilling the prophecies, answering the types and accomplishing the covenant. Through the whole sad chapter it might be said, "My Father worketh hitherto." Even amid the thick darkness and the dire suffering of Christ, the Father was with Christ, working those very sufferings in him, for "it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Into this fact Christ slinks as into a sea of comfort. "The Father is with me." "It is enough," saith he; "my own chosen friends forsake me, and my dearest earthly friends leave me, those whom I have purchased with my blood deny me, but my Father is with me." By a matchless exercise of faith, our Redeemer realized this, and was sustained.

We shall make practical use of our subject by considering THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS LONELINESS. No believer traverses all the road to heaven in company; lonely spots there must be here and there, though the most part to our heavenward pilgrimage is made cheerful by the society of fellow-travelers. "They go from company to company; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Christ's sheep love to go in flocks. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." We take sweet counsel together and walk to the house of God in company, yet somewhere or other on the road every man will find narrow defiles and close places where pilgrims must march in single file.

Sometimes the child of God endures loneliness arising *from the absence of godly society*. It may be in early days he mixed much with gracious persons, was able to attend many of their meetings, and to converse in private with the excellent of earth; but now his lot is cast; where he is as a sparrow alone on the housetop. No others in the family think as he does, he enjoys no familiar converse concerning his Lord, and has no one to counsel or console him. He often wishes he could find friends to whom he could open his mind. He would rejoice to see a Christian minister, or an advanced believer; but, like Joseph in Egypt, he is a stranger in a strange land. This is a very great trial to the Christian, an ordeal of the most severe character; even the strong may dread it, and the weak are sorely shaken by it. To such lonely ones our Lord's words, now before us, are commended, with the prayer that they may make them their own. "I am alone and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." When Jacob was alone, at Bethel, he laid him down to sleep, and soon was in a region peopled by spirits

innumerable, above whom was God himself. That vision made the night at Bethel the least lonely season that Jacob ever spent. Your meditations, Oh, solitary ones, as you read the Bible in secret, and your prayers as you draw near to God in your lone room, and your Savior himself in his blessed person, these will be to you the ladder. The words of God's book made living to you shall be to your mind the angels, and God himself shall have fellowship with you. If you lament your loneliness, cure it by seeking heavenly company. If you have no companions below who are holy, seek all the more to commune with the things which are in heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

God's people are frequently made lonely through *obedience to honest convictions*. It may happen that you live in the midst of Christians, but you have received light upon a part of God's word which you had neglected, either a doctrine or an ordinance, or some other matter, and having received that light, if you are as you should be, you are obedient at once to it. It will frequently result from this that you will greatly vex many good people whom you love and respect, but to whose wishes you cannot yield. Your Master's will once known, father or mother cannot stand in your way; you do not wish to be singular, or obstinate, or offensive, but you must do the Lord's will even if it sever every fond connection. Perhaps for a time prejudiced persons may almost deny you Christian fellowship: many a baptized believer has been made to know what it means, to be almost tabooed and shut out because he cannot see as others see, but is resolved to follow his conscience at all hazards. Under such circumstances, even in a godly household, a Christian who fully carries out his convictions may find himself treading a separated path. Be bold, my dear brethren, and do not flinch. Your Savior walked alone, you must do so too. Perhaps this lone obedience is to be a test of your faith. Persevere; yield not a particle of truth. These very friends who now turn their backs on you, if they are good for anything, will respect you all the more for having the courage to be honest, and perhaps the day will come when, through your example, they will be led in the same obedient way. At any rate, do not mar your testimony by hesitancy or wavering, but follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Fall back upon this truth you may displease and alienate friends, and be charged with bigotry, self-will, and obstinacy, but you are not alone when you follow the path of obedience, for the Father is with you. If what you hold is God's truth, God is with you in maintaining it. If the ordinance to which you submit was ordained of Christ, Jesus is with you in it. Care

not how either the church or the world revile, serve you your Master, and he will not desert you. With all due deference to others, pay yet greater deference to the Lord who bought you with his blood, and where he leads follow without delay; the Father will be with you in so doing.

The solitary way is appointed to believers who rise to *eminence of faith*. In these days the common run of Christians have but struggling faith. Should you sift the great mountain of visible Christianity very carefully, will you find so much as ten grains of faith in the whole? The Son of man when he comes, keen as his eyes are to discover faith, shall he find it on the earth? Here and there we meet man to whom it is given to believe in God with mighty faith. As soon as such a man strikes out a project and sets about a work which none but men of his mould would venture upon, straightway there arises a clamor "The man is over zealous," or he will be charged with an innovating spirit, rashness, fanaticism, or absurdity. Should the work go on, the opposers whisper together, "Wait a little while, and you'll see the end of all this wildfire." Have we not heard them criticize an earnest evangelist by saying, "His preaching is mere excitement, the result of it is spasmodic;" at another time, "The enterprise which he carries out is Quixotic; his designs are Utopian." What said the sober semi-faith of men to Luther? Luther had read this passage, "We are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law." He went to a venerable divine about it, and complained of the enormities of Rome. What was the good but weak brother's reply, "Go thou to thy cell, and pray and study for thyself, and leave these weighty matters alone." Here it would have ended had the brave Reformer continued to consult with flesh and blood, but his faith enabled him to go alone, if none would accompany him. He nailed up his theses on the church door, and showed that one man at least had faith in the gospel and in its God. Then trouble came, but Luther minded it not, because the Father was with him. We also must be prepared, if God gives us strong faith, to ride far ahead like spiritual Uhlans, who bravely pioneer the way for the rank and the of the army. It were well if the church of God had more of the swift sons of Asahel, bolder than lions, swifter than eagles, in God's service; men who can do and dare alone, the laggards take courage and follow in their track. These Valiant-for-truths will pursue a solitary path full often, but let them console themselves with this, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." If we can believe in God he will never be behindhand with us; if we can dare, God will do; if we can trust, God will never suffer us to be confounded, world without end. It is

sweet beyond expression to climb where only God can lead, and plant the standard on the highest towers of the foe.

Another form of loneliness is the portion of Christians when they come into *deep-soul conflict*. My brethren, you understand what I mean by that. Our faith at times has to fight for very existence. The old Adam within us rages mightily, and the new spirit within us, like a young lion, disdains to be vanquished, and so these two mighty ones contend till our spirit is full of agony. Some of us know what it is to be tempted with blasphemies we should not dare to repeat, to be vexed with horrid temptations which we have grappled with and overcome, but which have almost cost us resistance unto blood. In such inward conflicts saints must be alone. They cannot tell their feelings to others; they would not dare, and if they did their own brethren would despise or upbraid them, for the most of professors would not even know what they meant, and even those who have trodden other fiery ways would not be able to sympathize in all, but would answer them thus "These are points in which I cannot go with you." Christ alone was tempted, in all points like as we are, though without sin. No one man is tempted in all points exactly like another man, and each man has certain trials in which he must stand alone amid the rage of war, with not even a book to help him., or a biography to assist him, no man ever having gone that way before except that one man whose trail reveals a nail-pierced foot. He alone knows all the devious paths of sorrow. Yet even in such byways the Father is with us, helping, sustaining, and giving us grace to conquer at the close.

We will not, however, dwell on this aspect of solitary walking, for we have three others to mention. Many dear brethren have to endure the solitude of *unnoticed labor*. They are serving God in a way which is exceedingly useful, but not at all noticeable. How very sweet to many workers are those little corners of the newspapers and magazines which describe their labors and successes, yet some who are doing what God will think a great deal more of at the last, never saw their names in print. Yonder beloved brother is plodding away in a little country village; nobody knows anything about him, but he is bringing souls to God. Unknown to fame, the angels are acquainted with him, and a few precious ones whom he has led to Jesus know him well. Perhaps yonder sister has a little class in the Sunday school; there is nothing striking in her or in her class; now and then a little child ascends to heaven to report her success, and occasionally another comes into the church; but nobody thinks of her as a very remarkable

worker; she is a flower that blooms almost unseen, but she is none the less fragrant. Or shall we think of the humble City Missionary? The superintendent of the district knows that he goes his regular rounds, but has no idea of the earnest prayers and deep devotedness of that obscure lover of Jesus. The City Mission Magazine puts him down as trying to do his duty, but nobody knows what it costs him to cry and sigh over souls. There is a Bible woman; she is mentioned in the report as making so many visits a week, but nobody discovers all that she is doing for the poor and needy, and how many are saved in the Lord through her instrumentality. Hundreds of God's dear servants are serving him without the encouragement of man's approving eye, yet they are not alone, the Father is with them.

Never mind where you work care more about how you work. Never mind who sees, if God approves. If he smiles, be content. We cannot be always sure when we are most useful. A certain minister with very great difficulty reached a place where he had promised to preach. There was deep snow upon the ground, therefore only one hearer came. However, he preached as zealously as if there had been a thousand. Years after, when he was traveling in that same part of the country, he met a man who had been the founder of a church in the village, and from it scores of others had been established. The man came to see him, and said, "I have good reason to remember you, sir, for I was once your only hearer; and what has been done here has been brought about, instrumentally through my conversion under that sermon." We cannot estimate our success. One child in the Sabbath-school converted may turn out to be worth five hundred, because he may be the means of bringing ten thousand to Christ.

It is not the acreage you sow; it is the multiplication which God gives to the seed which will make up the harvest. You have less to do with being successful than with being faithful. Your main comfort is that in your labor, you are not alone, for God, the eternal One, who guides the marches of the stars, is with you.

There is such a thing — I would God we might reach it — as *the solitude of elevated piety*. In the plain everything is in company, but the higher you ascend the more lone is the mountain path. At this moment there must be an awful solitude on the top of Mount Blanc. Where the stars look silently on the monarch of mountains, how deep the silence above the untrodden snows! How lonely is the summit of the Matterhorn, or the peak of Monte

Rosa! When a man grows in grace he rises out of the fellowship of the many, and draws nearer to God. Unless placed in very happy circumstances he will find very few who understand the higher life, and can thoroughly commune with him. But then the man will be as humble as he is elevated, and he will fall back necessarily, and naturally upon the eternal fellowship of God. As the mountain pierces the skies, and offers its massive peak to be the footstool of the throne of God, so the good man passes within the veil, unseen by mortal eyes, into the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, where he abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

The last solitude will come to us all *in the hour of death*. Down to the river's brink they may go with us, a weeping company wife, and children, and friends. Their kind looks will mean the help they cannot give; to that river's brink they may go in fond companionship, but then, as with our Lord the cloud received him out of his disciples' sight, so must we be received out of sight of our beloved ones. The chariot of fire must take Elijah away from Elisha. We must ascend alone! Bunyan may picture Christian and Hopeful together in the stream, but it is not so; they pass each one alone through the river! Yet we shall not be alone, my brethren; we correct our speech; the Father will be with us; Jesus will be with us; the eternal Comforter will be with us; the everlasting Godhead in the Trinity of persons shall be with us, and the angels of God shall be our convoy. Let us go our way, rejoicing that when we shall be alone we shall not be alone, because the Father is with us.

“THOU LORD KNOWEST THY SERVANT”

*THOU knowest, Lord, thou knowest all about me,
And all the winding ways my feet have trod;
And now thou know'st I cannot go without thee,
To guide me onward through the swelling flood.*

*Thou know'st my way — how lone, how dark, how cheerless,
If thy dear hand I fail in all to see;
Bright with thy smile of love, my heart is fearless
When in my weakness I can lean on thee.*

*Give me thy presence! go thou, Lord, before me;
 Make a plain path where all is rough and drear;
 So let me trust the love that watched o'er me,
 And in the shadows still believe thee near.*

ANNA SHIPTON

THE MINISTRY NEEDED BY THE CHURCHES, AND MEASURES FOR PROVIDING IT

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

WITH novel theories of ministry we will not deal: we assume that we address those who believe that pastors and teachers are officers in the Christian church, recognized by Scripture. While we recognize that every believer has a ministry committed to him, we also see that certain individuals are more richly endowed with gifts and grace that they may be the instructors and helpers of others. This being taken for granted, we proceed.

No one can doubt that the spiritual condition of the Christian church is very much affected by the character of its ministry. For good or for evil, the leaders do actually lead to a very large extent. Doubtless the hearers influence the preacher, but for the most part the stronger current runs the other way. "Like priest, like people," is a well-known and truthful proverb, applicable with undiminished force to those who scorn the priestly title. Under a drowsy preacher the spirit of the people becomes lethargic; a minister absorbed in politics leads his hearers into party strifes; a would-be-intellectual essayist breeds a discipleship marked by affectation of superior culture; and an unsound thinker and uncertain talker promotes heresy in his congregation. Satan knows full well the power of the ministry, and therefore he labors abundantly to pervert the minds or the Lord's servants, and also to raise up false teachers who may do his evil cause great service. It is clear, therefore, that it be at all in our power to bless the church of our own day with sounder doctrine and more vital godliness our first efforts, whatever they may be, should strike at once at the root of the matter, and begin with the ministry. For manifest reasons, it is difficult to do much in molding the ministry which is already in the field. Men who have for years been teachers of others, have become stereotyped in their spirit and modes

of action and thought; and although they in a measure feel the influence of others, yet it is too late in the day to do much in fostering what has been neglected, or producing what is absent in them. In any case, prevention is better than cure. To effect much in shaping a preacher's life, the molding influences must surround him in his student days, while he is as yet like clay on the potter's wheel, or malleable iron upon the blacksmith's anvil. It appears to us that the maintenance of a truly spiritual College is probably the readiest way in which to bless the churches. Granting the possibility of planting such an institution, you are no longer in doubt as to the simplest mode of influencing for good the church and the world. We are certainly not singular in this opinion, for to successful workers in all times the same method has occurred. Without citing the abundant incidents of earlier times, let us remember the importance which John Calvin attached to the College at Geneva. Not by any one of the Reformers personally could the Reformation have been achieved, but they multiplied themselves in their students, and so fresh centers of light were created. In modern times, it is significant that the labors of Carey and Marshman necessitated the founding of Serampore College; while the gracious work in Jamaica called for a somewhat similar institution at Calabar. Wherever a great principle is to be advanced, prudence suggests the necessity of training the inert who are to become advancers of it. Our Lord and Savior did just the same when he elected twelve to be always with him, in order that, by superior instruction, they might become leaders of the church.

In the formation of a college, the design of which is to bless the church through the ministry, the question arises, What sort of men do the churches need? The answer to that question will largely shape our action. That enquiry being answered, one other remains What will be the best means of procuring and instructing such men?

In replying to the first question, we shall not venture into speculations, or follow our own prejudices, but shall seek to give a reply consistent with Scripture and observation.

The men whom God will honor must be *gracious men*, full of the Holy Ghost, called of God to their work, anointed, qualified, and divinely sustained. We cannot hope to see God glorified by men of doubtful piety or questionable experience. On this we are all agreed, and we will not dwell longer upon it..

We have remarked that great revivals of religion have been connected always with a revival of *sound doctrine*. That great religious excitements have occurred, apart from gospel truth, we admit; but anything which we, as believers in Christ, would call a genuine revival of religion, has always been attended with clear, evangelical instruction upon cardinal points of truth. What was the sinew and backbone of the Reformation? Was it not the clear enunciation of gospel truths which the priesthood had withheld from the people? Justification by faith, starting like a giant from its sleep, called to its slumbering fellows; and together these great doctrines wrought marvels. The Reformation was due not so much to the fact that Luther was earnest, Calvin learned, Zuingli brave, and Knox indefatigable, as to this — that the old truth was brought to the front, and to the poor the gospel was preached. Had it not been for the doctrines which they taught, their zeal for holiness, and their self-sacrifice, their ecclesiastical improvements would have been of no avail. The power lay not in Luther's hammer and nails, but in the truth of those theses which he fastened up in the sight of all men. The world to-day feels but little the power which Calvin wielded in the Senate of Geneva; but thousands of minds are swayed by the theology which he so forcibly promulgated. One instance in history might not suffice to prove a point, but there are many others. The great modern Reformation in England under Whitfield and Wesley was accomplished by the old orthodox doctrines, I grant you that we, as Calvinists, gravely question the accuracy of much that the Wesleyan Methodists zealously advocated; yet we do not feel that we are exercising any charity but merely speaking the honest truth, when we say that the disciples of Wesley, as well as the followers of Whitfield, brought out very clearly and distinctly the vital truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their views upon predestination and kindred points we could not endorse, but the three great R's were in the teaching of every Methodist, whether Calvinist or Arminian — Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration rung out with no uncertain sound. You could not hear a sermon from any of them, without hearing man described as a sinner, fallen and ruined, Christ alone, lifted up as the Savior, and the need of the Holy Spirit's work insisted upon in plain, unmistakable language. "Ye must be born again" was thundered over the land. If we wish to promote the good of the churches, we must pray for ministers who are well instructed in the doctrines of the gospel and firmly established in the belief of them. Whatever else they may not be able to explain, they must hold forth the great truth, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and show the way in which he saves them. We want men whose doctrines

are distinct, who hold firmly with all their hearts the truths which they are chosen to defend, men who upon fundamental points dare not equivocate and are never obscure; we require preachers whose whole business here below shall be to promulgate a gospel dear to them as their lives, because they have experienced its saving power in their own souls. They must not only be sound in the faith, but clear in their testimony. To waver upon the atonement, or the work of the Holy Spirit, or salvation by grace, is not merely dangerous but fatal to a preacher's usefulness. Let those who doubt be silent; to others it is given to say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." No church can be benefited by untruthful teaching. The world's true hope lies in the direction of revealed truth, not in the region of intellectual speculations and dubious philosophies.

The next thing we need in the ministry, now and in all time, is *men of plain speech*. The preacher's language must not be that of the classroom, but of all classes; not of the university, but of the universe. Men who have learned to speak from books are of small worth compared with those who earned from their mothers their mother tongue — the language spoken by men around the fireside, in the workshop, and in the parlor. "I use market language," said Whitfield, and we know the result. I rejoice in the Latinity and Germanic jargon of certain schools of pedantic and pretentious intellectualism, because their learned clatter renders them powerless with the masses; but I mourn when similar hideousnesses of speech are adopted by evangelic divines, for it assuredly weakens their testimony. Anglo-Saxon speech, homely, plain, bold, nervous, forcible, never fails to move the English ear. At the same time we don't desire a race of coarse men, who regard *slang* as being plain speech, which it certainly is not. Admitted that a coarse man may have his sphere, it is equally certain that he is unfitted for many other spheres of equal importance. If it be granted that a spice of vulgarity may adapt a man for special service among navies and costermongers, we question whether even with them there may not be a more excellent way, and there are other people in the world to be considered besides these. We are confident that, ordinarily, coarseness is weakness, and ought to be avoided; and we should no more think of preaching the gospel in the slang of the thieves' kitchen, than in the jargon of the Neologists. The gospel's apples of gold are worthy to be carried in baskets of silver. Language should be fitted to the dignity of the subject. The most truly dignified language is, however, the simplest; simplicity and sublimity are next of kin. Gospel simplicity is equally removed from

childishness and coarseness. Bunyan's English is as pure as it is plain. Our grand old authorized version is a model of speech; though marred here and there by an antique indelicacy, it is, as a whole, perfection itself, both for grandeur and simplicity of style. We need men who not only speak so that they can be understood, but so that they cannot be misunderstood. The plodding multitudes will never be benefited by preaching which requires them to bring a dictionary with them to the house of God. Why should they be called to work on the day of rest in order to get at the minister's meaning? Of what use is it to them to listen to spread-eagle talk, which conveys to them no clear sense? The Reformation banished an unknown tongue from the reading desk; we need another to banish it from the pulpit. I speak for English people, and demand English preaching. If there be mystery, let it be in the truth itself, not in the obscurity of the preacher. We must have plain preachers. Yet plain speech is not common in the pulpit. Judging from many printed sermons, we might conclude that many preachers have forgotten their mother tongue. The language of half our pulpits ought to be bound hand and foot, and with a millstone about its neck, cast into the sea: it is poisoning the "wells of English undefiled," and worse still, it is alienating the working classes from public worship.

It is a very proper thing in expressing one's sentiments among students and scholars, to use those technical phrases which have been collected from all languages, and generally accepted among the educated. The Latin, the Greek, the German, the French, and other tongues have all given us words which convey to the learned shades of meaning which the less plastic Saxon cannot compass; but to the mass of the people such speech is to all intents and purposes a foreign language. The Latinity of some preachers reminds us of the old fable of the boy thief perched in the apple tree. The owner of the orchard tells him to come down, but his words are laughed at. He then tries turf, the rogue is not dislodged. At last he throws stones at him, and the boy is soon at his feet. Now the devil does not care for your dialectics, and eclectic homiletics, or Germanic objectives and subjectives; but pelt him with Anglo-Saxon in the name of God, and he will shift his quarters.

Supposing, therefore, the matter and the speech to be correct, we next need men who, as to the order of their intelligence, rather come under the denomination of *common sense men*, than of schoolmen and rhetoricians. A gentleman who nowadays wins the repute in clerical circles of being highly intellectual, is generally a sort of spiritual Beau Brummel. The

famous Beau was asked if he had ever eaten a vegetable? and replied, that he thought he had once tasted a pea. So our modern high-flyers have heard that there are such persons as “sinners,” and believe they may be met with in the Haymarket and in the slums. They have no idea of the fall of man, but have read about the “lapsed condition of humanity.” These gentlemen, whose mouths could by no contortion pronounce the word “Damnation.” and who have considerable sympathy for that, being of whom they might correctly say, “Oh, no! we never mention him,” are very attractive to the idiotic classes, but to men they are loathsome.. The style of sermonizing of those who affect to be “thinking men,” is elevated, very elevated, as elevated as the manner of Lord Dundreary would have been, if that distinguished nobleman had become a clergyman. “Thinking men” of this superfine order consider anything orthodox quite beneath them; and in the pulpit they affect obscurity, quote Strauss, frequently speak of Goethe (careful as to the pronunciation of the name), and cannot get through a discourse unless they mention Comte, or Renan, or some of our home-bred heresy-spinners, such as Maurice and Huxley. They are very great at anything metaphysical, geological, anthropological, or any other ology, except theology. They know a little of everything, except vital godliness and Puritanic divinity; the first is usually too rigid a thing for them, and the second they sniff at as consisting of mere platitudes. When a “thinking man” has reached so sublime a condition of self-conceit that he can sneer at; such giants in mind and learning as John Owen, Goodwin, Charnock, and Manton, and talk of them as teaching mere common-places, in a heavy manner, not at all adapted to the advanced thought of the nineteenth century, we may safely leave him and his thinking to the oblivion which assuredly awaits all windy nothings. For the present we may observe that England requires no further supply of these eminent personages, and there’s certainly no need to establish any more colleges for their production. There are circles where such ministries are appreciated; here and there a suburban congregation of very respectable do-nothings will cluster around such a man and account him a prodigy; but among the working population, the real sinew, and blood and bone of England, there is no further space for the superficial intellectualism which has vaunted itself for its little hour, and is gradually writing its own doom. Our churches call for men whose thoughts are worth thinking; whose thoughts follow in the wake of the revealed word of God, who feel that they are not dishonored by treading in the track of the Infinite. We must have ministers whose education has taught them their own ignorance, whose learning has

made them revere the Scriptures; men whose minds are capable of clear reasoning, brilliant imagination, and deep thought; but who, like the apostle Paul, who was all this, are content to say, and feel themselves honored in saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such a man is more precious than the gold of Ophir. In him the Lord finds an instrument which he can consistently employ. He is a man among men, a practical, working, thoughtful teacher. Eschewing all flighty notions, specious novelties, mental eccentricities and philosophizings, he determines to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified. He is not one of those who follow after butterflies, but knowing that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, he goes to work, rough-handed it may be, but nevertheless in downright earnest, to do practical work in seeking to win souls.

Another point must also be noted if we would see great success attending the ministry. We require *men of popular sympathies*; men of the people, who feel with them. We are not prepared to subscribe to any political creed, except this "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." All forms of government turn out bad or good as the case may be; but this much is certain, that unless a man is a lover of the people in his inmost soul he will never be greatly useful to them. The people do not require more of those gentlemen who condescend to instruct the lower orders, being authorized by the State to assume airs of dignity because they are our rectors, towards whom we ought to walk with lowly reverence. The squires admire this, and the peasantry unwillingly submit to it for awhile; but the end of this business is at hand. Our dissenting churches call for other treatment. The Nonconformists of England are a race of freemen; their forefathers found it inconvenient to be slaves in the days of Charles the First, and the sons of the Ironsides do not intend to be priest-ridden now. As we do not bow before the parish priests, we certainly do not intend to pay homage to the aristocratic airs of a pompous youngster fresh from college. London's millions spurn the foppery of caste, they yearn for great hearts to sympathize with their sorrows; such may rebuke their sins and lead their minds, but no others may lecture them. The working classes of England are made of redeemable material after all; those who believe in them can lead them. A minister should welcome both rich and poor. Far be it from any servant of God to despise the godly because their hands are hard with honest toil. Be it ours to honor worth rather than wealth; and to esteem men for their spirituality, and grace, and holiness, rather than for

their purses and mansions. We do not desire to see preachers of the gospel rudely and lawlessly democratic in politics, ready to have fling at different ranks and classes; we want no Red Republicans in the pulpit, but we rejoice when we see that a man is thoroughly, heartily, lovingly with the people. Such was John Knox, and such were Whitfield, Rowland Hill, Jonathan Edwards, and others, famous in pulpit annals. We must be men of ourselves if we wish ever to move them. We must be advanced beyond them in knowledge, spirituality, and grace, for we are leaders; but, like our Lord, we must be "chosen out of the people." While our government is set upon abolishing the system of purchasing commissions in the army, in order that there may be more sympathy between the officer and the ranks, we must labor for the promotion of the same feeling in the church militant. The more our hearts beat in unison with the masses, the more likely will they be to receive the gospel kindly from our lips.

The church of God calls for *men whose one object is to save souls*. The final result of some ministries appears to be a Gothic chapel in the place of the less ornamental but more serviceable old meeting-house. The good man feels that he has ministered to edification as a wise master-builder, when he hears passers-by say of his new edifice, "What a gem of a place!" We have known gentlemen of the cloth, whose hearts have been mainly set upon getting up a well-performed service, going as far as they dare in vestments and ornaments, and aping our Anglican Papacy in almost every aspect. As if we did not know when the chapter was finished, we are told, "Here endeth the first lesson," or "Here endeth the second lesson"! and much is thought to be attained when that piece of mimicry is allowed; anthems and chants are greedily sough after; an organ, of course; a stone pulpit stuck in a corner; and then nothing will do but the brother must introduce at least a fragment of liturgy. Let but the poor creature have his way in all this, and his little heart overflows with joy, and he feels, "I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." Such gentlemen have mistaken their vocation: they would make capital conductors of concerts, masters of the ceremonies, man-milliners, or arrangers of shop-windows, but their talents are thrown away among Dissenters.

Among a certain order of divines the one aim evidently is the collection of what they are pleased to call highly intelligent audiences. It has been admitted of certain preachers that their hearers were certainly very few; but then it was claimed that the quality made up for the quantity! And what quality, think you, is that of which they boast? Eminent piety? Deep

experience? Great usefulness? No a bit of it! The rich and rare excellence of the slender audience lay in this, that not above one man in ten of them honestly believed the Bible to be inspired; not a fiftieth part could unhesitatingly have asserted their faith in the atonement, and probably not above one soul among them knew anything savingly of the grace of God, and that lonely individual was uneasy under the ministry. After this mode some gentlemen estimate congregations, and if they can succeed in collecting a synagogue of Arians, deists, semi-infidels, and heretics of various orders, then their fellows of the same clique exclaim, with intense delight, "A deeply thoughtful ministry has gathered around it all the intellect of the district." It has been usual to find little wool where there has been great cry, and the proverb is very applicable in this case. Those superficial beings, the Puritans, and those unintelligent persons of the type of Johnathan Edwards and Andrew Fuller, are, to our mind, far better models than the intellectual dandies, who have been in fashion.

The education of the intellect is not our cardinal work; our teaching should be full of wisdom, but not the wisdom of metaphysics and speculations; we are not apostles of Plato and Aristotle, but ministers of Christ. As he was, so are we also in this world: he came to seek and to save that which was lost, and our errand is the same. Accepting the revelation of Christ as the highest wisdom of God, we go forth with no other philosophy than that of Christ crucified. To turn from darkness to light the bewildered multitudes, to rescue from the destroyer the deluded crowd, to lead to Jesus as many as he has chosen — this is our life-work, from which nothing shall tempt us.

Soul-winners can never be too numerous; but it is a question whether the church is not sufficiently stocked with prophetic brethren, to whom what is to happen in the next twelve years is as plain as the sun at noonday. In some cases the time expended in fashioning and expounding a system of history to fit in with the vials and trumpets has seriously interfered with turning sinners from the error of their ways. Nothing should be the preacher's aim but the glory of God through the preaching of the gospel of salvation. Only let the ministry be supplied with men who drive at the conscience, and in the Spirit's power convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; men who strike at the heart, and are not satisfied until their hearers have laid hold on eternal life and closed in with the divine proclamation of mercy let such, I say, abound among us, and again the church will be "terrible as an army with banners."

For the rest, it is desirable *that brethren of varying abilities* be forthcoming; we want the profound, and the eloquent of the first rank; we need also the earnest and godly of ordinary capacity, for there is work for the very zealous and devout whose attainments are but small. Usefulness has been vouchsafed to holy men of all grades of talent. Infinite wisdom has ordained variety in gifts and degrees in ability for ends most gracious. No man can be too educated or too gifted for any position in the Christian church; yet some forms of culture, while they fit a man for one position, may somewhat disqualify him for usefulness in others. Work among our London poor needs the very ablest men; yet we could mention very gifted brethren who would be miserable to the last degree, if they were compelled to labor in the Golden Lane Mission, or in Seven Dials, and certainly they would not be more wretched than they would be inefficient. They would drive away rather than attract the poor fallen masses around them. Yet, they are men of undoubted ability, and in their own positions they wield a powerful influence for good. The very education which adapts a man to labor among the more refined, may make him too sensitive to be able to cope with the roughness of certain classes among whom others work with great success. I say again, I do not think that the loftiest talent is too great for work among the most sunken classes, and that in fact those who can deal with them are men of genius of a rare order; but it is certain that there are grades of talent, and that all of these are needed to complete the circle of the church's demands. A man whose gifts entitle him to address thousands becomes restless in a hamlet; another brother, whose voice and ability would never compass more than two or three hundred, finds that very hamlet a place of happy labor. Men of all orders are sent us by the Holy Spirit; all are not apostles, nor are all apostles equal to Paul. Each man after his own order, and for his own place; all are members of the one body, but they fulfill divers offices. If the church is to be well served, we must secure men who can speak to the educated of the West end, and we must; not reject those who from their culture find themselves at home in Bethnal Green. We want men who will stir our large towns where intellect is quick and sharp, and men who will move the less volatile but perhaps more stable minds of the country villages. No man may say, "Here is my model for a minister, and every man should be framed upon that shape." He would leave half the church, if not more, unsupplied, even if there were an unlimited upgrowth of the model men whom he desires.

We want ministers who, however various their talents, have but one spirit, and that one spirit, must be the Spirit of God; they must be tided with love, love to the church and to those yet to be ingathered out of the world; brethren of deep humility, who feel their need of divine help, but men of triumphant faith, who feel assured that the Lord works with them. We want men of self-sacrifice, willing to put up with all sorts of inconveniences, and even sufferings, to attain their end; men of dogged resolution, who mean to be successful, and cannot be put off the track; men who have given themselves up to God wholly, spirit, soul, and body, without reserve, doing one thing only, preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, that God may be glorified in their mortal bodies, whether they live or die. Give us such men as these, and their attainments may not be all we could wish, but this one spirit filling them, the Holy Ghost descending upon them, they shall bring back to the church the apostolic era, and we shall see the work of God revived.

Surely we command the agreement of most Christian people in the opinions we have stated; if it be not so, we are bold enough to say that we ought to do so, for all along through history it can be confirmed that the men who have been most precious to the church have been such as we have described. Find us a revival the whole world's history through, produced by a gentleman whose speech could not be understood. or whose sympathies were not with the people. Great evangelists have never been philosophical essayists, but men of simple gospel views. The Reformers and true fathers of the church have been men of practical common-sense habits, who went to the business of soul-winning in an earnest downright way, disdaining the little conventionalities and prettinesses which charm the weaker sort. They all without exception aimed at conversions. They did not hit on soul-winning by chance; they were not aiming at something else, and by accident managed to bring a great many to the Savior: they flew towards this one object, like an arrow to its target. There were great distinctions between Calvin and Luther, Whitfield and Wesley, Jonathan Edwards and Rowland Hill: their culture, talents, and position differed greatly, but they were all of one spirit, and God blessed them all.

We will now push on to our second point — the *means of procuring such men*. The first and best means is for the church to value the ascension gifts of her Lord, which were men ordained by himself for her edification and increase. Prayer for the sending of fit men must be continuous and fervent. Our Savior himself bade us pray the Lord of the harvest to send more

laborers into the harvest; but perhaps throughout Christendom no prayer is more seldom offered indeed, we hear from some quarters complaints that there are too many laborers already. A murmur monstrous, to say the least.

But honest prayer leads to action. It has led us to it. We believe that the Pastors' College has been one among other means used of God to promote the end we have been describing; and without intending, even by implication, in any degree or manner to criticize other institutions, we mean to show how our own effort seems to us adapted to its work.

The design being to discover earnest men, men of differing talents and abilities, suited for various places, one thing is very clear, namely, that *the church should make the area from which she draws her supplies as wide as herself*. To many excellent men the lack of pecuniary means has been a serious barrier. The number of young preachers in a denomination like the Baptists — which is one of the poorer branches of the Nonconforming family — who can afford to pay even a small sum for their own education and maintenance during three, four, five, or six years at a training institution, must necessarily be small. They are earning nothing at the time, and the sacrifice of what would have been their income is all that most of them can afford. A large number of men of real ability could not even clothe themselves during a college course, for they have no store, and their friends are poor. Why should the churches lose their services from our pulpits, or receive them in a raw, half-developed state? Should not every vestige of difficulty on this score be swept away, prudently and wisely, but effectually? Where the selection is carefully made, it is a great pleasure to feel that the wealth or poverty of the applicant does not sway the judgment one single iota, but higher qualifications are alone considered. There should be a clear way for any gracious and qualified man into the place where he may be taught the way of God more perfectly; no lack of money should block up his path. A great number of excellent brethren enter our ministry without education; all honor to them all what they accomplish; but while these worthy brethren do well, who shall say that they might not have achieved more if they had been better equipped for their work? Now it ought to be the object of the denomination to set these men who will become preachers, whether they are educated or not, to submit themselves to a preliminary instruction which will make them more efficient, if such instruction there be. The College ought to be so arranged that none of them should say by way of excuse for not entering it, "We could not afford it." Their case should be wholly and entirely met. A number of gifted men

are at this moment useful in the Sunday School and in occasional addresses, who would develop into notable preachers if they were encouraged to exercise their gifts by the knowledge that, if found qualified, there would be an opportunity for them to multiply their talents. We know that the spirit of preaching the gospel has been largely poured out upon our own church, and fostered by the presence of our school of the prophets; and we doubt not that other congregations have been influenced in the same way. At any rate, our College is open to the poorest. We constantly receive men whose food and raiment, as well as lodging and education, are furnished for them as a free gift from the institution; and though we are glad when they can help themselves (and some few not only help, but bear all their own charges), yet we never mean to set up a golden, silver, or even a copper gate to the Pastor's College, but to the poorest man, whom we believe the Lord has called, the porter opens cheerfully the door.

Another matter calls for attention. *The degree of scholarship required upon entering College should be so arranged as to exclude none solely on its own account.* Many a preacher who has come to us and succeeded best, would not, when he entered, have passed an examination at an ordinary dame school. It is sad that any man of twenty years should be in such a state of ignorance; but when the Lord converts a youth of the most ignorant class, and puts the living fire into him, shall we leave him unaided? As things have been until now, the unlettered condition of many a peasant and laborer has been well nigh inevitable. England has been far behind Scotland in this respect, and it is to be hoped that matters will now improve. At least for the present distress, I have been unable to see why a man who has the gift to speak earnestly and to move human hearts, should be denied an education because he is so terribly in need of it. What if he does not know the rudiments of English grammar? Let us take the blundering Apollos, and begin at the beginning with him. Because he labored under disadvantages in his childhood of poverty, and perhaps of sin, is he for ever to be crushed down? Must he achieve the impossible before we help him over the difficult? Let the man who has some education fight his way alone, rather than leave the other unhelped. I would assist both. Let the church, when the Lord sends her a man of rough but great natural ability, and of much grace, meet him all the way, take him up where he is, and help him even to the end. This we daily seek to do.

But there needs the opposite balancing principle of restriction. There must be always in every institution a most earnest, determined resolution that

none shall be received but such as are confidently believed to be deeply gracious, whose piety is beyond reasonable dispute, testified to by many who have known them, manifested by the fruits of their labors, certified in all ways that are possible. Even then we fear some will thrust themselves in unawares, but no vigilance must be spared. Those only should be received who have given indisputable proofs, as far as human judgment can ever do, that they love the gospel, that they seek only the glory of God, and all because they feel how much they owe to him who has redeemed their souls from going down into the pit. Certain denominations make a small matter of grace, and look alone to other qualities: we know a church where a man would be nearly as eligible for the ministry being graceless as if he were perfect; but it must not be so among us. It would be almost impossible to be too stringent in this respect. As Caesar's wife must be not only blameless but beyond suspicion, so must the Christian minister be spotless — yea, more, he must be full of good works to the glory of God. That we have sought to separate between the precious and the vile our Master knows full well.

If we would have the right men, again, *they should not be untried*, but should have preached sufficiently long to have tested their aptness to teach. No education can give a man ability if he has none. Amongst the first of ordinary gifts for the ministry is the gift of utterance; — that cannot be produced by training. I do not know of what value elocutionary classes may be. I suppose they are of some use; the existence of professors of elocution leads us to hope that they may be of some utility; but he would be an extraordinary elocution master who could teach a man to speak who had no aptness for it; in fact, it cannot be done. Now, no one can prove his fitness to impress others except by trial; it is, therefore, a wise regulation that the preacher should be asked, “Have you for a sufficient time — say two years or thereabout — exercised your gift, and have you in the judgment of persons qualified to speak been somewhat successful? We do not ask you whether you have already achieved anything remarkable, for then you would not want college help, but have you brought souls to Jesus, and been generally acceptable to believers?” To my mind, it is clear that no others ought to be admitted under any pretense whatever. If a college receives students because they know so much Greek, or so much mathematics, or can write a theme, it has no more facts before it from which to form a judgment as to the men's eligibility for the Christian

ministry, than if they were asked, “Could you stand on your head?” or, “Are you six feet high?”

So far we have looked only towards the students, but we have already said that men who will be a blessing to the church, must plainly preach gospel truths. Very well; then it is of the utmost importance that *the College should teach those truths, and teach them plainly*. But no books will spread orthodox doctrine unless they are in the hands of sound men. It is imperative that the tutors should be not only believed to be sound, but they should be known to have a determined predilection for the old theology, to be saturated with it through and through; to be, in fact, Puritans themselves, and not mere teachers of puritanic theology; men who love the gospel defend it, and are ready to die for it. We cannot expect to have the right men sent out unless the tutors who exercise so very potent a part in the training of their minds are valiant for the truth themselves. Our joy is that in this respect the Lord has favored us very greatly. Our dear friend, Mr. Rogers, who is at our head, is a John Owen for erudition, with a rare spice of motherwit. He is so venerable in years that we venture to say this much of him; is to the rest of us who form the staff, wherever we fail, we are certainly not less staunch in the old-fashioned theology.

In addition to biblical instruction, without limit, it is important that *each man should receive as much education as he is able to bear*. There should not be any cast-iron rule, so that a brother who would reach his best condition if he acquired a common English education, should be obliged to muddle his poor head with Hebrew. There should be different courses of instruction for different men. ‘We have always endeavored to carry out this idea, but with varying success; for many brethren who need urging further are content to pause, while others who had better halt clamor to go forward, and our wish is to yield to their desires as far as we dare. We have always from the very first tried to see what a brother could learn, and to let him learn what he could.

It has appeared to us that *the chief aim should be to train preachers and pastors rather than scholars and masters of arts*. Let them be scholars if they can, but preachers first of all, and scholars only in order to become preachers. The Universities are the fit places for producing classical scholars, let them do it; our work is to open up the Scriptures, and help men to impress their fellows’ hearts. It is certain that the man who has sacrificed everything to mathematical and classical eminence is not one

whit the better esteemed by our churches, because experience has taught them that he is not superior as an instructor or exhorter. Our one aim is to assist men to be efficient preachers. If we miss this, we think ourselves to have failed, whatever else we attain.

In order to achieve all these things, it is a very grand assistance to our College that it is connected with an earnest Christian Church. If union to such a church does not quicken his spiritual pulse it is the student's own fault. It is a serious strain upon a man's spirituality to be dissociated during his student-life from actual Christian work, and from fellowship with more experienced believers. At the Pastors' College our brethren can not only meet, as they do every day, for prayer by themselves, but they can unite daily in the prayer-meetings of the church, and can assist in earnest efforts of all sorts. Through living in the midst of a church which, despite its faults, is a truly living, intensely earnest, working organization; they gain enlarged ideas, and form practical habits. Even to see church management and church work upon a large scale, and to share in the prayers and sympathies of a large community of Christian people, must be a stimulus to right-minded men, Our circumstances are peculiarly helpful, and we are grateful to have our institution so happily surrounded by them. The College is recognized by the Tabernacle church as an integral part of its operations, and supported and loved as such. We have the incalculable benefit of its prayers, and the consolation of its sympathies.

We think it a fit thing that students who are to become ministers in sympathy with the people, *should continue in association with ordinary humanity*. To abstract them altogether from family life, and collect them under one roof, may have its advantages, but it has counterbalancing dangers. It is artificial, and is apt to breed artificialness. It may be objected, that residing, as our men do, with our friends around, they may be disturbed by the various family incidents. But why should they not? In future life the same difficulties will occur, for they are not likely to be Lord Bishops, whose studies will be out of the reach of a babe's cry or the street noise. Recluse life or collegiate life is not the life of the many, and much of it soon puts a man out of harmony with the everyday affairs of life. It is dangerous to engender tastes and habits which in afterlife cannot be gratified, and especially habits which, if they could be abiding, would tend to weakness;. Besides, the association of a number of young men has great perils about it, which we need not now rehearse; we will only mention the tendency to levity. Buoyant spirits are not to be condemned, but they

usually find vent enough without the encouragement of constant companionship with their like. To keep fourscore young men constantly under the same roof, and so to direct them that they shall remain as earnest and gracious as when they came to you, is a feat which some may have accomplished, but which we shall not attempt. Let the men meet at their studies, form suitable friendships, and go home at night to staid orderly households of much the same class as they may hope their own to be in future years.

Above all, if we are to discover the right sort of men, we must have an institution in which *spiritual life is highly esteemed and carefully fostered*. Watching as we do with anxious heart, we feel we can honestly bless God for the gracious spirit which rests upon the College just now. The most of the brethren have been rich partakers in the influence of our Special Services. We have heard with great joy of their earnestness and prayerfulness. It did us good to hear one say that he had been warned against losing his spirituality by going to College, but he now felt that he could live nearer to God than ever. Nor is this our occasional experience, it is more or less prevailingly our constant element. There have been seasons when it has been a very profitable means of grace to the president to attend his class, and associate with his young friends; for though they were students, eagerly looking after ordinary knowledge, yet they evidently walked with God in all they did. We desire to have it so at all times. There has never been among us any undervaluing of faith and enthusiasm because associated with educational defects, or any treatment of prayer as a needless formality; but on the contrary, a very earnest coveting of spiritual gifts has been the rule. We try to realize how mighty thing is nearness to God, and how grand it is to live under the divine influence of his Spirit.

Under God, the College has been the instrument of extending the Savior's kingdom, by founding new churches, and we hope to do far more in future years, if the Lord shall send us means. We do not so much care to build on other men's foundations, by sending ministers to old-established churches, our wish is to found new interests and break up fresh ground. In this aim we have had much fraternal co-operation from the Associations and denominational societies. Our design is the same as theirs, and mutual aid is the way to success, under God's blessing. Hundreds of towns and large villages are yet without the pure gospel ministry, and friends on the spot, by working with us, can find the way to form a church and evangelize the district.

There is little fear of our driving older ministers out of the field; we would rather enlarge the area for their cultivation. We point to London, where we have planted a number of strong, healthy, vigorous churches, which cause us great joy, and we can devoutly say, "What hath God wrought!" Let the kind reader observe how few of the old metropolitan pulpits we have touched, and how many new places we have helped to create. We believe there are some forty churches in the metropolitan district alone which have arisen from our College work, with the aid of friends and the Association. We gravely question whether the advance of religion in any denomination has been more solidly rapid than it has been with the Baptists in London, and in that we have had an honorable share. We have seen great things, but very little compared with what we hope yet to see, God helping us. We lift up our hearts and hands to the Most High, and bless the Eternal for all his mercies, craving still for more.

As to the actual success of the Institution, we thank God that we have most hopeful signs. The churches of Great Britain gladly receive our young brethren as soon as they are ready; indeed, our great difficulty is to retain them for the whole of our short period. But above this fact our joy is that we can report actual results of soul-winning. The gross increase of the churches under the pastorates of our brethren during the six years in which we have gathered their statistics, is 16,455, and the clear increase is 11,177. This does not include the churches abroad, nor does it represent all those at home, since we have never yet succeeded in inducing all the churches to report. Surely it is no small matter that sixteen thousand souls have been ingathered from the world. It makes our heart glad when we thus see the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom increased.

America welcomes our men; many have gone, and more will go. As the people of England remove to swell the great Republic, it is but fitting that a fair quota of the shepherds should go with the flock. No work can be more important than that of supplying the spiritual needs of newly-settled regions.

Our highest wish has not yet been fully realized. We long to receive the missionary call, but it has come only to one or two. We pray the Holy Ghost to separate some of our number to work among the heathen, and we ask our brethren to unite with us in the same petition.

Our funds come to us without lists of annual subscriptions. When the Lord's stewards receive intimations from him, they send us a portion of

their goods, and up to this hour we have known no lack. As for the future we have no doubt or anxiety. The Lord is our Treasurer. For all we lean upon him. We wish every kindred institution Godspeed, and believingly commit our own dear life-work to the Lord our helper who cannot fail us.

GREAT MERCIES

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

IF the ungrateful man were asked to count up his *great mercies*, he would mention two or three things, and fancy that he had completed the catalogue. The most of us, in our ordinary moods, would not require a ream of letter paper to write out what we carelessly conceive to be a comprehensive and extended list. Now, this comes of our forgetfulness and shallow understanding, and will, perhaps, never be remedied till all our faculties are perfectly developed and sanctified, as they will be in the land of the perfected. When we are a little awakened, it is astonishing how the area of our mercies is increased in the estimation of our judgment; the eye is cleared with a few briny tears, and straight; way it sees a hundred objects which it observed not before. To the soul chastened by divine correction, mercies swarm and teem where aforetime there seemed but few.

Take note of this, reader. I jot it down while I am newly escaped from the chamber of affliction, and the impression is fresh on me: *it is a great mercy to be able to change sides, when lying in bed*. Did I see you smile? I meant no pleasantry, but intended to write a sober, serious sentence. Did you ever lie a week on one side? Did you ever try to turn, and find yourself quite helpless? Did others lift you, and by their kindness only reveal to you the miserable fact that they must lift you back again at once into the old position, for bad as it was, it was preferable to any other? Do not smile again, but listen while I add — *it is a great mercy to get one hour's sleep at night*. You go to bed, and never reckon upon opening your eyes again till your seven or eight hours are over, but some of us know what it is, night after night, to long for slumber and find it not. O how sweet has an hour's sleep been when it has interposed between long stretches of pain, like a span of heaven's blue between the masses of thundercloud! We have blessed God more for those clear moments of repose titan for whole weeks of prosperity.

We are not about to continue our enumeration of choice and precious mercies at any length, for having once introduced the reader to a Christian invalid, we have placed him under the tuition of one who can continue the blessed schedule of mercy indefinitely; and if the record of one sick chamber should be all rehearsed, the next, if tenanted by a gracious sufferer, would, with sweet variations, prolong the strain. What a mercy have I felt it to have only one knee tortured at a time! What a blessing to be able to put the foot on the ground again, if but for a minute! What a still greater mercy to be able to get from the bed to a chair and back again!

What folly it is, however, to put down a few of these benefits selected from so many more! it is as though we would catalogue the cattle; on a thousand hills, or enumerate the waves of ocean. We pick and cull a few mercies; but on what principle? Is it not a childish, vain, and ignorant feeling which prompts our selection? We call those things mercies which please us, ease us, suit our wants, and fall in with our cravings. Truly they are so, but not less gracious are those benefits which cross us, pain us, and lay us low. The tender love which chastises us, the gentle kindness which bruises us, the fond affection which crushes us to the ground — these we do not so readily recount; yet is there as much of divine love in a smart as in a sweet, as great a depth of tenderness in buffeting as in consoling. We must count our crosses, diseases, and pains, if we would number up our blessings. Doubtless it is a mercy to be spared affliction, but he would be a wise man who should tell which of the two was the greater boon — to be for the present without chastisement or to be chastened? We judge that in either case “It is well” with the righteous, but we will not have a word said to the disparagement of affliction. Granted that the cross is very bitter, we maintain with equal confidence that it is also very sweet. We have a cloud of mercies around us as well as a cloud of witnesses. As the meadow is besprent with a thousand gay flowers, and we tread upon them without attempting to count them, even thus is it with our life in Christ Jesus: it is mercy, all mercy — mercy too great for reckoning. Our life is a wood, wherein are tangled thorns; but listen a moment! Is it not full of sweet songbirds, akin to those of Paradise? God is good to us at all points, and greatly good too. There is no royal road to learning, but there is a royal road to heaven — a causeway of loving kindness, paved with crystal blocks of grace, all of pure gold, like unto transparent glass. In the wilderness a highway has been made straight for the chosen people: every valley has been exalted, and every mountain and hill laid low. “How

precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.”

SHIVERING JEMMY

A MISERABLE impostor in the streets of London was accustomed to extract money from the pockets of the charitable by standing in a public position in the winter weather, clothed in rags, and shivering as with ague and extreme cold. He was a great adept at shivering, and could imitate it to a marvel. At last he shivered in very deed without shamming, and could not cease from it, whether he would or not. Summer or winter, in all places, his shivering was as constant as that of an aspen: he had violated Nature’s laws in his attempts to deceive, and fate took a dreadful revenge upon him; for the rest of his life he carried with him the name of *Shivering Jemmy*, and no explanation of the title was required by those who looked upon him.

Eat one plum from the devil’s trees, and you must eat a bushel. Talk falsehood at a trot, and you must soon lie at a gallop. Beware of anything approaching to the false, for falsehood has a terrible fascination about it. Like the spider, it casts film after film over its victim, but it never suffers him to escape its toil. Paint the face, *and it must be painted*.

The same is true of other vicious habits. He who brags once is sure to boast again, and at last he unconsciously pitches all his conversation on the high key, and becomes renowned for “tall talk.” A religious professor who runs over his devotions in a formal manner, will find formality grow upon him, till genuine prayer and real emotion will utterly leave him; the man will become for ever a heartless pretender. It is dangerous to preach an affected sermon, in which the lips utter more than the heart can actually endorse, the tendency will be for the minister to be always talking above himself, and what is this but to be a professional liar? We fear that some have feigned sympathy with others till now their tears lie ready salted in the corners of their eyes, and their cant is something more than stale. Others have so often expressed emotions which they did not feel, that it has become habitual with them to roll their eyes and clasp their hands under a sermon, or during the singing of a hymn they are “Shivering Jemmies” in the streets of the New Jerusalem, a pitiable and a disgusting sight.

Nothing is more to be dreaded than the insensible growth of hypocrisy. Since we are none of us free from a measure of self-deception, the danger is that the false within us may grow to power, and obtain a sort of established respectability within the little world of our nature. Better anything than a religious windbag. It were impossible to imagine a fate more horrible than to be all smoke — a pious fraud, a holy sham, a nothing blown out with foul gas. It were better to think ourselves incapable of a holy emotion, and to be breaking our hearts because of our obduracy, than to be shivering with a sham sensitiveness, to which we have attached the idea of eminent tenderness of spirit. O Lord, deliver us from every false way. Save us from deceit.

USE THE PEN

YOUNG ministers would do well to remember that for purposes of Leaching there are *two* fields of usefulness open to them, and that both deserve to be cultivated. The utterance of truth with the living voice is their main business, and for many reasons this deserves their chief attention; but the publishing of the same truth by means of the press is barely second in importance, and should be used to the full measure of each man's ability. It is a surprising thought that what is written to-day in our study may in a few weeks be read beyond the Alleghanies, and before long may lift up its voice at the Antipodes. And as space is thus overleaped, so also time; for if the world should last another five hundred years, the author of an immortal sentence will continue still to speak from the glowing page. The press performs marvels. So noble an agency, so far reaching, so potent, so available, ought not to lie idle. Every man who addresses his fellow creatures with the voice should try his hand at pen and paper, if only for his own sake; it will correct his style, give it more accuracy, more condensation; probably, therefore, more weight. The possibility of doing good to the souls of men is a grand incentive which needs no other to supplement it, and such a possibility beyond all question exists when warmhearted thought is expressed in telling language, and scattered broadcast in type among the masses. Young men, look to your goosequills, your Gillets;, or your Waverleys, and see if you cannot write for Jesus.

“What, in the name of reason, can move an Editor to perpetrate such a paragraph as the above, when we are already bored and pestered with the

immeasurable effusions of hundreds of scribblers, who are only spoilers of good foolscap?" We admit the naturalness of the question, and we feel its force feel it all the more because we have just now been for some hours up to our neck in a stagnant pool of printed dullness, and have almost caught a literary cramp. Look at that volume of poetry. We cannot review it; we have tried till we do not mean to try again; we fear it would worry us into a fresh attack of our ever-ready enemy the gout. "Our brain is tired, our heart is sick." The poems are just an everlasting ding-dong, ding-dong of commonplaces and pretty phrases, all meaning nothing at all. Do you see that volume of sermons? The good man who issues them declares that he did it in deference to the wish of his hearers: a very common excuse, by the way. He might well have prayed, "Save me from my friends." The discourses are no doubt pious, and well intended, but to print them was a blunder of the first magnitude. There is a book on Romanism, and another on Matrimony. We have read them both, and expect some day or other to be rewarded for our patient perseverance, but as yet it is numbered among those good deeds which bring no present profit to him who performs them. But indeed the list of volumes over which we have done penance is too long for rehearsal. We shudder at the recollection. We frequently wonder how we survive our sufferings in the review department; sifting a wagon had of chaff to find one solitary grain of wheat is nothing to the labor in vain which is allotted us by many authors. We pride ourselves upon our extreme gentleness in criticism, but we should soon lose all repute among our readers for this amiable virtue if we *did* criticize in print all the books sent to us; a considerable number of them it would be cruelty to notice, and in mercy to the authors we pass by their offspring and say nothing where nothing good could be said. [N.B. Those *gentlemen* whose books are not yet noticed in our magazine will please not to write and scold us next post. Let them hope that their productions are so good that we are too fascinated to begin as yet to criticize; at any rate, let no author wear a cap unless he finds it to be a correct fit.]

All this is a digression, to show that we are not forgetful of the fact that this press-ridden nation already groans beneath tons of nonsense and platitude, and needs no addition to the enormous burden. We frankly own that if another great historical fire should do for modern literature a similar work to that which was so providentially wrought at Alexandria, we should not fret. If we saw the commencement of the blaze we should be in no hurry to arouse Captain Shaw and his men with the brass helmets, but

should like to see it burn merrily on, especially if it would consume for ever all the small-beer poetry, the interpretations of prophecy, and — well — well, nineteen books out of twenty, at the least: ninety-nine out of every hundred would be a still more desirable purification.

“Yet you began by stirring up young men to write. Where your consistency?” Our answer is that we did not exhort anybody to write such stuff, as commonly is written. On our bended knees we would say to many a man who threatens to commit authorship, “we pray you do no such evil.” But we return to our first paragraph, and say again that the pen is a great means of usefulness, and it ought not to lie idle. Let a man wait till he has something to write, and let him practice himself in composition till he can express his meaning plainly and forcibly, and then let him not bury his talent. Let him revise, and revise again. Let him aim at being interesting, endeavoring to write not for the butter-shop, but for readers; and above all, let him write under the impulse of a holy zeal, burning to accomplish a real and worthy end.. The columns of religious magazines and newspapers are always open to such contributions, and if the author has no other broadsheet in which to publish his thoughts, he may be well content with the pages of periodical literature. Whatever may be the faults of our reviews and other periodicals, they are undoubtedly a great institution, and might be made far more influential for the highest ends, if men of greater grace were found among their writers. It is a worthy ambition to endeavor to seize these molders of the public mind, and make them subservient to true religion. The words of Dr. Porter, in his “Homiletics,” may be most appropriately quoted here: —

“Young men destined to act for God and the church, in this wonderful day, think on this subject. Recollect that religious magazines, and quarterly journals, and tracts of various form, will control the public sentiment of the millions who shall be your contemporaries and your successors on this stage of action for eternity. To whose management shall the vast moral machinery be intrusted, if the educated sons of the church, the rising ministry of the age, will shrink from the labor and responsibility of the mighty enterprise? Learn to use your pen, and love to use it. And in the great contest that is to usher in the triumph of the church, let it not be said that you were too timid or indolent to bear your part.”

Good men there have been and are who could do far more service for God and his church by their pens if they would write less and write better. They

flood our second-rate magazines with torrents of very watery matter; their style is slipshod to a slovenly degree; their thoughts are superficial; their illustration hackneyed; they weary where they mean to win. Let such brethren take time to mend their pens, the world will continue to rotate upon its own axis if we do not see their names next month at the head of an article. Work must be put into papers if they are to last. Easy writing is usually hard reading. The common reader may not observe the absence of honest work in a poem, sermon, or magazine article, but he manifestly feels the influence of it, for he finds the page uninteresting, and either goes to sleep over it; or lays it down. Young man, earnest in spirit, if you have any power with the pen, make up your mind to cultivate it. Do your best every time you compose. Never offer to God that which has cost you nothing. Do not believe that good writing is natural to you, and that you need not revise; articles will not leap out of your brain in perfect condition as the fabled Minerva sprang from the head of Jove. Read the great authors, that you may know what English is; you will find it to be a language very rarely written nowadays, and yet the grandest of all human tongues. Write in transparent words, such as bear your meaning upon their forefront, and let them be well chosen, correctly arranged, and attractively ordered. Make up your mind to excel. Aim high, and evermore push on, believing that your best efforts should only be stepping stones to something better. The very best style you can attain will be none too good for the glorious themes upon which you write.

But, remember, there is a more material business than mere excellence of composition. Your manner is important, but your matter is far more so. Tell us something well worth knowing when you write. It is folly to open your mouth merely to show your teeth; have something to say, or speak not at all: ink is better in the bottle than on the paper if you have nothing to communicate. Instruct us, impress us, interest and improve us, or at least try to do so. It is a poor achievement to have concocted a book in which there is neither good nor hurt, a chip in the porridge, a correctly composed nothing; but to have pleaded with men affectionately, or to have taught them efficiently, is a result worthy of a life of effort. Try, brother, not because it is easy, but because it is worth doing. Write until you can write; burn half a ton of paper in the attempt, it will be far better in the flames than at the printer's; but labor on till you succeed. To be a soul-winner by your books when your bones have mouldered is an ambition worthy of the noblest genius, and even to have brought hearts to Jesus by an ephemeral

paper in a halfpenny periodical is an honor which a cherub might envy. Think of the usefulness of such books as “James’ Anxious Enquirer,” and “The Sinner’s Friend.” These are neither of them works of great ability, but they are simple and full of the gospel, and therefore God blesses them. Is it not possible for others of us to produce the like? Let us try, and God helping us, who can tell what we may do.

One concluding word to our young brother. We would not recommend you to try poetry. Write reason before you write rhyme. The usual way is to sacrifice the sense to the jingle: do you adopt the other plan. Do not expect public men to spare time to read your manuscripts: apply to some judicious friend nearer home. Do not be thin-skinned, but accept severe criticism as a genuine kindness. Write legibly if you expect your article to be accepted by an editor: he cannot waste time in deciphering your hieroglyphics. Condense as much as possible, for space is precious, and verbiage is wearisome. Put as much fact as you can into every essay, it is always more interesting than opinion; narratives will be read when sentiments are slighted. Keep the main end in view, but aim at it prudently; do not worry readers with ill-timed moralizings and forced reflections. Ask a blessing on what you compose, and never pen a sentence you will on your dying bed desire to blot. If you attend to these things, we shall not repent of having said, to you, “*Use the pen.*”

WANT OF NATURALNESS IN PREACHING

SYDNEY SMITH tells us: — “I went, for the first time in my life, some years ago, to stay at a very grand and beautiful place in the country, where the grounds are said to be laid out with consummate taste. For the first three or four days I was perfectly enchanted; it seemed something so much better than nature that I really began to wish the earth had been laid out according to the latest principles of improvement. . . . In three days’ time I was tired to death: a thistle, a nettle, a heap of dead bushes — anything that wore the appearance of accident and want of intention — was quite a relief. I used to escape from the made grounds, and walk upon an adjacent goose common, where the cart-ruts, gravel-pits, bumps, irregularities, coarse ungentleman like grass, and all the varieties produced by neglect, were a thousand times more gratifying than the monotony of beauties the result of design, and crowded into narrow confines.”

Now, this is precisely the result produced upon most hearers by a too elaborate style of preaching. At first it astonishes, amazes, and delights; but in the long run it palls upon the mind, and even wearies the ear. The high art displayed in sentences, polished into perfect smoothness, is certainly very wonderful, but it ere long becomes very wearisome. Men cannot for ever look at fireworks, nor pass their days among artificial flowers. The preaching which maintains its attractiveness year after year is after the order of nature, original, unaffected, and full of spontaneous bursts which the laws of rhetoric would scarcely justify. Homely illustrations, a touch of quaintness, a fullness of heart, thorough naturalness, and outspoken manliness are among the elements which compose a ministry which will wear, and be as interesting at the end of twenty years as at first. Of the refined politeness of a drawing-room most people have enough in a single evening; to continue such a manner of intercourse for a week would be intolerable; but the familiar communion of the family never tires, home's genuine and spontaneous fellowship grows dearer ever year. The parallel holds good between the deliverances of a grandiloquous elocution and the utterances of a warm heart. The Primitive Methodist being asked to return thanks after dining with the squire, thanked God that he did not have such a good dinner every day, or he should soon be ill; and when we have occasionally listened to some great achievement of rhetoric, we have felt the same grateful sentiment rising to our lip. A whipped cream or a syllabub is an excellent thing occasionally, but it is very easy to grow tired of both of them, while bread and cheese or some such homely fare can be eaten year after year with a relish. If it be natural to a man to be very elegant and rhetorical, let him be so: flamingoes and giraffes are as God made them, and therefore their long legs are the correct thing; but let no man imitate the proficient in an elevated style, for geese and sheep would be monstrous if perched on high. To be sublime is one thing; to be ridiculous is only a step removed; but it is another matter. Many in laboring to escape rusticity have fallen into fastidiousness, and so into utter feebleness. It may be that to recover their strength they will have to breathe their native air, and return to that natural style from which they have so laboriously departed.

C. H. S.

“AND IT WAS SO”

A DISCOURSE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“And it was so.” GENESIS 1:7.

YOU will find these words six times upon the first page of revelation. God spake and said, “Let there be a firmament” “and it was so.” He said, “Let the dry land appear.” “and it was so.” He bade the earth bring forth grass, “and it was so.” He ordained the sun and moon for lights in the firmament of heaven, “and it was so.” Whatever it was that he willed, he did but speak the word, “and it was so.” In no single case was there a failure. There was not even a hesitation, a pause, or a demand for a more powerful agency than the divine word. In each case, Jehovah spake, “and it was so.” Nor is this first week of creation the only instance of the kind, for in no case has the word of God fallen to the ground; whether of promise or of threatening, the word has been confirmed and fulfilled. “As it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be, world without end;” whatsoever the mighty God decrees, foretells, declares, or promises, shall ere long come to pass.

I shall ask you to accompany me in a mental voyage down the stream of history, to show that this has been the case as far as all history is concerned up till now. “*And it was so.*” The Lord’s will has been law; his word has been followed by fact. *Dictum factum*, as the Latins say. We shall then endeavor to show that, with an immutable God, it will be so continually in the great and in the small, in the affairs of the world, and in our own personal matters. What God hath promised shall come to pass, and at the winding-up of all history, it shall be said, “God said this, and that, and it was so.”

We stand at the fountain-head of human history, and hear the Lord declare of our parents, that in the day in which they should break his commands, and eat of the forbidden fruit, they should surely die, “*and it was so.*” They died that moment. That spiritual death, which was the great and essential part of the sentence, was there and then fulfilled. The likeness and image of God was broken in them immediately, and we are dead in trespasses and in sins by reason of their death. He warned them also, when his wrath as it were glanced aslant from them to smite the soil on which they stood, that the earth should bring forth thorns and thistles to them, and that in the

sweat of their face they should eat bread, and truly it has been so. The earth has yielded her harvests, but she has produced her thorns and briars also; and though the curse of labor has become a blessing, yet man's toil and woman's travail vindicate the divine veracity.

When all flesh had corrupted its way, God repented that he had made man, and sent his servant Noah as a preacher of righteousness to threaten a universal flood. It did not appear very probable that the dense population of the earth could all be swept away, and that the billows should rear their proud heads above the mountains; but it turned out that Noah was no fool, and his prophecy was no raving. God had said the world should be drowned, "*and it was so.*" The sluices of the great deep beneath were drawn up, the cataracts of heaven descended, and none escaped, save the few, that is eight, whom God enclosed within the ark.

A little farther on, the Lord appeared to his servant Abraham, and told him that the wickedness of Sodom had been so great that the cry had gone up even to his throne; and the Lord communicated to his servant that he would go and see if it was altogether according to the cry thereof; and if so, Sodom should be destroyed. Abraham pleaded, and his intercession almost prevailed; but as no righteous salt was found in the filthy cities of the plain, it was doomed to perish. They had given themselves to strange flesh, and a strange judgment must therefore come upon them. Hell must fall out of heaven upon such abominable offenders "*and it was so,*" for when the morning dawned, Sodom was utterly consumed, and the smoke thereof went up to heaven.

You know how God kept his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were strangers with him, dwelling in tents, looking for a better city, that is, a heavenly. Whatever promise was made to the patriarchs was fulfilled to the letter in all respects "*it was so.*" When they went down into Egypt, God declared that after four hundred years he would bring them hence; and though the tribes appeared to be naturalized in Egypt, and were rooted to the soil, yet God would bring them forth; and though Pharaoh took strong measures, and thought to hold them fast, yet God had said that they should come out with a high hand, and an outstretched arm "*and it was so.*" Let the wonders which he wrought on the fields of Zoan, the plagues which overthrew the sons of Ham; let the going forth out of Egypt, and the terrors of the Red Sea, when the depths covered all the chivalry of Egypt, let these remind you that, as God had spoken, so it was. Pharaoh

was hardened but he was not able to resist the Almighty will: he stands for ever in history as a memorial that none shall harden himself against the Most High and prosper, for the Lord doeth as he wills in heaven and in earth, and in all deep places. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

I should not weary you, I think, if I were to dwell a little while upon the promise that God gave to Israel that he would lead the tribes through the wilderness, and surely bring them to their inheritance. It appeared very unlikely that they would enter into Canaan, when for forty weary years they wandered in the pathless wilderness; yet the Jordan was crossed in due season, and Jericho was taken. He said they should every man possess his portion, and each tribe its lot "*and it was so.*" The Canaanites dwelt in cities that were walled up to heaven, and they lashed into the battle in chariots of iron, yet were they overcome, for God had said it "*and it was so.*" He cast out the heathen, and planted the vine which he had brought out of Egypt; he overthrew Og and Sihon, "and gave their land for an heritage, for his mercy endureth for ever." Many a time after Israel had been settled in the land did they provoke the Lord to jealousy, so that he sent prophet after prophet, and their message was, "If ye thus sin against the Lord ye shall be given into the hands of your enemies" "*and it was so.*" But when they were sorely smitten they repented, and they cried unto God, and he had pity upon them; and then he sent another of his servants with a gentle message, saying, "Turn unto me, and repent, and I will deliver you" "*and it was so.*" In every case he kept his word, whether for chastening them or delivering them. Evermore was he faithful. When, in the later period of their history, Sennacherib blasphemed the Lord, his servant Hezekiah took the cruel letter of Rabshakeh and laid it before the Lord in the temple, and cried mightily unto him; and Isaiah came with the promise, "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it." Who could put the hook into the nose of that leviathan? Who could turn him back by the way that he came? The Lord had said it should be done, "*and it was so;*" for that night the destroying angel went through the host of the Assyrians, and there fell of corpses on the plain so many as the leaves of autumn. Hath God promised to rescue his children? Then be assured that, however numerous their foes, his word shall not fail. Then came that dark day when Israel and Judah were threatened with captivity in a strange land. They sinned, and lo! "*it was so.*" They were exiled far away. By the waters of

Babylon they sat down and wept; they wept when they remembered Zion; but there came a promise to them — a promise which they had left all unread and forgotten in their sacred books, that after the lapse of seventy weeks they should return again, and once more see the land of their fathers “*and it was so.*” God raised up for them a friend, and a helper, and the captives came back again to their land.

Let us quote the grandest instance of all. The Lord promised, immediately after the Fall, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. That promise had been succeeded by many others, and those in Israel who knew the Lord waited for the coming of the deliverer. The promise tarried long. Day and night devout men cried unto God, for their patience was sorely tried, yet they confidently expected the messenger of God who would suddenly come in his temple; and when the fullness of time was come, “*it was so.*” The everlasting God was found tabernacling among men, and they “beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” It was the master-promise of all — the promise of the greatest gift that God has bestowed upon mankind, and that promise was kept, kept to the letter, and to the hour. He had said it should be, “*and it was so,*” though it was a wonder beyond all wonder.

We might pursue our theme, and show you that as far as past events have gone, God’s word has been verified. But now, though we keep to history, we shall leave the large volume of the public records, and ask you to take down from its shelf that little diary of yours, the pocketbook of your own life’s story, and there observe how God’s word has been true. You remember in your youth the warnings that you received, when you were told that the ways of sin might be pleasantness at the first, but would end in sorrow. You were told that the cup might sparkle at the brim, but the dregs thereof were full of bitterness. Did you test that statement in the days of your early manhood? Ah! then I know you cannot deny that it was as God had declared. He said, “The wages of sin is death,” “*and it was so.*” He said it would be bitterness in the end thereof, “*and it was so.*” He told you that the fascinations of sins were as destructive as they were alluring, and truly “*and it was so.*” If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, you will blush as you answer the question, “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” It fell on a day, as God would have it, that your eyes were opened to see your lost estate, and there was a voice which spoke in the gospel, and said, “If thou wilt return unto me, return; only confess the transgressions that thou hast sinned against me, and I will

forgive thee. Come and put thy trust in my Son, and thy iniquity shall be blotted out like a cloud thy transgressions like a thick cloud." You came to Jesus led by sovereign grace. You washed in the fountain of his blood, guided to it by the Holy Spirit. What is your testimony? You were promised salvation, pardon, peace. My testimony is, "*and it was so*;" is not that yours also? O the joy of believing in Jesus! O the bliss of casting one's self into the Father's arms, and pleading the merits of the Only Begotten! There is a peace or God that passeth all understanding which comes to our faith when we exercise it upon Christ. Peace was promised, "*and it was so*." Since the time when you believed in Jesus you have had many wants both spiritual and temporal; but he has promised, "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly." What say you, brethren and sisters? Your needs have come, have the supplies come also? I am sure you will say "*it was so*" — strangely so — but always so. As my day my strength has been. The shoes of iron and of brass have had rough usage, but they have not worn out. The all-sufficient God has proved that his grace is all-sufficient for us. Our personal history bears witness that, with regard to the providence of God, and to the supplies of his grace, he said he would grant us enough, "*and it was so*." He told you that when you believed in his word he would hear your prayers. Three times he put it in varied form, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Brethren, you have been to the mercy-seat, and tried whether God hears prayer, and it has been so — he did hear prayer. We believed his word, and in due time our faith has been turned to sight, and the promise has been fulfilled. We have read in God's Word that he would sanctify our trials to us, and that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;" what, then, is my witness, after having been week after week, and even month after month, racked with pain, and laid low with sickness, what have these things been to me? Have they worked my good? Do they bring forth the comfortable fruits of righteousness? My truthful witness is, "*and it was so*." I feel persuaded that every Christian shalt have to say of his afflictions that they have been blessed to him "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word," said one of old, and many in these modern times can say the same. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" the Lord said it would be, "*and it was so*."

Up to this hour it has always been true with regard to us, his people that what the Lord has said he has surely performed. We can —

“Sing the sweet promise of his grace, And the performing God.”

Let me remind you that our history is only the common experience of all God’s people, and if there be anything uncommon in the stories of the saints, then there is only a more than usually clear confirmation of the truth. Look at the martyrs, they suffered what we can scarcely bear to read of, yet the Lord said he would be with them: “*and it was so.*” They wore the chain for Christ’s sake, and he promised to be their companion “*and it was so.*” They went to the stake or bowed their head to the ax, and they were promised that even to the end he would be with them: “*and it was so.*” Right along, through all the history of the church militant, and I might also ask the confirmation of the church triumphant too, the saints declare that “it was so.” Christ hath kept his word to the letter. Not one good thing hath failed of all that he ever promised to his people.

And now, having taken this very brief run through history, let me ask you to follow me when I say that as it has been in the past so it will be. It is always good reasoning when we are dealing with God to infer the future from the past “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.” Hearing the same God and the same promises, we may expect ever to see the same results. As for the future, a large part of Scripture is as yet unfulfilled. Many persons try to interpret it, but the man is not born who can explain the Revelation; yet whatever God has there declared, will be explained by providence. God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain. Whatever he hath there promised, it shall be said of it by-and-by “*and it was so.*” We learn that there is to be a wide spread of the gospel: “Surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God;” Ethiopia shall stretch on her arms to Christ; be assured that it shall so be. Let the missionary toil on, and the devil rage on if he will — the devil shall be disappointed, and the servant of God shall have his desire. God will honor his church, when she has faith enough to believe in his promises. There is to be in the fullness of time a second coming of the Lord Jesus. He who went up from Olivet left this as his promise, that in the same manner as he went up into heaven, he would return again. He shall surely come. Virgin souls who are awake, and watching for the midnight cry, will hear it ere long. And when he cometh, the dead in Christ shall rise; there shall be a resurrection of the just at his appearing. So he hath promised; and “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power.” There are no bonds of death that can hold the saints in their graves when the Lord descends; at the sound of the archangel’s

trumpet, God has said they shall rise, “and it shall be so.” They shall every one of them return from the land of the enemy. And then the glory — the Millennial splendor — we will not explain it, but we know that it is promised, and whatever has been declared shall surely be; the saints shall possess the kingdom, and shall reign with Christ. And heaven and the glory-land, and the eternal future, where the ever blessed God shall reveal himself unto his servants, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads: every golden word, every sapphire sentence which glows and sparkles with the glory of the Most High, and the lovingkindness of the Infinite — all shall be fulfilled it: shall be said of the whole, “and it was so.” Ay! and the dread future of the lost — those awful words that tell of fires that burn, and yet do not consume; and of a wrath that slays, and yet men live beneath its power, verily, verily, these shall all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word that God hath spoken shall fail. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.” Of doom or of glory, of promise or of threatening, it shall be said, “*and it was so.*” And when the end shall come, and Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, and the drama of history shall be ended, and the curtain shall drop, and God shall be all in all, all shall be summed up in this sentence, “He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast: he said it, ‘and *it was so.*’”

I desire, dear brethren and sisters, for your consolation, to bring his truth home to yourselves, if the Spirit of God will enable me. “It was so” — this *has been* true — *it shall be* so to you. God’s promises shall all be kept to you personally. God will fulfill his word to you in every letter. Observe, there will occur cases in which there will be no visible help toward the fulfillment of the divine promise, and no tendencies that way; but, if God has pledged his word, he will keep it. Note well, that in the erection of the world, there was nothing to help God. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him? When he began to fit up the world for man, and to furnish the house which he had made in the beginning, there was darkness, and that was no aid; there was chaos, and that was no help. Now you are troubled at the present time; your condition is one of confusion, disorder, darkness, you see nothing that could make God’s promise to come true, not a finger to help, no one even to wish well to you. Never mind, God wants no helper; he works gloriously alone. See how the earth stands. What hangeth it on? He hangeth the earth upon nothing. Look at the unpillared arch above it. There are no buttresses, no supports, no props to

the sky, yet it has not fallen, and it never will. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength;" and if he has given you a promise, and you have laid hold upon it though nothing should appear to aid its fulfillment, yet it shall be fulfilled; you will have to write, "ant it was so."

Yes, and this shall be the case, though many circumstances tend the other way. When there seems to be a conflict against God — not only no help, but much resistance; do not thou fear. What matters it to God? Though all the men on earth and all the devils in hell were against him, what mattereth it? Though heaps of chaff contend against the wind, what mattereth it to the tempest? They shalt be whirled along in its fury. What if the wax defy the flame — it shall but melt in the fervent heat? If all the world and all hell should declare that God will not keep his promise, yet he will perform it; and we shall have to say, "it was so." No opposition can stay the Lord. But you may say, "This cannot be true, surely, in my case. I could have believed it on a great scale, but for myself!" Ah! doth God speak truth in great things and lie in little ones? Will thou blaspheme the Most High by imagining that in public acts of royalty he is true, but in the private deeds of his family he is false? What would be a worse imputation against a man? Who shall throw such a charge upon the eternal God? The Lord promised his servant Elijah to take care of him: did he not make the ravens feed him? Did he not send him to the widow of Sarepta, and multiply her meal and her oil? He was as true to him in the raven's matter, and in the handful of meal matter, as when in the business of the great rain he bowed his head between his knees on Carmel, and saw at length the heavens covered with clouds and the land deluged with showers. God wilt keep his word in little things to you. Do not imagine that he forgets your mean affairs. The hairs of your head are numbered. A sparrow lights not on the ground without your Father. Are you not better than the sparrows which are sold at three for two farthings in the market? Will you not rest in your Father's care, and believe that his promise shall be fulfilled? "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure; thou shalt dwell in the laud, and verily thou shalt be fed."

God's word stands true, even when our unworthiness is in the way. I know you have fancied, "If I were a great saint, God would surely keep his word to me, but I being a very grievous sinner, how shall he be gracious to me?" And dost thou think that God is good and truthful only to the good and true? Wouldst thou be so thyself? Surely we must deal honestly with all

men, whosoever they may be. Their character is no excuse for our marring our own reputation. And so, poor sinner, if thou come to God, he will not cheat thee, and say, "I said, 'If, thou confess thy sin thou shalt have mercy;' but I did not mean it for such an one as thou art." No, Christ has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and if thou come, though thou be the blackest sinner out of hell, yet Christ shall be true to thee; for it is not *thy* character, but *his* character, that is to be considered in the promise. Even if we believe not, he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Yes and his promise comes true, and we have to say of it, "*and it was so,*" even in cases of our own confessed incapacity to receive it. Take the case of Abraham, for that is typical of many others in this respect; he had the promise of a son and heir, and though as for his own body, it was as dead, and Sarah was well stricken in years; Abraham did not consider himself or Sarah, but believed the promise, and in the fullness of time, there was the sound of laughter in the tent, for Isaac was born. We err when we become so depressed by our own incapacity as to conceive doubts of God's faithfulness. The Lord gives the promise that the barren woman shall keep house, *and it is so*. Our desert-hearts shall have the blessing; it shall drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills shall rejoice on every side. Our weakness shall not hinder the divine promise. He is able to bless us even when we feel only fit to be cursed. Oh, empty one, God can fill you! O dried branch and withered tree, thou that standest like an oak, smitten by lightning, only fit for the burning, the Lord, the everlasting God can quicken thee, and put fresh sap in thee, and make thy branch to bud again to the glory of his holy name. He promises, and if thou believest, thou shalt have to say, "*and it was so.*"

It will be thus right on to the end of the chapter. A few days ago I stood by the side of a dear departing brother, who feebly lifted his hands from the bed, and said just these few words "Christ, Christ, Christ is all." And then he said, as I bade him good-bye, "We shall meet in heaven. I shall go there soon and you will follow; but I hope it will be a long while before you do." I asked him whether that was quite a benediction, and he said, "You know what I mean. The church needs you." About half-past five this afternoon, he who rejoiced that he would soon be in heaven entered within the gate of pearl. He had served us well as a deacon of this church, and now he sees the face of the ever blessed. He believed while here on earth that it was bliss to be with Christ, and he finds it so; he is saying, "The half has not

been told me.” Well, well, whether we live to old age, or depart in mid-life, or die in early youth, what matters it. We shall find that passing across the river is delightful when at eventide it is light. And O the glory of the everlasting daybreak! The splendor of the sun that goeth no more down! O the bliss of beholding saints and angels, and seeing the king in his beauty! The messengers of God said that heaven is blessed, and it is so — it is so. They said, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,” and it is so.

I would leave a thought with those who are exercised with doubts and fears about the Lord’s sure mercies. It is a very hard thing that we should doubt our God, but we do; and therefore let us shoot arrows at unbelief. Note well, that when God spake in the creation, “and it was so,” there was only his *power* concerned. Supposing he had spoken, and it had not been so; then the only result would have been that God was proved not to be omnipotent. But his might did not fail him; his glorious attribute of power showed its majesty, and what the Lord spake was accomplished. Yet in this instance only one attribute was at stake. Now, when you consider one of God’s promises recorded in the Bible, there is more than one attribute engaged for its fulfillment; there are two at least, for there is the divine *truth* at stake as well as the divine power. If he said it should be, and it is not, it is either that he would not or he could not; if he could not, then his power has failed; but if he would not when he promised, then his truth is forfeited. We have, therefore, a double hold when dealing with covenant promises, and may rest in two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie. But sometimes in certain promises even more is observable, for instance, you will have known the Lord these ten or twenty years, have been helped hitherto; and suppose the Lord were to fail you now, then not only are his power and his truth compromised, but his *immutability also*, since he would then have changed, and would no longer be the same God to-day as he was yesterday. Three attributes are leagued upon your side; you have three sacred pledges. Frequently also you have God’s *wisdom* brought into the affair in hand. You have been in great difficulty, and you have seen no means of escape; but you have laid the case before God, and left it there; he has promised that he will “deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” He has also said, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee;” now, if he does not deliver and sustain, there are four attributes at stake. His power — can he do it? His truth — will he keep his promise? His immutability — has he hanged? His wisdom — can he find a way of escape? Frequently, my brethren, the

Lord's honor is also brought into the field in addition to the other attributes. You recollect how Moses put it when the Lord said, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them; and that I may consume them." Then Moses said, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" See, too, how Joshua uses the same argument with the Lord "The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" O that is grand pleading — that is grand pleading! Now if the Lord has brought you into deep waters, and you have put your trust in him, and said, "I know that he will deliver me," if he does not do so, the enemy will say, "It is a vain thing to trust in God, for the Lord does not preserve his people." His honor is a stake; and, ah, he is a jealous God. He will rouse himself, and go forth like a man of war to show himself strong in the behalf of them that trust in him. In addition to all this, divine love is included in the issue. How did Moses put it? The people said, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" And Moses argued it thus — "Didst thou bring all these people out that they might lie in the wilderness." Hast thou no love? Wilt thou be cruel to the sons of men? Even thus may we plead with the benevolence and pity of the Lord. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be favorable no more?"

*“And can he have taught me to trust in his name,
And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”*

Is it so that he has taught me to long after the sweetness of his grace, and yet will he deny it to me? Does the Lord tantalize men in this way? I could have been happy enough in my poor ignorant way as a sinner. But now that I have been made to taste of higher and sweeter things, I shall be doubly wretched, if I may not enjoy them. If he makes men hunger and thirst, and then does not feed them, he is not a God of love. But he is a God of love, and therefore he cannot treat his servants so. You remember Luther used to say that when he saw that God was in his quarrel, he always felt safe. "Thine honor is at stake," he would say, "and it is no business of Luther's: it is God's business when God's gospel is concerned." Every attribute is pledged as a guarantee that every promise shall be kept. Here faith may gather strength, and rest assured that the covenant is sure in every jot and tittle. If one child of God who has put his trust in Jesus should perish, the everlasting *covenant of grace* would have failed, for it is a part of its stipulations. "A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit, will I put

within you. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” And if I have come to Jesus, and rested in him, and after all, do not find salvation and eternal life, then the covenant has become a dead letter. This it never shall be. “Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” He will not suffer his promise to fail.

Last word of all, remember that the very *blood* of Christ is at stake in the matter of God’s promise. If a poor guilty sinner shall come and rest in Jesus, and yet is not saved, then Jesus Christ is grievously dishonored — he has shed his blood in vain. Shall they perish on whom his blood is sprinkled? Is the fountain, after all its boasted efficacy, become a mockery? Is there no power in the atonement of Jesus to cleanse the guilty? Ah, beloved, he said it would cleanse, and it was so, it is so, and it shall be so for evermore. They who rest in Christ shall not perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of his hand. Each one of us, as we arrive in heaven, shall add our testimony to the general verdict of all the saints, and say, “*it was so.*” He said it, and he fulfilled it, glory be unto his name! If any soul comes to Jesus at this hour, he shall find eternal life. “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Such is the gospel. The Lord grant his great blessing. Amen.

BE SHORT

Long visits, long stories, long essays, long exhortations, and long prayers, seldom profit those who have to do with them. Life is short. Time is short. Moments are precious. Learn to condense, abridge, and intensify. We can bear things that are dull, if they are only short. We can endure many an ache and ill, if it is over soon; while even pleasure grows insipid, and pain intolerable, if they are protracted beyond the limits of reason and convenience. Learn to be short. In making a statement, lop off branches; stick to the main facts in your case. If you pray, ask for what you believe you will receive, and get through; if you speak, tell your message and hold your peace; if you write, boil down two sentences into one, and three words into two. Always when practicable avoid lengthiness — learn to be short.

A VISIT TO CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

BEING A SHORT SERMON BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” Psalm 107:17-22.

IT is a very profitable thing to visit an hospital. The sight of others' sickness tends to make us grateful for our own health, and it is a great thing to be kept in a thankful frame of mind, for ingratitude is a spiritual disease, injurious to every power of the soul. An hospital inspection will also teach us compassion, and that is of great service. Anything that softens the heart is valuable. Above all things, in these days, we should strive against the petrifying influences which surround us. It is not easy for a man, who has constantly enjoyed good health and prosperity, to sympathize with the poor and the suffering. Even our great High Priest, who is full of compassion, learned it by carrying our sorrows in his own person. To see the sufferings of the afflicted, in many cases, would be enough to move a stone, and if we go to the hospital and come back with a tenderer heart, we shall have found it a sanatorium to ourselves. I purpose, at this time, to take you to an hospital. It shall not be one of those noble institutions so pleasingly plentiful around the Tabernacle; but we will take you to Christ's Hospital, or, as the French would call it, the *Hotel de Dieu*, and we shall conduct you through the wards for a few minutes, trusting that while you view them, if you are yourself healed, you may feel gratitude that you have been delivered from spiritual sicknesses, and an intense compassion for those who still pine and languish. May we become like our Savior, who wept over Jerusalem with eyes which were no strangers to compassion's floods: may we view the most guilty and impenitent with yearning hearts, and grieve with mingled hope and anxiety over those who are under the sound of the gospel, and so are more especially patients in the Hospital of God.

We will go at once with the psalmist to the wards of spiritual sickness.

And, first, we have set out before us THE NAMES AND CHARACTERS OF THE PATIENTS. You see, in this hospital, written up over the head of every couch the name of the patient and his disease, and you are amazed to find that all the inmates belong to one family, and, singularly enough, are all called by one name, and that name is very far from being a reputable one. It is a title that nobody covets and that many persons would be very indignant to have applied to them — “*Fool.*” All who are sick in God’s hospital are fools, without exception, for this reason, that all sinners are fools. Often, in scripture, when David means the wicked, he says, “the foolish;” and, in this he makes no mistake, for sin is folly. Sin is foolish, clearly, because it is a setting up of our weakness in opposition to omnipotence. Every wise man, if he must fight, will choose a combatant, against whom he may have a chance of success, but he who wars with the Most High commits as gross a folly as when the moth contends with the flame, or the dry grass of the prairie challenges the fire. There is no hope for thee, O sinful man, of becoming a victor in the struggle. How unwise thou art to take up the weapons of rebellion! And the folly is aggravated, because the person who is opposed is one so infinitely good that opposition to him is violence to everything that is just, beneficial, and commendable. God is love: shall I resist the infinitely loving? He scatters blessings: wherefore should I be his foe? If his commandments were grievous, if his ways were ways of misery and his paths were paths of woe, I might have some pretense of an excuse for resisting his will. But O my God, so good, so kind, so boundless in grace, ‘tis folly, as well as wickedness, to be thine enemy. Besides this, the laws of God are so supremely beneficial to ourselves, that we are our own enemies when we rebel. God’s laws are danger signals. As sometimes on the ice those who care for human life put up “*Danger*” here and there, and leave all that is safe for all who choose to traverse it, so God has left us free to enjoy everything that is safe for us, and has only forbidden us that which is to our own hurt. If there be a law which forbids me to put my hand into the fire, it is a pity I should need such a law, but a thousand pities more if I think that law a hardship. The commands of God do but forbid us to injure ourselves. To keep them is to keep ourselves in holy happiness; to break them is to bring evil of all kinds upon ourselves in soul and body. Why should I violate a law, which if I were perfect I should myself have made, or myself have kept finding it in force. Why need I rebel against that which is never exacting, never oppressive, but always conducive to my

own highest welfare, The sinner is a fool, because he is told in God's word that the path of evil will lead to destruction, and yet he pursues it with the secret hope that in his case the damage will not be very great. He has been warned that sin is like a cup frothing with a foam of sweetness, but concealing death and hell in its dregs; yet each sinner, as he takes the cup, fascinated by the first drop, believes, that to him, the poisonous draught will not be fatal. How many have fondly hoped that God would lie unto men, and would not fulfill his threatenings! Yet, be assured, every sin shall have its recompense of reward; God is just and will by no means spare the guilty. Even in this life many are feeling in their bones the consequences of their youthful lusts; they will carry to their graves the scars of their transgressions. In hell, alas, there are millions who for ever prove that sin is an awful and an undying evil, an infinite cure which hath destroyed them for ever and ever. The sinner is a fool, because, while he doubts the truthfulness of God, as to the punishment of sin, he has the conceit to imagine that transgression will even yield him pleasure. God saith it shall be bitterness: the sinner denies the bitterness, and affirms that it shall be sweetness. O fool to seek pleasure in sin! Go rake the charnel to find an immortal soul; go walk into the secret springs of the sea to find the source of flame, It is not there. Thou canst never find bliss in rebellion. Hundreds of thousands before thee have gone upon this search and have all been disappointed; he is indeed a fool who must needs rush headlong in this useless chase, and perish as the result. The sinner is a fool — a great fool — to remain as he is in danger of the wrath of God. To abide at ease in imminent peril and scorn the way of escape, to love the world and loathe the Savior, to set the present fleeting life above the eternal future, to choose the sand of the desert and forego the jewels of heaven; all this is folly, in the highest conceivable degree.

Though sinners are fools, yet there are fools of all sorts. Some are learned fools. Unconverted men, whatever they know, are only educated fools. Between the ignorant man who cannot read a letter and the learned man who is apt in all knowledge there is small difference, if they are both ignorant of Christ; indeed, the scholar's folly is in this case the greater of the two. The learned fool generally proves himself the worst of fools, for he invents theories which would be ridiculed if they could be understood, and he brings forth speculations which, if they were judged by common sense, and men were not turned into idiotic worshippers of imaginary

authority, would be scouted from the universe with a hiss of derision. There are fools in colleges and fools in cottages.

There are also reckless fools and reckoning fools. Some sin with both hands greedily; "A short life and a merry one" is their motto; while the so-called "prudent" fools live more slowly, but still live not for God. These last, with hungry greed for wealth, will often hoard up gold as if it were true treasure, and as if anything worth the retaining were to be found beneath the moon. Your "prudent," "respectable" sinner will find himself just as much lost as your reckless prodigal. They must all alike seek and find the Savior, or be guilty of gross folly. So, alas! there are old fools as well as young ones. There are those who after an experience of sin burn their fingers at it still. The burnt child dreads the fire, but the burnt sinner lovingly plays with his sin again. Hoar hairs ought to be a crown of glory, but too often they are fool's caps. There are young sinners who waste the prime of life when the dew is on their spirit, and neglect to give their strength to God, and so miss the early joy of religion, which is the sweetest, and makes all the rest of life the sweeter: these are fools. But what is he who hath one foot hanging over the mouth of hell, and yet continues without God and without Christ, a trifler with eternity?

I have spoken thus upon the name of those who enter God's hospital; permit me to add that all who go there and are cured agree that this name is correct. Saved souls are made to feel that they are naturally fools; and, indeed, it is one stage in the cure when men are able to spell their own name, and when they are willing to write it in capital letters and say, "That is mine! If there is no other man in this world who is a fool, I am. I have played the fool before the living God." This confession is true, for what madness it is to play the fool before the Eternal One, with your own soul as the subject of the foolery? When men make sport, they generally do it with trifling things. A man who plays the fool, and puts on a cap and bells, is wise in comparison with him who sports with his God, his soul, heaven, and eternity. This is folly beyond all folly. Yet the sinner, when he is taken into God's hospital, will be made to feel that he has been such a fool, and that his folly is folly with an emphasis. He will confess that Christ must be made unto him wisdom, for he himself by nature was born a fool, has lived a fool, and will die a fool, unless the infinite mercy of God shall interpose.

Now, for a minute, let us notice THE CAUSE OF THEIR PAINS AND AFFLICTIONS. "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their

iniquities, are afflicted.” The physician usually tries to find out the root and cause of the disease he has to deal with. Now, those souls that are brought into grief for sin, those who are smarting through the providential dealings of God, through the strikings of conscience, or the smitings of the Holy Spirit, are here taught that the source of their sorrow is their sin. These sins are mentioned in the text in the plural. “Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities.” How many have our sins been! Who shall count them? Let him tell the hairs of his head first. Sins are various, and are therefore called “transgressions and iniquities.” We do not all sin alike, nor does any one man sin alike at all times. We commit sins of word, thought, deed, against God, against men, against our bodies, against our souls, against the gospel, against the law, against, the week-day duties, against the Sabbath privileges — sins of all sorts, and these all lie at the root of our sorrows. Our sins also are aggravated; not content with transgression, we have added iniquities to it. No. one is more greedy than a sinner, but he is greedy after his own destruction, He is never content with revolting: he must rebel yet more and more. As when a stone is rolled downhill its pace is accelerated the further it goes, so with the sinner, he goes from bad to worse.

Perhaps I speak to some who have lately come into God’s hospital. I will suppose a case. You are poor, very poor, but your poverty is the fruit of your profligate habits. Poverty is often directly traceable to drunkenness, laziness or dishonesty. All poverty does not come from that. Blessed be God there are thousands of the poor who are the excellent of the earth, and a great many of them are serving God right nobly; but I am now speaking of certain cases, and probably you know of such yourselves, where, because of their transgression and iniquities, men are brought to want. There will come to me sometimes a person who was in good circumstances a few years ago, who is now without anything but the clothes he tries to stand upright in, and his wretchedness is entirely owing to his playing the prodigal. He is one of those whom I trust God may yet take into his hospital. At times the disease beaks out in another sort of misery. Some sins bring into the flesh itself pains which are anticipatory of hell; yet, even these persons may be taken into the hospital of God, though they are afflicted, to their shame, through gross transgression. Oh, how many there are in this great City of London of men and women who dare not tell their condition, but whose story is a terrible one indeed, as God reads it. Oh that

he may have pity upon them, and take them into his lazar house, and heal them yet through his abundant grace!

In more numerous cases the misery brought by sin is mental. Many are brought by sin very low, even to despair. Conscience pricks them; fears of death and hell haunt them. I do remember well when I was in this way myself; when I, poor fool, because of my transgression and my iniquities was sorely bowed in spirit. By day I thought of the punishment of my sin; by night I dreamed of it. I woke in the morning with a burden on my heart — a burden which I could neither carry nor shake off, and sin was at the bottom of my sorrow. My sin, my sin, my sin, this was my constant plague. I was in my youth and in the hey-day of my spirit; I had all earthly comforts, and I had friends to cheer me, but they were all as nothing. I would seek solitary places to search the Scriptures, and to read such books as “Baxter’s Call to the Unconverted” and “Alleyne’s Alarm,” feeling my soul ploughed more and more, as though the law, with its ten great black horses was dragging the plough up and down my soul, breaking, crushing, furrowing my heart, and all for sin. Let me tell you, though we read of the cruelties of the Inquisition, and the sufferings which the martyrs have borne from cruel men, no racks, nor firepans, nor other instruments of torture can make a man so wretched as his own conscience when he is stretched upon its rack. Here, then, we see both the fools and the cause of their disease.

Now, let us notice THE PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE. It is said that “their soul abhorreth all manner of meat,” like persons who have lost their appetite, and can eat nothing; “and they draw near unto the gates of death,” they are given over and nearly dead.

These words may reach some whose disease of sin has developed itself in fearful sorrow, so that they are now unable to find comfort in anything. You used to enjoy the theater; you went lately, but you were wretched there. You used to be a wit, in society, and set the table on a roar with your jokes; you cannot joke now. They say you are melancholy, but you know what they do not know, for a secret arrow rankles in your bosom. You go to a place of worship, but you find no comfort even there. The manner of meat that is served to God’s saints is not suitable to you. You cry, “Alas, I am not worthy of it.” Whenever you hear a thundering sermon against the ungodly, you feel, “Ah, that is me!” but, when it comes to “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” you conclude, “Ah, that is not for me.” Even if it be an invitation to the sinner, you say, “But I do not feel

myself a sinner, I am not such an one as may come to Christ. Surely I am a castaway." Your soul abhorreth all manner of meat, even that out of God's kitchen. Not only are you dissatisfied with the world's dainties, but the marrow and fatness of Christ himself you cannot relish. Many of us have been in this way before you. The text adds, "They draw nigh unto the gates of death." The soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and feels that it cannot bear up much longer. I remember using those words of Job once in the bitterness of my spirit, "My soul chooseth strangling rather than life;" for, oh the wretchedness of a sin-burdened soul is intolerable. All do not suffer like strong conviction, but in some it bows the strong man almost to the grave. Perhaps, my friend, you see no hope whatever; you are ready to say, "There cannot be hope for me. I have made a covenant with death and a league with hell; I am past hope. There were, years ago, opportunities for me, and I was near unto the kingdom; but, like the man who put his hand to the plough and looked back, I have proved myself unworthy." Troubled heart, I am sent with a message for you: "Thus saith the Lord, your covenant with death is broken and your league with hell is disannulled. The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered." You may abhor the very meat that would restore you to strength, but he who understands the human heart knows how to give you better tastes and cure these evil whims; he knows how to bring you up from the gates of death to the gates of heaven. Thus we see how terribly the mischief progresses.

But now the disease takes a turn. Our fourth point is THE INTERPOSITION OF THE PHYSICIAN. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." The Good Physician is the true healer. Observe, *when* the physician comes in — when "they cry unto the Lord in their trouble." When they cry, the physician has come. I will not say that he has come because they cry; that would be true, but there is deeper truth still — they cried because he came. For, whenever a soul truly cries unto God, God has already blessed it by enabling it to cry. Thou wouldst never have begun to pray, if the Lord had not taught thee. God is visiting a soul, and healing it, when it has enough faith in God to east itself, with a cry, upon his mercy. I cannot hope that there is a work of grace in thee yet, till I know thou prayest. Ananias would not have believed Paul converted, had not it been said, "Behold he prayeth!" Note the kind of prayer here: it was not taken out of a book, and it was not a fine prayer in

language, whether extempore or pre-composed: it was a *cry*. You do not need to show your children how to cry: it is the first thing a new-born, child does. It wants no schoolmaster to teach it that art. Our School Boards have a great deal to teach the children of London, but they need never have a department for instruction in crying. A spiritual cry is the call of the new-born nature expressing conscious need. "How shall I pray?" says one. Pour thy heart out, brother. Turn the vessel upside down, and let it run out to the last dreg, as best it can. "But I cannot, pray," says one. Tell the Lord you cannot pray, and ask him to help you to pray, and you have prayed already. "Oh, but I don't feel as I should!" Then confess to the Lord your sinful insensibility, and ask him to make your heart tender, and you are already in a measure softened. Those who say, "I don't feel as I should," are very often those who feel most, Whether it be so or no, cry. If thou art a sin-sick soul, thou canst do nothing towards thy own healing, but this thou canst cry. He who hears thy cries will know what they mean. When the surgeon goes to the battle-field after a conflict, he is guided to his compassionate work by the groans of the wounded. When he hears a soldier's cry, he does not inquire, "Was that a Frenchman or a German, and what does he mean?" A cry is good French, and excellent German too; it is part of the universal tongue. The surgeon understands it, and looks for the sick man. And, whatever language, O sinner, thou usest, uncouth or refined, if it be the language of thy heart, God understands thee without an interpreter.

Note well, that as we have seen when the physician interposed, we shall see now *what he did*. He saved them out of their distresses, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh, the infinite mercy of God! He reveals to the heart pardon for all sin; and, by his Spirit's power, removes all our weaknesses. I tell thee, soul, though thou be at death's door at this moment, God can even now gloriously deliver thee. It would be a wonder if your poor burdened spirit should within this hour leap for joy, and yet, if the Lord visit thee, thou wilt do so. I fall back upon my own recollection: my escape from despondency was instantaneous. I did but believe Jesus Christ's word, and rest upon his sacrifice, and the night of my heart was over: the darkness had passed, and the true light had shone. In some parts of the world there are not long twilights before the break of day, but the sun leaps up in a moment: the darkness flies, and the light reigns; so is it with many of the Lord's redeemed, as in a moment their ashes are exchanged for beauty, and their spirit of heaviness for the garments of

praise. Faith is the great transformer. Wilt thou cast thyself now, whether thou live or die, upon the precious blood and merits of the Savior Jesus Christ? Wilt thou come and rest thy soul on the Son of God? If thou dost so, thou art saved: thy sins which are many are now forgiven thee. As of old, the Egyptians were drowned in a moment in the Red Sea — the depths had covered them, there was not one of them left; so, the moment thou believest, thou hast lifted a mightier rod than that of Moses, and the sea of the atoning blood, in the fullness of its strength, has gone over the heads of all thine enemies: thy sins are drowned in Jesus' blood. Oh, what joy is this, when, in answer to a cry, God delivers us from our present distresses and our future destructions!

But how is this effected? The psalmist saith, "He sent his word and healed them." "*His word.*" How God ennobles language when he use it! That word "*word*" is uplifted in Scripture into the foremost place, and put on a level with the Godhead. "THE WORD." It indicates a God-like personage, for, in the beginning was the Word; nay, it denotes God himself, for the Word was God. Our hope is in the Word — the incarnate *Logos*, the eternal Word. In some aspects our salvation comes to us entirely through the sending of that Word to be made flesh, and to dwell among us. He is our saving health, by his stripes we are healed. But here the expression is best understood of the gospel, which is the word of God. Often the reading of the Scriptures proves the means of healing troubled souls; or else, that same word is made effectual when spoken from a loving heart with a living lip. What might there is in the plain preaching of the gospel! No power in all the world can match it. They tell us, now-a-days, that the nation will go, over to Rome, and the gospel candle will be blown out. I am not a believer in these alarming prophecies; I neither believe in the Battle of Dorking, nor in the victory of Pius the Ninth. Leave us our Bibles, our pulpits, and our God, and we shall win the victory yet. Oh, if all ministers preached the gospel plainly, without aiming at rhetoric and high flights of oratory, what great triumphs would follow? How sharp would the gospel sword be if men would but pull it out of those fine ornamental, but useless, scabbards! When the Lord enables his servants to put plain gospel truth into language that will strike and stick, be understood and retained, it heals sick souls, that else might have lain fainting long! Still the word of God in the Bible and the word of God preached cannot heal the soul unless God send it in the most emphatic sense. "He sent his Word." When the eternal Spirit brings home the word with power, what a word it is! Then the miracles of

grace wrought within us are such as to astonish friends and confound foes. May the Lord, even now, send his word to each sinner, and it will be his salvation. "Hear, and your soul shall live." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and faith brings with it all that the soul requires. When we have faith, we are linked with Christ; and so our salvation is ensured.

That brings us to the last point — THE CONSEQUENT CONDUCT OF THOSE WHO WERE HEALED. First, they praised God for his goodness. What rare praise a soul offers when it is brought out of prison! The sweetest music ever heard on earth is found in those new songs which celebrate our late deliverance from the horrible pit and the miry clay. Did you ever keep a linnet in a cage and then bethink yourself that it was hard to rob it of its liberty? Did you take it out into the garden and open the cage door? Oh! but if you could have heard it sing when it had fairly escaped the cage where it had been so long, you would have heard the best linnet music in all the wood. When a poor soul breaks forth from the dungeon of despair, set free by God, what songs it pours forth! God loves to hear such music. Note that word of his, "I remember thee, the love of thine espousal, when thou wentest after me into the wilderness." God loves the warmhearted praises of newly emancipated souls; and he will get some out of you, dear friend, if you are set free at this hour.

Notice that these healed ones praised God especially for *his goodness*. It was great goodness that such as they were should be saved. So near death's door and yet saved! They wondered at his mercy and sang of "his wonderful works to the children of men." It is wonderful that such as we were should be redeemed from our iniquities; but, our Redeemer's name is called Wonderful, and he delights in showing forth the riches of his grace.

Observe that, in their praises, they ascribe all to God: they praise "*him* for *his* wonderful work." Salvation is God's work, from beginning to end. Their song is moreover comprehensive, and they adore the Lord for his love to others as well as to themselves; they praise him "for his wonderful works to the children of men."

Forget not that they added to this praise *sacrifice*: "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving." What shall be the sacrifices of a sinner delivered from going down into the pit? Shall he bring a bullock that hath horns and hoofs? Nay, let him bring his heart; let him offer himself, his time, his talents, his body, his soul, his substance. Let him exclaim, "Let my

Lord take all, seeing he hath saved my soul." Will you not lay yourselves out for him who laid himself out for you? If he has bought you with a price, confess that you are altogether his. Of your substance give to his cause as he prospers you; prove that you are really his by your generosity towards his church and his poor.

In addition to sacrifice, the healed one began to offer songs, for it was to be a "*sacrifice of thanksgiving*." May those of you who are pardoned sing more than is customary now-a-days. May we, each one of us, who have been delivered from going down to the pit, enter into the choir of God's praising ones, vocally singing as often as we can, and in our hearts always chanting his praise.

Once more, the grateful ones were to add to their gifts and psalms a *declaration of joy* at what God had done for them. "Let them declare his works with rejoicing." Ye who are pardoned should tell the church of the Lord's mercy to you. Let his people know that God is discovering his hidden ones. Come and tell the minister. Nothing gladdens him so much as to know that souls are brought to Jesus by his means. This is our reward. Ye are our crown of rejoicing, ye saved ones. I can truly say, I never have such joy as when I receive letters from persons, or hear from them personally the, good news, "I heard you on such-and-such a night, and found peace;" or, "I read your sermon, and God blessed it to my soul." There is not a true minister of Christ but would willingly lay himself down to die, if he could thereby see multitudes saved from eternal wrath. We live for this. If we miss this, our life is a failure. What is the use of a minister unless he brings souls to God? For this we would yearn over you, and draw near unto God in secret, that he would be pleased in mercy to deliver you. But, surely, if you are converted, you should not conceal the fact. It is an unkind action for any person who has received life from the dead, through any instrumentality, to deny the worker the consolation of hearing that he has been made useful; for the servant of God has many discouragements, and he is himself readily cast down, and the gratitude of those who are saved is one of the appointed cordials for his heavy heart. There is no refreshment like it. May God grant you grace to declare his love, for our sake, for the church's sake, and, indeed, for the world's sake. Let the sinner know that you have found mercy, perhaps it will induce him to seek also. Many a physician has gained his practice by one patient telling others of his cure. Tell your neighbors that you have been to the hospital of Jesus, and been restored, though you hated all manner of meat, and drew near to

the gates of death; and may be a poor soul, just in the same condition as yourself, will say, "This is a message from God to me." Above all, publish abroad the Lord's goodness, for Jesus' sake. He deserves your honor. Will you receive his blessing, and then like the nine lepers give him no praise? Will you be like the woman in the crowd, who was healed by touching the hem of his garment, and then would fain have slipped away? If so, I pray that the Master may say, "Somebody hath touched me," and may you be compelled to tell us all the truth, and say, "I was sore sick in soul, but I touched thee, O my blessed Lord, and I am saved, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace will tell it; I will tell it, though devils should hear me; I will tell it, and make the world ring with it, according to my ability, to the praise and glory of thy saving grace."

Advanced Thinkers.

BY THE EDITOR.

SOME animals make up for their natural weakness by their activity and audacity; they are typical of a certain order of men. Assumption goes a long way with many, and, when pretensions are vociferously made and incessantly intruded, they always secure a measure of belief. Men who affect to be of dignified rank, and superior family, and who, therefore, hold their heads high above the *canaille*, manage to secure a measure of homage from those who cannot see beneath the surface. There has by degrees risen up in this country a coterie, more than ordinarily pretentious, whose favorite cant is made up of such terms as these: "liberal views," "men of high culture," "persons of enlarged minds and cultivated intellects," "bonds of dogmatism and the slavery of creeds," "modern thought," and so on. That these gentlemen are not so thoroughly educated as they fancy themselves to be, is clear from their incessant boasts of their culture; that they are not free, is shrewdly guessed from their loud brags of liberty; and that they are not liberal, but intolerant to the last degree, is evident, from their superciliousness towards those poor simpletons who abide by the old faith. Jews in old times called Gentiles dogs, and Mahometans cursed unbelievers roundly; but we question whether any men, in any age, have manifested such contempt of others as is constantly evidenced towards the orthodox by the modern school of "cultured intellects." Let half a word of protest be uttered by a man who believes firmly in something, and holds by a defined doctrine, and the thunders of liberality bellow forth against the bigot. Steeped up to their very throats in

that bigotry for liberality, which, of all others, is the most ferocious form of intolerance, they sneer with the contempt of affected learning at the idiots who contend for “a narrow Puritanism,” and express a patronizing hope that the benighted adherents of “a half-enlightened creed” may learn more of “that charity which thinketh no evil.” To contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints is to them an offense against the enlightenment of the nineteenth century; but, to vamp old, worn-out heresies, and pass them off for deep thinking, is to secure a high position among minds “emancipated from the fetters of traditional beliefs.”

Manliness and moral courage are the attributes in which they consider themselves to excel, and they are constantly asserting that hundreds of ministers see with them, but dare not enunciate their views, and so continue to preach one thing and believe another. It may be so here and there, and the more is the cause for sorrow; but we are not sure of the statement, for the accusers themselves may, after all, fancy that they see in others what is really in themselves. The glass in their own houses should forbid their throwing stones. If they were straightforward themselves, they might call others to account; but, in too many cases, their own policy savors of the serpent in a very high degree. The charge could not be fairly brought against all, but it can be proven against many, that they have fought the battles of liberality, not with the broad sword of honest men, but with the cloak and dagger of assassins. They have occupied positions which could not be reconciled with their beliefs, and have clung to them with all the tenacity with which limpets adhere to rocks. Their testimony has, in some cases, been rendered evidently worthless, from the fact that with all their outcry against orthodoxy, they did their best to eat the bread of the orthodox, and would still have continued to profess, and yet to assail, orthodox opinions had they been permitted to do so. Whether this is honest is doubtful: that it is not manly is certain.

These gentlemen of culture have certainly adopted peculiar tactics. The misbelievers and unbelievers of former ages withdrew themselves from churches as soon as they found out they could not honestly endorse their fundamental articles; but these abide by the stuff, and great is their indignation at the creeds which render their position morally dubious. Churches have no right to believe anything; comprehensiveness is the only virtue of a denomination; precise definitions are a sin, and fundamental doctrines are a myth: this is the notion of “our foremost men.” For earnest people to band themselves together to propagate what they hold to be the

very truth of God, is in their eyes the miserable endeavor of bigots to stem the torrent of modern thought; for zealous Christians to contribute of their substance for the erection of a house, in which only the truths most surely believed among them shall be inculcated, is a treason against liberality; while the attempt to scure our pulpits against downright error, is a mischievous piece of persecution to be resented by all "intellectual" men. The proper course, according to their "broad views," would be to leave doctrines for the dunces who care for them. Truths there are none, but only opinions; and, therefore, cultivated ministers should be left free to trample on the most cherished beliefs, to insult convictions, no matter how long experience may have matured them, and to teach anything, everything, or nothing, as their own culture, or the current of enlightened thought may direct them. If certain old fogies object to this, let them turn out of the buildings they have erected, or subside into silence under a due sense of their inferiority.

It appears to be, now-a-days, a doubtful question whether Christian men have a right to be quite sure of anything. The Jesuit argument that some learned doctor or other has taught a certain doctrine, and that, therefore, it has some probability, is now practically prevalent. He who teaches an extravagant error is a fine, generous spirit: and, therefore, to condemn his teaching is perilous, and will certainly produce an outcry against your bigotry. Where the atonement is virtually denied, it is said that a preacher is a very clever man, and exceedingly good; and, therefore, even to whisper that he is unsound is libelous: we are assured that it would be far better to honor him for his courage in scorning to be hampered by conventional expressions. Besides, it is only his way of putting it, and the radical idea is discoverable by cultured minds. As to other doctrines, they are regarded as too trivial to be worthy of controversy, the most of them being superseded by the advancement of science and other forms of progressive enlightenment.

The right to doubt is claimed clamorously, but the right to believe is not conceded. The modern gospel runs thus: "He that believes nothing and doubts everything shall be saved." Room must be provided for every form of skepticism; but, for old-fashioned faith, a manger in a stable is too commodious. Magnified greatly is the so-called "honest doubter," but the man who holds tenaciously by ancient forms of faith is among "men of culture" voted by acclamation a fool. Hence, it becomes a sacred duty of the advanced thinker to sneer at the man of the creed, a duty which is in

most cases fully discharged; and, moreover, it is equally imperative upon him to enter the synagogue of bigots, as though he were of their way of thinking, and in their very midst inveigh against their superstition, their ignorant contentedness with worm-eaten dogmas, and generally to disturb and overturn their order of things. What if they have confessions of faith? They have no right to accept them, and, therefore, let them be held up to ridicule, Men, now-a-days, occupy pulpits with the tacit understanding that they will uphold certain doctrines, and from those very pulpits they assail the faith they are pledged to defend. The plan is not to secede, but to operate from within, to worry, to insinuate, to infect. Within the walls of Troy, one Greek is worth half Agamemnon's host; let, then, the wooden horse of liberality be introduced by force or art, as best may serve the occasion. Talking evermore right boastfully of their candor and hatred of the hollowness of creeds, etc., they will remain members of churches long after they have renounced the basis of union upon which these churches are constituted. Yes, and worse; the moment they are reminded of their inconsistency they whine about being persecuted, and imagine themselves to be martyrs. If a person, holding radical sentiments, insisted upon being a member of a Conservative club, he would meet with small sympathy if the members would not allow him to remain among them, and use their organization as a means for overthrowing their cherished principles. It is a flagrant violation of liberty of conscience when a man intrudes himself into a church with which he does not agree, and demands to be allowed to remain there, and undermine its principles. Conscience he evidently has none himself; or he would not ignore his own principles by becoming an integral part of a body holding tenets which he despises; but he ought to have some honor in him as a man, and act honestly, even to the bigots whom he so greatly pities, by warring with them in fair and open battle. If a Calvinist should join a community like the Wesleyans, and should claim a right to teach Calvinism from their platforms, his expulsion would be a vindication, and not a violation, of liberty. If it be demanded that in such matters we respect the man's independence of thought, we reply that we respect it so much that we would not allow him to fetter it by a false profession, but we do not respect it, to such a degree that we would permit him to ride rough shod over all others, and render the very existence of organized Christianity impossible. We would not limit the rights of the lowest ruffian, but if he claims to enter our bed-chamber the case is altered; by his summary expulsion we may injure his highly-cultured feelings and damage his broad views, but we claim in his ejection to be advocating,

rather than abridging, the rights of man. Conscience, indeed! What means it in the mouth of a man who attacks the creed of a church and yet persists in continuing in it? He would blush to use the term conscience if he had any, for he is insulting the conscience of all the true members by his impertinent intrusion. Our pity is reserved for the honest people who have the pain and trouble of ejecting the disturber with the ejected one, we have no sympathy; he had no business there, and, had he been a true man, he would not have desired to remain, nor would he even have submitted to do so had he been solicited.

This is most illiberal talk in the judgment of our liberal friends, and they will rail at it in their usual liberal manner; it is, however, plain common sense, as all can see but those who are willfully blind. While we are upon the point, it may be well to inquire into the character of the liberality which is, now-a-days, so much vaunted. What is it that these men would have us handle so liberally? Is it something which is our own, and left at our disposal? If so, let generosity be the rule. But no, it is God's truth which we are thus to deal with, the gospel which he has put us in trust with, and for which we shall have to render account. The steward who defrauded his lord was liberal; so was the thief who shared the plunder with his accomplice; and so were those in the Proverbs, who said, "let us all have one purse." If truth were ours, absolutely; if we created it, and had no responsibilities in reference to it, we might consider broad-church proposals; but, the gospel is the Lord's own, and we are only stewards of the manifold grace of God, and of stewards it is not so much required that they be liberal, but that they be found faithful. Moreover, this form of charity is both useless and dangerous. *Useless*, evidently, because all the agreements and unions and compromises beneath the moon can never make an error a truth, nor shift the boundary-line of God's gospel a single inch. If we basely merge one part of Scriptural teaching for the sake of charity, it is not, therefore, really merged, it will bide its time, and demand its due with terrible reprisals for our injustice towards it; for half the sorrows of the church arise from smothered truths. False doctrine is not rendered innocuous by its being winked at. God hates it whatever glosses we may put upon it; no lie is of the truth, and no charity can make it so. Either a dogma is right or wrong, it cannot be indifferent. Conferences have been held of late between Baptists and Paedobaptists, in which there has been most oily talk of mutual concessions, one is to give up this and the other that. The fit description of such transactions is mutual, or rather

united, treason to God. Will the word of God shift as these conspirators give and take? Are we, after all, our own law-makers; and is there no rule of Christ, extant? Is every man to do as seemeth good in his own eyes? If we, on the one side, set up immersion on our own authority, and they, on the other side, bring forward the infant on their own account, we may both very wisely drop our peculiarities, for they are of man only, and, therefore, of superstition. But, if either side can find support in God's word, woe to it if it plays false to the will of the Great Head. We quote this merely as an illustration; and, as it concerns minor matters, it the more clearly sets forth the emphatic stress which we would lay upon loyalty to truth in the weightier matters of our great Master's law. The rule of Christians is not the flickering glimmer of opinion, but the fixed law of the statute book; it is rebellion, black as the sin of witchcraft, for a man to know the law, and talk of conceding the point. In the name of the Eternal Kin, who is this liberal conceder, or, rather, this profane defrauder of the Lord, that he should even imagine such a thing in his heart?

Nor is it less important to remember that trifling with truth is to the last degree *dangerous*. No error can be imbibed without injury, nor propagated without sin. The utmost charity cannot convert another gospel into the gospel of Jesus Christ, nor deprive it of its deluding and destroying influence. There is no ground for imagining that an untruth, honestly believed, is in the least changed in its character by the sincerity of the receiver; nor may we dream that the highest culture renders a departure from revealed truth less evil in the sight of God. If you give the sick man a deadly poison instead of a healing medicine, neither your broad views of chemistry, nor his enlightened judgment upon anatomy, will prevent the drug from acting after its own nature. It may be said that the parallel does not hold, and that error is not deadly, but here we yield not, no, not for an hour. Paul pronounced a curse upon any man or angel who should preach another gospel, and he would not have done so, if other gospels were harmless. It is not so long ago that men need forget it, that the blight of Unitarian and other lax opinions withered the very soul of the Dissenting Churches; and that spirit has only to be again rampant, to repeat its mischief. Instances, grievous to our inmost heart, rise up before our memory at the moment of men seduced from their first love, and drawn aside from their fathers' gospel, who only meant to gather one tempting flower upon the brink of the precipice of error, but fell, never to be restored. No fiction do we write, as we bear record of those we have

known, who first forsook the good old paths of doctrine, then the ways of evangelic usefulness, and then the enclosures of morality. In all cases, the poison has not so openly developed itself, but we fear the inner ruin has been quite as complete. In the case of public teachers, cases are not hard to find where little by little men have advanced beyond their "*honest* doubt," into utter blasphemy. One notorious instance will occur to all of a man, who, having ignored the creed of his church, and, indeed, all lines of fixed belief, has become the very beacon of Christendom, from the astounding nature of the blasphemy which he pours forth. In him, as a caricature of advanced thought, it is probable that we have a more telling likeness of the real evil, than we could by any other means have obtained. It may be that Providence has allowed him to proceed to the utmost lengths, that the church might see whereunto the much-vaunted intellectual school would carry us.

We are not believers in stereotyped phraseology, nor do we desire to see the reign of a stagnant uniformity; but, at this present, the perils of the church lie in another direction. The stringency of little Bethel, whatever may have been its faults, has no power to work the mischief which is now engendered by the confusion of the latitudinarian Babel. To us, at any rate, the signs of the times portend no danger greater than that which arise from landmarks removed, ramparts thrown down, foundations shaken, and doctrinal chaos paramount.

We have written this much, because silence is reckoned as consent, and pride unrebuked lifts up its horn on high, and becomes more insolent still. Let our opponents cease, if they can, to sneer at Puritans whose learning and piety were incomparably superior to their own; and, let them remember that the names, which have adorned the school of orthodoxy, are illustrious enough to render scorn of their opinions, rather a mark of imbecility than of intellect. To differ is one thing, but to despise is another. If they will not be right, at least, let them be civil, if they prefer to be neither, let them not imagine that the whole world is gone after them. Their forces are not so potent as they dream, the old faith is rooted deep in the minds of tens of thousands, and it will renew its youth, when the present phase of error shall be only a memory, and barely that.

THE GOSPEL OF THE DEVIL

A SKELETON SERMON. BY T. MARSHALL.

“Ye shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4.

DOCTRINE. GOD WILL NOT PUNISH SIN NOT THE WAY HE SAYS HE WILL.

I. *What the Devil's Gospel is.*

1. He has a Gospel.
2. It is an ancient Gospel.
3. It is a plausible Gospel.
4. It is a lying Gospel.

II. *What it does.*

1. Comforts the wicked.
2. Encourages men in their sins.
3. Hinders men from repentance.

III. *What it leads to.*

1. Suspicion of God's character.
2. Transgression of God's law.
3. Dislike of God's presence.

IV. *What it, ends in.*

1. Separation from God.
2. Shameful nakedness.
3. Irremediable misery.

BELIEVE IT NOT.

ST. BRELADE'S BAY

A GOSSIP BY C. H. SPURGEON.

NEVER dispute about scenery. Besides, the old rule which warns you against arguing upon matters of taste, there is the other, that it is better not to compare things which were no meant for comparison. We were one day at the Plemont Caves, and the next in St. Brelade's Bay: the first, rugged and grand beyond description; the second, fair and beautiful. The question as to which was the finer scenery was suggested, but was dismissed as not a topic to be tolerated by sensible people. Each was, in its own way, surpassing; contrast was conspicuous, but comparison was absurd. You cannot take the fields all flower-bedecked, and the waves flashing and for ever changing, and the clouds fleecy, grey, or blazing with the red sunset, and say of them, "Here we have positive, comparative, and superlative." No, they are each and all superlative. God's works are all beautiful in their season, all masterpieces; there is nothing second rate among them. Jersey may glory in Plemont and its other rugged headlands, and it may equally rejoice in the more quiet beauty of the bays of which S. Brelade's is the type.

The propensity to compare is frequently indulged in equally foolish and far more injurious ways. It cuts us to the heart when we hear excellent ministers decried, because they are not like certain others. Persons will actually discuss the graded rank and comparative merit of Punshon and Binney, Landells and Brock, forgetting that the men are different persons, and no more to be placed as first, second, third, and fourth, than cowslips and oysters, gazelles and dolphins. You cannot logically institute comparisons where they do not hold. Rugged Cephas has his place and order, and he is neither better nor worse, higher nor lower in value, than polished Apollos. No one inquires which is the more useful — a needle or a pin, a spade or a hoe, a wagon or a plough — they are designed for different ends, and answer them well; but they could not exchange places without serious detriment to their usefulness. It is true that A excels in argumentative power; let him argue, then, for he was made on purpose to convince men's reasons; but, because B's style is more expository, do not despise him, for he was sent not to reason, but to teach. If all the members of the mystical body had the same office and gift, what a wretched malformation it would be; it would hardly be so good as that, for it would

not be a formation at all. If all ears, mouths, hands, and feet were turned into eyes, who would hear, eat, grasp, or move? A church with a Luther in every pulpit would be all fist; and, with a Calvin to fill every pastorate, she would be all skull. Blessed be God for one Robert Hall, but let the man be whipped who tries in his own person to make a second. Rowland Hill is admirable for once, but it is quite as well that the mould was broken. There is a great run just now for little Robertsons of Brighton, but there will soon be a glut in the market.

Why not appreciate the good in all true preachers of the gospel, and glorify God in each of them? Never let us say, "This is my man and there is no other equal to him." It may be that our favorite is the most notable in his own peculiar order; but then, other orders of men are needed and fulfill an equally important function. The sublime and commanding style of Isaiah should not put us out of patience with the plaintive tones of Jeremiah, nor with the homeliness of Hosea, or the abruptness of Haggai.

So much for moralizing on that point; we must make a halt, dismount, and come to closer quarters with this bay of St. Brelade.

What is to 'be seen? The guide-book tells of "a delicious little cove, with fantastic rocks and recesses, known as the Creux Fantomes, or Fairy Caves." Come along, worthy comrades, we will explore them first of all, and rest afterwards in some cool grot, where neither shall the sun light on us nor any heat. Shalt we inquire the way? It may be as well; for where these fairy dwellings are, we are only vaguely informed: they lie somewhere on the western side, but a mile or two more or less makes a difference to a limping traveler. Does anybody know of these wonders? It seems not. We get information at last about these "unknown, mysterious caves, and secret haunts," but then we learn, also, that "there is no practicable way to them." Not the first things which we have desired to look into which have been beyond our reach. It is disappointing though! Instructive, at least, suggestive also. There are unapproachable men as well as caves. How many preachers have affected mystery and educated themselves into obscurity. They have become, by laborious art, little else than spiritual painted windows, which admit only a dim religious light. Few have the presumption to try to understand them. They do not claim to be infallible; but none would question their right, if they styled themselves "incomprehensible." Their thoughts may be as wonderful as these Creux Fantomes; but, alas, there is no path to their meaning which an ordinary

understanding can follow. Their jargon, it is to be hoped, is to themselves its own exceeding great reward; to others, it is sound and nothing more.

Adieu, then, to the fairies. Let us examine some more ordinary and accessible places. Here is the ancient church. Who was this Saint Brelade? Was he any relation of Ingoldsby's renowned St. Medard, who was so remarkably hard and solid about the parietal bone that his pate was not crushed even when the arch enemy of all saints hurled at it the weight of a great, big stone? We hope he was not at all of that breed, for we are not partial to those of whom the witty satirist sings,

*“St. Medard, he was a holy man,
A holy man I ween was he, And even by day,
When he went up to pray,
He would light up a candle that all might see!”*

Well, well, what matters who the good soul was? here is his church, and a native ready to open the churchyard gate. Here on the left of the entrance is a good notion, a money-box for the poor, with an inscription in French. “Jesus, etant assis vis-a-vis du tronc, regardait comment le peuple mettait de l'argent daus le tronc.” Mark 11:41. A text even more suitable in French than in its English form “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.” With that text before their eyes, surely many professing Christians would contribute more, and in a better spirit. We should be ashamed to give grudgingly, if we felt sure that Jesus saw. This Scripture needs to be put up over weekly offering boxes, for it is generally neglected in the reading, all persons being in a hurry to get to the widow's mites. With all due respect to that most admirable widow, we are afraid that she has innocently been a shield for covetous hypocrites. Rich men contribute a guinea to some enterprise requiring tens of thousands, and they modestly say, “Put it down as the widow's mite.” My dear sir, it was in the plural, two mites, so please make it two guineas, so as to be accurate in number at any rate: and then remember, that she gave all her living, and you defraud the woman if you call your donation by her name, and yet do not give a tenth nor a hundredth; nay, perhaps not even a thousandth part of your substance to the Lord. It were to be wished that some minute subscribers out of magnificent incomes would become “widow's indeed;” or, at least, give “widow's mites” in deed and of a truth.

The church — we are in it now — is a plain, decent, Christian place of worship, thoroughly well whitewashed. Capital stuff that lime-white to kill

the Tractarian bug or worm, a pest very discernible in many of our parish churches, and about as destructive as the white ant in India. Churchwardens could not do better than try a coat of lime, at the same time remembering that the insect will cling to altar cloths, processional banners, or any other old rags which may be cumbering the place. If crosses, holy candle-sticks, censers, and other trumpery to which these creatures attach themselves could be removed, it would be well; but we beg the purifiers not to carry these implements anywhere near Dissenting chapels for fear the plague should spread there also. If a gracious providence should command a mighty strong east, west, north, or south wind to take away these creatures, we should greatly rejoice, for they cover the face of the earth, so that, the land is darkened. There were other evidences of purity in St. Brelade's church, besides the fair white upon its walls. There stood a plain communion table, with four legs, simple and unadorned, and over it, as usual, were the apostles' creed, Lord's prayer, and decalogue. No frippery here. Moreover, there were suitable texts above and below each of these inscriptions; and we specially marked that over the creed were these words "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," with this most appropriate text, by way of interpreter, beneath: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." We commend these parallel Scriptures to the careful and prayerful consideration of all readers of *The Sword and the Trowel*.

In the grave yard were the hillocks and stones which memorialize not only the rude forefathers of the hamlet, but many from far and near, who came to Jersey, saw, and died. Inscriptions there were, English and French, a few in unmitigated doggerel, and many more of the usual rhymes of the sort, to which Pope's criticism might be applied

*"Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'
In the next line 'it whispers through the trees;'
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep,'
The reader's threatened, not in vain, with 'sleep.'"*

There surely should be some censorship of churchyard poetry, which might be elevating in sentiment and expression, but is too often neither. We were fortunate enough, however, to stumble on one epitaph which we copied eagerly, for it seemed to us, in its way, to be quite a gem

*“Weep for a seaman, honest and sincere,
Not cast away, but brought to anchor here;
Storms had o’erwhelmed him but the conscious wave
Repented, and resign’d him to the grave.
In harbor, safe from shipwreck now he lies
Till Time’s last signal blazes through the skies;
Refitted in a moment, then shall he
Sail from this port, on an eternal sea.”*

The Eton boy’s lines upon “The Conscious Water,” which “saw its God, and blushed,” were evidently in the versifier’s mind in line three; and the ring of some of the expressions reminds us much of Watts’ Lyrics.

We looked into the very ancient building called the “Chapelle des Pecheurs,” or Fisherman’s Chapel, and marked the rude frescoes, now happily passing away into well deserved decay. What men of taste can see in the worse than childish daubs of the mediaeval times, we know not; they are not merely grotesque, but comic, and in many cases revolting and blasphemous. Venerate the old if you will; but let old idols, and abominations, “portrayed upon the wall round about,” be devoured as speedily as possible by the salutary tooth of time. We should like half-an-hour with a stout hammer and a ladder in several of our parish churches; and we would leave behind us improvements in architecture worth of imitation by future architects.

*“Reformations which another,
Hating much the Popish reign —
Some faint, evangelic brother,
Seeing, might take heart again.”*

We, certainly, did not cross the Channel to spend our time inside a vaulty and dilapidated building, so away to the sea. What a splendid plain of sand; but see how it is stirred and moved by the wind. Such fine particles, in such constant motion, will assuredly blind us. Let us make a rush through it for the rocks, and then we can sit by the side of Mr. Disraeli’s melancholy ocean; or, what Pollok calls, the “tremendous sea.” Judge our surprise when we find that the raging sandstorm reaches no higher than our knees, and all above is clear enough. Odd, very odd, to be beaten about the ankles by a torrent of blowing particles; and up here, in the region of breathing and seeing, to be serenity itself. If our daily trials could be kept under foot in the same manner, how happily might we live. The things of earth are too

inconsiderable to be allowed to rise breast high. “Let not your heart be troubled.”

Out on the rocks, we enjoy the breeze and the view; and, looking back on the bay of St. Brelade, half envy the cottagers whose profound quiet is unmolested by the shriek of locomotives, the roll of cabs, and the discord of barrel organs. By us, the blue wave must be left for the black fog, and the yellow sands for the dingy bricks; but there are souls to be won by thousands amid the millions of London, and, therefore, we will return to duty with willing step. With all the advantages of a country life — and they are many and great — the active servant of God will prefer the town, because there he sows in wider fields, and hopes for larger harvests. Dr. Guthrie once said, “I bless God for cities;” and he rightly called them “the active centers of almost all church and state reforms, and the cradles of human liberty.” We, also, bless God for cities, for there the willing crowds hang on the preacher’s lips, there the laborious church is gathered, the student trained, the evangelist tutored, the mind inflamed by contact with mind, and the pulse of godliness quickened. We pronounce Raleigh’s blessing, on the country

*“Blest silent groves! O may ye be
For ever mirth’s best nursery.”*

But, we choose to spend our days where larger human harvests, white for the sickle, wait for the reaper’s coming.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

DECEMBER 1, 1871.

BILLY BRAY, THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN

BY THE EDITOR.

THE grace of God does not obliterate the peculiarities of nature. It weakens, and ultimately destroys, our depraved propensities; but the merely human elements in us it preserves in all their individuality, consecrating but not effacing them. Originality is rather an embellishment than a disfigurement of true religion; though formalists have in all ages aimed at lifting all up or beating all down to a common level, it is a most fortunate circumstance that they have not succeeded, for had they done so the elect family would have lost much of its beauty, and more of its strength. If when the living creatures in Noah's day entered the ark, they had all, straightway, become of one species — all cattle for instance — the result would have been destructive to the perfect chain of life, injurious to mankind, and, what is far more important, derogatory to the wisdom of the Most High: we ought not, therefore, to expect men when they enter the ark of salvation, to lose their natural distinctions and peculiarities, and become all tame and monotonous repetitions of one model.

Many, however, who are prepared to tolerate, and even to admire considerable diversities of character, have yet, unconsciously to themselves, laid down in their own minds very fixed and definite limits within which those diversities shall range. So far they are still looking for a measure of uniformity, and will probably require several more or less violent wrenches of their propriety before they will be able to comprehend within the circle of their sympathy sundry eccentric and erratic forms of genuine spiritual life, which, nevertheless, have had their uses, and have brought no small glory to God. We are most of us somewhat tolerant of well-educated eccentrics, we almost reverence the oddities of genius, but we are squeamish if we see singularities combined with ignorance, and idiosyncrasies prominent in men who cannot even spell the word. What in a

gentleman would be a peculiarity, is reckoned in a poor man to be an absurdity. Such slaves are most men to kid gloves and good balances at the banker's, that they toady to aristocratic whims, and even affect to admire in my Lord Havethecash that which would disgust them in poor Tom Honesty. This partiality of judgment, in a measure, affects even Christians, who, beyond all other men, are bound to judge things by their own intrinsic value, and not according to the false glitter of position and wealth. We claim for uneducated Christian men as wide a range for their originality as would be allowed them if they were the well-instructed sons of the rich; we would not have a shrewd saying decried because it is ungrammatical; nor a fervent, spiritual utterance ridiculed because it is roughly expressed. Consider the man as he is; make allowances for educational disadvantages, for circumstances, and for companionships, and do not turn away with contempt from that which, in the sight of God, may be infinitely more precious than all the refinements and delicacies so dear to pompous imbecility.

With this long-winded preface, we beg to introduce to our esteemed readers the life of Mr. William Bray, of Cornwall, for several years a local preacher among the Bryanites, or Bible Christians: we beg his pardon for calling him by a name which he never used, and introduce him a second time, with due accuracy, as Billy Bray. This worthy was once a dunken and lascivious miner, running to excess of riot, but grace made him an intensely earnest and decided follower of the Lord Jesus. His conversion was very marked, and was attended with those violent struggles of conscience which frequently attend that great change in strong-minded and passionate natures. After many resolves and failures, he was deeply impressed by reading Bunyan's "Visions of Heaven and Hell." In that book he met with a passage, in which two lost souls in hell are represented as cursing each other for being the author of each other's misery; and Bray at once thought of a certain Sam Coad, to whom he was much attached, and the question pierced his very heart "Shall Sam Coad and I, who like each other so much, torment each other in hell?" "From that time, November, 1823, he had a strong desire to be a better man. He had married some time before; his wife had been converted when young, but had gone back from the right path before marriage. But the remembrance of what she had enjoyed was very sweet, and yet very bitter. She told her husband that 'no tongue could tell what they enjoy who serve the Lord.' 'Why don't you begin again?' was his pertinent enquiry; adding, 'for then I may begin too.' He was

ashamed to fall on his knees before his wife, for the devil had such a hold of him; but he knew it was his duty to pray for mercy. He went to bed without bending his knees in prayer; but about three o'clock he awoke, and thinking that if he waited until his wife was converted, that he might never be saved, he jumped out of bed, and got on his knees for the first time, and forty years afterwards he could joyfully boast that he had never once since been ashamed to pray.

“When Sunday morning came it was very wet; the Bible Christians had a class-meeting a mile from his house; he went to the place, but because it was wet none came. This had an unfavorable effect on his mind, and his first thought was, ‘If little rain will keep the people away from the house of God, I shall not join here.’ This hasty decision was soon reversed, for Billy was a consistent member with the Bible Christians for more than forty years, and died in communion with the people of his early choice.”

His actual obtaining of peace brought the tears into our eyes as we read it, and made us remember a lad who, more than twenty years ago, found the Lord in a somewhat similar style; it also reminded us of George Fox the Quaker, and John Bunyan the Baptist, when undergoing a similar change. Children of God are born very much alike: their divergencies usually arise as a matter of after years; in their regeneration, as in their prayers, they appear as one. When Bray found no one at the meeting, he went home, and spent the day in reading his Bible and the hymn-book, and in prayer to God. “He was assailed by the fierce temptation ‘that he would never find mercy;’ but with the promise, “Seek and ye shall find,” he quenched this fiery dart of the wicked one, and in due time he learned, by blessed experience, that the promise was *true*. Monday forenoon was spent in the same manner. In the afternoon he had to go to the mine, but, ‘all the while I was working I was crying to the Lord for mercy.’ His sad state moved his fellow-workmen to pity he ‘was not like Billy Bray,’ they said. Why? Because he had been used to tell lies to make them laugh, and now he was determined to serve the Lord. No relief came, and he went home, ‘asking for mercy all the way.’ It was then eleven o'clock at night, but the first thing he did was to go upstairs and fall upon his knees, and entreat God to have mercy on him. Everything else was forgotten in the intensity of his desire that the Lord would speak peace to his soul. After a while he went to bed, but not to sleep. All the forenoon of the next day he spent in crying for mercy food being almost left untasted, and conversation with his ‘partner’ at the mine in the afternoon having almost ceased. That day

passed away, and nearly the whole night he spent upon his knees. The enemy ‘thrust at him sore,’ but ‘I was glad,’ he says, ‘that I had begun to seek the Lord, for I felt *I would rather be crying for mercy than living in sin.*’ On the next day he had ‘almost laid hold of the blessing,’ but the time came for him to go to the mine (two o’clock in the afternoon). The devil strongly tempted him, while at his work, that he would never find mercy; ‘but I said to him, “Then art a liar, devil,” and as soon as I said so, I felt the weight gone from my mind, and I could praise the Lord, but not with that liberty I could afterwards. So I called to my comrades, “I am not so happy as some, but sooner than I would go back to sin again, I would be put in that ‘plat’ there, and burned to death.” When he had got home on former nights he had cared nothing about supper, his anguish of soul was so great; and this night he did not, because a hope had sprung up in his heart, and with it a determination to press right into the kingdom of heaven. To his chamber he again repaired. Beautifully simple and touching are his own words: — ‘I said to the Lord, “Thou hast said, *They that ask shall receive they that seek shall find, and to them that knock the door shall he opened,* and I have faith to believe it.” In an instant the Lord made me so happy that I cannot express what I felt. I shouted for joy. I praised God with my whole heart for what he had done for a poor sinner like me for I could say, the Lord hath pardoned all my sins. I think this was in November, 1823, but what day of the month I do not know. I remember this, that everything looked new to me; the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a man in a new world. I spent the greater part of my time in praising the Lord. I could say with Isaiah, “O Lord, I will praise thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me;” or, like David, “The Lord hath brought me up out of a horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, *and hath put a new song* in my mouth, even praise unto my God.” I was a new man altogether. I told all I met what the Lord had done for my soul. I have heard some say that they have had hard work to get away from their companions, but I had hard work to find them soon enough to tell them what the Lord had done for me. Some said I was mad; and others that they should get me back again next pay-day. But, praise the Lord, it is now more than forty years ago, and they have not got me yet. They said I was a *mad*-man, but they meant I was a *glad* man, and, glory be to God! I have been glad ever since.’”

No sooner was Billy saved himself than he began at once looking after others. He prayed for his work-mates, and saw several brought to Jesus in answer to his prayer. His was a simple faith; he believed in the reality of prayer, and meant to be heard, and expected to be answered whenever he supplicated for the souls of his comrades. He was a live man, not a dummy. In his own simple style he did all that he did with vigor, physical vigor being quite conspicuous enough in his shouting and leaping for joy. "He tells us, soon after his conversion, 'I was very happy in my *work* and could leap and dance for joy under ground as well as on the surface. My comrades used to tell me that was no religion, dancing, shouting, and making so much "to-do." But I was born in the *fire*, and could not live in the *smoke*. They said there was no need to leap, and dance, and make so much noise, for the Lord was not deaf and he knows our hearts. And I would reply, but you must know that the devil is not deaf either, and yet his servants make a great noise. The devil would rather see us doubting than hear us shouting.'" Does the reader wince? Why should not Billy Bray shout, as., well as the saints in the Psalms? and why should he not dance before the Lord, if he felt inclined to do so, with so good an example as David before him? Why should we play the part of Michal? True, neither the writer nor his readers will probably become shouters or jumpers; but, for the life of us, we cannot see why natural expressions of holy joy in rough, pitmen should not be quite as acceptable with God as the more silent and decorous modes of thanksgiving adopted by more refined converts. The deadly decorum which represses all the jubilation of unsophisticated nature is none of our favorites. We have half a mind to give a leap or two ourselves, or shout "Glory, glory!" just to show how heartily we despise the stiffness of unregenerate gentility, which has stolen the name of propriety.

"Bray began publicly to exhort men to repent, and turn to God, about a year after his conversion. Towards the end of 1824 his name was put on the Local Preachers' Plan, and his labors were much blessed in the conversion of souls. He did not commonly select a text, as is the general habit of preachers, but he usually began his addresses by reciting a verse of a hymn, a little of his own experience, or some telling anecdote. But he had the happy art of pleasing and profiting the people, so that persons of all ages, the young as much as the old, of all classes, the rich as much as the poor, and of all characters, the worldly as much as the pious, flocked to hear him, and he retained his popularity until the last. Perhaps no preacher

in Cornwall ever acquired more extensive or more lasting renown, and the announcement of his name, as a speaker at a missionary meeting, or any anniversary or special occasion, was a sufficient attraction, whoever might or might not be present rise. Sometimes his illustrations and appeals made a powerful impression, I remember once hearing him speak with great effect to a large congregation, principally miners. In that neighborhood there were two mines, one very prosperous, and the other quite the reverse, for the work was hard and the wages low. He represented himself as working at *that* mine, but on the 'pay-day' going to the prosperous one for his wages. But had he not been at work at the other mine? the manager inquired. He had, but he liked the wages at the good mine the best. He pleaded very earnestly, but in vain. He was dismissed at last with the remark, from which there was no appeal, that he must come there to work if he came there for his wages. And then he turned upon the congregation, and the effect, was almost irresistible, that they must serve Christ here if they would share his glory hereafter, but if they would serve the devil now, to him they must go for their wages by-and-by. A very homely illustration certainly, but one that convinced the understanding and subdued the hearts of his hearers.

“There was great excitement and much apparent confusion in some of his meetings, more than sufficient to shock the prejudices of highly sensitive or refined, or over-fastidious persons. Some even who had the fullest confidence and warmest affection for Billy could not enjoy some of the outward manifestations they occasionally witnessed to the extent that he himself did, or persons of similar temperament. Billy could not tolerate ‘deadness,’ as he expressively called it, either in a professing Christian or in a meeting, He had a deeper sympathy with persons singing, or shouting, or leaping for joy, than he had with

*‘The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.’“*

His life, though not without its trials, must have been a remarkably happy one. Mr. Gilbert says of him, on one occasion, “When Billy was about to leave, in company with a youth who had come with him, he said, ‘Johnny and I, we’ll make the valleys ring with our singing and praising as we go home!’ I said, ‘Then you are a singer, Billy,’ ‘O yes, bless the Lord! I can sing. My heavenly Father likes to hear me sing, I can’t sing so sweetly as some, but my Father likes to hear me sing as well as those who sing better

than I can. My Father likes to hear the *crow* as well as the *nightingale*, for he made them both.” When much opposed and persecuted for singing so much, he would exclaim, “If they were to put me into a barrel, *I would shout glory through the bung-hole!*”

Methodism is the mother church of Cornwall, and Bray was a genuine though uncultivated child of her heart. As John Wesley always associated the grace of God with the penny a week, so Bray’s religion was not all shouting; it had an eminently practical turn in many directions. Billy was quite a mighty chapel builder; he began by getting a piece of freehold from his mother, which he cleared with his own hands, and then proceeded to dig out the foundations of a chapel which was to be called *Bethel*. Under great discouragements, both from friends and foes, mostly, however, from the first, he actually built the place, working at it himself, and at the same time begging stone, begging timber, and begging money to pay the workmen. His little all he gave, and moved all around, who had anything to spare, to give likewise. On-lookers thought Billy to be silly, and called him so; but, as he well remarked, “Wise men could not have preached in the chapel if silly Billy had not built it.” Almost as soon as one building was finished, he was moved to commence another. It was much needed, and many talked about it, but nobody had the heart to begin it but Billy Bray. He begged the land, borrowed a horse and cart of the giver; and then after doing his own hard day’s work underground in the pit, and providing for five small children, he and his son worked at raising stone and building the walls; frequently working twenty hours of the twenty-four. He had a hard struggle over this second chapel; but; his own account is best. “When our chapel was up about into the door-head, the devil said to me, ‘They are all gone and left you and the chapel, and I would go and leave the place too.’ Then I said, ‘Devil, doesn’t thee know me better than that; by the help of the Lord I will have the chapel up, or lose my skin on the down.’ So the devil said no more to me on that subject. Sometimes I had blisters on my hands, and they have been very sore. But I felt I did not mind that, for if the chapel should stand one hundred years, and if one soul were converted in it every year, *that* would be a hundred souls, and that would pay me well if I got to heaven, for they that ‘turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.’ So I thought I should be rich enough when I got there. The chapel was finished after a time; and the opening day came. ‘We had preaching, but the preacher was a wise man, and a dead man. I believe there was not much good done that day, for it was a very dead time

with the preacher and people; for he had a great deal *grammar*, and but little of *Father*. ‘It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.’ If it was by wisdom or might, I should have but a small part, for my might is little and my wisdom less. Thanks be to God, the work is his, and he can work by whomsoever he pleases. The second Sunday after the chapel was opened and I was ‘planned’ there. I said to the people, ‘You know I did not work here about this chapel in order to fill my pocket, but for the good of the neighbors, and the good of souls; and souls I must have, and souls I will have.’ The Lord blessed us in a wonderful manner. Two women cried to the Lord for mercy; and when I saw that, said, ‘Now the chapel is paid for already.’ The good Lord went on to work there; and the society soon went up from fifteen members to thirty. You see how good the Lord is to me; I spoke for one soul a year, and he gave me fifteen souls the first year. Bless and praise his holy name, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever, for one soul is worth a thousand worlds. Our little chapel had three windows, one on one side, and two on the other; the old devil, who does not like chapels, put his servants, by way of reproach, to call our chapel *Three-Eyes*. But blessed be God, since then, the chapel has become too small for the place; and it has been enlarged; now there are six windows instead of three; and they may call the chapel *Six-Eyes* if they will. For, glory be to God, many that have been converted there are now in heaven. And, when we get there, we will praise him with all our might; *and he shall never hear the last of it.*”

No sooner was this second house finished, than he began a third and larger one, and in this enterprise his talent for collecting, as well as his zeal in giving and working, were well displayed. He had high — and as we believe proper — ideas of his mission, in gathering in the subscriptions of the Lord’s stewards. “A friend who was with Billy on a begging expedition suggested, as they were coming near a gentleman’s house, and Billy was evidently making for the front door, that it would be better if they went to the back door. ‘No,’ said Billy, ‘I am the son of a King, and I shall go frontways.’” “At one time, at a missionary meeting, he seemed quite vexed because there was something said in the report about money received for ‘rags and bones.’ And when he rose to address the meeting he said ‘I don’t think it is right supporting the Lord’s cause with old rags and bones. The Lord deserves the best; and ought to have the best.’” Well done, Billy! This is right good, and sound divinity.

Simple souls like Billy, with all their happiness, have also their trials. His true life unto God observed the molesting influence of the evil spirit, and he viewed him in much the same realistic manner as Martin Luther had done before him. “King of the Blacks,” was his common name for the arch-enemy. “The devil knows where I live,” was a common saying of Billy’s, in answer to remarks of persons that he knew but little or nothing of trial and temptation, he was tempted, so he said, to do many bad things, to swear, to tell lies, etc., and sometimes to end his life by throwing himself down the “shaft” of a mine. But he told the tempter, “*old smutty-face*,” as he called him, to do this himself, and see how he would like it.

This cool way of ridiculing the fiend reminds us of a story of the Puritan times. We will give it as we find it. “Mr. White, of Dorchester, being a member of the Assembly of Divines, was appointed minister of Lambeth, but, for the present, could get no convenient house to dwell in, but one that was possessed by the devil. This he took; and, not long after, his maid, sitting up late, the devil appeared to her; whereupon, in a great fright, she ran up to tell her master. He bid her go to bed, saying, she was well served for sitting up so late. Presently after, the devil appeared to Matthew White himself, standing at his bed’s feet; to whom Mr. White said, ‘If thou hast nothing else to do, thou mayest stand there still, and I will betake myself to rest;’ and, accordingly, composing himself to sleep, the devil vanished.” A little of this coolness would soon end the nonsense of impostors, and would probably be the best treatment for the fallen angel himself, if he did literally appear.

While upon this subject, we are tempted to quote Mr. Bourne again, especially as the passage shows Billy Bray to the life. “We may give two or three incidents, as they show not only the eccentricity, but also the force of his genius. He thus repelled the tempter, when he suggested that he would not go to heaven when he died ‘Hast thee got a little “lew” place for me in hell where I could sing thee a song? *Thee cus’n’t burn me, devil There’s no grease in me*’; or, ‘If thee shouldst get me, I should vex thee a lot, for I should bring Jesus with me. I never go anywhere without he. I should raise such a peal about thy ears as thee hasn’t heard for this two-seven years. I should do nothing but sing and tell about Jesus.’ If the temptation was that he was a fool to go to preach, as he would never get anything for it, the answer was, ‘Not so big a fool as thee art, for once thee was in a good situation, and did not know how to keep it.’ When his crop of potatoes failed, while his neighbors had plenty, the temptation was, ‘What a God

thine is! He gives others plenty of potatoes and you none. I would not serve such a God as that.' Billy's reply was, '*Then I would*, for this shows that my heavenly Father is omnipotent, and that he can give potatoes or take them away!' and the devil left at once, and, as Billy said, '*without having the manners to say good morning.*' It is long long ago since Satan asked the Almighty, 'Doth Job fear God for nought?' craftily insinuating that there was no disinterested virtue, and that God had only to touch what Job had, and he would curse him to his face. But Christians love God for what he is, and not for profit or reward; and they love holiness, not only because it is happiness, but because it is his image who is to them "the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." It is a miserable, shallow philosophy to suppose that the Lord rewards those who are poor in spirit, and pure in heart, and patient, under suffering, with mere earthly good, or that their trust, and love, and devotion, and service, can be alienated by any sorrows and evils he permits to come upon them.

Billy, too, knew how to fight the devil and his agents with their own weapons. Returning late from a revival meeting, on a dark night in a lonely road, 'certain lewd fellows of the baser sort,' tried to frighten him by making all sorts of unearthly sounds; but he went singing on his way. At last one of them said, in the most terrible tones, 'But I'm the devil up here in the hedge, Billy Bray.' 'Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!' said Billy, '*I did not know thee "wust" so far away as that.*' To use Billy's own expression, 'What could the devil do with such as he!'"

This good man's heart and soul were in all that he did, and to him things were as the Book of God describes them. 'We do not suppose that we should have agreed with his theology; but we sympathize with his experience, and admire his holy childlikeness. We feel obliged to Mr. Bourne for telling the simple, unvarnished tale, and only hope our borrowing from him, may, like the bees who suck the flowers, do no hurt to his book. We expect that our readers will get it for themselves, and exhaust the edition. They will find a good deal which they will not endorse, but much more that they will read with interest, and we trust with profit.. We shall not tell more of his life and death, but close with an incident which we admire beyond everything else in the book, for we believe in the Holy Ghost moving preachers, and would gladly be silent if we did not feel his power.

“One of the most blessed results of his deep piety was *his unfeigned humility, and his continual sense of dependence upon God*. The Lord’s servants without the Lord’s presence are weak like other men, like Samson, when he lost his locks. Here is one experience of Billy’s: ‘When I was in the St. Neot’s Circuit, I was on the plan; and I remember that one Sunday I was planned at Redgate, and there was a chapel full of people, and the Lord gave me great power and liberty in speaking; but all at once the Lord took away his Spirit from me, so that I could not speak a word and this might have been the best sermon that some of them ever heard. What! you say, and looking like a fool and not able to speak? Yes, for it was not long before I said, I am glad I am stopped, and that for *three* reasons. And the first is, To humble my soul, and make me feel more dependent on my Lord, to think more fully of the Lord, and less of myself. The next reason is, To convince you that are ungodly, for you say we can speak what we have a mind to, without the Lord as well as with him; but you cannot say so now, for you hear how I was speaking, but when the Lord took away his Spirit I could not say another word; without my Lord I could do nothing. And the third reason is, That some of you young men who are standing here may be called to stand in the pulpit some day as I am; and the Lord may take his Spirit from you as he has from me, and then you might say, it is no good for me to try to preach or exhort, for I was stopped the last time I tried to preach, and I shall preach no more. But now you can say, I saw poor old Billy Bray stopped once like me, and he did not mind it, and told the people that he was glad his Lord had stopped him, and Billy Bray’s Lord is my Lord, and I am glad he stopped me too, for if I can benefit the people, and glorify God, *that* is what I want.’ I then spoke a great while, and told the people what the Lord gave me to say.”

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

A RECORD

OF COMBAT WITH SIN AND OF LABOR FOR THE LORD.

EDITED BY C. H. SPURGEON.

1872.

PREFACE

To Our Readers

BRETHREN, — Our editorial labors of another year are before you, in their results at least. Conscientiously have they been performed, and never with a slack hand. Our work has been personally conducted to the best of our ability, and the effect has been a sustained circulation for our periodical, and we hope, also, a continued degree of interest, among our readers. Certainly, our various enterprises, such as the College, the Orphanage, and the Colportage, have derived perpetual assistance as the fruit of our magazine articles; and very many other useful institutions which our contributors have described in our pages, have also gained substantial aid. For all this we are grateful, and render thanks to Almighty God; but we aspire to larger influence for good, and for this we must appeal to our subscribers whose good word would speedily double the number of our readers. If they feel they should give it, we trust they will not be silent.

In the portico of St. Mark's Cathedral we were amused by the sight of a grotesque mosaic representing seven lean bullocks, whose ribs might be counted, devouring seven well-fatted steers, whose plump hindquarters were bleeding under the strangely carnivorous operators' teeth. We fear that the year 1872 has been to the Dissenting Churches of England one of the ill-favored and lean kine, and has sadly consumed the former years, which were comparatively fat and well-fleshed. Our numbers, taking all churches round, have not increased, but have rather diminished hence we must close the year with humiliation and regret. Jeremiah must be our prophet for awhile, and call us to lament for the hurt of the daughter of our people. Where lies the sin? Who is the Achan in the camp? Let us rise and purge ourselves, and cry mightily till the Lord our God return unto us in the power of his mighty grace.

Yet there is no cause for despondency. "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." He will turn again and restore to us the years which the locus hath eaten, only let us return unto him, and walk in all his ways, and rest in his promises. Now must we awake, and by faith advance in right earnest to the battle, and the enemy shall no longer insult over us. All the signs of the times, both those which are hopeful and those which threaten, unite to stimulate the prayers and

activities of the faithful. Who knoweth what shall be, or whence shall come deliverance? This much we know assuredly, that the Lord will yet prevail over his enemies, and Moab shall be trodden down as straw is trodden for the dunghill.

Our own church at the Tabernacle has continued to enjoy prosperity and increase, and so has the larger proportion of those presided over by brethren trained in our College. Our piece has been rained upon in the year of drought, which also keeps us in good heart of hope for others, since we are neither more worthy, nor wiser, nor stronger than they. The Lord is among us, and gleams of the light of his countenance are visible here and there; therefore, let the churches preach the gospel simply, live in holiness, and be much in prayer, and the power of the sacred Spirit will soon be manifest among us, and conversions will become numerous as the drops of the morning.

Again have we to bear witness to the goodness of God in providence, for our many and expensive operations have all been well supported, even until now; and they will be for our reliance is upon the Infinite One. We have hope, also, that other works will yet be wrought by our instrumentality; and were all our readers fully consecrated to the Lord as to their substance, many much-needed agencies could be commenced or enlarged. He only lives who lives for Jesus. Nothing is worth having if it cannot be made to serve his cause. Eternity is hurrying, on, we hear its chariot-wheels, and in its near approach we feel moved to speedier action, and wish that the blood of all Christians were quickened, to more rapid pulsations in the work and life of Jesus. O for crowns for him! Souls won by his gospel to be priceless gems in his resplendent diadem! Brethren, what are we doing? Put the question in the singular, each man among you, and say "What am I doing for my Redeemer, the best of Masters, the incomparable Well Beloved?" By every mercy received, by every boon expected, by every communion enjoyed, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, we call upon every lover of The Altogether-lovely One to honor him in all ways, while yet this dispensation lingers, and the Bridegroom tarries. To fight for him against his carnal foes, and labor for him in his vineyard, on his own chosen hill, be our chosen vocation, "till the day break and the shadows flee away."

Brethren, as your brother and fellow-laborer, we salute you, begging a place in your prayers, and an increased share in our generous aid.

Yours for Christ's sake,

(C. H. Spurgeon signature, *December, 1872.*

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JANUARY 1, 1872.

THE YEAR OF GRACE, 1872.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

WE adopt the above title, because our sincere prayer and earnest expectation would verify it. There is great need for a season of revival among the churches, and we have personal reason to believe that it is coming. If it be the Lord's will, a gracious time of refreshing will occur, and we think we have good warrant for anticipating it. In a hopeful spirit, anxiously expectant, we sit down to write this brief paper, the first in another volume of the *Sword and Trowel*, intending to make it in part a history, and in part an exhortation. How happy shall we be if it shall, in even the least degree, contribute to the consummation for which our spirit pines!

Some three months ago, having newly risen from a sick bed, our heart felt heavy for the souls of dying men. Our ministry has never been without large results in conversion, but we were discontented and ill at ease because to such multitudes the Lord Jesus appeared to be without form or comeliness. Especially did it burden us to see so many of our regular hearers undecided. After so much preaching, were they after all to perish? Were they to find no Savior in the gospel but that of death unto death? These questions pricked us in our reins, and gave us no rest.

We should have become too sad for efficient service, had not another circumstance comforted our soul; for at this time instances of conversion, through the printed sermons, were brought before us in unusual abundance, so that, for a considerable period, we heard of perhaps twenty each week who had been led to find rest in the atoning blood. Some of these saved ones lived in remote parts of the world, and met with our sermons at sea, or in the bush, or in foreign hospitals, or in the backwood.

This was cheering, but the former pang was not diminished in bitterness, Did the Lord intend to bless his word by us to strangers and foreigners, and were the sheep of our pasture at home, the peculiar objects of our care, to remain without his favor? Our desire and anguish grew, and acted upon each other until both became, regnant within our spirit, beyond all else. Then spake we with our tongue. We laid their case before the unregenerate, begging them to consider their state of condemnation, and to abide no longer in horrible indifference, while the wrath of God was resting upon them. Whether they felt it or not, our own spirit was stirred, and we were greatly disquieted.

It happened, as God would have it, that one of the female members of the church accosted us in this way: — “Dear pastor, I am sorely troubled for souls; I cannot rest unless they be saved.” This word we laid up in our heart. A short time after an elder of the church expressed himself in almost similar terms; and, unknown to him, another came to us with a similar confession of painful solicitude for the unconverted, the confession in each case being very emphatic, and relating to no ordinary emotion, but to an agony intense and unspeakable. We saw that the Lord was mowing in other hearts besides our own, and were encouraged to feel a yet more vehement travail of soul.

Spontaneously, as a work of God, of which we may say, It groweth, but “thou knowest not how,” a prayer-meeting began among the elders, from 5 to 6 on Monday evenings, before the usual business meeting, at 6. These meetings have been times of sacred weeping and importunate intercession, and the very hour has seemed consecrated to us; we were of one accord, if we could not all be actually in one place. If ever men prayed, the pastors and elders of The Tabernacle did so; nor was faith lacking either, for we spake to one another with words of good cheer, and talked of the coming blessing, though no unusual means had been used to obtain it, and though no artificial effort would have been tolerated, if proposed.

A deacon who had been traveling on the Continent, upon his return, declared that he had been greatly stirred in heart, and had made a vow unto the Lord, though he was quite unaware that the pastor and elders had been subjects of similar inflamings of the Spirit of God. He had it on his heart to propose some special meetings, and had determined to bear any expense which they might involve. This, however, he left until such time as might seem good to the pastors and brethren. Like every one of the children of

God upon whom the Holy Ghost was brooding, he felt afraid to push any suggestion, or to urge any plan, but coincided with his brethren in the belief that the Lord was about to work in the church, and that we must continue to wait upon him in prayer.

Signs of the sure answer to intercession began to appear and were joyfully welcomed; and, meanwhile, the circle of fervent ones daily increased, and comprised both men and women. As a specimen of the feeling which pervaded each heart, among the quickened ones, we will quote from a private letter which, we received from one of the elders, and it may well stand as a sample of all, for his inward experience precisely tallied with that of others, who perhaps imagined that they alone were sighing and crying unto the Lord. This brother wrote us as follows

“Mr. DEAR PASTOR, — That fire which God has lit up in your soul for the conversion of sinners has become apparent to every one. It has increased from a flame to a glowing heat; that fire has kindled a flame in others; glory be to God for this. I am convinced that the Lord is about to work mightily among us. When I heard Mr. C.’s prayer last Monday evening, that prayer told out all that I had been passing through. His troubled soul, his restless hours, and his cry in the night watches, were like mine. The Lord had been dealing with me in the same way, and at the same time. My soul has been troubled and refused to be comforted. My sleep departed from my eyes. I could not rest on my bed. At one, two, and three, in the morning, I have been constrained to cry unto the Lord that he would hasten the time to favor our land, and turn the barren wilderness into a fruitful field, and that he would purge and revive his church. With Mr. C., I have asked (yes, before I knew what was passing through his soul), Has God put this desire into our souls for nought? Has he made our hearts to long and pant for the salvation of souls, without having some precious design? I come to his house at the time of prayer, and find he has been dealing with a brother just in the same way as with myself; surely God is moving among us, or it would not be so. I have been anxious about this thing, and troubled as I look it in the face.”

Other words of like import came to us from divers of our dear fellow helpers, and we waited to see what the end would be, as, indeed, we are waiting still. It could not be thought of that this was a mere spasm of pious feeling, it occurred so spontaneously, it moved in so many, and it was most evident in men of a cheerful heart, not at all prone to be unduly excited.

Week by week we inquired of the Lord for guidance, but held no meetings of an unusual sort. We thought of asking certain valued evangelists to visit us and hold special meetings, and the brethren only replied, "Do as you judge best, we shall only pray that you may not follow, our own mind, but be led wholly of the Lord. Whatever you decide upon, we are with you heart and soul." Impressed with a feeling of deep responsibility, we turned over plan after plan, and at last determined upon that which we thought would savor least of trusting in man, and show most that we believed the Lord had already heard prayer, and had made the preaching of his word effectual. We gave notice that the pastor would sit two whole days to see inquiring souls, and that each evening there would be meeting a which he would speak upon the discouragements and encouragements of seekers, and any of the elders who felt moved to do so would exhort.

Blessed be the Lord for the ingatherings of those two days; they wearied the reaper with very joy. As soon as the hour appointed struck, several were waiting, and they streamed in all day. We looked for anxious persons, but the great majority who came were already believers in Jesus, brought to God during the former weeks of prayer. There were many weepers, it is true, but the most were persons who could tell of pardon bought with blood. The number was too great for us to see all privately one by one, so we had to appoint another season to see many of them. In the evening there were more than two hundred and fifty seekers present, and they were seekers indeed. We spoke to them for an hour of their discouragements, and it was a delightful duty, for they were all eye, and ear, and heart. No need to employ attractive illustrations; they drank in the truth, and cared nothing for the language: they wanted to be saved, and listened as for life and death. Our preaching would be joyful work indeed, if we always had such a congregation. Our elders who exhorted spoke under manifest impulse from on high; their addresses were not wordy and windy, but personal, affectionate, and telling. The Lord was there, and we knew it, and many remained behind to tell what they had felt, and to ask for more guidance and consolation. Sweet was our sleep that night.

The second day found more waiting, and still the preponderating number were not merely convinced souls, but rejoicing converts. They told us that they had believed in Jesus, and we had but to question them as to their change of heart and life, and their renunciation of self and the world. There was gladness that day in many hearts. One who came inquiring left us in deep sorrow, but came back an hour afterwards, for on the road home he

had found Jesus, and came to tell us so at once. That evening there were from 400 to 500 present in the Lecture Hall, and the attention was almost oppressive to the pastor's soul: it was intense to the utmost degree. Far more remained and our helpers, both of the sisterhood and brotherhood, had their hands more than full. There was not even the shadow of the excitement which reveals itself in noise and indecorum; all was as quiet as usual, more so indeed, and we were rejoiced to see it, for when intelligent people are on a life and death business, they are little inclined to bawl and shout. There is an emotion which blusters, but the deeper kind is too earnest to cause its voice to be heard in the streets. Eternity alone can know what the Lord wrought those two rights, and the secrets of how many hearts were then revealed. To us it sufficed that sixty persons were proposed for fellowship on the following evening; and these were, in every case, those who professed faith in the Lord Jesus, and were able to give a reason for the hope that is in them.

We write these few lines hundreds of miles away from the spot; but we are confident, that on our return, we shall find the good work vigorously progressing, and far larger numbers ready to join themselves with the people of God. We have not to deal with a God who begins and ends in a day. He has eternity before him and works steadily on, and we also are not in the hurry of unbelief though we would use the diligence of love.

Officers of churches, if you love one another and love your pastors, you will sometimes be actuated by one common impulse; and if you are living near to God, that impulse will be compassion for the souls of men. Should the Lord the Holy Spirit visit you with his flames of fire, you will glow, and, glowing, you will flame forth in ardent entreaties and labors. Then God will bring about his set time for Zion to be favored; and multitudes of her sons will be born at once. May heaven so ordain it, and glorify himself by so ordaining. A perishing world calls upon you, hastening time and nearing eternity admonish you, while all the promises encourage you. Only be very zealous for the Lord God of Israel, and we shall have truly named this new year

THE YEAR OF GRACE, 1872

PARIS AND LONDON

A WARNING WORD, BY C. H. SPURGEON.

WE have been saddened by the sight of the ruins which commemorate the reign of the Commune in Paris. The devastations of the great German army have left no mark upon the city itself to be mentioned in the same hour with the scars of the wounds received in the bourse of her friends. The Hotel de Ville stands a ghastly but classical ruin, in fellowship with the Tuilleries, the Palais Royal, the great Granaries, and many other vast and once magnificent public buildings. Churches, houses, and docks have shared the same fate as palaces and courts of justice. The madness of the hour spared nothing on account of its sacredness, patriotic associations, antiquity, or serviceableness. The column recording successful war, so dear to the French vanity, is utterly fallen; and even the memorial of successful revolution, in the shape of the column of July, has not escaped the ruthless hand of the spoiler. Republicans, in firing upon republicans of a redder hue, have not spared the splendid pillar of bronze which records the names of liberty's martyrs, but have pierced it through and through with their cannon-shot. To both parties that pillar was more sacred than almost any other erection in the city, yet their fury spared it not; and the huge gilded angel at the top must have found it hard to continue his long poise upon one leg, and have had many inclinations to add to the number of the fallen angels who were creating a horrible Pandemonium below.

It was a most pitiable sight to see the many houses beyond the Arc de Triomphe, with their roofs gone, and in many cases gutted, riddled, rent, and made a heap of ruins. There, on the bridge of Neuilly more than six months after the conflict, you may stand and mark enough of the horrors of civil war, to sadden any heart capable of feeling; and yet we suppose that what is now visible is a mere flea-bite compared with what could have been seen directly after the struggle; indeed, it must be so, for on all sides there are evidences of extensive repairs. The bridge itself is broken about in scores of places, huge stones being dislodged from its parapets, and all corners being chipped off, as if angles were objectionable to republicans, and dead levels alone tolerable. Yonder is another bridge, one traversed by a railway, but now broken in halves. On the right, over the river, stand, or rather lean, a nest of houses, all roofless, with their floors broken through

and their fronts gone; to be let cheaply on a repairing lease, we should think. On the left, on this side, are shops in a similar condition of distress: we step into one where business is being carried on, and note how the floor is propped up with timbers, holes in the wall filled up with plaster, and great cracking, bulging walls shored up to prevent a general collapse. There are scores, perhaps we should not exaggerate if we said hundreds, of such damaged domiciles. There was hot work here, for you observe that windows are still filled in with great lumps of clay, and roofs are in a highly ventilated condition; the trees which once adorned the noble roadway are almost all gone, and even the fortifications are tossed about as if an earthquake and a hurricane together had labored, diligently to level them. To peace-loving English people this is a sight nothing less than horrifying; for one begins to calculate the loss in money, in domestic happiness, and, worst of all, in blood, which all this indicates. The stone and mortar are something more than mere building material out of order, for they once sheltered living palpitating hearts of men and women, now dislodged without fear and trembling, and an incalculable amount of lamentation. One house, ruined from roof to basement, involves a calamity to the landlord, to the tenant, the inmates, their servants, their business, and their out-door dependants; in fact, no one knows all the ramifications of one such disaster; but who shall estimate the amount of misery involved in a whole street reduced to fragments by a storm of shot and shell? Driven from home, or lingering there in deadly fear, the mental suffering to the inhabitants must have been beyond conception; and then the sad return to the wreck of all they valued, and the drain upon their substance to rebuild their desolated abodes, must have involved anxieties and woes not easily estimated. Happy are they to whom such things are but a rumor from afar; happy those who dwell in the peaceful homes of England, where the noise of civil war and insurrection has long been unknown.

The mere observer of the surface of things passes by the painful scene before us with a flimsy remark upon the volatile character of the French people, and their need of a firm hand to govern them; but, there is far more than this to be learned, if we are inclined to learn it. No doubt, there are differences of race, and it is true that the Anglo-Saxon is more law-abiding than the Gaul; the islander is naturally conservative, and advances in the pathway of liberty with caution always, if not always with courage; but this is not all; nay, nor the thousandth part of what these violent convulsions would suggest to us. What has been done in Paris, may be done in London,

and will be done, unless some far stronger restraints are brought to bear upon the working-classes than any which are involved in the temper of the race. Whether it be Gallic or Saxon, human nature is everywhere very much the same, and it is silly patriotic vanity to suppose our countrymen to be by nature so much better than our neighbors as to be incapable of riot and pillage. Mobs in England are, when infuriated, not very much superior to mobs in France. Where baby-farming can be practiced, petroleuses may be produced; and there are not wanting among us desperadoes who only need the occasion and they would at once develop into human butchers. We may lull ourselves into a deadly security, if we carry too far the notion that the populations are differently constituted, and that Englishmen never could become such furies and demoniacs as the Communists have been. We give the fullest legitimate weight to the supposed superior subordination of our countrymen, and we confess that it does not remove our disquietude, or even very much allay it.

Let us look at facts. Those bullet-holes, which pock the face of fair Paris, are hieroglyphic warnings to those whom it may concern. In London, we have a population far larger, quite as poor, and with the same passions and desires. Under like circumstances and conditions, why should not the many in London act as the many have done in Paris? God forbid it should ever be so; yea, we say, God forbid it, a thousand times: but what is to hinder it? Our form of government gives no greater guarantee for security against insurrection than that of the Emperor, our troops are less numerous, our police not more skillful or forcible, Reasons for complaint may be fewer, but as grievances are not always based on fact, but usually grow out of sentiment, they may soon multiply, perhaps have already multiplied, in thousands of minds, and lie festering there, to produce mischief by-and-by. The vast difference between rich and poor is ever before the workman's eye, and, what is worse, before the eye of the loafer who hates work, and this alone is the great standing cause of envy, and the provocative to dissatisfaction. Already mutterings are heard of the word "republic," and that not alone or altogether from plebeian mouths; thousands have cheered the utterance, and a far greater number have heard it with silent complacency. There can be no doubt that a grave discussion is going on upon a point which, not long ago, seemed as fixed as the eternal hills, and among the many that discussion is taking a form most natural, but not most reassuring, to timid minds. There is activity in the political market, and all the business is not done at the "Hole-in-the-Wall," or the Old Bailey. Your

republican clubs are mere foam, but here is a sea which will not always rest and be quiet unless something is done, and continuously done, to say to its billows, "Peace, be still." Under a virtuous queen, few will support a change which, under a dissolute king, fewer still will oppose. We have few fears about that formal political change, whether it come or come not; we look further down, and see far greater convulsions imminent before this generation has passed away, unless timely warning shall arouse those able to avert them.

What then? Do we suggest stringent measures of repression, or the denial of further reforms so earnestly demanded? Far from it. Such a course would be the readiest way to produce the evils which threaten the state. It is poor policy to refuse men their rights in order to preserve order; it is indeed the surest method to create rebellion. In England, especially, repression is out of date; we may be led, but we will not be driven. In the age of the Stuarts, force did not suffice to ensure the domination of mere power, much less will it in the days of the newspaper and household suffrage. No, we are no advocates of any order which requires tyranny at its head. and slavery at its foot. Let every right be acceded to every man, and let no man suffer injustice even on the pretext of the commonwealth's necessity.

To what then do we look? We answer, we believe that national peace, and the security of our great cities, can only be guaranteed for a long future, by the recognition of the religion of Jesus Christ, and the wider spread of its principles. We do not mean by this an increased number of clergymen or ministers, or the erection of more churches or tabernacles these, of course, so far as they are necessitated by the main matter; but we mean something more spiritual and potent by far. Let the spirit, the essence, the governing power of our holy faith predominate, and the work is done. Not as a charlatan puffs his nostrum, but with honest and cogent reasoning do we back our eulogism upon the one and only panacea for ills to be dreaded in London, and bemoaned in Paris. Dost thou sneer, O doubting critic? Sneer on, but hear.

It would greatly tend to allay all feeling of popular discontent, if all employers acted as true Christians should in the matter of wages. Political economy gives the workman what it must, but Christianity commands that we give him what we should. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal," is a plain command of the Christian's law-book; and at

the peril of being unknown by the Lord at the last, may the master give his servant less. But the question occurs, "What is just and equal?" It is not always that which the worker asks, or even strikes to obtain, for he may demand what is unjust and cannot fairly be paid without damage to the employer; but one thing is clear as the sun, it cannot be just and equal to give a man a pittance upon which he can barely exist, and which compels him to live in a hole unfit for a dog or a horse. What can be said for employers who give to an able-bodied man in London fifteen shillings for a hard week's work? What indeed; but that they are the true sowers of sedition and fomenters of dissatisfaction. We are not aware of the remuneration of agriculturalists, and their rent and other expenses are far less burdensome than in town, consequently their earnings would naturally be less; but if in either city, town, or village, men or women are paid less than they should be, the wrong ought to be remedied by every employer professing to be a Christian. I may be a heathen and grind the faces of the poor, but a Christian I cannot be. A personal, independent, and upright course of action on this point, on the part of every follower of the Lord Jesus, would go far to influence other employers, and lay the ax at the root of much of the evil which is leavening the community. We are all in the ship together, and though we pay no attention to those able-bodied seamen who threaten us with mutiny unless they are paid as well as the mate or the captain, and still less to those lubberly fellows who will not lend a hand except at mealtimes; yet if there are honest, hardworking sailors who have not their fair share of beef and biscuit, and have no hammocks, we cannot allow the thing to go on; all hands must see justice done, or else, if the poor, half-starved fellows get together in the steerage, and concoct a plan to seize the vessel, the captain and officers will be as much to blame as they are. It is true it may be possible to knock them on the head, or put them in irons, but then it would be a loss to the ship if it were done, and besides, two can play at that game, and who knows which might win? Where the Lord Jesus is the Admiral, the order will be passed round to do unto others as we would they should do unto us; and, if that does not stop a mutiny, nothing will.

We have made a remark upon the laws of political economy, to which we will revert. It is a fact that supply and demand regulate the labor market, and, therefore, it has been called a law. A law it is, in the sense that men are usually governed by it, but a law it is not in the sense that men ought to be so governed. It is no law of God, but the reverse. It is a law of human

nature to follow its own devices; but those devices are, nevertheless, sins, and will in due time be punished; and in the same way it is a law of society that men will only give for labor what others will give, but if that price is unfairly low, the transaction is a robbery, and will cry out to heaven against the perpetrator of it. It is a law of garroters to squeeze men's throats, but we flog them for it despite their law; and, if it be a law of communities to underpay the worker, they will have to answer for it also, in a higher court, as also will all personal offenders. The law of political economy can no more be denied than that of gravitation; sinners will give no more than they can help, and the worth of a thing is, to the most of our race, what it will fetch; be it added, also, that the souls of those who act by this rule will have to submit to a further immutable rule of fact, and of sublimely political economy: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." What they want is hard fact, and they shall have it, and find God's vengeance on oppressors a matter of fact of an emphatic character.

This much being done, the work has only begun; for much is needed on the worker's side. Many a man is now a grumbler because he has faculties untrained, and is following a mode of labor uncongenial to his nature. There must be education, that such men may find their true pursuit, the calling for which they are adapted, and in which they would be of the greatest service to their fellow men. Education is also required for those unhappy beings who now seek their pleasures in the indulgence of the baser passions, because they are unaware of the joys of knowledge and intellect. Perhaps they would cease to be discontented if they could appreciate the heritage which belongs to every man of understanding. We doubt not that many a working man has imagined happiness to be the product of politics, and so has raved deliriously, who would have found quiet for his mind, and have been a good citizen, had he spent the hours between his daily labors in some intellectual pursuit. Drink is still the curse of the working-classes, and what justice can we expect from beery politicians? If our workers abhorred drunkenness because Christ has forbidden it, there would be no more boisterous demands for share and share alike; the tankard and such talk go together. When the artisan or laborer becomes a Christian, he is at once removed from the ignorance and excess which are so damaging to social order, and he becomes at the same time an advocate for justice between man and mart. If true to his profession, he gives a fair day's work for his wage, which, begging the

pardon of thousands, is by no means a common thing. He is no eye-server, but labors diligently, doing in his sphere as he would have others do to him, were he their employer. Talk comes to him of forcing the price of work upwards, and he is glad enough of it if it can be fairly done, but he disdains to ask for other than justice, or even to fight for his rights in an unrighteous manner. He is no milksop; nay, of all men the Christian is or should be the most manly, but he is no lover of agitators who set class against class, and he is man enough to tell them so and to judge for himself and not be a joint in the tail of some class combination. Not that he condemns combination when it aims at a just end, but he loathes it when its object is injustice.

The Christian workman is the hope of the age. It has been our lot to work with hundreds of such, and they are among our most earnest helpers. We never perceived in them the remotest objection to the discipline of our religious organizations; they will not obey mere power, but they love to see right made as strong as you will. Having rendered their own homes happy, they are not likely to desire to break up the peace of others. They are rejoicing in hope of God's glory, and in the present enjoyment of his favor, and they are not apt to be envious of men of this world, even though they are clothed in fine linen and fare sumptuously every day. Desire to benefit their fellow men is a far more predominant passion with them than jealousy; and a wish to loot an alderman's house, or burn down the Mansion House, never crosses their mind. To see a Christian working man voting boldly against the iniquity of endowing a favored sect, and standing up for the political privileges of his order at a public meeting, is not unusual or otherwise than praiseworthy; but we are unable to imagine a Christian man exciting a riot, burning a palace, or pillaging a town-hall. Fustian jacket or broad cloth makes no difference; the Christian contends for justice for all ranks, and takes care to act justly himself.

It is plain, then, that the religion of Jesus, when it creates obedience to its golden rule, becomes the Savior of Society; and as it has other and equally effective modes of operation, it affords multiplied securities for peace and order. Spread it then, as it never has been spread. Educate, but let the faith of Jesus be the point to which men shall be led. Suffer no child to grow up unacquainted with the Scriptures; no adult to die unenlightened as to redeeming love. Paris is full of anarchy because steeped in atheism. The priests have made religion a farce; and so the great bond of order has been snapped. London would long ago have drifted in the same direction, had it not have been for her working men who are converted to God: that these

are not more numerous is deeply to be regretted; that they are far more numerous than is generally believed is our assured conviction. Take away the working men from the dissenting churches of London, and many of them would become extinct, and nearly all would be brought very low, both in numbers and grace. Not empty profession, but genuine godliness, is the cement of our social fabric. England will suffer nothing, whether her government be of one form or another, so long as her people love God, and, therefore, love righteousness. Wrong-doing in any quarter divides, distracts, and incites to rebellion; but when all seek the right for all, mutual confidence creates union, union strength, and strength prosperity.

Let us, then proclaim a new crusade, and lift again the cross of Jesus. The Ragged-schools must go on till none are ragged. If as yet the people will not come to us, we must go to them, and their fellow workmen must be the missionaries of our churches. We must teach the rich to do right and the poor to do the same, regarding no man's person in our teaching, but dealing faithfully with all. Our churches, built up of good men and true, of all ranks, must be multiplied, and most of all where poverty abounds. Let us bring the lever to the load and lift it. Let us cry to heaven for help, and then put our shoulder to the wheel. Heaven and hell are warring with each other for London; may God send victory to his living truth, and give our city to his Son, then shall we fear no carnival of fire and blood.

A SABBATH IN ROME.

WITH no ordinary feelings we found ourselves on the Lord's-day in the city where Satan's seat now is, but where once the gospel gained its grandest triumphs. We had trodden the Appian way, peered into the gloom of the Mamertine prison, and threaded the mazes of the catacombs, and now we were to preach the gospel in Rome also, and salute the saints which be in Rome, and devout strangers out of every nation. Of superstition we do not possess a particle, and even sentimental reverence for places has small power over us. It might be said of us most truly

*“A brickbat from Jerusalem,
A bit o brickbat was to him
And nothing more.”*

For all that, an unusual condition of heart was upon us, and we felt the spell of Rome. That, spell, however, did not move us in the direction of the old heathenish Papacy, but in the opposite path once trodden by an older, holier, and more truly Christian church, which is at this time reviving in the city of the Caesars. If the church of the catacombs still exists — and we are sure it does, for we have seen it, it — it certainly finds no shelter beneath the dome of St. Peter's, or within the walls of the Vatican, for there an utterly alien system holds sway. Peter would be filled with wrath at the idolatry which defiles St. Peter's, and Paul would wonder how Pio Nono could dare to claim apostolical succession, when his palaces, and his teachings, and his pretensions are things unknown in the word of God.

We started early to find our Baptist friends and break bread with them, but as they had told us the hour only, and not the place of meeting, we wandered about in a hopeless search. Our walk, however, took us by the English Episcopal church, outside the walls, hard by the public slaughter-house. Here the Pope in the days of his reign allowed our countrymen to worship, but their heretical rites were not allowed to defile the holy city. This church is reputed high, so high, that a rival church is opened on the opposite side of the road, offering a resort for those of a lower or more evangelical creed. The church which boasts of her unity thus exhibits a schism in the presence of the lynx-eyed church of Rome — a schism which one would think would not have arisen — as there is yet a third Episcopal congregation, called the American church. A man must be hopelessly infatuated who sets up High Church in Rome; carrying coals to Newcastle is nothing to it. If a man wants the genuine Popish article, he is not likely to deal with a Ritualistic peddler, when so many wholesale warehouses are all around him. We sincerely hope the Low Church will snuff out the High, and present to the Roman people something better than the sham fineries of Puseyism.

We missed the meeting for communion, which we had much anticipated, and turned in to wait for the service in the neat and elegant meeting-house of Dr. Lewis, of the Free Church of Scotland. Our Free Church brethren, wherever they exist, gather around them all the Nonconformist element; and their general liberality of heart, and orthodoxy of doctrine, render them a very attractive center for all Non-episcopal believers. In Dr. Lewis's church we had the great privilege of preaching the gospel to a numerous audience of all classes of the community, including not a few eminent persons among our fellow countrymen. At the remembrance of that service

our heart is glad, for we are persuaded that the Lord was among us of a truth. Pleasant, indeed, it was to meet with old friends and acquaintances, after the service, and receive their Christian salutations.

In the evening our sermon within the gates, in the very center of Rome, was addressed to the Italians. It was in an upper room near the Forum of Trajan that we spoke to a crowded little gathering, our beloved brother, Mr. James Wall, acting as interpreter. This dear friend we have known and esteemed for years; he is an able preacher, has thoroughly mastered the language, and speaks with the fluency of a native. He is sanguine, zealous, warm-hearted, intense man; in all respects well fitted to be the pioneer of the Baptized churches in Rome. Withal, he is cheerful, and of a generous spirit, and large-hearted enough to work with the Vaudois, the Wesleyans, and others who are evangelizing Italy. He deserves the prayers and cooperation of Christians in England, and we trust he will not be without them. In connection with his excellent fellow laborer, Mr. Cote, who represents the American Baptists, and of whom we will say more anon, Mr. Wall is doing a good and great work among the Romans.

Mr. Wall gave out a hymn, read a portion of Scripture, and prayed in Italian, and then began our part of the proceedings. It is always dull work to speak through an interpreter. One has to utter a few sentences and pause, and then begin again. It is as murderous to all oratory as the old method of lining out the hymn was deadly to all music. Your train of thought hardly starts, before it has to pull up. There is no opportunity for warmth or vehemence. Still, by keeping to the marrow of the gospel, giving short sentences, and plentiful illustration, attention can be gained and held. So far as we could judge, the best of feeling pervaded the meeting, and the truth was received with joy, though many there were strangers to it.

This was too good to last; and accordingly, as Satan would have it, a question was asked by some one near the door, which, being answered, a well-dressed personage attempted to prolong the inquiry and raise difficulties. As he had no right by law to disturb the assembly, he was requested to wait till the preacher had done. In all probability, our close would have been a little more remote, but so unusual an experience flurried us a little; and, with a prayer for divine guidance, we ended our exhortation, and prepared for war. Mr. Wall was coolly expectant, being well used to such debates. We being only able dimly to guess what the

objector had to say, felt uneasy and impatient. The voice was at first that of a caviler from a free-thinker's point of view, but an assault being made in Mr. Wall's rejoinder upon the church of Rome, the gentleman threw off the mask and spoke as a Romanist. Thereupon, an esteemed Waldensian Pastor rose and addressed him with great energy, and even rose to indignant eloquence, denouncing the Jesuitism displayed by the caviler. He carried all the people with him, so that general acclamation followed, which could scarcely be hushed. The objector, with violent gesticulation and affected nonchalance, commenced again, but many rose to reply, and we could see that the battle was in excellent hands. It was a hotly contested field, but the enemy made no headway, even the common hearers were eager to answer him. We asked him, through Mr. Wall, one or two questions, at which he bit his lips, but which he did not attempt to answer, as for instance, this "What are the great advantages offered by the church of Rome? Seeing that masses are said for the repose of the soul of Cardinal Wiseman, it is clear that this eminent divine has gone where he is not in repose. If such is the future prospect of your best and greatest men, there must be but a poor look-out for common people; would they not be better off if they turned heretics and went to heaven at once when they died?" The people tried to hold him to these questions, but he backed out of them, and endeavored to talk on other points.

Just then a letter was passed up, saying that the writer knew the objector to be a secular priest, of remarkable ability, and a personal friend of the Pope. He was informed of this and asked if it were so. He pretended astonishment, but could not deny it. He was thereupon challenged by Mr. Wall to a public discussion, but wisely declined it. He was then informed that the time was come to close any debate for the evening, and he thereupon left the assembly. We then proceeded again to talk to the people; and, after many salutations to the brethren, went our way to our hotel, attended by the two evangelists and other friends.

Our brethren in Rome view the conflict of the evening with great satisfaction. To them it appears needful to break their way in a manner unusual and undesirable in England. The disputing brings hearers, and lets in light where otherwise indifference would have reigned. For our part we shall be glad when it can be dispensed with, for our fear is that it prevents the due influence of gospel preaching upon the hearer, and is likely to confound the weaker sort, and wound quiet spirits. For the present it is like

the backwoods-man's ax, needful to hew a way through the dark forests of ignorance, superstition, and skepticism.

So ended our Sabbath in Rome, joyously and well. We hope that ere long we may be allowed to spend many days in this city, for a great door and effectual is open unto us and there are many adversaries. Since that Sabbath, we have had further intercourse with our Baptist brethren, and have broken bread with them, and quietly preached the word of life. A church is growing up in Rome, full of hope, living, suffering, and increasing. There are four preaching rooms in Rome, a small Pastors' College, and several out-stations. Mr. Cote is a solid and energetic man, exactly fitted to work with Mr. Wall; and the two together make up an apostolic agency of the right kind. They ought never to lack funds or friends. Prayer should be made for them continually: they need it and deserve it. What is most wanted is a large central meeting-house where all could meet for worship. Their rooms are as good as they can afford, and are just now in capital situations to reach the poor; but, in addition, they ought to have a permanent site and a neat but handsome room. If they were only half as well off as our Presbyterian friends, it would be an improvement indeed. American and English Baptists must unite in this work; why should they not? Would to God we were knit together by closer bonds. We are one race and have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; let us labor together for the common cause. Would it not be possible to have a Baptist Union for all the world, and meet in brotherly conference to look each other in the face? It might be a step to increased unity in the entire Christian world. Meanwhile, Rome must have a chief place in all our hearts.

Besides the English churches, and the two brethren we have mentioned, who labor among the Italians, there are in Rome two ministers of the Waldensian church with their congregations, one Italian Wesleyan, and we believe two Italian Free churches. There is therefore a hopeful agency at work, a wonderful agency indeed, considering that religious freedom has only been enjoyed since September, 1870, when the Italian troops entered the city. Everywhere priests are despised. Convents find nunneries are in the progress of suppression, church lands are being sold, and public opinion falls strongly on the side of unbounded liberty. Skepticism is widespread, and is an enemy equally to be dreaded with superstition, but the tongue and the pen of the evangelist are free, and the gospel slowly but surely is winning its way. If we had to choose our life-work, we would

prefer to labor in Rome. It is a clear site, no other man's foundation is there, and he who is first at work will be the architect of the future. The Lord bless those who are already laboring there, and raise up many helpers of their toil. May his Holy Spirit richly rest on all that is done in the name of the Holy Child Jesus, both at Rome and throughout the world.

C. H. SPURGEON.

THE BLESSED POOR

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THE seventy-second Psalm reveals the king in his beauty, and side by side with it, the poor in their necessities a singular but most appropriate connection. It is the greatest honor of our eternal King that he cares for the poor, and it is their greatest happiness to be cared for by him. His sovereign grace would not be so resplendent, if it did not embrace such needy objects; neither would they be otherwise than wretched if he did not look upon them.

The King is said in the second verse to judge or rule his poor people, thus, he displays his own impartial righteousness, and they enjoy secure protection. It little matters to them how the world may condemn, for the Divine Judge will hold the scales impartially, and give forth his sentence according to truth. Then shall slanderous tongues be silenced for ever. Then, in the fourth verse, the king saves the needy, and, by breaking in pieces their oppressors, reveals his own power, while they, in their weakness, magnify his might, and rest in peace. Persecutors shall have but a brief day. The iron rod of the coming king will make short and sharp work of them, dashing them in pieces like potters' vessels. In the twelfth verse, the Prince of Peace delivers the poor and helpless when they cry, and so proves his faithfulness to his promises, and makes them confide in him without fear. In verses thirteen and fourteen, he is said to spare and redeem the needy, he bears long with them, and spares them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him; while, by the merit of his blood, and the might of his arm, he, both, by price and power, redeems his chosen. All the attributes of the covenant God are displayed in saving the needy clients of mercy, while the Lord's poor people bless him with all their hearts.

From this we learn the blessedness of the spiritually poor. It is for them that the Son of David rules; all the statutes and ordinances of his government have a special eye to them. The poor in spirit are the courtiers of heaven, the favorites of the Great King; their lowliness is their livery of state, their humility the insignia of honor. Men count themselves happy in great possessions, but the saints find their wealth in being and having nothing of their own. To be nought in self and to have all things in Christ, are the true riches of believers. Emptiness of self leads to fullness in Christ. When we are weak, then are we strong. Often do we forget this, and labor after the self-sufficiency which would inevitably be our ruin; but, in our best frames, we feel it to be both most safe and most right for us to bow lower and lower before the Lord. As the poor have the gospel preached to them, so, in a deeper sense, the poor have the gospel. By so much as I think I have of my own, I am most truly poor; I may estimate my real poverty by my supposed self-sufficiency. As merchants labor to be rich so should Christians labor to be spiritually poor. To divest ourselves of all our own hopes, trusts, joys, and aims is the most rapid way of being clothed with the royal apparel. Perfect man was naked, and when we are made perfect we shall not wear a rag or thread of our own: our beauty and adornment shall be all in Jesus. Downward, as to self, lies the way to heaven. We fight against that which we should covet, for the flesh lusteth after somewhat to flatter its own pride, and will not submit to be dead and buried, that Christ may be all in all. My Lord, grant me grace to sink deal graciously with me by starving all my self-content, and allowing me no provision for self congratulation! Let me never lift my horn on high, but rather let me lie low in the dust before thee, that I may share the benedictions which are reserved for thy poor people, and may not be the object of thy wrath, as the world's mighty ones have been!

Another precious truth taught us in this Psalm is, that the Lord's poor have no cause to be afraid of divine sovereignty. As a rule, the more emptied of self a man is, the less does he quarrel with reigning grace. The self-righteous are all fierce disputers against the doctrines of election and eternal love, because they have an inward instinct which makes them feel that, if these things be true, their boastings are futile. Proud hearts; see that the doctrines of grace abase the lofty pretensions of the flesh, and, therefore, they cannot endure them; but such as feel themselves guilty before God, and heartily confess that salvation must be all of grace, are the very men to allow that the Lord has a right to do as he wills with his own.

The ninth of the Romans is a pricking thorn to unregenerate minds. It afflicts them greatly to be told that the Lord “will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion.” They call the Lord a tyrant, but his own elect are content that none should say unto him, “What doest thou?” His absolute dominion is their delight. The King of Zion loves his poor, and his poor love him. They are too low in their own esteem to set up any fancied rights of their own in limitation of his sovereignty; and he, on the other hand, is so full of compassion towards them, that his throne is ever a rock of comfort and defense to them. They are both of one mind; he will be all in all, and they delight that he should be so; they feel that it is their exaltation to see him exalted, and hence, the delight to be less than nothing that he may be all in all. Happy people of a happy king! Lord, let me never quarrel with thy crown rights, but be among those who bless thy glorious name for ever and ever. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Save whomsoever thou wilt save; for thy poor and needy people own thy sovereign prerogatives, and rejoice in them from the bottom of their hearts.

The Lord’s poor must expect to be despised of men. The wicked delight to shame the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is their refuge. But there is no cause for dismay on this account: the favor of the king is a more than sufficient compensation for the malice of all his foes and ours. He shall redeem our souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall our blood be in his sight; therefore, let us cease from all fretfulness and impatience, and spend our days in praising and serving our gracious Lord, in whom our souls are blessed. “Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.” Amen and Amen

GOLD RIMS

It is astonishing how far mere polish will go with certain hearers. Let a man affect fine language and pompous manners, and there are professed Christians who will delight in him. Though there may be no spiritual food in his sermons, nor even a single original idea, he will be preferred by some to the most instructive preacher, whose style appears to be less refined. We have no reason to believe that Caligula’s horse liked his oats any the better for their being gilded, but with certain persons the gilt is everything. Manly Christians look more to the meat than the garnishing, but the present feeble

generation runs mad after flowers and finery. Paul discarded excellency of speech, and enticing words of man's wisdom; but among the moderns these carry the highest price in the market. Combine scraps of Tennyson, obscure and suspicious, metaphysical jargon from the Germans, a spice of heresy from Maurice or Voysey, and a pinch of hair-splitting criticism, and you will have prepared a bait which will entrap hundreds of the would-be intellectuals, who, having little or no brain, give themselves credit for a double measure of it. Wrap up the half of nothing in poetical phrases and philosophical affectations, and you shall be cried up as a man of culture; but if you preach the old-fashioned, unadulterated gospel, with plainness of speech, refinement will turn up her nose at you, even though the Lord should convert hundreds of sinners by your ministry, and build up his people in their most holy faith. Somewhere or other we came across the story of an old lady who persisted in wearing a pair of spectacles which were of no earthly use to her, for she always looked over them, and not through them. She preferred them far beyond another most serviceable pair, and why? *Because they had gold rims.* There are old women of both sexes who attach themselves to a weak-minded man of veneer, and cannot appreciate a solid gospel preacher of vigorous intellect and extended usefulness. The gold rims go a very long way with fastidious simpletons. Taplash with his scented pocket handkerchief and faultless cambric cravat is their choice; his flowing utterances and well turned periods are their admiration; and they like him and his rhetoric none the less, but perhaps all the more, because there is nothing in either. Reader, be not thou enchanted with childish things, but feed on sound doctrine, which is both milk for babes and meat for men. — C. H. S.

LOOKING FOR ONE THING AND FINDING ANOTHER

A DISCOURSE. BY. C. H. SPURGEON.

“And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.” — 1 Samuel 9:3.

“And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of

Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house." — 1 Samuel 9:20.

SAUL went out to seek his father's asses, he failed in the search, but he found a crown. He met with the prophet Samuel, who anointed him king over God's people, Israel, and this was far better than finding the obstinate colts. Let us consider this singular incident, perhaps, though it treats of asses, it may yield us some royal thoughts.

Our first remark shall be — OBSERVE HOW THE HAND OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE CAUSES LITTLE THINGS TO LEAD ON TO GREAT MATTERS.

This man Saul must be placed in the way of the prophet Samuel. How shall a meeting be brought about? Poor beasts of burden shall be the intermediate means. The asses go astray, and Saul's father bids him take a servant and go to seek them. In the course of their wanderings, the animals might have gone north, south, east, or west; for who shall account for the wild will of run-away asses? But so it happened, as men say, that they strayed, or were thought to have strayed, in such a direction that, by-and-by, Saul found himself near to Ramah, where Samuel, the prophet, was ready to anoint him. On how small an incident the greatest results may hinge! The pivots of history are microscopic. Hence, it is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of providence as the most startling events. He who counts the stars has also numbered the hairs of our heads. Our lives and deaths are predestinated, but so also are our down-sitting and our uprising. Had we but sufficiently powerful perceptive faculties, we should see God's hand as clearly in each stone of our pathway as in the revolutions of the earth. In watching our own lives we may plainly see that on many occasions the merest grain has turned the scale. Whereas there seemed to be but a hair's breadth between one course of action and another, yet that hair's breadth has sufficed to direct the current of our life. "He," says Flavel, "who will observe providences shall never be long without a providence to observe." Providence may be seen as the finger of God, not merely in those events which shake nations and are duly emblazoned on the page of history, but in little incidents of common life, ay, in the motion of a grain of dust, the trembling of a dew-drop, the flight of a swallow, or the leaping of a fish.

*“He that scrutiniseth trifles hath a store of pleasure to his hand.
 If pestilence stalk through the land, ye say, This is God’s doing;
 Is it not also his doing when an aphid creepeth on a rosebud?
 If an avalanche roll from its Alp, ye tremble at the will of Providence.
 Is not that will concerned when the sere leaves fall from the poplar?
 A thing is great or little only to a mortal’s thinking.”*

But that is not the consideration to which we now invite you. Our drift is this — as Saul went out to find asses, but found a crown; so, IN THE MATTER OF GRACE, MANY A MAN HAS RECEIVED WHAT HE LOOKED NOT FOR. That is a remarkable text in Isaiah — “I am found of them that sought me not.” Sometimes the sovereign grace of God is pleased to light on persons who had no thought about it, who were to all appearance quite unprepared for it, nay, even opposed to its divine operations. These persons have stumbled on the treasure hid in the field when they were only thinking of their plough, they have met Jesus at the well when they only purposed to fill their waterpots, they have heard glad tidings of the Savior when they were only caring for their flocks.

On ground unfurrowed the rain of heaven has fallen; grace has come unasked. We have emblems of this in the Scriptures, in the miracles which were wrought by our Lord and his apostles. There was a young man dead, carried out to be buried, and around his bier were his weeping mother and relatives. Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, was entering in at the gate of the city, but we do not read that any of the mourners sought a miracle at his hands. They had not the faith to expect that he would raise the dead. The young man, being dead himself, was far beyond the possibility of like seeking help for himself from the miracle-working hand of Jesus. But Jesus interposed, and commanded the bearers to stand still they did so, and then, unsought and unasked, Jesus said, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise,” and he arose, to be delivered to his mother. Many a young man has been in like plight; he has been dead in trespasses and sins, Christ’s interposition has not been sought by him: he has not trembled at his lost position; he has not even understood it, being utterly dead and therefore insensible of his ruined state. The Redeemer has sovereignly interposed, the Holy Spirit has poured light into the darkened conscience, the man has received grace, and has lived a new and spiritual life, a life for which he had never sought.

Of a like character was the miracle of casting out devils from the two demoniacs among the Gergesenes, in which case the unhappy men were moved by the evil spirits to adjure the Savior to let them alone. Such also

were the miracles of restoring the man with the withered hand, the feeding of the multitudes, and the healing of the ear of Malchus. Here swift-footed mercy outran the cry of misery.

Take another case from apostolic times. A poor beggar, extremely lame, hobbled one morning up to the Beautiful gate of the Temple, and there took his daily place, and began his incessant cry for a little charitable aid for a poor paralyzed man. Peter and John came up to the temple to pray. He looked upon them doubtless, but it never entered into his heart to ask them to heal him. He asked alms. Drop a few Roman pennies into his palm, and he would be contented with the gift. But, Peter and John gave to him what he had not sought for. They bade him, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk, and up he leaped, delivered from his infirmity, without having expected such a deliverance.

These emblems can be interpreted by kindred facts of grace. Christ has often met with individuals and saved them, when they have not been seeking him. Matthew was not seeking Jesus when the Lord bade him leave the table at which he was receiving custom, and follow him. The case of Zaccheus was similar: he came in the way of Christ's preaching, but his motive was purely one of curiosity — he wished to see Jesus, who he was. He was curious to know what kind of a man was this who had set all Judea on a stir? Who was this that made Herod tremble, was reputed to have raised the dead, and was known to have healed all manner of diseases? Zaccheus, the rich publican, is a lover of sights, and he must see Jesus. But there is the difficulty — he is too short; he cannot look over the heads of the crowd. Yonder is a sycamore tree, and he will for once imitate the boys and climb. Mark how carefully he conceals himself among the thick branches, for he would not have his rich neighbors discover him in such a position. But Christ's eye detected the little man, and standing beneath that tree, unasked, unsought, unexpected, Jesus said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house," and so soon as he had come down these words were spoken — "This day is salvation come to thy house." Deeds of grace have been wrought in this Tabernacle after the same fashion. Men and women have come hither out of curiosity, a curiosity created by some unfounded story, or malicious slander of prejudiced minds; and yet Jesus Christ has called them and they have become both *his* disciples and *our* warm-hearted friends. Some of the most unlikely recruits have been our most valuable soldiers. They began with aversion, and ended with enthusiasm. They came to scold, but remained to

pray. These seats could tell many an incident of the “romance of grace,” more wonderful than the marvels of fiction.

Nay, brethren, such is the surprising grace of God, that he has not only been pleased to save men who did not expect it, but he has even condescended to interpose for the salvation of men who were fighting with his grace and violently opposing his cause. Read yon story which will never lose its charm, of which the hero is one Saul of Tarsus. What a singular subject for converting grace! He had resolved to hound the saints to death. He would exterminate them if he could. His blood boiled against the followers of Jesus; he could not speak of them calmly; he was mad with rage. Hear him rave at them! What? Would these men oppose the traditions of the fathers and of the Pharisees? If they are allowed to multiply, there will be no respect paid to our holy men or their weighty sentences! He will persecute them out of existence not in Jerusalem alone but in Damascus. Yet, in a few days, this hater of the gospel was touched by the gospel’s power, and never did Christendom gain a braver champion. Nothing could damp his fervor or quench, his zeal; persecuted, beaten with rods, ship-wrecked thrice — nothing could stop him from serving his Lord. What a complete reversing of the engine, and yet it was going at express speed! When he was most at enmity, then was his turning-point. As though some strong hand had suddenly seized by the bridle a horse that had broken loose, and was about to leap down a precipice, and had thrown it back on its haunches, and delivered it at the last moment from the destruction on which it was impetuously rushing; so Christ interposed and saved the rebel of Tarsus from being his own destroyer.

Another case rises before us most vividly, it is that of the jailer. He did not look like seeking the gospel and being converted. He received Paul and Silas and made their feet fast in the stocks, — a piece of superfluous brutality; they could not have escaped from the inner prison, and it was needless to lay them by the heels. No doubt he wished to please his masters, and felt a contempt for the apostles. The jailers in those days had usually been soldiers, and camp life amongst the Romans was rough indeed; his nature evidently furnished very flinty soil for the gospel to grow in. But, an earthquake comes; the prison shakes; it is a mysterious earthquake, for the prison doors are lifted from their hinges and the prisoners’ fetters are unbound; the jailer trembles, and, to make short work of the story, he believes in Jesus, he is baptized with all his house, he invites the Apostles to his table, entertains them, and becomes one of the

first members of the Church of God at Philippi. What cannot the gospel do when it comes in its power? And where may it not come? May it not, at this moment, visit another prison, and save another jailer, though his thoughts are far otherwise.

We have ourselves met with similar cases. Many old stories are current which we do not doubt are true. There is one of a man who never would attend a place of worship until he was induced to go to hear the singing. He would listen to the tunes, he said, but he would have, “none of your canting preaching” — he would put his fingers in his ears. He takes that wicked precaution, and effectually blocks up ear-gate for awhile, but the gate is stormed by a little adversary, for a fly settles on his nose; he must brush it off, and, as he takes out his finger to do so, the preacher says — “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” The man listens, the Word pierces his soul and he is converted. I remember quite well, and the subject of the story is most probably present in the congregation, that a very singular conversion was wrought at New Park Street Chapel. A man who had been accustomed to go to a gin-palace to fetch in gin for his Sunday evening’s drinking, saw a crowd round the door of the Chapel, he looked in, and forced his way to the top of the gallery stairs. Just then I looked in the direction in which he stood, I do not know why I did so, but I remarked that there might be a man in the gallery who had come in there with no very good motive, for even then he had a gin-bottle in his pocket. The singularity of the expression struck the man, and being startled because the preacher so exactly described him; he listened attentively to the warnings which followed; the word reached his heart; the grace of God met with him; he became converted, and he is walking humbly in the fear of God. These cases are not at all uncommon. They were not unusual in the days of Whitefield and Wesley. They tell us in their Journals of persons who came with stones in their pockets to throw at the Methodists, but whose enmity was slain by a stone from the sling of the Son of David. Others came to create disturbances, but a disturbance was created in their hearts which could never be quelled till they came to Jesus Christ and found peace in him. The history of the Church of God is studded with the remarkable conversions of persons who did not wish to be converted, were not looking for grace, and were even opposed to it, and yet by the interposing arm of eternal mercy were struck down, and transformed into earnest and devoted followers of the Lamb.

That fact being established, we may now range our thoughts around the question, WHAT SHALL WE SAY ABOUT IT?

What shall we say about these acts of sovereign preventing grace? Why, first, we will say, *behold the freeness of the grace of God*. It is like the dew that cometh on the earth, which stayeth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men. It is like the sunbeam shining into the hovel, and finding its way through grimy window panes, more calculated to shut it out than to admit it. It is like the wind which whistles among the cordage, whether the mariners desire it or no. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion: not because of any goodness in the sinner, or because of any preparedness in the creature, but simply because he wills it, he visits men with salvation. He is so able to work salvation that he waits not for any contributory arm; but when the creature is most dead, and most corrupt, then cometh in the quickening grace of God, and getteth to itself all the glory of salvation. If every convert were brought in through the usual means of grace, we should come to regard conversion as a necessary result from certain fixed causes, and attribute some mystic virtue to the outward means; but when God is pleased to distribute the blessing entirely apart from these, then he shows that he can do without means as well as with means, that nothing is too mighty a work for him, that his arm is not shortened at all, so that he needs to use an instrument to make up the length of it; neither has he lost any strength, so as to be forced to appeal to us to make up the deficiency. If it were God's will he could by a word convert a nation. If so he chose, he is such a master of human hearts that as readily as the corn waves in the breath of the summer's wind, so could he make all hearts bow before the mysterious impulses of his Holy Spirit. Why he doth it not we know not, it is among his secrets; but when he works in a marked and decided way beyond all expectation, he doth but give us a proof of how he is able to work as he wills amongst the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world. Oh! the richness, the freeness, the power of the grace of God! The richness of it, that it comes to those who sought it not! The freeness of it, that it waits no for preparation on man's part! The power of it, that it makes the unwilling willing when the appointed hour has come! Brethren, let us join together heartily in adoring this grace of God, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in as many as it pleaseth the Lord our God to call.

What shall we say further about this? We will gather this consoling inference from it: *if the Lord is thus found of those that seek him not, how much more surely will he be found of those who seek him.* If he has been known to give sight to those who did not ask it, how much more will he bestow it upon those who cry, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” If he saved Saul who hated him, much more will he listen to him that crieth, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” If he called careless, curious Zaccheus, much more will he speak to you, my anxious, earnest hearer, who are saying, Oh, that he would speak to me!” If a man opens his door and voluntarily call to a passing beggar and says, “Here, poor man, here is relief for you,” why, then, the man who begs importunately will not be sent away — will he? He who is so liberal that he will dispense his liberality unasked, surely he will never turn away one who pleads with tears, and sighs, and groans. If I were in the case of the seeker, I should be mightily encouraged by the subject before us. I should say, “Does he thus call those who were not hungering and thirsting, and does he bring them into the gospel feast? Then when I, a poor hungry thirsty sinner, come wringing my hands and saying, ‘Oh, that he would give me to drink of the water of life. Oh, that he would let in e feed on the blessings of his grace!’ Surely he will receive me.” Be cheered, ye humble penitents, the Lord’s heart is too large to permit him to send you away empty. Be encouraged at this moment to breathe the silent prayer — “O God! the Lord and giver of grace, give thy grace to me who seek it now.” Why, dear heart, you have grace already, or you would not seek it; for grace must first come to you to make you seek grace. Be thankful, for salvation has come to your house. Dead men do not long for life. In the marble limbs of the corpse there are no strugglings after life, no pangs of desire for health. God has looked on thee in love; look thou to Jesus and live.

What Shall we say about this doctrine? There is one other thing we will say about it — from this time forward we will never despair of anybody. If the Lord Jesus Christ called Saul of Tarsus when he was foaming at the mouth with wrath, there are none among the wicked who are beyond the reach of hopeful prayer. Your boy breaks your heart, dear mother. You have wept over him many tears. He is far away now, and the last you heard of him wounded your soul, and unbelief said, “Do not pray for him again.” Ah! that is the devil’s counsel; he is no good messenger who bids a mother cease praying for her child, while that child is out of hell; have faith in the divine power, and pray for your boy yet. Who knows what the Lord may

make of him? There is me living in your parish, a swearer, and everything that is bad. You did once think of asking him to come and hear the gospel, but you said, "It is of no use; he will be sure to turn it into ridicule." How do you know? It is the very boast of grace that it shines into the unlikeliest hearts. God's electing love has in many cases selected great fools, and great sinners: at least, I know God's people think themselves such. I have said, never despair of your child, and I will put it to you again — if you have friends who are infidel, or persecuting, or profane, yet, as long as you live and they live, it is your business to labor for their conversion, and to weep and pray for them. Oh! brethren, if the lives of some of us before conversion had been known, good men might have denied the possibility of our salvation. If all the secrets of our hearts had been written, some would have said, "This is a hopeless case." But mercy saved *us*, and therefore it can save anybody. Never say of any place, "It is such a den of iniquity, I can do no good there." Never say, "That workshop is so profane, I could not speak of religion there." Oh you do not know — you do not know! With God at your back, if it were possible to save the damned in hell, you might go and preach there and win trophies for Christ. Never think any too bad or too vile, but labor on still, for God can work wonders in every case.

We will close, when we have noticed with great brevity, *what we ought not to say about these things.*

We have told you what we should say about these remarkable conversions, — we should behold the freeness and sovereignty of the grace of God; we should be encouraged to seek it for ourselves, and we should hope for the conversion of others, But now, what ought we not to say? One thing we ought not to say is this: — "Then I shall sit still, and perhaps the grace of God will come to me; I shall not seek, nor pray, nor desire, for if I am quite unconcerned, grace may yet visit me." Now, my dear hearer, if you make such an excuse as that for your spiritual indolence, you will find the covering too thin to conceal your nakedness. You know better. A man suddenly stumbles upon wealth, by a windfall or a speculation. Do you therefore say — "I shall not keep the shop open, I shall leave business, I shall not go to work again, for Robinson has found a thousand pounds; I shall stay at home, and perhaps, I shall do the same?" No, you know that all the examples in the world of sudden wealth only go to prove the rule that he who would gain riches must find them in the appointed way. So all the examples of these remarkable interpositions of God only go to prove the rule that he who would have mercy must seek it. "Seek ye the Lord

while he may be found” is the fixed rule, and though God comes to some who seek him not, yet the rule still holds good. Do you not know that all the while you remain impenitent your soul is under condemnation? Some men have run this awful risk, and yet have escaped; is that any reason why you should? I have heard of a man who took poison, but so rapid was the action of a surgeon in the neighborhood, that by means of the stomach pump the man’s life was preserved: is that a reason why you should swallow poison too? Because providence has preserved some while they were running on in sin, is that a reason why you should continue to rebel against God? I have heard a story of an English sailor in a foreign port; when the foreigners were manning the yards and performing their maneuvers in honor of a royal personage, our countryman, in order to show what an Englishman could do, climbed to the top of the mast and stood there on his head. On a sudden the ship lurched and he fell, but by a happy providence he caught at a rope as he fell, and descended safely to the deck. “There,” said he, “you fellows, see if you could tumble down like that.” Are you surprised that no one accepted the challenge? Who but a fool would have thought it worth his while to imitate the example? Because here and there a man who runs solemn risks is by the interposition of divine grace saved from the consequences of his folly, is that a reason why you should run those hazards yourselves? God does thus interpose; nobody can doubt it, but still his sovereign rule is “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,” and his gospel cries daily “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Trust the merits of Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, for our gospel is not “Sit still and wait for divine interpositions,” but “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Moreover, we should never say, “*Why use means for saving others; God can do his own work.*” Brethren, a man is always in a vicious state of heart when he speaks so. He knows he talks nonsense, and he only does so as an excuse for his indolence, and to quiet his conscience. We are to labor to win souls, for men are brought to God by instrumentality. Where God has appeared to save without any means, if you could have the whole matter before you, you would find that means were used. For instance, take Saul’s conversion. You will ask, “What means were used in his case?” We do not know, but possibly the dying martyr Stephen, when he prayed for his enemies, may have been the secondary cause of the young man’s call by grace. At any rate, he was included in Stephen’s intercession, and that

prayer went up to God for Saul, and was prevalent with heaven. And then, look again, after Saul had been arrested from above — Ananias must come in to open his eyes, so that even in that case there was the instrumentality of prayer before, and the instrumentality of instruction afterwards. So it may be with many a one who has been suddenly converted. There was a mother, perhaps, in heaven who had prayed for the man forty years before, for prayer will keep, and be fragrant many a year. And let me say that if neither father nor mother ever prayed for that conversion, perhaps a grandfather did, for prayer has power for hundreds of years; and a great-grandfather's prayers may be the instrumentality of the conversion of his great grandchildren. There is no end to the efficacy of prayer. Good Dr. Rippon used often in the pulpit to pour out his soul in prayer that God would bless the church of which he was the pastor, and the members at the Tabernacle have been the inheritors of the blessings brought down by his intercession. Pray on then. Your prayers may not be answered for the next five centuries; those prayers of yours may be lying by till Christ comes, but they will avail in some way. So that you see when we think there is no instrumentality, there really is an instrumentality, if we could but see it. These remarkable cases must never be used as a reason why we are not to do all that we can to bring sinners to Christ. God's work in such instances, instead of discouraging us, should stimulate action on our part. Because God works, are we to be still? Nay, but because God works let us be workers together with him, that through us, directly and indirectly his purposes may be fulfilled. Suppose, now, it were known that the events of a certain battle would depend entirely on the skill of the general. The two armies are equally balanced, and everything must depend upon the tact of the commander; would the soldiers therefore conclude that they needed not to load, or fire, or draw a sword, because everything depended on the commander? No, but the commander works and his soldiery work together with him. So is it with us. Everything depends on God, but we are his instruments. We are his servants, and because he is at our back, let us go forward with courage and zeal. The results are certain, God being our helper.

I charge you, my brethren and sisters, to take heart from the fact that God works great wonders. Go to your classes, or wherever else you may be laboring, singing cheerfully the song of hope, and offering the prayer of full assurance. When we feel that we must have souls saved, souls will be saved. For my part, I cannot be happy unless sinners are led to Jesus. We

must have it, the Holy Ghost will not let us rest without it; we shall have it, and God shall have the praise. Amen.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

APRIL 1, 1872.

ADVICE GRATIS.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

UPON one or two matters we shall this month give our readers our advice gratis, and at least we shall feel sure that it is worth the fee charged for it, if not more. When a man has been more than twenty-one years in the ministry he may be considered to be of age, and upon some points, it may no be foolish to “ask him.” We shall be quite willing in future numbers to give such answers as we can to any queries of sufficient importance for general edification. Though by no means skilled in the law, we have some experience, in matters concerning the gospel; and wilt in this paper and succeeding ones give replies to certain queries which have reached us. Should any tender consciences feel aggrieved by receiving that for which they have not paid, they can forward the usual six shillings and eight pence to the Stockwell Orphanage.

I. Old Puritan asks, “What have you been saying about short sermons being the hardest to preach? What is the length to which you go yourself?”

We only quoted Dr. Chalmer’s opinion that the shorter the discourse the more time it required in preparation; but we endorse it fully, and think we can prove it. When a man has nothing to say, it generally takes him a long time to get to the end of it; like a man who is going nowhere he finds he has not reached his point, and thinks he may as well keep on. When the gutters of a town ran with water, one would not be surprised if the current continued for a week; but when the conduit floods them with wine, even a king’s bounty cannot afford many minutes of it. Excellence enforces brevity: you cannot have a diamond as large as a pyramid, nor a pearl of the size of a Swiss lake. In some measure with a conscientious preacher the converse of the proposition is also inevitable, and brevity enforces excellence. If the minister is allowed only forty minutes for expounding a great truth he feels that he must not multiply words; but must compress

much meaning into every sentence. If only a few pounds of provision can be carried by the members of an Arctic expedition, they are wise enough to secure the essence of meat, and not an ounce of mere bone or garnishing is tolerated. Give a man abundance of stowage in a vessel, and he will not spend time in close packing; but drive him hard in the matter of space, and it is quite wonderful how much he will contrive to get into it. A truss of hay brought upon a wagon to Whitechapel is one thing, but a truss compressed by hydraulics for ocean transit is quite another. Condensation requires labor: you cannot get an Australian sheep transformed into a pot of Liebig's essence without careful cookery; neither can you distill a garden of roses into a drop of the precious otto without laborious art. The same holds good with thought, you cannot deliver it from the encumbrance and alloy of verbiage unless time and mental effort are given to the task. Of course a man can talk nonsense during the briefest period allotted to him, and it is to be feared that a great many do; but, at any rate, they cannot lay to their souls the flattering unction that the quantity made up for the quality; and the likelihood is that they will discover the nakedness of the land and endeavor to improve.

In general, a great sermon is a great evil. Length is the enemy of strength. The delivery of a discourse is like the boiling of an egg; it is remarkably easy to overdo it, and so to spoil it. You may physic a man till you make him ill, and preach to him till you make him wicked. From satisfaction to satiety there is but a single step; a wise preacher never wishes his hearer to pass it. Enough is as good as a feast, and better than too much.

Having learned by long experience that we exactly fill the 12 pages which our publishers allow for a penny sermon, when we speak for 40 or 45 minutes, we have come to adopt that period as our stint, and we usually find it neither too short nor too long. In occasional services, when we address persons who have no other opportunity of hearing us, we take more latitude, but our regulation allowance is three quarters of an hour. A man who speaks well for that length of time has told his people quite enough, and from him who preaches badly they have in that time heard too much. Most divines can deliver all their best thoughts upon a text in forty minutes, and as it is a pity to bring forth "afterwards that which is worse," they had better bring the feast to an end. To men of prodigious jaw it may seem a hardship to be confined to time, but a broad charity will judge it to be better that one man should suffer than that a whole congregation should be tormented.,

The speaker's time should be measured out by wisdom. If he is destitute of discretion, and forgets the circumstances of his auditors, he will annoy them more than a little. In one house the pudding is burning, in another the child is needing its mother, in a third a servant is due in the family; the extra quarter of an hour's prosiness puts all out of order. A country hearer once said to his pastor, "when you go on beyond half-past four, in the afternoon service, do you know what I always think about?" "No," said the orator. "Well, then, I tell you plainly, it is not about what you are preaching, but about my cows. They want milking, and you ought to have consideration for them, and we will not keep them waiting. How would you like it, if you were a cow. This last remarkable enquiry suggested a good deal of reflection in the mind of the divine to whom it was proposed, and perhaps it may have a similar beneficial effect upon others who ought to confess their long preachings as among the chief of their shortcomings.

II. A Deacon wants to know whether a church ought not to hear several preachers before it selects one for a pastor?

Certainly, certainly, if the object be to divide it into a great many factions, and generate the feeling "I am of A, and I am of B, and I am of C." Many churches have been utterly wrecked while they were selecting a pilot. They had so large a choice that, like a lady in a linendraper's shop, they could not tell which to select; they grew critical; became in fact spiritual connoisseurs, and at last fell foul of one another. Beginning with prayer for God's guidance, many churches end in quarreling for their own whims. Each new preacher will be sure to charm some, and on the other hand he will be objected to by others. The admiring company if their man be not elected, and the objectors if he should be, become too often the nucleus of discontent.

We would counsel those in office to be very much in prayer for divine guidance, and at the same time the whole church should pray much for grace to manifest discretion and forbearance. If a man be judged fit to preach as a candidate for the pulpit on other grounds, let a personal visitation be made to his present sphere of labor, that his ordinary preaching may be heard, and that the congregation may not be misled by hearing a few well-prepared discourses, which are not fair specimens of what they will have afterwards to listen to. Let it also be ascertained whether it would be fair to the man's present church to offer him any prospect of removal, for robbers of churches who steal the shepherd are

not more honest than those who steal the sheep. If the preacher under consideration be unattached, the church of which he is a member should be consulted through its pastor, or his character should be quietly ascertained by reference to his former associations. Thus unworthy or inefficient men will not be put before the hearers. All being satisfactory, one man should be fairly heard, with the hope that he may be the man whom God has sent. If there be divided judgments, it will be usually the best to let that fact decide the matter without more ado than need be. One or two quarrelsome or odd people may not be so considered as to make them virtually the sole voice of the community, but as nearly as possible unanimity should be obtained, or out of respect for unity the brother should not be brought forward any further. Then another attempt should be cautiously and prayerfully made, the former preacher being as much as possible left out of all further consideration, and the next man heard by himself, and not as a rival candidate. Sooner or later, the man on whom the Lord's anointing rests will be sure to come to a people who have learned both to pray and wait; but when a factious few are aggrieved because their choice is not law, and therefore will not candidly hear another, the matter assumes a sad appearance, and the state of the church is serious. Each should consult the good of all; each should be prepared to waive personal predilection for the benefit of the whole, and for Christian fellowship sake.

Again we say, never, never have two brethren before the church at once, if it can be avoided. It is the strongest possible provocation to schism, and, while human nature is what, it is, evil will more or less ensue.

Let everything be done above-board. Managing churches is deaconcraft, and that is just one stage worse than priestcraft. Personal friendships must not operate, or else we had better have patronage open and avowed at once; a man pushed upon one of our churches will wish ere long that he had refused the calamitous preferment. The least suspicion of anything which will not bear daylight naturally excites the indignation of our people; therefore, let there be no guile, no planning, no deviation from the open and right course. Under God's blessing, the church will come at a wise decision, if the very wise men in her midst are not too wise.

Wait, but not too long. Choose, but do not look for perfection. Every divine cannot be a Luther. Some of our most useful pastors have grown up among a people who had grace to bear with them when they were immature. You may go further and fare worse. Persons who pick a basket

of fruit over and over to find an unblemished apple are more than ordinarily in danger of lighting at last upon one which is rotten at the core. We may also remember the story of the schoolboy who wanted a stick from the wood, but would not cut either this or that, because he expected to meet with a yet better one; the result being that coming to the end of the trees he was obliged to take any one that he could, and went off with a very inferior stick indeed, it no way comparable with scores which he had already passed.

Every member of a church without a pastor should feel that the community is undergoing a serious ordeal, which without great grace will prove highly injurious to it; and, therefore, each one should be doubly prayerful and watchful. We would say to all brethren in such a condition, beware of becoming connoisseurs of preaching, and faultfinders with discourses. Nothing can compensate you if you degrade yourself to this. Hear devoutly; let the critical faculty remain in abeyance. Judge only whether the brother preaches the truth is of the right spirit, is adapted to the people, aims at winning souls, possesses an unction from on high, and labors to glorify his Master. If these things be in him and abound he will not; be barren or unfruitful.

Last of all, ask the Great Head of the Church to send you an undershepherd, and expect Him to do so. Faith will then be on the watch to find him, discernment will be awakened, and wisdom will be displayed.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

MAY 1, 1872.

ADVICE GRATIS CONTINUED

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

III. A Lover of Order inquires whether it ought not to be a rule in all churches that persons who do not attend for six months should be withdrawn from for non-attendance?

Our reply is, first, that we solemnly question the right of churches to make rules at all. The Lord Jesus is the only legislator in the church and where he has not left us a command it is better to abstain from inventing one, lest we receive for doctrines the commandments of men. The genius of the gospel is freedom, and the spirit of every rightminded church is not law but love. At the same time, persons who forsake the assembling of themselves together are evidently walking disorderly, unless they have some valid reason for non-attendance, and therefore they ought to be diligently looked after by the officers of the church, and enquiry made into the cause of their absence. If that cause should lie in backsliding and indifference, they should then come under discipline, and should be visited according to the excellent custom of our churches: after this comes the withdrawal, if the case be found to be incorrigible, and utterly hopeless. Where general laxness of conduct is suspected but cannot be proved, or where the exposure of a fault would only gender strife and scandal, it is wise to withdraw from the offender for the unquestionable fault of non-attendance; but in no case for that fault alone, until every means has been used. To cut off persons merely because they have not been to the communion for six months is an idle method on the part of the church, and frequently involves great unkindness towards the individuals. Our experience leads us to know that a large portion of the absentees are not fit subjects to be dealt with under a hard and fast rule. For instance, a person reduced in circumstances, but quite unwilling to make his circumstances known, had pawned the garments in which he was wont to appear among us. The same spirit which led him to

keep his wants private induced him also to worship among strangers while his raiment was shabby. I do not justify the spirit, neither dare I say a hard word against it, but a gentle rebuke and a brotherly gift soon enabled the afflicted friend to fill up his place to his own intense delight. In another instance, a member had gone to Australia and back upon a voyage as steward, and reappeared shortly after enquiry had been made; his exclusion would have greatly pained the mind of a most worthy brother, and would have been an outrage upon Christian love. A mother of many children had also been very ill herself for some considerable time, during which the family had removed, that she could not be found, then followed an interesting event which increased her cares, and not for some months could she again occupy her place among us. Her husband, an ungodly man, would not take the trouble to communicate her change of abode, and thus by the heartless rule suggested above she would have been excluded from the church: our knowledge of her gracious character led us to wait, and she returned to worship and to the Lord's table at the first possible moment. Many varieties of circumstances may thus render absence no sin; but surely only for sin, removal to another church, or utter failure to find out a brother's whereabouts after earnest searching, ought we to erase a name from the roll of our membership.

If a sheep has strayed let us seek it; to disown it in a hurry is not the Master's method. Ours is to be the labor and the care, for we are overseers of the flock of Christ to the end that all may be presented faultless before God. One month's absence from the house of God is, in some cases, a deadly sign of a profession renounced, while in others a long absence is an affliction to be sympathized with, and not a crime to be capitally punished. I know the lovers of rule are full of arguments, but houses and families under rigid rules are never happy places to live in: its health and its disease cannot be legislated for like stone and iron. The best plan is to deal with every case on its own merits, without regard either to rule or precedent, looking only to the great general principles of the Word of God, and asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There are sins enough in the world without our increasing them by new commands. More quarrels in churches grow out of rules than out anything else; the sooner they are all burned like the Ephesian books the better. Christ's Spirit leads us not into bondage. We cannot endure the letter which killeth, much less that which buries men alive.

IV. Ruth would like to know what can be done to stop scandal in a church.

We suggest to her that enough cotton in both ears would prevent her hearing it, and the filling of her month all the day long with the praise of God would render it impossible for her tongue to spread it. This would suffice for her personally. She, however, we suspect, rather wants us to suggest a remedy for the habit of scandal in others. Really we do not know of anything short of the grace of God. While hearts remain unrenewed, tongues will be full of bitterness; and in gracious people while corruption remains, there will be a measure of mouth disease too. Dog's delight to bark and bite, "for 'tis their nature to." None can rule or tame human tongues except the Omnipotent himself. Solomon talked of hot coals of juniper, and such-like fiery remedies, but we question whether they would be effectual even if they could be applied. One rule we endeavor to follow with regard to gossip, viz. let the thing die a natural death. If any one reports to us that here is a dirty pool near us, we go in another direction, but never dream of sitting down on its margin to take long sniffs, neither do we indulge the practice of stirring it, and poking a pole to the very bottom of it. We told a friend lately, who said that it was our duty to interpose in the squabbles of another church, that we did not carry a brush in our pocket to scrub all the pigs we met with, and we fancied that if we did we should soon get some of the mire on our own hands. Scandal is like the hydra which lives by being killed, and multiplies itself with every cut you make at it. It is like a very bad house to let, which is illdrained, has a leaky roof, and is generally out of repair; it is best let alone. If dogs are asleep don't wake them, they may bark; and if they are barking don't interfere with them, for they may bite.

"But surely, it is our duty to put out the fire of strife!" Yes, but what is the best way? Will you put it out by heaping on more fuel? Will poking the fire damp it? Why, even pouring oily words on it will not quench the flame. Very few people have wisdom enough to deal with scandals aright, and these generally prefer the method of letting them burn themselves out. Be deaf, be blind, be dead to gossip, and it will grow disgusted with you and select a more sensitive victim. To bring matters before a court of law, or even before the church, is to honor the gossip and to lower yourself. "What are the wild waves saying?" They are saying more sense than the tongues of rumor; worry yourself about the rough music of the roaring sea. if you will, but about tongues, male and *female*, concern not your heart, O Ruth;

or, sapient reader, be thou equally insensible thereto. When a bull offered to toss a little party who were crossing a meadow, courage was for fighting the irate monster, folly talked of taking him by the horns, enthusiasm thought of jumping on his back, credulity tried the virtue of a suddenly opened umbrella, and obstinacy dared Old Taurus to interfere with him, but prudence got over the stile into the next field, and I went with him, and mean to do the same next time. Shall I help you over the gate, Miss Ruth?

V. — S. H. C. wants advice as to the sudden introduction of fresh subjects before a church-meeting when no previous notice has been given to the pastor, the officers, or the church. Should it be allowed or not?

Surely, common sense alone is needed to form a judgment upon this point. Would such a thing be borne with any but an assembly of idiots? The men of the world have needed no enlightenment upon so simple a matter; hath not nature herself taught them how to act? This folly, which we fear is committed in some churches, is but another illustration of our Lord's saying, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The rules observed in debates in Parliament, in public meetings, ay, and in the meanest Hole in the Wall, where tinkers and tailors ventilate their treason, are often superior to those which are maintained in the church of God. I speak this to the shame of many. Disorder and confusion worse confounded are allowed, nay, even invited and fostered by the disregard of the plainest dictates of common sense in certain gatherings styled church-meetings, which might in such cases more descriptively be called ecclesiastical bear-gardens. We remember an instance in which, before much of the fit business of the assembly had been transacted, a member suddenly proposed a resolution, or rather raved out a denunciation concerning the sacramental wine; he was followed by a second, who wished to abolish pew-rents, and he by a third reformer, who wanted meetings where everybody could speak as some sort of spirit might move him; and, when the third sat down, a fourth advocated the frequent change of deacons, hinting that those in office had lost the confidence of the members. The church was so worn and harassed with impromptu suggestions of this kind, that both pastor and people abhorred the very name of church-meeting and suddenly discovered that, for the protection of the quiet many, the noisy few ought not to be allowed to ride their various hobbies at pleasure. Great was the relief when it was resolved to end such disorder by following the custom of all decent society, and begin no discussion without notice, and none even with notice which did not come

within the province of the assembly. No new law was wanted; the old command to “do all things decently and in order” was quite sufficient. The mere fact of a man’s being a professed Christian does not entitle him to act as a savage; and a churchmeeting, because it is a spiritual assembly, is none the more entitled to behave like a mob of aborigines. No society of any kind can long subsist if it disregards the ordinary laws which regulate human assemblies. These, it is true, are not incorporated in the Scriptures, because there is no need to reveal by inspiration, what half-a-grain of sense will show us. We might as well ask for Scripture for wearing flannel in winter time, or using gas or candles at our evening services, as for regulations for conducting our meetings for church business. Where reason suffices revelation is not to be expected. Every custom of assembly, which is founded in necessity and promotes order, goodwill, and fairness, is virtually contained in the golden rule, to do to others as we would that they should do to us. No man would wish others to take him by surprise with new proposals which he had not been permitted to consider, but must vote upon helter-skelter on the spot; neither would he wish another to make a sacred assembly the platform for enunciating views hostile to his judgment and foreign to the purport of the association; therefore, no man has a right to inflict the same wrong upon others, and no set of men are doing justice if they allow such perpetual infractions of the law of love. When Marcus Arethusa was stripped naked, smeared with honey, and stung to death by wasps, he was in an enviable position, compared with a minister whose people consider it to be part of their Christian liberty to agitate him and the church whenever they please. However great may be the good man’s faults he does not deserve so condign a punishment. An American cowhiding, a Russian knouting, a Turkish bastinado, or a Red Indian scalping, are milder forms of punishment than the doom of presiding over a lawless assembly, by whom the rules of decency and justice are despised as worldly and unfit, to be regarded by spiritual men.

S. H. C. has seen, we hope, a solitary ease, and we have known the only other example. Let us trust so. We have no reason to believe that the evil is common. We fear that it lingers in our churches, but it can surely be only in those uncivilized parts whereas yet knives and forks are unknown luxuries, and reading remains a stupendous mystery. If such conduct be tolerated, in assemblies of educated men, we can only say that they invite disquietude, they court division, and will not be long before they reap the reward of their unwisdom.

In every cause due notice must be given of any unusual business, and it will be at least courteous that this should be given to the pastor and officers. A member ought to hesitate a long time before he proceeds contrary to the judgment of the officers; and the Church should always have an opportunity of considering whether or no the question to be submitted is one which they care to discuss. The ordinary rules of public meetings are the best guide for the chairman of a church-meeting, and should not be disregarded.

Happy is the church which has no history but that of continued increase and edification. When debates are among us they create discord, and there is an end first to fellowship and next to usefulness. May the Holy Spirit preserve us all in love and unity, and then the question before us will never be raised.

THE BRIDGE OVER THE ROAD

LATELY riding through a pleasant country the road passed along a hollow like a railway cutting, and overhead we observed a handsome bridge, by which the person who owned the property on both sides had connected the two portions of his garden. It was a simple but very convenient arrangement, and must have been greatly useful to all frequenters of the beautiful grounds. Time was when his friends could only perambulate half the garden, and were cut off from other guests whom they could see in the other portion of the grounds, which lay across the dividing chasm. So also the fair domain of truth was in years past divided between Arminians and Calvinists; the one traversed his own portion of truth and never went an inch beyond, while the other marched up and down his own division of doctrine and scowled over the great gulf at the opposite party. Both of these in their walks frequently strayed out of the garden, but for the most part they kept in it, and their great fault was that they dared not complete the range of the entire domain. Many attempts at uniting the truths held in common by both parties have been utter failures, because the projectors attempted to effect their design by reasoning, and by speculating about a middle term between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. At last, faith threw a bridge over the road by teaching men that where two truths are both revealed by inspiration they are equally to be believed, whether we can see their consistency or no. God is true in all that he reveals, whether

the unity of his truth be apparent upon the surface, or lie concealed in mystery. By means of this bridge believers can now range the whole enclosure of gospel doctrine, and admire the wealth of the great Lord who planned the paradise of truth, and intended the whole of it for the comfort and enrichment of his friends. We are not now afraid of a truth because it is peculiarly prominent in the creed of the Hyper-Calvinists, nor are we alarmed at another Scriptural statement because it is most vigorously taught by the Wesleyans; if the doctrine be the truth of God we receive it with reverent faith, and if there be any other teachings of the Lord Jesus which we have not yet received, we wait at his feet with childlike desire to learn. To us truth is one and belongs to no party. By God's help we would walk with God through every glade of the garden of revelation, feeling as safe in one part thereof as in another.

COMFORT FOR THOSE WHOSE PRAYERS ARE FEEBLE

A BRIEF SERMON. BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Hide not thine ear at my breathing.” Lamentations 3:56.

YOUNG beginners in grace are very apt to compare themselves with advanced disciples, and so to become discouraged; and tried saints fall into the like habit. They see those of God's people who are upon the mount, enjoying the light of their Redeemer's countenance, and, comparing their own condition with the joy of the saints, they write bitter things against themselves, and conclude that surely they are not the people of God. This course is as foolish as though the lambs should suspect themselves not to be of the flock because they are not sheep, or as though a sick man should doubt his existence because he is not able to walk or run as a man in good health. But since this evil habit is very common, it is our duty to seek after the dispirited and cast-down ones, and comfort them. That is our errand in this short discourse. We hear the Master's words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” and we will endeavor to obey them by his Spirit's help.

Upon the matter of prayer many are dispirited because they cannot yet pray as advanced believers do, or because during some peculiar crisis of their spiritual history their prayers do not appear to them to be so fervent and

acceptable as is the case with other Christians. Perhaps God may have a message to some troubled ones in the present address, and may the Holy Ghost apply it with power to such.

“Hide not thy prayer at my breathing.” A singular description of prayer, is it not? Frequently prayer is said to have a voice. ‘Tis so in this verse: “Thou hast heard my voice.” Prayer has a melodious voice in the ear of our heavenly Father. Frequently, too, prayer is expressed by a cry. It is so in this verse, “hide not thine ear at my cry.” A cry is the natural, plaintive utterance of sorrow, and has as much power to move the heart of God as a babe’s cry to touch a mother’s tenderness. But there are times when we cannot speak with the voice, nor even cry, and then a prayer may be expressed by moan, or a groan, or a fear, “the heaving of a sigh, the falling of a tear.” But, possibly, we may not even get so far as that, and may have to say, like one of old “Like a crane do I chatter.” Our prayer, as heard by others, may be a kind of irrational utterance. We may feel as if we moaned like wounded beasts, rather than prayed like intelligent men; and we may even fall below that, for in the text we have a kind of prayer which is less than a moan or a sigh. It is called a *breathing* — “Hide not; thine ear at my breathing. The man is too far gone for a glance of the eye, or the moaning of the heart, he scarcely breathes, but that faint breath is prayer. Though unuttered and unexpressed by any sounds which could reach human ear, yet God hears the breathing of his servant’s soul and hides not his ear from it.

We shall teach three or four lessons from the present use of the expression “breathing.”

I. *When we cannot pray as we would, it good to ray as we can.* Bodily weakness should never be urged by us as a reason for ceasing to pray; in fact, no living child of God will ever think of such a thing. If I cannot rise upon the knees of my body because I am so weak, my prayers from my bed shall be on *their* knees, my heart shall be on its knees, and pray as acceptably as aforetime. Instead of relaxing prayer because the body suffers, true hearts, at such times, usually double their petitions. Like Hezekiah, they turn their face to the wall that they may see no earthly object, and then they look at the things invisible, and talk with the Most High, ay, and often in a sweeter and more familiar manner than they did in the days of their health and strength. If we are so faint that we can only lie still and breathe, let every breath be prayer.

Nor should a true Christian relax his prayer through mental difficulties, I mean those perturbations which distract the mind and prevent the concentration of our thoughts. Such ills will happen to us. Some of us are often much depressed, and are frequently so tossed to and fro in mind, that if prayer were an operation which required the faculties to be all at their best, as in the working of abstruse mathematical problems, we should not at such times be able to pray at all. But, O brethren! when the mind is very heavy, then is not the time to give up praying but rather to redouble our supplications. Our blessed Lord and Master was driven by distress of mind into the most sad condition; he said, “My soul is exceeding’ sorrowful even unto death;” yet, he did not for that reason say, “I cannot pray,” but, on the contrary, he sought the well-known shades of the olive grove, and there unburdened his heavy heart, and poured out his soul like water before the Lord. Never let us consider ourselves to be too ill or too distracted to pray. A Christian ought never to be in such a state of mind that he feels bound to say, “I do not feel that I could pray;” or, if he does let him pray till he feels he *can* pray. Not to pray because you do not feel fit to pray, is to say, “I will not take medicine because I am too ill.” Pray for prayer: pray yourself, by the Spirit’s assistance, into a praying frame. It is good to strike when the iron is hot, but some make cold iron hot by striking. We have sometimes eaten till we have gained in appetite, let us pray till we pray. God will help you in the pursuit of duty, not in the neglect of it.

The same is the case with regard to spiritual sicknesses. Sometimes it is not merely the body or the mind which is affected, but our inner nature is dull, stupid, lethargic, so that, when it is the time for prayer we do not feel the spirit of prayer. Moreover, perhaps, our faith is flagging, and how shall we pray when faith is so weak? Possibly, we are suspicious as to whether we are the people of God at all, and we are molested by the recollection of our shortcomings. Now the temptation will whisper, “Do not; pray just now — your heart is not in a fit condition for it.” My dear brother, you will not become fit for prayer by keeping away from the mercy-seat, but to lie groaning or breathing at its foot is the best preparation for pleading before the Lord. We are not to aim at a self-wrought preparation of our hearts that we may come to God with them, but “the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are both from God.” If I feel myself disinclined to pray, then is the time when I need to pray more than ever. Possibly, when the soul leaps and exults in communion with God it might more safely refrain from prayer than at those seasons when it drags heavily

in devotion. Alas! my Lord, does my soul go wandering away from thee? Then, come back my heart, I will drag thee back by force of grace, I will not cease to cry till the Spirit of God has made thee return to thine allegiance. What, my Christian brother, because thou feelest idle, is that a reason why thou shouldst stay thine hand and not serve thy God? Nay, but away with thine idleness, and resolutely bend thy soul to service. So under a sense of prayerlessness be more intent on prayer. Repent that thou canst not repent, groan that thou canst not groan, and pray until thou dost pray; in so doing God will help thee. No, neither bodily, mental, nor spiritual anguish must prevent our pouring out our soul before God, in breathing, if in no better manner.

But it may be objected, that sometimes we are placed in great difficulty as to circumstances, so that we may be excused from prayer. Brethren, there are no circumstances in which we should cease to pray in some form or other. "But I have so many cares." Who among us has not? If we are never to pray till all our cares are over; surely, then we shall either never pray at all, or pray when we have no more need for it. What did Abraham do when he offered sacrifice to God? It was evening when the patriarch slaughtered the bullocks and laid them on the altar, and as the sun went down, certain vultures and kites came hovering around, ready to pounce upon the consecrated flesh. What did the patriarch then? "When the birds came down upon the sacrifice Abraham drove them away." So, must we ask grace to drive our cares away from our devotions. That was a wise direction which the prophet gave to the poor woman when the Lord was about to multiply her oil. "Go, take the cruse," he said, "pour out and fill the borrowed vessels," but what did he also say? "Shut the door upon thee." If the door had been open, some of her gossiping neighbors would have looked in and said, "what are you doing? Do you really hope to fill all these jars out of that little oil cruse? why, woman, you must be mad!" I am afraid she would not have been able to perform that act of faith if the objectors had not been shut out. It is a grand thing when the soul can bolt the doors against distractions, and keep out those intruders; for then it is that prayer and faith will perform their miracle, and our soul shall be filled with the blessing of the Lord. Oh, for grace to overcome circumstances, and at least to breathe out prayer, if we cannot reach to a more powerful form of it.

Perhaps, however, you declare that your circumstances are more difficult than I can imagine; for you are surrounded by those who mock you, and, besides, Satan himself molests you. Ah! then, dear brother or sister, under

such circumstances, instead of restraining prayer be ten times more diligent. Your position is pre-eminently perilous, you cannot afford to live away from the throne of grace, do not therefore attempt it. As to threatened persecution, pray in defiance of it. Remember how Daniel opened his window, and prayed to his God as he had done aforetime. Let the God of Daniel be your God in the chamber, and he will be your God in the lion's den. As for the devil, be sure that nothing will drive him away like prayer. That verse is correct which declares that

*“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”*

Whatever thy position, if thou canst not speak, cry; if thou canst not cry, groan; if thou canst not groan, let it be “groanings that cannot be uttered;” and, if thou canst not even rise to that, let thy prayer be at least breathing a vital, sincere desire, the outpouring of thine inner life in the simplest and weakest form, and God will accept it. In a word, when you cannot pray as you would, take care to pray as you can.

II. But, now, a second word of instruction. It is clear from the text, from many other passages of Scripture, and from general observation, that *the best of men have usually found the greatest fault with their own prayers;* — we find here Jeremiah calling his prayer a breathing. This arises from the fact that they present living prayers in real earnest, and feel far more than they can express. A mere formalist can always pray so as to please himself. What has he to do but to pen his book and read the prescribed words, or bow his knee and repeat such phrases as suggest themselves to his memory or his fancy? Like the Tartarian Praying Machine, give but the wind and the wheel, and the business is fully arranged. So much knee-bending and talking, and the prayer is done. The formalist's prayers are always good, or, rather, always bad, alike. But the living child of God never offers a prayer which pleases himself; his standard is above his attainments; he wonders that God listens to him, and though he knows he will be heard for Christ's sake, yet he accounts it a wonderful instance of condescending mercy that such poor prayers as his should ever reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabbath.

If it be asked in what respect holy men find fault with their prayers; we reply, that they complain of the narrowness of their desires. O God, thou hast bidden me open my mouth wide, and thou wilt fill it, but I do not open my mouth. Thou art ready to bestow great things upon me. But I am not

ready to receive great things. I am straitened, but it is not in thee; I am straitened in my own desires. Dear brethren, when we read of Hugh Latimer on his knees perpetually crying out, "O God, give back the gospel to England," and sometimes praying so long that he could not rise, being an aged man, and they had to lift him up from the prison-floor, and he would still keep on crying, "O God, give back the gospel to poor England;" we may well wonder that some of us do not pray in the same way. The times are as bad as Latimer's, and we have as good need to pray as he had, "O God, drive away this popery once again, and give the gospel to England." Then, think of John Knox. Why, that man's prayers were like great armies for power, and he would wrestle all night with God that he would kindle the light of the gospel in Scotland. He averred that he had gained his desire, and I believe he had, and that the light which burns so brightly in Scotland is much to be attributed to that man's supplications. We do not pray like these men; we have no heart to ask for great things. A revival is waiting, the cloud is hovering over England, and we do not know how to bring it down. Oh, that God may find some true spirits who shall be as conductors to bring down the fire divine. We want it much, but our poor breathings — they do not come to much more — have no force, no expansiveness, no great heartedness, no prevalence in them.

Then, how far we fail, in the matter of faith? We do not pray as if we believed. Believing prayer is a grasping and a wrestling, but ours is a mere puffing and blowing, a little breathing — not much more. God is true, and we pray to him as if he were false. He means what he says, and we treat his word as if it were spoken in jest. The master fault of our prayer is want of faith!

How often do we lack earnestness? Such men as Luther had their will of heaven because they *would* have it. God's Spirit made them resolute in intercession, and they would not come away from the mercy-seat till their suit was granted; but we are cold, and consequently feeble, and our poor, poor prayers, both in the prayer-meeting and in the closet, and at the family altar, languish and almost die.

How much, alas, is there of impurity of motive to mar our prayers? We ask for revival, but we want our own Church to get the blessing that we may have the credit of it. We pray God to bless our work, and it is because we would wish to hear men say what good workers we are. The prayer is good in itself, but our smutty fingers spoil it. Oh, that we could offer

supplication as it should be offered! Blessed be God, there is One who can wash our prayers for us; but truly our very tears need to be wept over, and our prayers want praying over again. The best thing we ever do needs to be washed in the fountain filled with blood, or God can only look upon it as a sin.

Another fault good men see in their supplications is this, that they stand at such a distance from God in praying — they do not draw near enough to him. Are not some of you oppressed with a sense of the distance there is between you and God? You know there is a God, and you believe he will answer you, but it is not always that you come right up to him, even to his feet, and, as it were, lay hold upon him and say, “O my Father, hearken to the voice of thy chosen, and let the cry of the blood of thy Son come up before thee.” Oh, for prayers which enter within the veil, and approach to the mercy-seat. Oh, for petitioners who are familiar with the cherubim and the brightness which shines between their wings. May God help us to pray better. But this I feel sure of — you who plead most prevalently are just those who will think the least of your own prayers, and be most grateful to God that he deigns to listen to you, and most anxious that he would help you to pray after a nobler sort.

III. A third lesson is this, — *the power of prayer is not to be measured by its outward expression.* A breathing is a prayer from which God does not hide his ear. It is a great truth undoubtedly, and full of much comfort too, that our prayers are not powerful in proportion to their expression, for if so the Pharisee would have succeeded best, since he evidently had the most gifts. I have no doubt if there had been a regular prayer-meeting, and the Pharisee and the Publican had attended, we should have called on the Pharisee to pray. I do not think the people of God would have enjoyed him quite, nor have felt any kinship of spirit with him, and yet very naturally on account of his gifts he would have taken upon himself to engage in public devotion; or, if that Pharisee would not have done so, I have heard of other Pharisees who would. No doubt the man’s spirit was bad, but then his expression was good, he could put his oration so neatly and pour it out so accurately. Let all men know that God does not care for that. The sigh of the Publican reached his ear and won the blessing, but the goodly phrases of the Pharisee were an abomination unto him. If our prayers were forcible, according to their expression, then rhetoric would be more valuable than grace, and a scholastic education would be better than sanctification. But, it is not so. Some of us may be able to express ourselves very fluently from

the force of natural gifts, but it should always be to us an anxious question whether our prayer be a prayer which God will receive for we ought to know, and must know by this time, that we often pray best when we stammer and stutter, and we pray worst when words come rolling like a torrent, one after another. God is not moved by words; they are but a noise to him. He is only moved by the deep thought and the heaving emotion which dwell in the innermost spirit. It were a sorry business; for you who are poor, if God only heard us according to the beauty of our utterances; for it may be that your education was so neglected, that there is no hope of your ever being able to speak grammatically; and, besides, it may be from your limited information that you could not use the phrases which sound so well. But the Lord hears the poor, and the ignorant, and the needy; he loves to hear their cry. What cares he for the grammar? it is the soul he wants; and, if you cannot string three words of the Queen's English together correctly, yet, if your soul can breathe itself out before the most High anyhow, if it be but warm, hearty, sincere, earnest petitioning, there is power in your prayer, and none the less power in it because of its broken words, nor would it be an advantage to you, so far as the Lord is concerned, if those words were not broken, but were well composed. Ought not this to comfort us, then? Even if we are gifted with expression, we sometimes find that our power of utterance fails us. Under very heavy grief a man cannot speak as he was wont to do. Circumstances can make the most eloquent tongue grow slow of speech: it matters not, your prayer is as good as it was before. You call upon God in public, and you sit down and think that your confused prayer was of no service to the Church. You know not what scales God weighs your prayers in — not by quantity but by quality, not by the onward dress of verbiage, but by the inner soul and the intense earnestness that was in it does he compute its value. Do you not sometimes rise from your knees in your little room and say, "I do not think I have prayed, I could not feel at home in prayer?" Nine times out of every ten those prayers are most prevalent with God which we think are the least acceptable, but when we glory in our prayer God will have nothing to do with it. If you see any beauty in your own supplication God will not; for you have; evidently been looking at your prayer and not at him. But, when your soul sees so much *his* glory that she cries, "How shall I speak unto thee — I that am but dust and ashes?" when she sees so much his goodness that she is hampered in expression by the depth of her own humiliation, oh, then it is that prayer is best. There may be more prayer in a groan than in an entire liturgy; there may be more acceptable devotion in a tear that

damps the floor of yonder pew, than in all the hymns we have sung, or in all the supplications which we have uttered. It is not the outward, it is the inward; it is not the lips, it is the heart which the Lord regards if you can only breathe, still your prayer is accepted by the Most High.

I desire that this truth may come home to those of you who say, "I cannot pray." It is not true. If it were necessary that to pray you should talk for a quarter of an hour together, or that you should say pretty things, why then I would admit that you could not pray; but, if it is only to say from your heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" ay, and if prayer is not saying anything at all, but desiring, longing, crying for mercy, for pardon, for salvation, no man may say "I cannot," unless he be honest enough to add, "I cannot because I will not; I love my sins too well, and have no faith in Christ; I do not desire to be saved." If you will to pray, O my hearer, you can pray. He who gives the will joins the ability to it.

And oh! let me say, do not sleep this night until you have tried it. If you feel a burden on your heart, tell the Lord of it. Now, cover your face and speak with him. Even that you need not do, for I suppose Hannah did not cover her face when Eli saw her lips move, and supposed that she was drunken. Nay, your lips need not even move; your soul can now say, "Save me, my God, convince me of sin, lead me to the cross; save me to-night; let me not end another day as thine enemy; let me not go into the cares of another week unabsolved, with thy wrath hanging over me like a thunder-cloud. Save me, save me, O my God." Such prayers, though utterly wordless, shall not be powerless, but shall be heard in heaven.

IV. We will close with a fourth practical lesson, — *feeble prayers are heard in heaven.* "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." Nobody else can hear a breathing, but God can and will hear it. The prophet used no translatable language; but the Lord Jesus is an interpreter, one of a thousand.

*"He takes the meaning of his saints,
The language of their groans."*

Why is it that feeble prayers are understood of God and heard in heaven? There are three reasons.

First. The feeblest prayer, if it be sincere, is written by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and God will always own the handwriting of the Holy Spirit. Frequently certain kind friends from Scotland send me for the Orphanage

some portions of what one of them called the other day “filthy lucre,” — namely, dirty pound notes. Now these pound notes certainly look as if they were of small value. Still, they bear the proper signature, and they pass well enough, and I am very grateful for them. Many a prayer that is written on the heart by the Holy Spirit seems written with faint ink, and, moreover, it appears to be blotted and defiled by our imperfection; but the Holy Spirit can always read his own handwriting. He knows his own notes, and when he has issued a prayer he will not disown it. Therefore, the breathing which the Holy Ghost works in us will be acceptable with God.

Moreover, God our ever blessed Father has a quick ear to hear the breathing of any of his children. When a mother has a sick child, it is marvelous how quick her ears become while attending it. Good woman, we wonder she does not fall asleep. If you hired a nurse, it is ten to one *she* would. But the dear child in the middle of the night does not need to cry for water, or even speak; there is a little quick breathing — who will hear it? No one would except the mother; but her ears are quick, for they are in her child’s heart. So, if there is a heart in the world that longs for God, God’s ear is already in that poor sinner’s heart. He will hear it. There is not a good desire on earth but the Lord has heard it. I recollect when at one time I was a little afraid to preach the Gospel to sinners as sinners, and yet wanted to do so, I used to say, “If you have but a millionth part of a desire, come to Christ.” I dare say more than that now, but at the same time I will say that at once — if you have a millionth part of a desire, if you have only a little breathing, if you desire to be reconciled, if you desire to be pardoned, if you would be forgiven, if there is only half a good thought formed in your soul, do not check it, do not stifle it and do not think that God will reject it. Come with it. Oh, that you may be enabled to come to Christ’s cross just now, even as you are, for God will hear even the breathing of your soul.

And, then, there is another reason, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is always ready to take the most imperfect prayer and perfect it for us. If our prayers had to go up to heaven as they are, they would never succeed; but they find a friend on the way, and therefore they prosper. A poor person has a petition to be sent in to some government personage, and if he had to write it himself it would puzzle all the officers in Downing-street to make out what he meant; but he is wise enough to find out a friend who can write, or he comes round to the minister, and says, “Sir, will you make this petition right for me? Will you put it into good English, so that it can be

presented?" And then the petition goes in a very different form. Even thus the Lord Jesus Christ takes our poor prayers, fashions them over again, and presents the petition with the addition of his own signature, and the Lord sends us answers of peace.

And, once more. The feeblest prayer in the world is heard because it has Christ's seal to it. I mean, he puts his precious blood upon it, and wherever God sees the blood of Jesus he must and will accept the desire which it endorses. Go thou to Jesus, sinner, even if thou canst not pray, and let the breathing of thy soul be, "Be merciful to me, wash me, cleanse me, save me," and it shall be done; for God will not hear your prayer so much as hear his Son's blood, "which speaketh better things than that of Abel." A louder voice than yours shall prevail for you, and your feeble breathings shall come up to God covered over with the omnipotent pleadings of the great High Priest who never asks in vain.

I have been aiming thus to comfort those distressed hearts who say they cannot pray, but ere I close I must add, how inexcusable are those who, knowing all this, continue prayerless, godless, and Christless. If there were no mercy to be had, you could not be blamed for not having it. If there were no Savior for sinners, a sinner might be excused for remaining in his sin. But, there is a fountain, and it is open — why wash ye not in it? Mercy is to be had "without money and without price" — it is to be had by asking for it. Now, sometimes, poor men are shut up in the condemned cell to be hanged, and suppose they could have a free pardon for the asking for it, and they did not do it, who would pity them? God will give his blessing to every soul who is moved to seek for it sincerely at his hands on this one sole and alone condition — that that soul will trust in Jesus. And even that is not a condition, for he gives repentance and faith, and enables sinners to believe in his dear Son. Behold Christ crucified, the saddest and the gladdest sight the sun ever beheld! Behold the eternal Son of God made flesh, and bleeding out his life! A surpassing marvel of woe and love! A look at him will save you. Though ye be on the borders of the grave and on the brink of hell, by one look at Jesus crucified your guilt shall be canceled, your debts for ever discharged before the throne of God, and yourselves led into joy and peace. Oh, that you would give that look! Breathe the prayer. "Lord, give me the faith of thine elect, and save me with a great salvation." Though it be only a breathing, yet, as the old Puritan says, when God feels the breath of his child upon his face he smiles; and he will feel

your breath and smile on you, and bless you. May he do so, for his name's sake. Amen.

TALK WITHOUT WORK

A TERRIBLE wreck happened some years ago off the coast of Tuscany. In his report of the affair the Tuscan coastguard remarks, with evident complacency, "I lent every possible help to the vessel with my speaking-trumpet, but, nevertheless, many corpses were found upon the shore the next morning." What are words without deeds? You plead for the destitute, but where is your guinea? You are eloquent for fallen women, but what are you doing towards their rescue? You demand an educated ministry, what institution are you aiding? You pity the widow and the fatherless, to what orphanage do you contribute? Silence is most becoming in those whose speech is not illustrated by suitable action.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JUNE 1, 1872.

FAITH

AN ADDRESS BY C. H. SPURGEON, DELIVERED AT THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AND STUDENTS EDUCATED AT THE PASTORS' COLLEGE, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1872.

NOW that the time has come for me to address you, my beloved brethren, may God himself speak through me to you!

The subject which I have selected for this address is FAITH. As believers in Jesus we are all of us of the pedigree of faith. Two lines of descent claim the covenant heritage. There is the line of nature, human efforts and works, headed by Ishmael, the son of Hagar. We own no kindred there. We know that the highest position to which the child of the flesh can attain will only end in "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." We, brethren, are children of the promise, born not after the flesh, nor according to the energy of nature, but by the power of God. We trace our new birth not to blood, or the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but to God alone. We owe our conversion neither to the reasoning of the logician, nor to the eloquence of the orator, neither to our natural betterness, nor to our personal efforts we are as Isaac was, the children of God's power according to the promise. Now, to us the covenant belongs, for it has been decided and the apostle has declared the decision. in the name of God — "that to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." — Galatians 3:16, 29.

We are altogether saved by faith. The brightest day which dawned upon us was the day in which we first "looked unto him and were lightened." It was all dark till faith beheld the Sun of Righteousness. The dawn of faith was to

us the morning of life; by faith only we began to live. We have since then walked by faith. Whenever we have been tempted to step aside from the path of faith, we have been like the foolish Galatians, and we have smarted for our folly. I trust we have not “suffered so many things in vain.” — Galatians 3:4. We began in the Spirit and if we have sought to be made perfect in the flesh we have soon discovered ourselves to be sailing upon the wrong tack, and nearing sunken rocks. “The just shall live by faith,” is a truth which has worked itself out in our experience, for often and often have we felt that in any other course death stares us in the face; and, therefore, “we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” — Galatians 5:5.

Now, brethren, as our pedigree is of faith, and our claim to the privileges of the covenant is of faith, and our life in its beginning and continuance is all of faith, so may I boldly say that our ministry is of faith too. We are heralds to the sons of men, not of the law of Sinai but of the love of Calvary. We come to them not with the command, “This do, and thou shalt live,” but with the message, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Ours is the ministry of gracious faith, and is not after man, nor according to the law of a carnal commandment. We preach not man’s merit but Christ crucified.

The object of our preaching, as well as its doctrine, is faith; for we reckon that we have done nothing for sinners until, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we bring them to faith; and we only reckon that our preaching is useful to saints as we see them increase in faith. As faith is in our hand the power with which we sow, and as the seed we sow is received by us by faith and steeped in faith, so the harvest for which we look is to see faith springing up in the furrows of men’s hearts to the praise and glory of God.

Interwoven, therefore, with our entire spiritual life, and with all our ministerial work, is the doctrine and grace of faith; and, therefore, we must be very clear upon it — that is a small business, we must be very strong in it, — that is the great matter. On that topic I will speak to you, praying earnestly that we may every one of us be strong in faith, giving glory to God, “being men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.”

Our work especially requires faith. If we fail in faith we had better not have undertaken it; and, unless we obtain faith commensurate with the service we shall soon grow weary of it. It is proven by all observation that success in the Lord’s service is very generally in proportion to faith. It certainly is

not in proportion to ability, nor does it always run parallel with a kind of zeal; but it is invariably according to the measure of faith, for this is a law of the kingdom without exception, “According to thy faith be it done unto thee.” It is essential, then, that we should have faith to be useful, and that we should have great faith if we are to be greatly useful. For many other reasons besides usefulness — namely, even for our being able to hold our own against the enemies of the truth, and for ability to stand against the temptations which surround our office — it is imperative upon us that we should have abundant confidence in the living God. We, above all men, need the mountain-moving faith, which, in the old time, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, subdued kingdoms, and wrought righteousness.

One of the brethren observed at last night’s meeting that I confirmed you in the habit of saying, firstly, secondly, and thirdly. I must plead guilty to the charge and follow the same method still, for I judge it to be no fault, but a practice helpful to the speaker in the arrangement and recollection of his thoughts, and profitable to the hearer in the remembrance of the sermon. We may risk being formal when to be formal is to be useful. Though not to be slavishly followed, the custom of announcing divisions in a discourse may be generally maintained, and we will maintain it, at any rate, to-day.

I. I mean first to speak concerning faith under the head of this question, — WHEREIN AND UPON WHAT MATTERS HAVE WE, AS MINISTERS, FAITH, OR GREAT NEED OF IT?

First, we have *faith in God*. We believe “that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” We do not believe in the powers of nature operating of themselves apart from constant emanations of power from the Great and Mighty One, who is the sustainer as well as the creator of all things. Far be it from us to banish God from his own universe. Neither do we believe in a merely nominal deity as those do who make all things to be God, for we conceive pantheism to be only another form of atheism. We know the Lord as a distinct personal existence, a real God, infinitely more real than the things which are seen and handled, more real even than ourselves, for we are but shadows, *he* alone is the I AM, abiding the same for ever and ever. We believe in a God of purposes and plans, who has not left a blind fate to tyrannize over the world, much less an aimless chance to rock it to and fro. We are not fatalists, neither are we doubters of providence and predestination. We are believers in a God who

orders all things according to the counsel of his own will. We do not conceive of the Lord as having gone away from the world and left it and the inhabitants thereof to themselves we believe in him as continually presiding in all the affairs of life. We by faith perceive the hand of the Lord giving to every blade of grass its own drop of dew, and to every young raven its meat. We see the present power of God in the flight of every sparrow, and hear his goodness in the song of every lark. We believe that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and we go forth into it, not as into the domains of Satan where light comes not, nor into a chaos where rule is unknown, nor into a boiling sea where fate's resistless billows shipwreck mortals at their will; but we walk boldly on, having God within us, and around us, living and moving and having our bearing in him, and so by faith we dwell in a temple of providence and grace wherein everything doth speak of his glory. We believe in a present God wherever we may be, and a working and operating God accomplishing his own purposes steadfastly and surely in all matters, places, and times; working out his designs as much in what seemeth evil as in that which is manifestly good; in all things driving oft in his eternal chariot towards the goal which infinite wisdom has chosen, never slackening his pace or drawing the rein, but for ever, according to the eternal strength that is in him, speeding forward without pause. We believe in this God as being faithful to everything that he has spoken, a God that can neither lie nor change. The God of Abraham is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is our God this day. We do not believe in the ever-shifting views of the divine Being which differing philosophies are adopting; the God of the Hebrews is our God. Jehovah, Jah, the Mighty One, the covenant God, is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death.

Whether we be fools or not thus to believe in God the world shall know one day, and, whether it be more reasonable to believe in nature, or in powers that operate of themselves, or to believe in nothing, than it is to believe in a self-existent Being, we shall leave eternity to decide. Meanwhile, to us faith in God is not only a necessity of reason, but the fruit of a child-like instinct which tarries not to justify itself by arguments, being born in us with our regenerate nature itself.

Next to, this, our faith most earnestly and intensely fixes itself upon the *Christ of God*. We trust in Jesus; we believe all that inspired history saith of him; not making a myth of him, or his life, but taking it as a matter of fact that God dwelt in very deed among men in human flesh, and that an

atonement was really and truly offered by the incarnate God upon the cross of Calvary. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ to us is not alone a Savior of the past. We believe that he has “ascended up on high, leading captivity captive,” and that he “ever liveth to make intercession for us” I saw in the cathedral at Turin a very remarkable sight, namely, the pretended graveclothes of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are devoutly worshipped by crowds of Romanists. I could not help observing as I gazed upon these relics, that the ensigns of the death of Christ were all of him that the Romish church possessed. They may well show the true cross, for they crucify him afresh; they may well pray in his sepulcher, for he is not there, or in their church and they may well claim his graveclothes, for they know only a dead Christ. But, beloved brethren, our Christ is not dead, neither has he fallen asleep, he still walks among the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand.

Our faith in Jesus is most real. We believe in those dear wounds as we believe in nothing else; there is no fact so sure to us as that he was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood. We believe in the brightness of his glory; for nothing seems to us so necessarily true as that he who was obedient unto death should as his due reward be crowned with glory and honor. For this reason, also, we believe in a real Christ yet to come a second time in like manner as he went up into heaven; and, though we may not inquire minutely into times and seasons, yet we are looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man; at which time we expect the manifestation of the sons of God, and the rising of their bodies from the tomb. Christ Jesus is no fiction to us: —

*“While Jews on their own law rely,
And Greeks of wisdom boast,
We love th’ incarnate mystery,
And there we fix our trust.”*

Beloved, we have an equal confidence *in the Holy Spirit*. We unfeignedly believe in his deity and personality. We speak of his influences because he has influences, but we do not forget that he is a person from whom those influences stream; we believe in his offices, for he has offices, but we rejoice in the person who fills them and makes them effectual for our good. Devoutly would each one of us say, “I believe in the Holy Ghost.” Yet, my brethren, do you believe in the Holy Ghost? “Yes,” say you unanimously, spontaneously, and emphatically; “Yes,” say I also but, be not grieved if I ask you yet again if you verily and indeed believe in him; for there is a

believing and a believing. There is a believing, which I have concerning a man, for which I may have but slender grounds, and upon which I would not risk a single penny of my substance: but it is another form of believing in a man when I feel that I could trust my very life with him, being assured that he would be true to me, and prove both an able and willing helper. Have we such a reliance upon the Holy Ghost? Do we believe that at this moment he could clothe us with power, even as he did the apostles at Pentecost? Do we believe that, under our preaching, by his energy a thousand might be born in a day? If we all so believe we are happy to be in such an assembly, for the majority of Christians, if under one sermon even a dozen persons were to cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" would exclaim exactly as the unbelieving Jews did, "These men are drunken with new wine." They would condemn the whole transaction as the result of dangerous excitement; they could never imagine it to be of the Lord. For this reason I mournfully conclude that there is not such a belief in the Holy Ghost in the church as there ought to be; and yet, as certainly as we hear the voice which saith, "Power belongeth unto God," as surely as we hear the divine voice of the Son, saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" so truly does the third person of the blessed Trinity claim our loving confidence, and woe unto us if we vex him by our unbelief. When we have a full faith in the Triune God, then shall we be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Farther than this, dear brethren, you and I believe in *the doctrines of the gospel*. We have received the certainties of revealed truth. These are things which are verily believed among us. We do not bow down before men's theories of truth, nor do we admit that theology consists in "views" and "opinions." We declare that there are certain verities, essential, abiding, eternal, from which it is ruinous to swerve. I am deeply grieved to hear so many ministers talk as if the faith were a variable quantity, a matter of daily formation, a nose of wax to be constantly reshaped, a cloud driven by the wind. So do not I believe! I have been charged with being a mere echo of the Puritans, but I had rather be the echo of truth, than the voice of falsehood. It may be want of intellect which prevents our departing from the good old way, but event this is better than want of grace, which lies at the bottom of men's perpetual chopping, and changing of their beliefs. Rest assured that there is nothing new in theology except that which is false; and that the facts, of theology are to-day what they were eighteen hundred years ago. But in these days, the self-styled "men of progress" who

commenced with preaching the gospel degenerate as they advance, and their divinity, like the snail, melts as it proceeds; I hope it will never be so with any of us. I have likened the career of certain divines to the journey of a Roman wine cask from the vineyard to the city. It starts from the wine-press as the pure juice of the grape, but at the first halting-place the drivers of the cart must needs quench their thirst, and when they come to a fountain they substitute water for what they have drank. In the new village there are numbers of lovers of wine who beg or buy a little, and the discreet carrier dilutes again. The watering is repeated, till, on its entrance into Rome, the fluid is remarkably different from that which originally started from the vineyard. There is a way of doctoring the gospel in much the same manner. A little truth is given up, and then a little more, and men fill up the vacuum with opinions, inferences, speculations, and dreams, till their wine is mixed with water, and the water none of the best. Many preachers — and I speak it with sorrow — have built a tower of theological speculations, upon which they sit like Nero, fiddling the tune of their own philosophy while the world is burning with sin and misery. They are playing with the toys of speculation while men's souls are being lost. Much of human wisdom is a mere coverlet for the absence of vital godliness. I went into railway carriages of the first class in Italy which were lined with very pretty crochet-work, and I thought the voyagers highly honored, since no doubt some delicate fingers had sumptuously furnished the cars for them. The crochet work was simply put on to cover the grease and dirt of the cloth. A great deal that is now preached of very pretty sentimentalism and religiousness is a mere crochet-work covering for detestable heresies long since disproved, which dared not appear again without a disguise for their hideousness. With words of human wisdom and speculations of their own invention men disguise falsehood and deceive many. Be it ours to give to the people what God gives to us. Be ye each of you as Micaiah, who declared: "As the Lord liveth, what soever the Lord saith unto me that will I speak." If it be folly to keep to what we find in Scripture, and if it be madness to believe in verbal inspiration, we purpose to remain fools to the end of the chapter, and hope to be among the foolish things which God has chosen.

Brethren, our faith also, resting upon the doctrines of the gospel and upon the God of the gospel, embraces *the power of prayer*. We believe in the prevalence of supplication. I am afraid this is going out of fashion in the so-called Christian world. The theory of some is that prayer is useful to

ourselves, but that it cannot be operative upon God; and much is said about the impossibility of the divine purposes being changed, and the utter unlikelihood of a finite being affecting God by his cries. We also hold that the purposes of God are not changed, but what if prayer be a part of his purpose, and what if he ordains that his people should pray when he intends to give them blessings? Prayer is one of the necessary wheels of the machinery of providence. The offering of prayer is as operative in the affairs of the world and the production of events, as the rise of dynasties or the fall of nations. We believe that God in very truth hearkens to the voices of men. For my own part, if any one should, say to me now, "God does not hear prayer; such a notion is a piece of superstition," I should reply to him, 'Nay, sir', but with you I have no argument at all. The whole question is a personal one which concerns my own character, — am I an honest man or no? If I am a truth-speaking person, my testimony is worth receiving; and I solemnly declare that the Lord has heard my prayers scores and hundreds of times, and that these answers have come so often and so singularly that they could not have been coincidences." I should not argue beyond this point, — "Unless you are prepared to make me a liar, you are as much bound to believe facts which I have witnessed, as I am to believe anything which you solemnly assert." Brethren, we ought not always to profess our ability to prove scriptural truths to ungodly men, for many of them lie out of the region of their understanding. I should not try to prove to a blind man that the grass is green and the sky blue, because he can have no idea of the proposition which I am proving. Argument in such a case is folly on both sides. To us, at any rate, prayer is no vain thing. We go to our chambers alone, believing that we are transacting high and real business when we pray. We do not bow the knee merely because it is a duty, and a commendable spiritual exercise; but because we believe that into the ear of the eternal God we speak our wants, and that his ear is linked with a heart feeling for us and a hand working on our behalf. To us true prayer is true power.

One other point, which I believe is essential to a minister's faith, is that we believe in *our own commission to preach the gospel*. If any brother here is not assured of his call to the ministry, let him wait till he is sure of it. He who doubts as to whether he is sent of God goes hesitatingly, but he who is certain of his call from above demands, and commands an audience; he does not apologize for his existence, or for his utterances, but he quits himself as a man, and speaks God's truth in the name of the Lord. He has a

message to deliver which he must deliver, for woe is unto him unless he preaches the gospel. In the face of the Ritualists who boast that they alone have the apostolical succession, we declare that ours is the true commission, and that their claim is false. We are not afraid to submit our claims to the test which the Lord himself has appointed, — “By their fruits shall ye know them.” We believe that God has anointed us to preach the gospel, and we do preach it, but who will testify that these priests even so much as know the gospel? Under our word the Spirit of God regenerates man, but he does not so through these pretenders; for they do not even comprehend what regeneration is, but confound it with a ceremonial aspersion. Our gospel satisfies the heart, renews the nature, comforts the soul; but can these pretenders do so with their enchantments? If they be apostles, let them show us their signs. We claim to be the Lord’s ministers, and our epistles of commendation are written upon many hearts.

Now, having detailed the great points of faith, let me say, brethren, we believe, hence, on account of all this, that, notwithstanding the slenderness of our stores, *the Great Shepherd of the sheep will grant us an all-sufficiency with which to feed his people*. Believing in God All-sufficient, we expect to see our loaves and fishes multiplied; consequently, we do not lay by in store, but deal out at this present all that we have. I saw in Rome a fountain, which represented a man holding a barrel, out of which a copious stream of water was perpetually running. There was never much at once in that marble barrel, and yet it has continued to yield a stream for four or five hundred years. So let us pour forth from our very soul all that the Lord imparts to us. For twenty years and more I have told out all I know, and have run dry every time, and yet my heart still bubbles up with a good matter. I know good brethren in the ministry who are comparable to the great tun of Heidelberg for capacity, and yet the people do not receive so much gospel truth from them as from preachers of very inferior capacity who have formed the habit of giving out all they have. We believe that the Spirit of God will be in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and we speak upon that theory. We do not expect to have much goods laid up for many years, but as we live by daily bread, so upon continually new supplies do we feed our people. Away with the musty, worm-breeding stores of old manna, and let us look up day by day for a fresh supply.

Brethren, our faith discerns upon our side *unseen agency*. While we are at work God is at work. We do not reckon that the forces engaged upon our side are confined to the pulpit; we know that all the week long God is by

care, and affliction, and trouble, and sometimes by joy and consolation making the people ready to receive what he has charged us to teach. We look upon our congregations, and perhaps are ready to cry in our unbelief, "Master, what shall we do?" but our eyes are opened, and we see horses of fire, and chariots of fire round about the prophet of the Lord; mysterious agencies are co-operating with the ministry of grace. When the Mount Cenis Tunnel was being made, a party of engineers worked from the Italian side for six years, and expected at the end of that period to see an open roadway through the mountain, They knew that the work would take, at the rate they were going, twelve years at least, and yet they knew it would be completed in six years, because there was another party on the French side working to meet them; and, accordingly, in due time they met to an inch. I cannot understand these miracles of engineering, and do not know how two tunneling parties manage to meet each other in the heart of an Alp; neither do I know how the Lord's work in men's consciences will fit in with mine, but I am quite sure it will, and, therefore, in faith I go on working with all my might.

Faith leads us to believe in *difficulties as overruled to promote success*. Because we believe in God, and in his Holy Spirit, we believe that difficulties will be greatly sanctified, and that they are only placed before us as stepping-stones to grander results. We believe in defeats, my brethren; we believe in going back with the banner trailed in the mire, persuaded that this may be the surest way to lasting triumph. We believe in waiting, weeping, and agonizing; we believe in a non-success which prepares us for doing greater and higher work, for which we should not have been fitted unless anguish had sharpened our soul. We believe in our infirmities, and even glory in them; we thank God that we are not so eloquent as we could wish to be, and have not all the abilities we might desire, because now we know that "the excellency of the power shall be of God and not of us." Faith enables us so to rejoice in the Lord that our infirmities become platforms for the display of his grace. Brethren, we believe that our enemies shall, in God's hands, subserve our highest interests; they are yoked to the ear of God. Perhaps, of all the powers which effect the divine purposes in the world, none does more than the devil himself. He is but a scullion in the Eternal's kitchen; he unwillingly performs much work to which the Lord would not put his children, work which is just as needful as that which seraphim perform. Believe not that evil is a rival power of equal potency with the good God. No, sin and death are, like the Gibeonites,

hewers of wood and drawers of water for the divine purposes; and, though they know it not, when the Lord's enemies rave and rage most they fulfill the eternal purposes to the praise of the glory of his wisdom and grace.

Brethren, we believe in *the gospel*, as God's power to save. We know that for every case of spiritual sickness we have a cure; we need not say to any man, "We have no good news from God for you." We believe that there is a way of getting at all hearts. There is a joint in every sinner's harness, though he be an Ahab, and we may draw the bow hopefully, praying the Lord to direct the arrow through it. If we believe in God nothing can be too hard or too heavy for us. If I believe only in myself I feel that a hardened sinner may refuse to listen to my reasoning, and may not be moved by my affectionate address; but, if I believe in the Holy Ghost, I feel that he can win a hearing and carry conviction to the conscience. We believe, brethren, in the power of truth. We do not expect truth to be loved by mankind; we do not expect the gospel to become popular amongst the great and the learned, for we remember that word, "not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen;" but, we do not believe that the Gospel has become decrepit through old age. When the foolish wise men of this age sneer at the old gospel, they render an unconscious homage to its power. We do not believe that our grand castle and defense has tottered and fallen to the ground, because men say it is so. We recollect Rabshakeh, and how he reviled the Lord, and how, nevertheless, it is said, "he shall not come against the city, nor shoot an arrow there, by the way that he came, by the same shall he return." We have seen enough philosophies go back "to the vile dust from whence they sprung," to know that the race is of the order of Jonah's gourd. We, therefore, in confidence wait, and in patience bide our time. We are sure of victory ere long. If our gospel be true it will come to the front yet, and God will work for us; therefore, are we steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. If we do not see souls saved to-day or to-morrow we will work on. Ours is not the work of Sisyphus rolling up hill a stone which will rebound upon us, nor that of the daughters of Danaus who sought to fill a bottomless vessel. Our work may no more appear than the structures which the coral insects are building below the blue waves of the southern sea; but the reef is rising, far down the foundation of the massive structure is laid, and its walls are climbing to the surface. We are laboring for eternity, and we count not our work by each day's advance as men measure theirs it is God's work, and must be measured by his standard. Be

assured that, when time, and things created, and things that oppose themselves to the Lord's truth shall all be gone, every earnest sermon and every importunate prayer offered, and every form of Christian service honestly rendered shall remain embedded in the mighty structure which God from all eternity has resolved to raise to his own honor.

II. Thus I have recapitulated the subjects of our faith. Now, brethren, our second head will be, **WHAT WORKETH OUR FAITH IN US?**

It works in us, first, a glorious independence of man. We are glad of earnest helpers but, we can do without them. We are grateful for our good deacons but we dare not make flesh our arm. We are very glad if God raises up brethren in other churches who will fraternize with us but we do not lean upon them. The man who believes in God, and believes in Christ, and believes in the Holy Ghost, will stay himself in the Lord alone. He does not wish to be solitary, yet can he singly contend for his Master, and when he has most of human helps he sedulously endeavors still to wait only upon God. If you lean upon the helpers when you have them, it may be you will realize the terrible meaning of this word, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." As the apostle saith, it remains with them that have wives to be as though they had not, so we may say that it remaineth to us who have zealous helpers to be as though we had them not, and to let our confidence in God be as simple, and our own selves as free of all carnal confidence, as if we stood like Athanasius against the world, and had not one to speak us a good word or bear a portion of our burden. God alone suffices to bear up yon unpillared firmament. He alone balances the clouds and upheats them in the heavens. He kindles the lamps of night, and gives the sun his flames of fire. God alone is sufficient for us, and in his might we shall achieve the purpose of our being.

This faith gives us courage under all circumstances. When young Nelson came home from a birds-nesting expedition, his aunt chided him for being out so far into the night, and remarked, "I wonder fear did not make you come home." "Fear," said Nelson, "I don't know him." Fit speech for a believer when working for God. "Fear? I do not know it. What does it mean?" The Lord is on our side. Whom shall we fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" A minister stands trembling in the presence of a learned schoolmaster, who, with twenty school boys, makes an important item in a village congregation — is that a consistent condition of heart for a prophet of the Lord? A preacher is all on a quiver because a person with

a white cravat under the gallery looks like a minister, and probably is a London divine who is staying in the neighborhood for his health. Is that trembling preacher a man? I say a man! I will not ask, is he a man of God? If you have something to say of your own, my dear friend, do not try to say it when those learned people are present who can speak so much better; but, if God has something to say through you, he knows which trumpet is most fit for him to use; and what matters it to you who may or may not be listening? Dare you play the coward in the presence of God? No. The conviction that you have a commission from God, and that the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, will make you very bold. Faith in God will cause us to honor our calling so much that we dare not disgrace it by cowardice.

True faith in God will make us abundant in good works. The eleventh of Hebrews is a chapter dedicated to the glorification of faith; but, if I assert that it records the good works of the saints, can anybody contradict me? Is it not as much a record of works as of faith? Ay, verily, because where there is much faith there shall surely ere long be abundant good works. I have no notion of that faith which does not produce good works, especially in the preacher. I question whether, as channels for damnation, Satan has upon earth more apt instruments for breeding infidelity and for causing men to regard the gospel with contempt, than those who profess to believe the gospel and then act as though the belief were a matter of no consequence whatsoever. Those philanthropists who are always telling what ought to be done and who do nothing — what is their faith, and what is their philanthropy? To what shall I liken it? It reminds me of a shipwreck, off the Tuscan coast some years ago. The Tuscan coastguard reported to his government that there had been a lamentable shipwreck on the coast, and he said, “Notwithstanding that I lent to the crew on board the ship every assistant possible *by means of my speaking trumpet*, I regret to say that a number of bodies were washed upon the shore next morning, dead.” Very wonderful, was it not! And yet this is the kind of assistance which many who profess the faith have lent to the people. They have yielded them the assistance of rhetoric, flowers of speech, and poetical quotations, and yet men have persisted in impenitence. There has been no real care for souls. The sermon was preached but the people were not prayed for in secret. The people were not hunted for as men search for precious things. They were not wept over; they were not in very deed cared about. After all it was the speaking-trumpet’s help and nothing else. But our faith makes us abundant in good works. May I say to you, if you

are doing all you possibly can for Christ, endeavor to do yet more. I believe a Christian man is generally right when he is doing more than he can; and when he goes still further beyond that point, he will be even more nearly right. There are scarcely any bounds to the possibilities of service. Many a man who now is doing little might, with the same exertion, do twice as much by wise arrangement and courageous enterprise. For instance, in our country towns, a sermon delivered on the village green would, in all probability, be worth twenty sermons preached in the chapel; and, in London, a sermon delivered to a crowd in a public hall or theater may accomplish ten times as much good as if it had fallen on the accustomed ears of our regular auditors. We need, like the apostles, to launch out into the deep, or our nets will never enclose a great multitude of fishes. If we had but the pluck to come out of our hiding-places and face the foe, we should soon achieve immense success. We need far more faith in the Holy Ghost, He will bless us if we cast ourselves entirely upon him.

Faith in God enables many of you, I know right well, to bear much hardship, and exercise much self-denial, and yet to persevere in your ministry. My heart rejoices over the many brethren here whom God has made winners of souls; and I may add that I am firmly persuaded concerning many here present that the privations they have undergone, and the zeal they have shown in the service of their Lord, though unrewarded by any outward success, are a sweet Savior unto God. True faith makes a man feel that is sweet to be a living sacrifice unto God. Only faith could keep us in the ministry, for ours is not a vocation which brings with it golden pay; it is not a calling which men would follow who desire honor and rank. We have all kinds of evils to endure, evils as numerous as those which Paul included in his famous catalogue of trials; and, I may add, we have one peril which he does not mention, namely, the perils of churchmeetings, which are probably worse than perils of robbers. Underpaid and undervalued, without books and without congenial associates, many a rural preacher of the gospel would die of a broken heart, did not his faith gird him with strength from on high.

Well, brethren, to sum up a great many things in one, faith is to us a great enlargement of our souls. Men who are morbidly anxious to possess a self-consistent creed, a creed which will put together and form a square like a Chinese puzzle, — are very apt to narrow their souls. Fancying that all truth can be comprehended in half-a-dozen formulae, they reject as worthless every doctrinal statement which cannot be so comprehended.

Those who will only believe what they can reconcile will necessarily disbelieve much of divine revelation. They are, without knowing it, following the lead of the rationalists. Those who receive by faith anything which they find in the Bible will receive two things, twenty things, ay, or twenty thousand things, though they cannot construct a theory which harmonizes them all. That process of theory making is an expensive folly, the invention of middle terms is a waste of ingenuity; it were far better to believe the truths and leave the Lord to show their consistency.

Those who believe firmly are, moreover, the men who are strong for service. Have you ever seen the famous statue of the boy sitting down and picking a thorn out of his foot? I saw him twenty years ago and I saw him the other day, and he was still extracting the little tormentor. I have known brethren of the same order; they are always picking thorns out of their feet, they have a doubt about this, and a scruple, about that; but the man who says, "I know whom I have believed, I know what I have experienced" — he is the man who can run upon the Lord's errands.

Faith is our refreshment. Our faith in God relieves us of our weariness. Even natural fatigue is sometimes overcome by faith. Certainly faintness of spirit needs no better restorative than reliance upon God. Close to the Coliseum there stands the ruin of an ancient fountain and bath called the Meta Sudans. Here came the gladiators who had escaped with life the struggles of the amphitheater covered with blood, and begrimed with sweat and dust from the arena, they plunged into the bath and felt delicious refreshment. Faith in God is just such a laver to our hearts.

III. My concluding word shall be, WHAT SAITH OUR FAITH TO US THIS MORNING? It claims to be well founded. I put it to you, brethren, in very simple words. Is the living God worth trusting? Does Omnipotence deserve that you should lean upon it? Does Omniscience warrant you in believing it? Does Immutability justify you in depending upon it? Why, if I were to bring here the best man of woman born whose name should be to you the synonym for virtue, and if I were to advise that you should trust him with your lives, I must speak with bated breath, for who, shall trust in man? Ay, and if there stood here Gabriel, the angelic messenger of God, and he should tell us that he would zealously defend us, might hesitate ere I said to you, "O sons of men, rest in cherubic strength, and rely on seraphic zeal." But, when I speak of the Father, the Incarnate Son, the everblessed

Spirit, who shall venture to hint a limit to our trust in God? What logician shall accuse us of folly in confiding in such a One?

The older I grow (and Mr. Rogers, who is still older, will agree with me I am sure) I feel more and more sure of the things I believe, not merely (as some would insinuate) because I get into the habit of saying them, and therefore think I believe them, but because they tally with my soul's best experience. I read occasionally some of those productions of genius which are associated with the frothy religion of modern thought, but, when my body is sick or I am depressed in spirit, nothing suits my case but *the gospel* of our fathers, the very truth of God. Now, I believe that the doctrine which a man's innermost experience confirms to him in the day of trial, and in the day when he is nearest to God, is to him, at any rate, the very truth itself and worthy of his credence.

I never feel when I meet with intellectual men, who look down upon me as a mere preacher of platitudes, that they have any right to do so. To them I give place by subjection, no, not for an hour. I have rather to check a propensity to look down on them than to subdue any feeling of inferiority. To us the truths of the gospel are absolute certainties for which we do not crave tolerance, but to which we demand submission. If any shall brand us with epithets, such as bigot, vulgar dogmatist, or mere echo of departed Puritanism, and all these are used, we will only reply, "You may use what opprobrious titles you will to us, but we know that if we were to express the truth about you, there is no adjective of contempt which you do not deserve; and, therefore, because we know of no language sufficiently strong to set forth our abhorrence of your false doctrine, we will let you pass in silence." My brethren, when you hear that a learned man has made a new discovery which contradicts the Scriptures, do not feel alarmed. Do not imagine that he is really a great man, but believe that he is just a learned idiot, a self-conceited fool. If you find time to read the works of learned skeptics, you will soon see that their statements of fact are not reliable, their deductions are not logical, their inferences are monstrous, their speculations are insane. I remember reading some statements of the great German, Oken, which to me sounded singularly like the babblings of Bethlehem Hospital. They reminded me of an incident which occurred when a prize was offered for verses of poetry, which were to be quite free from meaning. The two first among the competitors were nearly equal, but in one there was the faintest glimmering of an idea, while the other had not even a trace of sense, and therefore so gained the prize. I vote for the

supremacy of the neologians in that department; in sonorous nonsense they excel. If I am thought to express myself too strongly, it must be so, for I believe I speak what God himself would endorse; he applies no soft terms to boastful unbelievers. When he takes any notice of them at all he calls them fools, and has done with them. You shall find that to be the expression which the Lord uses concerning unbelievers constantly in the Old Testament, and in the New too — “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.” And, brethren, when I hear my heavenly Father say that a man is a fool, I dare not think him wise. Do not let us think otherwise than God.

Though we may be confounded in argument we cannot be confounded in experience, or driven from that which we have tasted and handled of the good word of God. Neither are we confounded in our faith. We know that our faith is well founded, and, therefore, we hear it say, “Do not treat me as if I were a dream. Do not tell your message with bated breath. Say it out! For he who contradicts it is a liar.” If it be of God it must be so. We are not adherents of an infallible church which founds its faith on its own authority, or of an infallible Pope who fancies himself to be the image of truth; if such were our boast the world might well laugh us down but, having learned God’s truth by divine revelation, we defy the world’s sneer, we do not even say, “By your leave, gentlemen.” No, but with or without your leave, we will speak what God has revealed to us.

Next, our faith asks us this question, — “Have I ever deceived any of you?” I shall pass the enquiry round. God puts it to you. “Have I been a wilderness to Israel?” Has the Lord failed you? Has he turned his back upon you in the day of trouble; and, when you have leaned upon his arm, has it proved insufficient? If God has failed you, and his truth has been a lie to any one of you, let him speak!

But, if you could not, would not, must not accuse the Lord of unfaithfulness, but would loathe such a thought because your experience would deny it, then, brethren, go on to believe, and to believe more steadfastly. Go on to believe, only rest more quietly still on the everblessed arm.

And so faith says, in the third place, “Give me a wider range. Trust your God far more.” We have only waded ankle-deep in faith as yet. We thought the water very cold and chill when we timorously ventured in, but having tried it up to the ankles we have found it good and pleasant. Let us

advance until we are breast deep, yea, and deeper. Blessed be that man who gets his feet off the bottom, and swims in the stream where he has no hope but his God, and no confidence and no helper but the Invisible One who sustaineth all things. Faith cries, "Trust me, my son to make you preach better. Have more enterprise. Be more daring. Do not fight your own battle in the church-meeting, leave it to your God; trust all with him. Do not be afraid to go and speak to that foul-mouthed man; I will give you a word in the self-same hour. Trust me, and go with prudence but with zeal into the darkest haunts of vice. Find out the worst of men and seek their salvation. There is nothing thou canst not do if thou wilt trust in God." Brother, your failure, if you fail, will begin in your faith. The air says to the eagle, "Trust me; spread thy broad wings. I will bear thee up to the sun. Only trust me. Take thy foot from off yon rock which thou canst feel beneath thee. Get away from it, and be buoyed up by the unseen element." my brethren, eaglets of heaven, mount aloft, for God invites you. Mount! You have but to trust him. An unknown glory rests upon him, and the radiance thereof shall come upon you if you know how to trust.

And then faith says (and with that I shall close), "Feed me! Feed me!" Faith has been everything to you; feed her upon the bread of heaven. On Christ faith feeds. I saw a group of lovely ferns the other day in a grotto from the roof of which continually distilled a cool, clear, crystal rain: these ferns were perpetually fresh and beautiful, because their leaves were continually bathed in the refreshing drops. Although it was at a season when verdure was scant, these lovely ferns were as verdant as possible. I observed to my friend that I would wish to live in the everlasting drip of grace, perpetually laved, and bathed, and baptized in the overflowing of divine fellowship. This makes a man full of faith. If Moses had faith you do not wonder, for he had been forty days upon the mount. If we have communed with God it shall be a marvel if we doubt, and not that we believe. Feed faith with the truth of God, but especially with him who is *the* truth.

I pray the Lord to endow this College with Faith. May we be an endowed and established church — established on a rock, and endowed with the blessings of the covenant of grace. Remember, brethren, that you and I are committed to faith now. It is too late to retire. We are in the condition of Bunyan's pilgrim: *we must go forward*. There are many perils before us, the valley of the shadow of death lies on ahead; arrows will fly very thickly around us as we traverse its shades. 'Tis hard going on, but we cannot retrace our steps, for we have no armor for our backs. Suppose we should

take to reasoning, suppose we should give up the fundamentals of our faith, what would remain to us? For my part, I have nothing beneath the sun to do but to take the rope of Judas and to end a miserable life, for only my faith makes it worth my while to live. If faith were gone, I would intreat permission to expire; to be extinct were better than to live if these things be but a delusion after all. It must be onward with us, for in the case of brethren of this College the most unsafe thing for us is to think of turning back. One or two of our firmer comrades have gone aside from us; we cannot judge their hearts, but I fear they have also gone aside from God. I will not say more of them than this — they are the last men you would envy if you knew their history. If any men bear upon them, even in this life, the evident mark of God's disapprobation, it will be those who have known the truth and defended it, and yet, for lucre's sake, or ambition's sake, have turned aside from it. If it were fitting, I could write narratives of apostate experiences which would harrow up your feelings, and they would relate to men into whose faces I have looked as I now look into yours, and who were familiar with me, but with whose names, once welt beloved, I am ashamed now to be associated. God have mercy upon them! It is all that I could say if had to write their epitaphs — “God have mercy upon them!”

‘Well, you and I are committed to the onward course, we cannot go back, neither can we turn to the right hand nor to the left. What shall we do, brethren? Shall we lie down and fret? Shall we stand still and be dismayed? So! In the name of the Lord let us set up our banner again, the royal standard of Jesus the crucified. Let us sound the trumpets joyously, and let us march on, not with the trembling footsteps of those who know that they are bent upon an enterprise of evil, but with the gallant bearing of men whose cause is divine, whose warfare is a crusade. Courage, my brethren, behold the angels of God fly in our front, and lo, the eternal God leads our van. “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Blessed faith! God grant us more of it, for Christ's sake. Amen.

A SEQUEL

SINCE delivering the address above printed I have had to endure a somewhat severe trial of the faith which I so much recommended to others, and the trial still lasts. The Orphanage has from the first been so graciously sustained of God, that there has always been a considerable balance in hand. During the last three months friends have appeared to forget our orphans, very little has come in, and the nest eggs have vanished one by one. Over and above the endowment there is needed about $\text{œ}10$ each day to carry on the institution, and on the 17th of May there certainly was not one day's supply in hand, if the accounts had there and then been balanced. Debt, we have not, and by God's grace never mean to have, but we were never so near the ground before. Dear reader, this is a position by no means enviable; with 220 boys to feed, clothe, and educate, one looks around and feels it welt to be able still to look up. I have always felt that the funds would come to feed the little ones who are cast on the fatherhood of God. I still feel it, and am very far from being depressed or dismayed. But this is a new experience *with the Orphanage*. Laid aside for a week with most severe neuralgic pain, this was by no means a comforting medicine, but perhaps it may prove a valuable tonic. I undertook the work, as I believe, at the Lord's bidding, on the behalf of his church. I did not expect to be always kept above trial, and I had no promise that I should be. I am sure, however, that the Father of the fatherless will not desert his family, nor will he allow my brethren to desert me in the hour of need. One looks the Lord in the face at such times, and faith comes to close quarters with the promise. I am as sure that he will interpose as I am that seed-time and harvest will not fail, yet prayer has to tarry awhile, and entreaty has to knock again and again, and effort has to bestir herself. I cannot expect the Lord to inform his people of the needs of the Orphanage by miracle, and, therefore, I feel bound to let them know by the magazine. *He* may let me be straitened and I will bless him, but I do not think his people ought to let the work run quite so short of supplies again. If I and my fellow-trustees do the work in a trustworthy manner, our fellow-servants should not stint us quite so much. "Peradventure it was an oversight," and as soon as beloved brethren know of the need they will hasten to supply it.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JULY 1, 1872.

A SERMON ON A GRAND OLD TEXT

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15.

YOU will observe that Paul wrote this verse immediately after he had given a little outline of his own personal history. He had, he said, been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; and then he added this priceless gospel verse, as if he inferred it from god’s grace to him, as well as received it by inspiration. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” It was an experimental text then — one which the apostle fetched out of the deeps of his own soul, as divers bring pearls from the ocean bed. He dipped his pen into his own heart when he wrote these words. No preaching or teaching can equal that which is experimental. If we would impress the gospel upon others, we must have first received it ourselves. Vainly do you attempt to guide a child in the pathway which you have never trodden, or to speak to adults of benefits of grace which you have never enjoyed. Happy is that preacher who can truly say he speaks what he doth know, and testifies what he hath seen. The testimony of Paul is peculiarly forcible, because he was a very straight-forward man. Before his conversion, he was second to none in opposing the gospel. He was a downright man who never did anything by halves. As the old Saxon proverb puts it, “It was neck or nothing with him.” He threw his whole nature into anything which he espoused; and it must have been indeed a mighty inward force which led him to speed forward so eagerly in the directly opposite way to that which he had pursued with enthusiasm throughout the early part of his life. He was an honest man a man to whom it was impossible either to lie or to be neutral; he was truthful, sincere,

outspoken, wearing his heart upon his sleeve, and carrying his soul in his open hand. When we hear him say as the outcome of his own personal experience that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, we may be sure that he believed it with his whole heart, and we may receive his testimony as one which he lived to prove, and died to seal with his blood. Never had a fact a better witness; he lost all for its sake, and counted that loss his greatest gain. Hear ye his words, for he speaks to you from the ground which received his blood: his blood speaketh better things than that of Abel, and it cries with a voice not less loud and clear.

The text, as we find it, is like a picture surrounded with a goodly border. We sometimes see paintings of the old masters in which the bordering is as full of art as the picture itself, we might safely say as much of our text. We will look at its *framework* first; here it is: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." When we have carefully considered that, we will study *the great masterpiece itself*; meditating upon the matchless saying." — Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." When we have noticed the preface and the saying, you will then allow me to preach a short sermon upon it.

I. First, then, THE FRAMEWORK. Paul says, "*it is a saying.*" When we declare a sentence to be a saying we mean that it is commonly spoken, and usually said, so that everybody knows it, it is town talk, "familiar in our mouths as household words." Those who like harder words explain that this is an axiom — a Christian axiom — a self-evident truth, a thing which nobody doubts who is a Christian at all; but, I will keep to our own version, and add that I greatly wish that our text were more truly a saying among all Christian people of this day. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, is a truth which we all believe, but do we all talk about it so frequently as to make it in very deed a saying? Do you think that our servants who have lived for months in our houses would in their gossips say "It was one of my Master's sayings, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" I will even ask: Do you think that, if a person attended our places of worship for years he would be able conscientiously to say "Why, it was our minister's ordinary saying, it was quite a proverb with him; he was always repeating that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"? Yet a sentence cannot be called "a saying" until it is often said. It does not get into the category of sayings, and is not called by that name unless it is a matter of ordinary common talk. I gather, then from this, that Christian people ought to talk more about the gospel than they

do, and a great deal more about that primary and elementary truth into the world to save the of the gospel, the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to save the guilty. Believers ought so often to speak of it, that it should be currently reported amongst even ungodly people, as one of our phrases and stock speeches. I should like them to be able to taunt us with it as a main part of our conversation: it would even be a good sign if they complained that we wearied them with it. Let them say, "Why, they are always harping on that string; even their children lisp it, their young men boast of it, and their matrons and their sires affirm it, and add their solemn seal thereunto, as if it were the sheet-anchor of their lives." O ye who know the wondrous story, talk ye of the gospel by the way; talk of it when ye sit in your houses; speak of it at your work; tell it to those who pass you in the street; or in the fields. Make the world hear it, make society ring with it. If there be a new saying, though it be but a jest, men report it, and every newspaper finds a corner for it; are we to be silent about this oldest and yet newest saying? Men rejoice in *bon mots*, and yet this is the best of words. We have the really good news, let us publish it. Let us popularize the gospel, and compel men to know it. If before some men we are less communicative upon the more mysterious truths, because we fear to cast pearls before swine, yet let this simple truth, since Scripture calls it "a saying" be spoken again and again and again till it shall be confessed, to be a common word among us.

Now Paul did not merely write "it is a saying," but "*it is a faithful saying,*" a saying worthy of faith, a saying full of truth, a saying about which no doubts may be entertained, a sure and certain saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Many sayings in the world had been much better left unsaid. There are proverbs which pass current amongst us as gold which are spurious metal, and no man can tell the mischief which an untruthful proverb may work; but, this is a saying fraught with unmingled benefit, it is pure truth, a leaf of the tree of life sent for the healing of the nations. Some matters which were important years ago are now worn out. Times have changed and circumstances have altered, and things are not now what they were to our forefathers; but, this is a faithful saying because it is as practically true to-day as when, eighteen hundred years ago, the apostle wrote it to the beloved Timothy. This is still a saying full of blessing to the nations that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Like the sun it shines with the same golden light as in the ages past, and, blessed be God, it will still shine when you and I have gone to

our rest; and, if this crazy world holds out, another thousand years, or even fifty thousand, the light of the gospel will not have grown dim. This coin of heaven will not have lost its image, or its superscription when time shall be no more: it is of God's minting and will outlast the world. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Ah, you heard it when you were a boy and you did not think much of it. Your years are now many, and your life has almost run its course. and you are still unsaved; but, thank God now, in your old age, we have the same truth to tell to you, though you rejected it in your boyhood, and it is quite as certain now as then that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. To the eleventh hour this precious sentence abideth sure. May none of you despise it or doubt it, but may each one of you prove it to be God's own word of salvation.

Our apostle, however, adds yet another word; "*it is worthy of all acceptance.*" I think he meant two things. It is worthy of all the acceptance anyone can give it; and, it is worthy of the acceptance of all men. Some sayings are not worth accepting: the sooner you have done with them and forgotten them the better for you; but, this saying you, nay receive as truth, had having received it as truth to other men, it will be a happy circumstance if you receive it as truth to yourself; for it will be a blessed day to you when you appropriate it as your own. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If I, feeling myself a sinner, infer that Jesus came to save me, I may without any fear rest assured that I am accepting a truth, for, believing in Jesus, I may safely rejoice that he came to save *me*. You may receive this truth not only into the ear — it is worthy of that acceptance, or into the memory it is worthy of that acceptance; but you may receive it into your inmost heart — it is worthiest of all of that acceptance; and, receiving it, you may lay upon it all the stress of your soul's interests for the past, the present, and the future, for time and for eternity; you may accept it; as being the mainstay, the prop and pillar of your confidence; for it is worthy of all the acceptance that you or any other man can possibly give to it.

It is worthy, we have said, of the acceptance of all mankind. The riches, the greatest, the most learned, the most innocent, the most pure — speaking after the manner of men — these may accept it; it is worthy of their acceptance. In the sight of God they still are guilty, and need that Christ should save them. And, on the other hand, the lowest, the most ignorant, and most groveling, depraved, debauched, abandoned, helpless, hopeless, lost, castaways may receive it, for it is true to them, emphatically

to them; for Jesus Christ came into the world to save just such offenders as they are. If I stood in Cheapside to-morrow, and any man out of the crowd should come to me, and say, "Is that sentence, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners' worth my believing and accepting?" I should not hesitate, but without knowing who spoke to me, I should reply, "Yes." If he stopped his carriage and came to me, or if he took his hand off the costermonger's barrow, or left his shoe-blackening box, or came with his rags about him, or if he had escaped from the prison omnibus, it would not matter who he was, we might safely assure him that this saying is worthy of his acceptance. It is not a stoop for a king or a saint to receive it, and yet it meets the level of the poorest and the worst of characters. It is worthy of everybody's acceptance. Beloved friends, no one can ever rightly accuse us of making too much of the gospel. However earnest we may be, we can never be too earnest, and, however diligent to spread it, we can never be too diligent; for it is a gospel worthy of every man's acceptance, and, therefore, worthy of every Christian's publication. Spread it; let the winds bear it; let every wave proclaim it; write it everywhere, that every eye may see it; sound it in all places, that every ear may hear it. Simple are the words, and to some men their meaning is despised as almost childish, but, it is the great power of God. "A mere platitude," they say, yet; it is a platitude which has made heaven ring with sacred mirth; a platitude which will make earth's deserts blossom like a rose; a platitude which has turned many a man's hell into heaven, and his densest darkness into the brightness of glory. Ring out that note again, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; it is worthy of angelic trumpets, it is worthy of the orator's loftiest speech, and of the philosopher's profoundest thought. It is worthy of every Christian's publication, as surely as it is of the acceptance of every human being. God help us never to undervalue it, but to prize it beyond all price. There is the frame of the picture; the basket of silver which holds the apples of gold.

II. Our meditation now turns to THE SAYING ITSELF. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Very briefly and simply I will open up this passage as if none of us had hitherto understood it. May the Holy Ghost instruct us.

Here is, first, *a person coming* — a divine person — Christ Jesus the anointed Savior. The Son of God, the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity, became the Savior of sinners. Very God of very God was he. He created the earth, and upon his shoulders the pillars thereof still lean. Yes,

he who was personally offended by human sin; he, himself, deigned to become the Savior of men. Weigh this and marvel and adore!

Next, you have the *deed he did* — he “came into the world.” He was born a babe in Bethlehem — it was thus he came into the world. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Thirty years and more he lived in the world, sharing to the full its poverty and toil. He was a working man, he wore the common garb of labor, he wrought, he hungered, he thirsted!, he was sick.; he was weary; he, in all these senses, came into the world and became a man among men; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. As it was a sinful world, he was vexed with the transgressions of those about him; as it was a suffering world, he bore our sickness; as it was a dying world, he died; and, as it was a guilty world, he died the death of the guilty, suffering in their stead the wrath of God. He was crucified for sinners,

*“Bearing, that they might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

He came into the world most practically and emphatically, not lingering upon its verge, or viewing it from an elevation, but mingling with its masses; receiving publicans and sinners and eating with them. His divine nature was closely joined with our humanity, and as a man, yet God, he was numbered with transgressors, and died for human sin.

Mark well *the object for which he came* — he came to save. He came into this world because men were lost, that he might find them and save them. They were guilty — he saved them by putting himself into their place, and bearing the consequences of their guilt. They were foul — he saved them by coming into the world and giving his Holy Spirit, through whose agency they might be made new creatures, and so might have pure and holy desires, and escape the corruption which is in the world through lust. He came to sinners, to take them just where they are at hell’s dark door, to cleanse them in his precious blood, and fit them to dwell with himself in eternal glory, as saved souls for ever. This is all wonderful. Angels marvel at it, so may we; but the most wonderful fact of all is that he came into the world to save *sinners*, not the righteous but the ungodly. Remember his own words, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The physician comes to heal the sick; the Savior comes to save the lost. To attempt to save those who are not lost would be a ridiculous superfluity: to die to pardon those who are not guilty would be a gross absurdity. It is a

work of supererogation to set free those who are not in bonds. Christ came not to perform an unnecessary deed. If you are not guilty, the Savior will not save you. If you are not a sinner, you have no part in Christ. If you can say, "I have kept the law from my youth up, and am not a transgressor," then we have no gospel blessings to set before you; if you were blind the Lord Jesus would open your eyes, but as you say, "we see," your sin remaineth. If you be guilty, the text is full of comfort to you, it drops with honey like a honeycomb — "Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*."

Lest there should be any mistake, Paul added these words — "of whom I am chief" or, "of whom I am first;" and Calvin warns us against supposing that the apostle labored under a mistake or uttered an exaggeration. Paul was an inspired man writing inspired Scripture, and he spoke the truth, he was, in some respects, the chief of sinners. He went very very far into sin. It is true he did it ignorantly in unbelief; but, then, unbelief is, in itself, the greatest of all sins. It is an atrocious thing for a man to be an unbeliever — it is a damning sin, — what if I say *the* damning sin? We have heard of a man who had committed a violent assault, who, before the magistrate, pleaded that he was drunk. Now, it is sometimes the case that magistrates admit this as an extenuating circumstance; but the magistrate on that occasion was a sensible man, and, therefore, he said, "Very well, then, I give you a month for the assault, and I fine you forty shillings for being drunk; that is another offense and it cannot diminish your guilt." So with unbelief. Though from one point of view it might be looked upon as a mitigating circumstance, yet from another it is really an increase of sin, and Paul regarded it as such; and, therefore, he believed himself to be the chief of sinners. Yet he declares that Christ Jesus came to save him. Now, if a great creature can pass through a certain, door, a less creature can; if a bridge is strong enough to carry an elephant it will certainly bear a mouse; if the greatest sinner that ever lived has entered into heaven by the bridge of the atoning sacrifice, no man that ever lived may say "My sin is past forgiveness." To-day no mortal has a just pretense to perish in despair. Some continue to despair but they have no ground for such a feeling, for this is the good news which is preached to you, that Jesus Christ has come to call the guilty, the lost, and the ruined to himself, and save the vilest of them with a great salvation. Thus we have looked at the setting of the text, and at the text itself.

II. Now for A BRIEF SERMON upon it. Our short homily shall begin with *the doctrine of the text*; and we will handle it negatively. Notice that our

text does not say that Jesus Christ has come to compliment, to encourage, and to foster the independent spirit of righteous men. It is not written that he is come to tell us that human nature is not so bad as some think it to be, or that he has come to commend those who are self-reliant and intend to fight their own way to heaven. Here is not a word of the kind; and, what is more, there is not a word like it in the entire Book of God. There is no encouragement in Holy Scripture to the man who depends upon himself for salvation, or who imagines or conceives that eternal life can spring out of his own loins, or can be wrought out by anything that he can do: and yet our human nature loves to do something to save itself. I don't know that I ever felt my blood boil so with indignation, nor my heart melt so much with pity as when I went to see the Sancta Scala, at Rome, the holy staircase down which our Lord is said to have been brought by Pilate. On those very stairs Martin Luther was crawling on his knees, trying to find pardon for his sins, when the text came to him, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." I stood at the foot of those marble stairs. They are very high, and they are covered with wood lest the knees of the faithful should wear them out, and this wood has been worn away three different times by the kneelers. I saw men, and women, and children — little children too, and aged women, going up from step to step upon their knees to find their way to heaven. On the first step there is a little hole in the wood so that the worshippers may kiss the marble, and they all kissed it, and touched it with their foreheads; the middle and top step are favored in the same manner. It was an awful reflection to me to think that those poor creatures really believed that every step their knees knelt on there were so many days less of purgatory for them; that every time they went up the stairs there were so many hundreds of days of deliverance from the punishment of their sins. Oh, if they could but have understood this text, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," that men are not saved by crawling on their hands and knees, or by penances and self-inflicted misery — what a blessing it would have been to them, and how they would have turned with scorn from these infamous impostures with which priests seek to mislead and destroy the souls of men. No, the Scripture does not say that Jesus came to encourage the righteous and to help those who are their own saviors.

Note, again, that it does not say in the text — Jesus Christ came to help sinners to save themselves. There is a gospel preached which is very like that; but it is not the gospel of Christ. The poor man who was wounded on

the road to Jericho was found by the Samaritan half dead. Now the Samaritan did not say to him, "I want you to come part of the way to me in this business," but, he came where he was lying wounded and half-dead, and poured the oil and wine into his wounds, bound up the gashes, took him and set him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, and did not even ask him to pay the reckoning, but said to the host, "If there be anything more I will pay thee." If there were anything more to be done for sinners Jesus would do it, for he would never let them have a share of the work of salvation. The sinner's business is to take the finished work of Christ, to give up all his own doings, and let him who came from heaven to save do the saving which he came to do. It is not ours to interfere, but to let Jesus do his own work.

Another thought demands expression. The text does not say that Christ came to half save sinners, intending when he had completed half the work to leave them to themselves. There is a notion abroad that men may be saved, and yet may fall from grace; that they may have eternal life, but it is eternal life of an odd kind for it may die out: they may be pardoned and yet punished; they may be children of God and yet become children of the devil, members of Christ's body and yet be cut off and joined to Satan. Blessed be God, it is not so written in this precious book. Jesus does not begin the saving work and leave it unfinished. When he once puts his hand to it he will go through with it — his wonderful salvation shall be completed, none shall say that he began but was not able to finish. Glory be to his name, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinner from top to bottom; he will be the Alpha and the Omega, he will be the beginning and the end to all who trust him.

One other reflection here. Christ the real Savior came into the world to save real sinners. When Luther was under a bitter sense of sin, he said, "Oh, but my guilt is so great, I cannot believe that Christ can save me." But one who was helping him much said to him, "If thou wert only the semblance of a sinner, then Christ would only be the semblance of a Savior, but if thou be a real sinner then thou shouldst rejoice that a real Savior has come to save thee." If we meet with a man who says, "Yes, I am a sinner, I know I am a sinner, but I do not know that I ever did much amiss; I have always been honest and correct." Such a person has a name to be a sinner and no more. He is a sham sinner, and a sham Savior would suit him well. But for another who confesses that he has been a grievous transgressor, there is a real Savior. Rejoice, O ye guilty ones, that the Christ of God

himself really came with real blood and presented a real atonement to take away real sins, such as theft, drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking, lying, murder, and things I need not mention, lest the cheek of modesty should blush; even these can be blotted out by the real Savior who has come to save the chief of sinners from suffering what is due to their sins. Oh, that we could ring this great gospel bell till the hills and valleys were filled with its music. May the Lord open men's ears and hearts that those who hear the glad tidings may accept the Savior who has come to save them.

My little sermon has dealt with the doctrine of the text, now it must treat of the *inferences of the text*, which are these.

It is a great and a hard thing to save a sinner, for the Son of God must needs come into the world to do it. It could not have been accomplished by any other except Jesus Christ, and he himself must leave the throne of heaven for the manger of earth, and lay aside his glories to suffer, and bleed, and die. If soul-saving be so great and hard a work, when it is accomplished, let the Lord Jesus have all the glory of it; let us never put the crown on the wrong head, or neglect to honor the Lord who bought us so dearly. Unto the Lamb of God be honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

And next, it must be a good thing to save a sinner since Jesus would not have come from heaven to earth on an ill errand. It must be a great blessing to a sinner to be saved. Dear brethren, this ought to lead all of us to consecrate ourselves; to be willing instruments in the hand of Christ in endeavoring to rescue the fallen. That work which filleth the Savior's heart and hand is noble work for us. It were worth living for and worth dying for to be the instruments in the Spirit's hands of bringing souls into a state of grace. Think much of the blessed service which Jesus allots you, though it be but to teach an infant class in the school, or a few poor men and women whom you visit from house to house, or a group of sorry idlers at a lodging house; mind not the degradation of the people, for to save them from sin is a work which God himself did not disdain to undertake.

Again. Another inference I draw is, that if Jesus came from heaven to earth to save sinners, depend upon it he can do it. If he has come into the world, and bled and died to be a Savior, he can do it. The price he paid is enough to redeem us; the blood he shed suffices to cleanse us. If there be any man here who feels himself very foul and filthy, let him look up to Christ at the

right hand of the Father, and dare to say in his soul, “He can save even me; he is exalted on high to give repentance and remission, and he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. He must be able to save me.” O soul, if thou canst say that, and venture thy soul on it, there is no risk in it; thy faith shall save thee, and thou mayst go in peace, for he who can rely upon Christ shall not find the Savior fail the faith which he himself has wrought in the soul.

These are the inferences, then, which I gather from the text; and shall close by *an enquiry*, which my text very naturally raises in my mind, and suggests to you. If Jesus came to save sinners, has he saved *me*? has he saved *you*?

Has he saved *me*? I dare not speak with any hesitation here; I *know* he has. Many years ago I understood by faith the plan of salvation. Hearing it simply preached, I looked to Jesus and lived, and I look to him now. I *know* his word is true, and I am saved. My evidence that I am saved does not lie in the fact that I preach, or that I do this or that. All my hope lies in this, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. I am a sinner, I trust him, he came to save me, I am saved; I live habitually in the enjoyment of this blessed fact, and it is long since I have doubted the truth of it, for I have his own word to sustain my faith.

Now, beloved, can *you* say — if not positively — yet with some measure of confidence, “Yes?”

*“All my trust on him is stayed,
All my help from him I bring.”*

Ah, you are favored, you are very favored. Be happy God has highly blessed you. You ought to be as merry as the days are long in June. A man who can say, “Christ has saved me,” has bells enough inside his heart to ring marriage peals for ever. Oh, be glad, be very glad, for you have the best inheritance in the world, and if temporal matters are not quite as you would wish them to be, do not become discontented, but solace yourself with the fact that the Lord has saved you with a great salvation.

But, are you compelled to answer, “No, I do not think that Christ has saved me?” Then I will ask you another question may: it not be ere this day is finished that you shall be able to say, “He has saved me?” Look at the matter. It is written that he came to save sinners. Is that your name or not? Spell it over. Are you a sinner? I have distinguished between a sham sinner

and a real sinner. Do you confess that you are guilty? Then Jesus came to save such as you are. There is a passage of Scripture which says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." You know what to believe is. It is to trust, to rely upon. Now soul, if thou reliest upon Christ Jesus, sinner as thou art, thou art a saved sinner. It thou dost lean on him, thou art this moment saved, at this instant, forgiven. "Oh, but I, I," — ah! you want to crawl up that Roman staircase, do you? That is what you want — you are anxious to go up and down those steps. "No," you say, "I am not quite so foolish as that." But, indeed, if you are trying to be saved by your own works you are quite as foolish, You make a Pilate staircase for yourself, and toil up and down its steps. "Oh but, sir," you say, "I must *be* something, I must *feel* something." Yes, yes, it is that staircase again — always that staircase. Now the gospel is not that staircase, not yet; your feelings, nor yet your works; its voice is, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." You smile at the folly of Romanists and yet popery, in some form or other, is the natural religion of every unconverted man. We all want to do the crawling and penancing in some shape or another. We are so proud that we will not accept heaven for nothing. We want to pay, or do something or other, forgetting that if a man should give all the substance of his house for love it would utterly be contemned. The one only plan of salvation is "Believe and live," trust, rest, depend upon, rely upon Jesus. There is life in a look at the Crucified One; but there is no life anywhere else. God grant us to look at this moment, and may the Lord Jesus say unto our soul, "I am thy salvation."

LIVING WATER WILL BE SEEN

WHEN looking from an elevation upon a wide stretch of country one observes the church-towers, the woods, and the hills, but chiefly the lakes, rivers, and ponds attract the eye, for they glisten in the sun; in the same manner, whatever else may escape the eye of the reader of history, the presence of the gospel is certain to press itself upon him. In any foreign travel the prevalence or absence of the saving word will force itself upon the thoughtful mind.

Let but the gospel be preached, and hearers will be sure to find it out. From far and wide the people will flock to hear of Jesus. He cannot be hid. The clear and sparkling streams of grace flash in the light of God, and men must behold them, even if they refuse to drink. Nothing is so surely its own advertisement; as the good news of salvation.

IT'S NOT ALL RIGHT

“ALL, right” is as; much John Bull’s own word as “Go-a-head” is the especial voice of Cousin Jonathan. We hear it every day, and scarcely notice its cheerful significance; but the other morning the power of its negative fell very forcibly upon us. Asleep in the cabin of the good ship “Orion,” we were dreaming in a happy manner when a very emphatic voice startled us into thorough wakefulness by asserting most vigorously, “IT IS NOT ALL RIGHT.” A sinking vessel, furious breakers, and bursting engines, like “battle, murder, and sudden death,” all rushed before our mind. The hobgoblins which so much alarmed Bunyan’s Pilgrim were all before us. When a man bears witness in the dead of night with a sonorous voice that “it is not all right,” he is clothed with the power of a Jonah, and arouses all who hear him, whether it be a trio in a cabin or a crowd in a city. We do not know a more sure and efficient method of chasing sleep from a landsman’s eyes than by shouting in his ears, “it is not all right;” at three o’clock in the morning, when he wakes up not in his own cozy bedroom; but in the little den wherein the steward has “cribbed, cabined, and confined him.” After all, there was more reason for fun than fear, for the prophetic voice proceeded from one of the companions of our voyage, who, so far from intending to warn us of some dread event, was himself hardly conscious of having spoken. Our friend was lying in the berth beneath us, and the boy coming in for the boots which it was his office to clean, not knowing that any living being was in the aforesaid berth had put his hand on our friend’s leg, leaned heavily thereon, while he groped on the floor for the shoes: the sudden pressure made the sleeper spring up much to the amazement of the boy, who very naturally cried out “All right, sir,” but received for answer a flat contradiction from the half-awakened passenger, “It is *not* all right.” The explanation created a burst of laughter, but all chance of any more of “Tired nature’s sweet restorer” was gone for that season. Many a day after, the cry of “*It’s NOT all right*” lingered with us, and we thought of the large amount of truth which it contained.

We entered the churches of a Popish city, and felt amid the mummeries and idolatries that “it was not all right.” We thought of a church at home, which has now become a Noah’s ark wherein the unclean beasts are herded by sevens, and the clean animals in twos only, and we reflected that “it was not all right.” We remembered three or four Presbyterian churches in which no eye unaided by a Scotch microscope can detect a difference, and we heard loud voices raging against a hopeful union, and we thought “it was not all right.” We considered the mournful fact that many English Nonconformists are removing all the old landmarks, and seeking out novel inventions, and we lamented that “it was not all right.”

Then our mind passed in review the hundreds of self-righteous persons, lovers of pleasure, and neglecters of the gospel, with whom “it is not all right.” We pictured the dying beds, the resurrection and the judgment, of men with whom “it is not all right,” and we felt that we had here a great text for a most impressive sermon; but, dear reader, we are not going to inflict a discourse upon you, and, therefore, we drop our pen; only adding one prayer that none of us may have to exclaim at the last,

“IT IS NOT ALL RIGHT,”

C. H. S.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

AUGUST 1, 1872.

JEZEBEL

Mr. PETER BAYNE has taken Jezebel as the subject of a poem. (The Days of Jezebel an Historical Drama.) He is wise in his generation, for the Sidonian queen was no ordinary woman, and he who was raised up to battle with her was that chief among men, "my Elijah." The period in which these two royal spirits appeared upon the stage was one of fierce conflict, in which the truth of God wrestled with the idolatries of the heathen, the spoil of battle being the whole nation of Israel, and the weapons of warfare the prophet's voice on the one hand, and the sword of persecution on the other. It was a grand era, a time wherein the Lord revealed himself as "a man of war, Jehovah mighty in battle." As for its history, is it not written in the book of the wars of the Lord?

Mr. Bayne has not proved himself too ambitious in his choice of a theme; he has worthily sung where most minstrels would have failed. If he has not girt himself with thunder, and ridden upon the whirlwind in such a manner as the subject demanded, throwing a fierce soul into the fury of the fray; he has, nevertheless, in flowing numbers, with a true poet's language, rehearsed the conflict, and instructed future generations in its teachings. It needed a Byron to sing a Jezebel; but, had he essayed the theme, his song would, in all probability, have been such, that, like the painted enchantress herself, it had been better for the world had its voice never been heard. As for Elijah, the prophet of fire would require a poet of flame to be his expositor. Till a thunderbolt genius shall arise to speak in lightning and whirlwind, Mr. Bayne's bright and benign star will be in the ascendant over Samaria and Carmel.

The historical drama opens with a dialogue between Ahab and Jezebel, in which, with the irresistible weapons of a beautiful woman's fears, the queen subdues her husband to her will. She complains that her ideas of universal toleration for all religions had been insolently opposed by Jehovah's prophets, who had filled the public ways "with howlings against

Baal and Ashtoreth.” until the people “prompt to catch the flame of mad fanaticisms” were ready to revolt. She demanded that the prophets who resisted her liberal, broad-church, comprehensive policy should, at one blow, be utterly destroyed; for, as she said and the present age is altogether of her mind,

*“Tolerance
Of those who will not tolerate is sin
Against all toleration.”*

She was a bigot for liberality, an admirer of the music and statuary which adorned the divergent rites of the various religions, ardently desirous that all gods should be equally revered, and only fierce towards the God who so austere demanded that he should reign alone. Her ideal of Church fellowship was the antitype of that which has the patronage of a certain learned dean, and a considerable and influential party both within and outside the National Church: she wished —

*“That every man of every nation round
Who visited Mount Zion, there should find
An altar to his country’s gods, and thus
With friendly gods above and friendly men
Below, the broad green earth might smile in peace
Up to a smiling, azure firmament.”*

Obadiah enters while the queen is inveighing against the raving fanatics, and she fiercely puts it to him “think’st thou we cannot tread these rebels down.” The succeeding conversation appears to us to merit the highest praise, none but a true poet could so well have conceived, and so fitly have worded his conception.

OBADIAH.

*“They are most weak, O queen, if spear and sword
And iron chariot are the only strength
In which a man may trust; but if their God
Be pleased to help them, all their enemies
Shall be like stubble in the crackling flame,
When winds scud rapid o’er the blackened ground.*

JEZEBEL.

*Great swelling words, but with no jot of sense!
 What armies can these prophets or their Jah
 Set in the tented field? What fortresses
 Can lend them shelter? Will a javelin
 Not pin a traitor to the ground because
 He mouths a prayer to Jah?*

OBADIAH.

*What God will do,
 He only knoweth. All unsearchable
 By mortal man the secrets of His reign.
 But what He can do he hath clearly shown
 By mighty signs and wonders. By a word,
 If such His will, He could the mountains fledge
 With hosts of bannered angels, helmed with flame.
 The great sea is His slave, and, at His nod,
 Would bring its surges o'er the scarped hills.
 The solid earth obeys Him, opens wide
 Its rock-fanged mouth to close it upon those
 Marked for its prey by Him. The moon by night
 Pauses among the stars to write His praise
 In silver glitterings on the solemn clouds."*

There are many passages of equal power scattered all through the poem, of which another sample may be taken from a scene wherein Elijah foretells the withholding of dew and rain.

*"There was a change
 That moment in the sky and on the earth,
 The sun drank up the clouds like cups of wine,
 And glared, red-eyed, above. The dewy drops
 On lily and on vine flashed off in films
 Of thin white vapor, rushing to the sky.
 The wind moaned low and died. The air grew hot
 And touched the brow like fire."*

Here and there the master's hand strikes what seems to our ear a discordant note, or, to use another simile, the eagle wing wearies and flies too low, but there are great passages full of fine flights of imagination which will never be forgotten. The description of Elijah's mockery of the

priests of Baal, the Sun-god, overflows with life, and strikes us as catching the very spirit of the Scripture narrative.

*“A fearful glee was in his eye, a mirth
 Too stern, methought, for man of woman born;
 His glance was vexing those robed prophets more
 Than the sun’s fire; and then he gave it words.
 ‘Might he not spare one little spark, but one,
 Your fine god riding there,’ he cried, ‘to light
 Your sacrifice? He surely has enough;
 He’s burning you, if not your offering.
 Poor souls? I pity you! ‘They screamed for rage.
 ‘A little louder,’ smiled he, ‘for perhaps
 In his warm chariot he has fallen asleep.’
 They leaped, they danced, they cut themselves with knives,
 Till the blood soaked their robes and poured in streams
 From their lanced foreheads. Then he laughed aloud,
 Great shouts of laughter, till the echoes rang
 From crag to crag on Carmel. ‘Keep it up,
 Another dance!’ he shrieked; another song!
 Leap rather higher; never grudge some drops
 ‘Of’ your dear blood, so precious in his sight
 Ye know he is a god, my reverend friends;
 How often have ye told the people so?
 Your pretty speeches and the miracles
 Which ye have shown them, these were not, of course,
 Mere lies accursed. He is a god, you know;
 Louder, I say; he’s old, perhaps, and deaf,
 Out with your beards that’s hopeful crack your throats
 In yelling chorus. Good, good ha, ha, ha! ‘
 He rubbed his hands, waved wildly in the air
 His sheepskin mantle, laughed until the tears
 Streamed down his face, and all his body shook
 With paroxysms of mirth and scorn. Ah me!
 That laughter sounded fearfully, and seemed
 Not human in its fiery ruthlessness.
 But as he stood on Carmel, charred and gray,
 A dead land lay below, his native land;
 And the white corpse-eyes made appeal to him
 Against its murderers, murderers of the truth,
 Baal’s lying prophets. Furthermore, I think
 That this Elijah is not to be judged
 Like common men. The little, rippling lake,*

*Safe hid among the hills, can never know
The ocean's tempest."*

Our author represents Elijah as expecting after the slaughter of Baal's priests to be installed in the place of power, and to be acknowledged "a greater Moses in the land," but he was bitterly disappointed, for "the Sidonian woman" repulsed him from the palace gate. Then when the divine afflatus had left him, and the excitement of the day was over, the prophet sank into sadness, and is described by one who met him coming from Jezreel as —

*"Haggard and worn, with trouble in his gait,
And infinite astonishment and pain
Within his wildly sparkling eye."*

The plan of Jezebel to avenge upon Naboth his denial of the king's request for his vineyard is well conceived, and the conversations held by the elders of Jezreel have in them touches of grim humor which are after our own heart. One Melchi speaks for all the world like an Evangelical clergyman pleading for the continuance of himself and brethren in the Popish church of our realm. All along we suspected as we passed from page to page that Mr. Bayne had an underlying parable, but here the vein comes to the surface, and the riddle expounds itself. Melchi condemns Naboth for 'wounding sensibilities finer perhaps than his own,' and as being unable quite —

*"In matters of morality and truth,
To comprehend a motive if it lies
Beneath the surface and its nature is
Involved and subtle; fiercely positive
That you must never sign a compromise
'Tween truth and falsehood."*

Melchi, good man, would be very pleased to see the true worship universal, but the policy of compromise he clearly sees to be most useful for the present, and he looks upon "accommodation" as a gift and grace, most fruitful in dear peace, in light, in sweetness, and in the honey-dew of bright tranquillity for home and heart.

*“Look round the land; I ask you could we have
So much of purest truth from Jah’s own Book,
Preached everywhere, but for the compromise
So recently effected between Baal
And Israel’s Jehovah!’ Many men,
Of rank and influence famed upon the coast
Of Tyre and Sidon, thus have been induced
To listen to the truth, and who can tell
What good has thus been done?”*

Assuredly we have heard all this before, not in blank verse, but in oft-repeated prose, of detestable deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Melchi is moreover quite persuaded that Dissent is a disreputable affair, and that he could never associate himself with it. The more respectable State church of which he is a member, is so grandly comprehensive, and withal, so conservative of propriety, that he will sooner swear Naboth into Tophet than leave her.

*“Will any candid, reasonable man
Affirm that there is honor done to God,
When crazy Homart and a half-starved knot
Of rubel hill-men, meeting in some hole
Among the rocks, sing hymns, and pray, and raise
Elijah’s cry, and swear they never will
Bow down to Baal, honor done, I say,
To God by these ill-mannered, vehement men,
So great as that which doth redound to Him
From the decorous, regulated rites
Which law permits us here in Jezreel?”*

It would do some men we wot of a world of good to read this poem line by line, and drink in its spirit, — men molluscous, invertebrate, gelatinous. Truth they would fain love wisely, not too well, nay not well enough to be positive about it or to suffer for it. They believe that words mean what you can make them mean, and they have great art in creating senses which no one else would have dreamed of. The point up to which they will yield constantly recedes from view; doubtless they have a line beyond which they will never go, but the most daring heretic has no idea whereabouts it is drawn; the most daring Ritualistic mariner will find that though he push the prow beyond the pillars of Hercules known as Transubstantiation and reach the Ultima Thule of Mariolatry, he will find his Evangelical brother still

with him at the dividing of the loaves and fishes. We lament the pertinacity of inconsistency which this fact reveals. Capacity for eating dirt must be great in certain quarters. Mr. Bayne is a “no compromise” man, and writes like a very Elijah for decision. We hope his poem, which is written right out of his heart, will accomplish in some measure the purpose for which he has sent it forth. It has been a great joy to us to traverse his fertile pages, and has paid us for journeying through leagues of wilderness verse sent to us for review; his is a goodly land, full of Sidonian lilies and sweet Sharon roses.

The little sonnets which occur here and there in the book do not strike us as being equal to the body of the work; we think the writer could do better. We would not be quite so severe upon them as Jezebel was when she said, “Better, a little better; but not good;” but his is about the only matter in which we feel any sympathy with Jezebel’s sayings, or opinions. Mr. Bayne will not resent this criticism, for he is not one of the poets of “a spindling race” who “hang their heads and pout unless they’re praised.” We, however, much appreciate his song of Baal and Ashtoreth, and his imitation of Hebrew verse in the song of the prophets in the ave. The following is a passage: —

*“Is this the King of Israel,
 That is ruled by a woman?
 Is this king Ahab,
 That trembleth before an arrogant heathen?
 Hath he borne the shield and the spear?
 Hath he gone in the chariot to battle?
 Hath he shouted in the face of the foe-men?
 Wherefore then should he fear a woman,
 And the countenance of his wife make him afraid?
 Clothe him with the garments of a maidservant,
 Let his place be in the women’s chambers,
 Let his hand take hold of the distaff,
 Let him bring wool to the spinning women.”*

In closing, we cannot refrain from quoting Elijah’s description of the long drought; it strikes us as most impressive.

*“Then the great drought prevailed through all the land.
 Upon the fields, instead of bladed grass,
 Lay a white scurf as on a leper’s face.
 The drought pierced to the core of the gray hills
 And drank their secret wells. In the sere woods
 The buds half opened in the hope of spring,
 Then shriveled like the hands of dying babes,
 And made no Summer. ‘Mid the branches bare
 The voice of birds went silent, and the beasts,
 With black tongues hanging from their mouths, and eyes
 Sunk in their sockets, gazed int, the pools
 But found no water. Mountain villages
 Grew silent on the hill and stood as tombs.
 Oh, it was weariness unspeakable
 To see nor fresh green leaf, nor yellow grain,
 Nor purple grape, nor blue corn-flower, nor spark
 Of scarlet poppy, nor white, sailing cloud.
 No color, on the world! The woven robe
 Of air and moisture laid upon the earth,
 To make her beautiful and draw the love
 Of us her children, had been lifted off
 In God’s fierce anger.”*

C. H. S.

THE KING’S MOWINGS

IN MEMORIAM

BY C. H. SPURGEON

“The king’s mowings.” — Amos 8:1.

CERTAIN lands belonged to the king, so far, that he always took the first cut of grass for himself; and left any aftermath to those who worked upon the land. Now, our great King has his mowings too. His church is the field which he has enclosed and blessed. At set seasons the king takes his mowings. Lately, beyond any other time in my life that I remember, the King has been taking his mowings in and around the church of which he has made me overseer. One has spent many hours at the bedsides of the

dying, and in trying to console the bereaved. Our loss, if I may venture to call it a loss, as a church, at the opening of this year was extremely heavy. The King has been taking his mowings among us, and has cut down here one and there another. When churches commence with a great many young members there naturally would not be so many deaths; but, as we all grow old together, there must be a larger proportion of removals from this world into the land above. I purpose to speak a little upon that subject, and I shall do so in a threefold way First, by way of *consolation*; then, by way of *admonition*; and, then, by way of *anticipation*.

I. First, by way of CONSOLATION. It is a sorrowful matter that our beloved brethren should be taken from us. We were not more but less than men if we did not sorrow. Jesus wept, and by that act he sanctified our tears. It is not wrong, it is not unmanly, much less is it sinful, for us to drop the tear of sorrow over the departed; yet let us help to wipe those tears with a handkerchief of sacred consolations.

First, seeing, “All flesh is grass, and all the comeliness thereof as the flower of the grass,” dost thou lament that the King has been mowing? Then let this thought abide thee. The King himself has done it! There is no such abstract thing as death, an unloosed monster devouring the saints at will, “drinking the blood of men, and grinding their bones between his iron teeth.” This is a poet’s raving. No destroying angel is sent forth to slay the Israel of God. There is a destroying angel, it is true; but he comes not near those who bear the blood-mark. It is not in the power of disease, or accident, to kill the children of God except as instruments in the divine hand. No saint dieth otherwise than by the act of God. It is ever according to the King’s own will; it is the King’s own doing. Every ripe ear in his field is gathered by his own hand, cut down by his own golden sickle, and by none other. Every fall-blown flower of grace is taken away by him, not smitten with blight, or cut down by the tempest, or devoured by some evil beast.

*“When mortal man resigns his breath,
 ‘Tis God directs the stroke of death;
 Casual howe’er the stroke appear,
 He sends the fatal messenger.
 The keys are in that hand divine;
 That hand must first the warrant sign,
 And arm the death, and wing the dart.
 Which doth his message to our heart.”*

The Lord has done it, in every case, and, knowing this, we must not even think of complaining. What the King doeth his servants delight in; for he is such a King, that, let him do what seemeth him good we will still bless him we are of the mind of him who said, “Though he slay in yet will I cruse in him.”

Again, those who have been in mown down and taken away are with the King. They are the King’s mowings: they are gathered into his stores. They are not in purgatory; they are not in the *limbus patrum*, much less are they in hell. They are not wandering in dreary pathways amidst the stars to find a lodging place. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold thy glory, the glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me from before the foundations of the world.” This prayer has fixed their abode. We shall enter into no questions now about whether heaven is a place, and where it is, or whether it be a state merely: it is enough for us that where Jesus is there his people are — not some of them on lower seats or sitting outside or in lower rooms, but they are all where he is. That will certainly content me, and if there be any degrees in glory you who want the high ones may have them. The lowest degree that I can perceive in Scripture is, “that they my be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,” and that lowest degree is as high as my most vivid imagination can carry me. Here is enough to fill our souls even to the brim. And now do you sorrow? Do you not almost blame your tears when you learn that your beloved ones are promoted to such blissful scenes? Why, mother, did you ever wish for your child a higher place than that it should be where Jesus is? Husband, by the love you bore your wife you cannot grudge her the glory into which she has entered. Wife, by the deep devotion of your heart to him who is taken from you, you could not wish to have detained him a moment from the joy in which his soul now triumphs with his Lord. If he were gone to some unknown land, if you could stand on life’s brink, and hear the roaring billows of a dread mysterious ocean and say, “My dear one has gone, I know not whither, to be tossed like a waif or stray upon yonder tempestuous sea,” Oh, then you might mix your own tears with the brine of that ocean. But you know where they are, you know with whom they are, and you can form some idea by the joy of Christ’s presence here on earth what must be their bliss above.

*“Sounds of sweet melody fall on my ear;
Harps of the blessed, your voices I hear!
Rings with the harmony heaven’s high dome,
Joyfully, joyfully bring the saints home.”*

It is a sweet reflection, too, that although our dear friends have been cut down like flowers by the scythe, yet their lot is better than ours though we are standing and blooming to-day. Life seems better than death, and the living dog is better than the dead lion; but take into account the everlasting state, and who will dare say that the state of the blessed is worse than ours? Will not all assert that it is infinitely superior? We are suffering still, but they shall smart no more. We are weak and tottering here, but they have regained the dew of their youth. We know what want means, and wipe the sweat of toil from off our face, but they rest in abundance for ever. The worst of all is that we still sin, and have to wrestle hard with doubts and fears; Satan still besets us, the world is around us, and corruptions within us. But they are where not a wave of trouble can ever break the serenity of their spirit, beyond the barkings of the hell-dogs, and beyond the arrows of hell’s quiver; though there be archers who would shoot their darts into heaven itself if they could. The ingathered ones are supremely blest; they are far beyond what we are in joy, and knowledge, and holiness; therefore, if we love them, how can we mourn that they have gone from the worse to the better, and from the lower to the higher room?

And, moreover, brethren, although some of you sorrow very bitterly, because God has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke, let me remind you that you might have had a worse sorrow than this concerning them. Ah, the mother that hath to mourn over a grown up son who has become a profligate, has a bitterer pang a thousand times over than she who sees her infant carried to the grave. The father who knows that his sons or daughters have become a dishonor to his name, may well wish that he had long ago seen them laid in the silent tomb; and I have known men in the Church whom I would sooner have buried a thousand times over than have lived to see what I have seen afterwards in them. For years they stood as honorable professors; but they lived to dishonor the Church, to blaspheme their Lord, to go back into perdition, and prove that the root of the matter was never in them. Oh, ye need not weep for those in heaven; weep not for the dead, neither bewail them; but weep for the spiritually dead; weep for the apostate and backslider; weep for the false professor and the hypocrite, “the wandering stars,” “for whom is reserved the

blackness of darkness for ever.” If ye have tears, go and shed them there; but for those who have fought the fight and won the victory, for those who have stemmed the stream and safely landed on the other side, let us have no tears; nay, put away the sacbut and bring forth the clarion, let the trumpet ring out jubilantly the note of victory. It is to them the day of jubilee; why to us should it be the hour of sorrow? They put on the crown and wear the palm branch, wherefore should we don these funeral weeds? There is more to rejoice in infinitely than there is to sorrow for; therefore, let our hearts be glad. The Lord hath said to them, “Well done,” and rewarded them according to his grace, and this is infinitely better than that they should have lived to slip and slide.

“But this is poor comfort,” you will say, and therefore let me come back to the text, and say the King has taken his mowings. Sorrowful as they may be, it is not the worst sorrow, but whether or no we must not grudge the King. All the friends we have are lent us. The old proverb says, “A loan should go laughing home,” that is, we should never be unwilling to return a loan but cheerfully give it back. They were lent us — and, dear ones, what a blessing they have been to us. The lamps of our house, have they been the joy of our day? The Master says, “I want them back again,” and do we clutch at them and say, “No, Master, thou shalt not have them,” Oh, it must not be so. Our dear ones were never half as much ours as they were Christ’s. We did not make them, but *he* did; we never bought them with our blood, but *he* did; we never sweat a bloody sweat for them, nor had our hands and feet pierced for them, but *he* did. They were with us, but they belonged to him. Your prayer was, “Father, let them be with me where I am,” but Christ’s prayer was, “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” Your prayer pulled one way and Christ’s another, be not envious that Christ won the suit, for if I ever enter into the Lord’s court of chancery, if I find that Christ is on the other side, my Lord, I will not plead. Thou shalt have thy will, for I and thou and thou and I are one; and if it be thy suit that all I love be with thee, so be it, for I shall be with thee too, ere long, and I would not quarrel with thy wish. The King; as let out his church like a pasture to us, and he says, “I must take my mowings sometimes.” Well, he has so watered us and given us the smell of a field that the Lord God has blessed, that when he cometh and takes his rent, we may not stand at the gate and forbid him, but say “Good Master, come and take which thou wilt. Take thy quitrent, for the field is

all thine own. Thou hast dearly purchased it, and thou hast tilled, it with much diligence take what thou wilt, for it is thine.”

And, let us add, to increase our comfort, that the King took his mowings at the right time. Out of those whom he has taken away from us, I think we must all confess that the Lord took them when they should be taken. In one case, a venerable sister, who, if she had lasted longer would have been the prey of weakness and of pain. ‘Twas well she fell asleep. In another case, a dear young friend was pining under that fell disease, consumption. Her throat was scarcely able to receive nourishment. I think those who loved her best must have felt relieved when at last she fell asleep. Two brethren rise before my mind’s eye — the one struggled through life, and wondered often that he did not sink before, for he was like a ship unfit for sea, which every wave threatens to engulf — it is a wonder that he survived so long as he did. He served his Lord up to the last, and when all was over it was well. Another, whom I saw with an afflicting disease about him that had brought him very low, had led as gracious a life that he did not need to utter any dying testimony. Brethren, beloved, also who were once with us in the College have fallen asleep, having finished their course and kept the faith.

I may add that, not only did the king take his mowings at the right time, but in every case I have now before my mind he took them in the easiest way. He took them gently. Some have a hard fight for it at the last, but in these cases though there were pains and dying strife, yet at the last their souls were kissed away by the dear lips of him who named them by their names and said they were his. They fell asleep, some of them, so sweetly, that those who looked on scarcely knew whether it was the sleep of life or the deeper sleep of eternity. They were gone; they were gone at once to their Lord and their God. Putting all these things together, reflecting that the King has done it, that those he has taken way he has taken to be with himself; that their present lot is an infinitely better one than anything beneath the moon; considering, too, that we must never grudge the King the heritage which he has so dearly bought, and that he took his mowings at the right time, and took them in the happiest manner, we will no longer repine, but we will bless the Lord.

II. And now, brethren, suffer me for a few minutes to use the subject by way of ADMONITION.

I hardly know whether under this head I have grouped together thoughts that are quite admonitory. The first one to me is very joyous. It is this, that as we belong to the King, our hope is that we shall be mown too. We are sitting on the banks of Jordan, especially some of riper years, waiting for a summons to the court of the Eternal King. It grows a wonder sometimes with aged Christians, why they stay so long. John Newton, methinks, used to marvel at his own age; and Rowland Hill used to say he half imagined they had forgotten him, and hoped they would soon recollect him and send for him. Well, we have not quite got that length — we who are young — but still we entertain the hope that some fair evening, calm and bright, the angel-reaper will come with the scythe. Then shall we, having fulfilled, like the hireling, our day, lay down our tools of labor and take our rest. Then shall we put down our sword, and take off our breast-plate, and unloose the shoes of iron and brass, for we shalt fight no more, but take the palm and claim the victory before the throne. Never let us look forward to this with dread. It is wondrous that we should do so, and we could not if our faith were stronger. When faith vividly realizes the rest that remaineth for the people of God, we are tempted to long to be up and away. Then why should we wish to linger here? What is there in this old musty worn-out world, worm-eaten and full of holes, with its very gold and silver cankered that can satisfy an immortal spirit? Let us away to the hills of spices and to the mountains of frankincense, where the King in his beauty stands with “helmed cherubim and sworded seraphim,” and all the hosts that serve him day and night, to behold his face, and evermore adore him. Let us anticipate cheerfully the time when the King’s mowings shall include us also.

Brethren, the admonition that rises out of all this, is — let us be ready. Should not every Christian man live every day as if he were going to die that day? Should we not always live as if we knew our last hour to be at that the door? If a man in his right state were informed on a sudden, “You will die to-night,” he ought not to alter his mode of life one atom; he should be so living that he had nothing more to do but to continue his course. It is remarked of Bengel, the great critic, that “he did not wish to die in spiritual parade, but in the ordinary way; like a person called out to the street door from the midst of business: so much so that he was occupied with the correction of his proof-sheets at his dying season, as at other times.” To me it seems to be the very highest kind of death to die in harness, concluding life without suspending service. Alas, many are

unready, and would sadly be put about if the midnight cry were suddenly heard. Oh, let us see that every thing is in order! Both for this world and the next, nothing should be left to be hurried over in the last few hours. Christian man, is your will made? Are your business affairs all straight? They ought to be, everything ought to be as near as you can keep it in perfect order, so that you are ready to go at any minute. Mr. George Whitefield used to live so in anticipation of death that he said, "I never go to sleep at night with even a pair of gloves out of place." Oh, that we could be habitually ready and in order, especially in higher matters, walking before the Lord' preparing to meet him

Then dear friends, this departure of many friends, while it admonishes us to be going, at the same time teaches us to do twice as much while we are here, seeing that our numbers are being thinned. A brave soldier in the day of battle, if he hears that a regiment has been exterminated by the enemy's shot and shell, says "Then those of us that survive must fight like tigers. There is no room for us to play at fighting. If they have slain so many, we must be more desperately valiant." And so, to-day, if one is gone here and there, a useful worker from the Sabbath-schools, from the street preaching, then it is time our broken ranks were repaired. O you young men, I pray you, fill up the gap; and you young women who love the Savior, if a Sabbath-school teacher is gone and you are teaching, teach better, or, if you are not teaching, come and fill the place. My dear brethren, I pray for recruits, I stand like a commander in the midst of my little army and see some of the best smitten down, here one and there one, and what can I do, but, as my Master bids me, lead you on, and say, "Brethren and sisters, step into their places; fill the gaps in the ranks." Do not let death gain upon us, but even as one goes into the golden city, let another cry: "Here I am! I will fill up the place and seek to do the work until the Master shall call me also to my reward." As for us who are at work we must labor more zealously than ever, we must pray more fervently than ever. When a certain great man suddenly died in the ministry, I remember in my young days an old preacher saying, "I must preach better than ever I did now that Mr. So-and-so is gone." And you, Christian, whenever a saint is removed say, "I must live the better to make up to the church the loss which it has sustained."

One other thought, by way of admonition. If the King has been taking his mowings, then the King's eye is upon his church. He has not forgotten this field, for he has been mowing it. We have been praying lately that he would

visit us. He has come, he has come! Not quite as we expected him, but he has come, he has come! Oh yes, and an he has walked these aisles, and looked on the congregation, he has taken one and then another. He has not taken me, for I was not ready and he has not taken you, for you are not quite ripe; but he has taken away some that were ripe and ready, and they have gone in with him. Well, then, he has not forgotten us, and this ought to stimulate us in prayer. He will hear us, his eye is upon us; this ought to stimulate us to self-examination. Let us purge out everything that will grieve him. He is evidently watching us. Let us seek to live as in his presence that nothing may vex his Spirit, and cause him to withdraw from us. Beloved, these are the words of admonition.

III. And, now, a few more words by way of ANTICIPATION. I hardly know under what head to place them. What anticipations are there that come out of the mowing? Why, these. There is to be an aftergrowth. After the King's mowings there came another upspringing of fresh grass, which belonged to the King's tenants. So we expect, now that the King has been mowing, that we shall have a fresh crop of grass. Is there not a promise, "They shall grow as the grass, as willows by the watercourses"? Fresh converts will come, and who will they be? Well, I look around, and I will not say with Samuel, as I look at some young man in the gallery, "Surely the Lord hath chosen him;" neither will I look down here and say, "Surely the Lord hath chosen *him*;" but I will bless God that I know he has chosen some, and that he means to make this fresh grass spring up to fill up the waste caused by the King's mowings. Do you know who I should like to come if I might have my preference? Well, where the daughter died, how glad I should be if the father came, or the brother came; and where the father died, how would I be rejoiced if the son should come; and where a good woman has been taken away, how glad would I be if her husband filled up the place. It seems to me as if it were natural to wish that those who loved them best should occupy their position, and discharge their work for them. But if that cannot be, I stand here to-night as a recruiting sergeant. My king in his wars has lost his men, and the regiment wants making up. Who will come? I put the colors in my hat to-night, but will not stand here and tempt, you with lies about the ease of the service, for it is hard service; yet I assure you we have a blessed Leader, a glorious conflict, and a grand reward. Who will come? Who will come to fill up the gaps in the ranks? Who will be baptized for the dead, to stand in their place of Christian service, and take up the torch which they have dropped? I will put the question round,

and I hope that many a heart will say, "Would God the Lord would have me. O that he would blot out my sins and receive me!" He delighteth in contrite hearts; he sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit. He will have whom he will have, but the way to be enlisted is plain, "Oh," say you, "what must I give to be Christ's soldier?" To be the queen's soldier you do not give any thing; you receive a shilling. You *take* to be a soldier of the queen, and so to be Christ's soldier you must take Christ to be your all in all, holding out your empty hand and receiving of his blood and righteousness to be your hope and your salvation. Oh that his good Spirit would sweetly incline your wills, that one after another were made willing in the day of his power. May he thus do and our hearts will greatly rejoice.

As I read the passage in Amos, which we have taken for our text, I noticed something about caterpillars. It is said that after the King's mowings there came the caterpillars to eat up the aftergrowth. Oh, those caterpillars! When the poor eastern husbandman sees the caterpillars, his heart is ready to break for he knows they will eat up every green thing. And I can see the caterpillars here to-night. There is the great green caterpillar that eats up all before him; I wish could crush him. He is called the caterpillar of procrastination. There are many, many other worms and locusts which eat up much, but this worm of procrastination is the worst, for just as the green blade is beginning to spring up this caterpillar begins to eat. I can hear him gnawing, "Wait, wait, wait; to-morrow, to-morrow; a little more sleep, a little more sleep, a little more sleep." And so this caterpillar devours our hopes. Lord, destroy the caterpillar, and grant that instead of the fathers may be the children, instead of the King's mowings may come up the aftergrass which shall be a rich reward to tire husbandman and bring glory to the owner of the soil.

We have reason to pray that the Lord would send the dew and the rain to bring forth the aftergrowth. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." Now this congregation is like mown grass. God has in mown it — a rich mowing has the King taken from us. Now, my brethren, we have the promise; let us plead it before the throne. All the preaching in the world cannot save a soul, nor all the efforts of men; but God's Spirit can do everything, and, oh, that he would come down like rain upon the mown grass now. Then shall we see the handful of corn upon the top of the mountain multiply till its fruit shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. The Lord send it, the Lord send it now.

If any would be saved, here is the way of salvation “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” To believe is to trust. What you have to trust in is this: that Jesus is God, that he became man, that he suffered in the sinner’s place, and that whosoever believes in him shall be forgiven because God has punished Christ instead of believers. Christ bore God’s wrath instead of every sinner that ever did or ever shall believe in him, and if thou believest in him thou wast redeemed from among men. His substitution was for thee and it will save thee; but if thou believes not thou hast no part nor lot in this matter. Oh, that thou wert brought to put thy trust in Jesus. This would be the pledge of thy sure salvation to-night and for evermore. God bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PREPARE to die whilst you are in health. It is an ill time to calk the ship when at sea, troubling up and down in a storm: this should have been looked to when she was in port. And as bad is it to begin and trim a soul for heaven when tossing on a sick bed. Things that are done in a hurry are seldom done well. Those poor creatures, I fear, go in an ill dress into another world who begin to provide for it when they are dying . . . but alas, they must go, though they have not time to put on proper clothes. —
Gurnall.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

OCTOBER 1, 1872.

OPENING THE CAMPAIGN

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

The next six months are, in many churches, the period of harvest. Our richer friends will have returned from their sea-side vacation, and our poorer brethren will, during the long evenings, have better opportunities for attending our meetings; and therefore we look for larger meetings and less distracted thoughts. In the country, the harvest operations no longer engross attention, and in the town, for the most part, evening services have more attraction. Between this month and the spring, much may be accomplished if pastors and churches have a mind to work. The time has come: are the men ready to avail themselves of it? We judge it seasonable to give a word of exhortation this month, and we trust our readers will not only suffer it but accept it. No one can prescribe rules for other men, yet those who have actual and large experience may give useful hints.

We take it for granted that all are resolved that the season should be improved to the utmost, and all done that can be done to secure the blessing. Let this be spoken of publicly in the pastor's discourse, and regarded as being as much a settled fact as the gathering in of the harvest in its due season. It is important that ministers should at once call special attention to the usual power-meetings, by mentioning them from the pulpit, with a special request that they may be well attended, or, better still, by a sermon upon the topic; stirring up the pure minds of the brethren by way of remembrance. It may be exceedingly beneficial to hold a special meeting after one of the Sabbath services, or to impress the minds of the people with the commencement of the winter campaign by some extraordinary meeting for prayer and exhortation. Men's minds are exercised with many reflections when they see that the pastor is setting himself in a zealous manner to the work of God, and like a man in earnest is availing himself of the opportunities of the season. Their own proverbs teach our people to

make hay while the sun shines, and they judge of the sincerity of our efforts when they see us with common-sense prudence seizing the most profitable occasions. Every one of the members of a congregation should be made to feel, — “Whether I help or hinder, whether I unite in effort or am idle, whether I get a blessing or remain indifferent, the minister in God’s name has summoned the church to seek a gracious visitation of the Holy Spirit, and he acts like a man who will not rest without it.” Let the trumpet give a certain sound that every warrior may prepare himself for the battle. A lively, hopeful, prayerful commencement will give tone to all that follows.

Thus, having cried unto the Lord for strength, the church should each week make some distinct inroad upon the territory of the archenemy. We assume that her Sabbath schools, her Bible classes, preaching stations, tract districts, open-air evangelizations, and so on, are all maintained in first-class vigor, and that grace rests on all the workers; what we have to propose is extra and beyond all this; — we suggest that some new effort beyond all that; is already done should be made every week between Sabbath and Sabbath, or on the Lord’s day itself’. For instance, in the department of tract distribution, could not a number of selected tracts be produced at the meeting for prayer, paid for by the gifts of all, and then distributed to all for dissemination all over the district during the week. Upon these might be printed the name of the place of worship, and the time of the services, and thus a double end might be answered. To give publicity to our services would greatly tend to increase our congregations. In large towns tens of thousands do not even know of the existence of a chapel which may stand within a street or two of them. Handbills of a striking character could be issued, in the same manner, to be placed in shop windows, pasted on walls, or nailed up on gate posts, or elsewhere. By this means the church might bear testimony to the truth each week. If no other good came of it, the duty of witness-bearing would have been performed, and a sin of omission prevented. Of the first handbill given away at the Tabernacle we give a copy at the close of this paper. Funds for this would surely be forthcoming, every one would do something, and much would be accomplished. Or take another instance of what we mean. Is there yet room for more children in the Sabbath school? Then let, the meeting for prayer, at one of its gatherings, consider mainly the school, and plead for a blessing unto it., and let the godly persons there present agree to scour the neighborhood and bring in all the stray children. If the pastor and superintendent would come prepared with a map or plan, with districts

marked out, they would probably find sufficient persons volunteering to do all the needful child.-hunting, and the whole meeting would feel a far greater interest in the Sabbath school than it has ever done before. Or, to carry our plan into another department., if rooms in cottages, parlors in larger houses, and such halls as can be hired, were engaged as advanced posts for evangelists services, so that fresh ground were broken up by all the preaching power of the church, and such services were held here one week, and there another, in each case assailing a fresh part of the enemy's wall, we lit, de know what good would follow. We must not be deterred by the idea that we should be thinning the congregation at home, or diminishing the central power. God has ways of recompensing, and takes care that the liberal church Shall be made fat. We have had too much of centralizing; God means us to divide, and so to increase and conquer. We fish one pond till there are no more fish left that are ever likely to be caught, while the same amount of effort elsewhere would, humanly speaking, be far more remunerative. We must launch out into the deep. We have dragged the shallows again and again, with much wear and tear to the net and very small results; who knows what shoals of great fishes are swarming in the waves further from the shore?

Each week, then, we suggest some distinct effort in advance, publicly announced and prayed over, and recognized as the effort of the church, or of that part of it which answers to the pastor's call, and gathers at the council of war held weekly at the prayer-meeting. Real work should be *done*, not talked about.

Meanwhile the congregation should be, by God's help, vigorously plied with the gospel Within her own suburbs the church should make it hard for sinners to be at ease. Appeals should not only come from the pastor, but from all the members. Whichever way the unconverted turn they should be confronted with expostulations, entreaties, invitations, and warnings. Frequent seasons should be set apart for inquirers: the pastor and officers should lay themselves out to converse with all presons under concern of soul.. No one should find it difficult to unbosom his doubts, or relate his struggles after pardon: all experienced believers should be upon the watch to lend their aid. If the undecided will not come to us we must go to them; the members of the church must individually see to them one by one; but the bulk of them will come to an interview if properly invited, and if their first venture should prove profitable they are pretty sure to desire a second. Love all on fire with holy zeal must make the meetings pleasing, and induce

the timid to take courage, the retiring to be less backward, and the self-condemned to be more at ease in the company of believers. What sweeter work is there than to speak to an audience gathered on purpose to learn the way of salvation? Sweet as it is, few find it easy to discharge the work aright. One goes away from such gatherings sighing and crying because one's heart; is not more tender and one's mind more wise in soul-winning. No one can calculate the personal influence of a beloved minister when he comes side by side with a seeker and pleads with him alone. Under God it is like one of our old three-deckers lying side by side with an enemy's man-of-war and pouring in broadsides of red-hot shot; you may see the vessel under fire quiver from stem to stern, and its attempts at reply grow fainter and fainter at every round. Ministers who hold no such meetings, and give souls no opportunity for private discourse, are surely unaware of their duty, or ignorant of their power.

During the sacred crusade a courage of sermons upon the first truths of the gospel would be peculiarly appropriate, and if all hearers were urged to bring friends with them it would be well. For the seat-holders to give up their seats occasionally, and to make it public that, working men were welcome, would be a hopeful experiment. If this were done once a month, and all the seats could be filled with a new set of hearers, what a blessing it might be. Where it has been tried it has been attended with the most admirable results. At any rate the preacher must dwell largely at this time upon arousing and soul-saving topics. He must preach Jesus most distinctly, and the plan of justification by faith as clearly as words can put it. The more advanced truths can wait; awhile, but the rudiments of the gospel *must* be laid before men's minds, if peradventure they may believe and live. Every sermon should have a warm side for sinners, and never be concluded without the proclamation of free grace. This, backed by believing prayer which secures the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, will not be without its effect. After each sermon, announce that inquirers will be immediately seen, and encourage them to stay behind. Also publish frequently the way of joining the church, and urge secret believers to confess their Lord. Let no one say, "I wish to be baptized, but do not; know where to apply." Keep the church agencies above board, and make plain paths for the feet of seekers. More lies in this than some would suppose.

It will be well that the young should have peculiar attention paid to them. Mothers' prayer-meetings should be in full force, and why not fathers'

prayer-meetings too? These last must be held at very convenient times or they will be a failure, as our experience has shown. Meetings for prayer for the young themselves, if well conducted, will be eminently beneficial. There are young believers in the church who would feel at liberty to pray at such meetings, and their example would, by God's blessing; influence other youths. Addresses should also, at this season, be given to the schools by other than the regular teachers, and the pastor or qualified persons should undertake this task. The little ones must be made to see that they are lovingly cared for by the church. If meetings could be held at which two or three lively, affectionate exhortations should be given, and opportunities offered for private conversation afterwards, it would surprise some to see how many of the young would gladly come forward to tell their gracious feelings and receive further instruction. In this field we reap not because we do not sow, or because we sow without faith. If day schools could be visited also by the minister to tell out the common salvation, precious souls would doubtless be his reward. Private seminaries, as well as the more public schools, should also have a visit from the: workers in the church.

The church-officers and all the leading workers should come together often during this time of Zion's travailing, both for mutual encouragement and united prayer: the pastor's presence would be a stimulus at such meetings, and therefore should not be lacking so long as time and strength hold out. One such assembly held an horn' before the regular prayer-meeting, has just been convened at the Tabernacle, and it has made our heart sing for joy. The church members also should come together alone, and stir each other up to increased love and good works. Why not more of such meetings? Why is not the church-meeting utilized to a far greater extent? It might be and must be. To break bread together at such times would also be very profitable, and tend much to the sustenance of spiritual strength.

Every believer should be doubly on the alert in watching for souls. None in that congregation should be able to say, "We attended that place, but no one spoke to us." There should be much hand to hand battling with unbelievers, for this mode of wrestling with sin is greatly blest, and it is the duty of all who are themselves partakers of the divine life. If all members of the church became seekers of souls they would, with God's blessing, all become winners of souls. This would yield a season of increase such as our present experience has not enabled us to realize.

O that the Lord would send forth real power into our midst! We need not great talents or intense excitements; with what we already have the battle may be won if the Lord will put his Spirit within use. The ox-goad, the jawbone, the sling-and-stone, and the ram's-horn trumpet have each been made an irresistible weapon; with God the instrument is little, his might is everything. Only let us be strong in faith, full of zeal, and very courageous for the Lord our God, and the Lord will bless us.

Brethren, our marching orders are FORWARD!

**COPY OF HANDBILL DISTRIBUTED
ON SEPTEMBER 16TH, AT THE TABERNACLE —**

A QUESTION!

*Where wilt thou spend Eternity?
Nay; don't tear down the bill;
This question means but good to thee,
And will be answered still
To shun the light, or shut the sight,
Thy Cup of Wrath may fill.*

*Eternity where wilt thou spend?
Don't say — "I cannot tell."
The life thou leadest now will end
In Heaven or else in Hell.
O Friend, bethink thee well!*

The above may be had of Passmore and Alabaster, 4, Paternoster Building.
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THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

DECEMBER 1, 1872.

VOICES FROM POMPEII

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

A RUSH of thought has hurried through our soul while traversing the streets of the long lost city of Pompeii. Worn as its pavements are by the traffic of a thousand chariots in days of yore, it is all silent now, and its temples and palaces echo only to the footfalls of inquisitive visitors, who guess its life from its suggestive relics. The city was not destroyed by a fiery stream of molten lava, as is popularly supposed; but it would seem that first there fell a shower of ashes and cinders, with here and there a huge mass of volcanic matter; and then there followed torrents of liquid mud, which flowed over all and formed over the city a crust, preserving everything that remained from further injury or decay. Had the stream been burning lava, it must have melted down the bronzes, calcined the marbles, and reduced all to one vast heap of molten matter; as it is, the most delicate frescoes remain uninjured, the most minute articles are found in their integrity, and even such readily combustible materials as thread and skeins of silk, are gathered from the ruined dwellings. We have seen a glass jar of oil still retaining its contents, delicate bottles of perfume apparently as fresh as when purchased at the shop, and amphorae of wine, with the age of the vintage as freshly marked thereon, as though but yesterday placed in the cellar. How marvelous does all this seem when we remember that the city was buried in A.D. 79, and, therefore, has lain in its grave for close upon eighteen hundred years.

Comparatively few human remains have been found in the excavations, for although the inhabitants of Pompeii had but scant warning, it appears that the bulk of the population were, at the time of the eruption, assembled in the great amphitheater, which is outside the town, and, finding themselves cut off from the rest of the city by the falling ashes, they made their escape from the impending doom. All of them were not, however, so fortunate,

for some six hundred skeletons have been exhumed, and as yet a bare half of the city has been uncovered. In the ear of our imagination have sounded voices from the dead in Pompeii, and in a hurried moment we sit down to record the impressions they have made.

The full chorus of the disinterred chants one solemn line, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." To many in that fair abode of luxury and vice the outbreak of Vesuvius appeared to be the end of all things. When the darkness which might be felt settled down upon them; when the earth rumbled and reeled beneath them; when the groaning waves of the tortured sea foamed beyond them; when the scorching glare of vivid lightnings flashed above them, and huge rocks blazing and hissing with fire fell all around them; they believed that the world's death had come, — and so, indeed, in a manner it had come to them, but in a fuller and truer sense it hastens on for us! Even now, while the ink is flowing from our pen, the Lord may be on his way, and may suddenly appear. In Pompeii's last tremendous hour the bread was in the oven, but the baker never saw it taken from it; the meat was seething in the pot never to be eaten; the slave was at the mill, the prisoner in the dungeon, the traveler at the inn, the money dealer in his treasury, but none of these saw aught of their labors, their pains, their pleasures, or their profits again. The burning dust fell over all, the poisonous vapors sought out every crevice, and the ocean of mud buried inhabitant and habitation, worshipper and temple, worker and all that he had wrought! Should a sudden overthrow come upon us also, are we ready? Could we welcome the descending Lord, and feel that for us his coming with clouds to recompense justice would be a joyful appearing, to be welcomed with exulting acclamation? The question is too important to be dismissed until honestly answered: may sincerity direct the examination it suggests.

A very large proportion of the dead were discovered in the barracks; thirty-four were found together, beyond all doubt the guard called out for the fatal night discipline must have been powerful indeed to have kept men to their duty at such a time, especially when they were not far from the city gate. It would seem that the officers' wives and children shared in the same spirit, and remained with the band, and with them, those ever faithful friends of man, the dogs who had fed beneath their table. Soldiers are expected to endure hardness, and these Roman legionaries discharged their trust to the last. Christians are called soldiers of Christ; shall they be less firm, less bravely obedient, even unto death? Whoever flees in the evil day,

a Christian must not. His it is to be at his post at all hazards, and faithless never. Christian and coward, saint and deserter, are words as much opposed as heaven and hell. Every one has heard of the lone soldier at the Herculaneum gate of Pompeii, who stepped under an arch to shelter himself from the hot ashes, and there remained close by the gate which he was set to guard, and was found there spear in hand, faithful unto death, His martial voice rings in our ear, and bids us, even if alone, abide in our appointed place come what may. Ours it is not to consult personal ease or safety, but to abide where the great Lord of all has marked our station till he himself shall release us from it. Like the dove which was found sitting upon her nest in the garden of Diomed, if we are entrusted with the care of others we must sooner perish than forsake our charge. If Jesus has said "feed my lambs," we must not flee when the wolf cometh, but must, under evil report and good report, feed the flock of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.

One of the first buildings seen by the traveler upon entering the excavations, is the villa whose owner is supposed to have been named Diomed, because a tomb on the opposite side of the road bears that name. In the ample cellars of this house seventeen persons were found huddled in a corner, who from their ornaments and dress are believed to have been females, and some of them the ladies of the house. Where was the father, the master, the husband of the family? Why did he not form the center of the group, and prove the mainstay of the tremblers in their hour of horror? A skeleton, believed to be that of the master of the house, was found near the garden gate, with the key of his villa firmly grasped in his hand; and behind him was an attendant with one hundred pieces of money in his girdle. What was he about to do? He was doubtless fleeing for his life and perished in the attempt: but why escape alone? It would have been useless to carry the key if the door remained unlocked. Had he then fastened in his family and left them all to die? Let us not judge even the dead severely: perhaps the timid females would not venture with him, and he went to discover for them a way of escape. The taking of a considerable sum of money with him does not give much countenance to the theory, but this much is clear, for some reason or other the strong man left his household behind him and sought safety for himself. Meanwhile, outside his door, on the other side of the road, a lady stumbled through the heaps of small loose pumice stones which filled the roadway, and sought a shelter under the vault of the hemicycle where many a traveler had rested ere he entered the

splendid city of poms. She was not alone, but had two children clinging to her garments, and she carried another at her breast. Did she sever herself from the little ones? Did self-preservation drive her to drop her helpless burden? No; folded in each other's arms they fell into their last sleep, the mother still cherishing in death the children, about whose necks her love had hung pearls and finest gold while yet their days were happy. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb?" Man is too often hard and selfish, but a mother's heart is tender, and her love makes sacrifices and counts them sweet.

In the streets of abundance, in the house of a money-changer, in a dark vault-like room at the rear of the building, lies a skeleton upon a heap of rubbish, with outstretched arms and clutching fingers, as if he had been grasping at earth with his last life-throb. Near him the diggers found some 400 coins, mostly of silver, with quite a little fortune in rings and cameos. Was he a thief, and were these the spoils he had gathered and purchased with his life? Was he a money-lender, and were these his capital and his securities for loans? No man can answer these questions, but the blending together of death and gold in one story is no new thing; it is, indeed, but another among a thousand instances in which death has slain men with gilded darts. In another place was found an adventurous pilferer, who, after the destruction of the city, had marked the spot where stood a rich man's house, had burrowed down into it, and had met his end through the falling in of the earth upon him. He digged for treasure, and knew not that he had prepared his grave; fit warning to other earthworms among men that they also perish not in their groveling, though it is to be feared the admonition is seldom heeded, and men continue to barter heaven for yellow clay. Less ignobly died the prisoners in their cells, and the soldiers in their stocks, for they were bound by no voluntary fetters, and may have been free in spirit while they lay in durance. Avarice both imprisons and degrades.

The skeleton in the large room behind the Temple of Isis reveals the overpowering energy of even a base animal appetite, for there it was found with bones of chickens, eggshells, fishbones, bread, wine, and a garland of flowers around it. He must have been a rare feeder who could find stomach for his meat amid such convulsions of nature; his worship of his belly had furnished him with a courage which far nobler devotions have not excelled. It shows how sottish he becomes who lives to eat instead of eating to live; he may one day die by his eating, and go from the banquets of Bacchus to the tortures of Tophet. Let all men beware of the tyranny of carnal

passions, for no despots are so exacting as the appetites of the flesh. Suicide by one's own teeth is the meanest of deaths, and involves a man in everlasting contempt; the cruelest of tyrants have not demanded this of their victims. By all that we value for time and for eternity, let us conquer fleshly appetites lest they conquer us.

Time would fail us to tell of the wretch who left his bones in a temple with all the evidence of his sacrilege about him. Will a man rob God? How will it fare with him should he perish in the act? Neither can we speak much of the gigantic personage, who with an axe had pierced a way through two walls of the temple of Isis in his efforts to escape from the all-surrounding death. He at least was no sluggard or foolhardy glutton. He perished, but he had made desperate efforts to be saved; many also will share this fate, in a spiritual sense, if they rely upon their own strength; but blessed be God, none shall ever be left to die, who labor against sin, trusting in the merits of the Redeemer. Vain also would it be to conjecture who was the owner of that remarkable brain that once filled that skull of striking conformation, which has excited the speculations of so many phrenologists. He whose eyes looked out from under that overhanging brow was crushed beneath a falling column, literally severed in twain by the prostrate mass. Had he lived and thought for God, for truth, for man? Or was he some arch deceiver, a deluder of the multitude? Echo alone answers to our inquiries, and she by mocking them. The tomb is silent, and so also are those to whom sepulcher is denied, But one thing is clear to the most superficial glance: these skeletons are the petrifications of vitality, the abiding record of life's latest moment. As in the forum remain the half-finished columns, with the last mark of the sculptor's hand; as in the chambers of the household remain the essences and rouge of ill-fated beauty; as in the bath remains the strigil, and in the hall the treasure-casket; so in the stone-like relics of the departed Pompeians abide the records of their concluding acts; they are the finis of their own history, observed by all men. Behold, at this hour our moral history is being preserved for eternity; processes are at work which will perpetuate our every act, and word, and thought; not alone the last line, but every word and letter of our actual history is being stereotyped for the world's perusal in the day which shall reveal the secrets of men. We are not writing upon the water, but carving upon imperishable material — the chapters of our history are graven with an iron pen and lead in the rocks for ever.

Time and thought alike fail us just now: we have indicated a subject worthy of an abler pen, and we have done more if we have also suggested to our readers a worthy theme for thought.

A PLAIN TALK UPON AN ENCOURAGING TOPIC.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“When my soul fainted within me, then I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.” —
Jonah 2:7.

THE experience of the saints is the treasure of the Church. Every child of God who has tried and proved the promises of God, when he bears his testimony to their truth, does as it were hang up his sword and spear on the temple walls; and thus the house of the Lord becomes like “the tower of David builded for an armory, whereon do hang a thousand bucklers all shields of mighty men.” The footsteps of the flock encourage, others who are following their track to the pastures above. Every preceding generation of saints has lived and suffered to enrich us with its experience. One great reason why the experience of saints in olden time is of such use to us, is this, — they were men of like passions with ourselves. Were they otherwise we could not have been instructed by what they suffered. They endured the same trials and pleaded the same promises before the self-same God, who changes not in any measure or degree; so that we may safely infer that what they gained by pleading may also be obtained by us when surrounded by the same circumstances. If men were different, or if the promises were changed, or if the Lord had varied, all ancient experience would be but an idle tale to us; but now, whenever we read in Scripture of what happened to a man of faith in the day of trial, we conclude that the like will happen to us; and when we find God helping and delivering his people, we know that he will even now show himself strong on our behalf, since all the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God by us. The covenant has not changed, it abideth firm as the eternal hills. The preacher, therefore, feels ‘quite safe in directing you to the experience of Jonah, and in inviting you to make its lessons a practical guide to yourselves.

We shall use the lesson of the text, first, for the child of God; and,, secondly, for the sinner awakened and aroused.

Our text has an evident bearing upon those who fear the Lord, for such was Jonah. With all his mistakes he was a man of God, and, though he sought to flee from the service of his Master, yet his Master never cast him off; he brought back again his petulant messenger to his work and honored him in it, and he sleeps amongst the faithful, waiting for a glorious reward. Think, then, of *the saints' condition*. In Jonah's case, as set forth before us, the child of God sees what a plight he may be brought into — his soul may faint in him.

Jonah was certainly in a very terrible condition in the belly of the fish, but the position itself was probably not so dark as his own reflections, for conscience would say to him, "Alas, Jonah! you came here by your own fault, you must needs flee from the presence of God, because in your pride and self-love you refused to go to Nineveh, that great city, and deliver your Master's message." It gives a sting to misery when a man feels that he himself is alone responsible for it. If it, were unavoidable that I should suffer, then I could not repine, but if I have brought all this upon myself, by my own folly, then there is a double bitterness in the gall. Jonah would reflect that now he could not help himself, in any way. It would answer no purpose to be self-willed now; he was in a place where petulance and obstinacy had no liberty. If he had tried to stretch out his arm, he could not; he was immured in a dungeon which imprisoned every sense as well as every limb, and the bolts of his cell his hand could not draw; he was cast into the deep in the midst of the seas, the waters compassed him about even to the soul; the weeds were wrapped about his head. His state was helpless, and, apart from God, it was hopeless. Children of God may be brought into a similar condition, and yet be dear to the unchanging heart. They may be poor and needy, and have no helper. No voice may speak a word of sympathy, and no arm may be stretched out to succor them. The best of men may be brought into the worst of positions. You must never judge of character by circumstances. Diamonds may be worried upon the wheel, and common pebbles may bathe at ease in the brook. The most wicked are permitted to clamber to the high places of the earth, while the most righteous pine at the rich man's gate, with dogs for their companions. Choice flowers full often grow amid tangled briars. Who has not heard of the lily among 'thorns? Where dwell the pearls? Do not the dark depths of the ocean conceal them, amid mire and wreck? Judge not by appearances,

for heirs of light may walk in darkness, and princes of the celestial line may sit upon dunghills. Men accepted of God may be brought very very low, as Jonah was.

Let me remark that the hearts of God's servitors may sometimes hint, in them; yes, absolutely faint in them, and that, first, through a renewed sense of sin. In this matter my tongue will not outrun my experience. Some of us have enjoyed for years a full assurance of our pardon and justification. We have walked in the light as God is in the light, and we have had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son hath cleansed us from all sin. We have often felt our hearts dance at the assurance that "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." We have stood at the foot of the cross and seen the record of our sins nailed to the tree, as the token of their full discharge. Yet at this time we may be suffering an interval of anxious questioning, and unbelief may be lowering over us. It is possible that our faith is staggered, and, therefore, our old sins have risen upon us and are threatening our peace. At such times conscience will remind us of our shortcoming, which we cannot deny, and Satan will howl over the top of these shortcomings, "How can you be a child of God? If you were born from above, how could you have acted as you have done?" Then, if for a moment we look away from the cross, if we look within for marks of evidences, the horrible bog of our inward corruptions will be stirred, and there will pour into the soul such dark memories and black forebodings, that we shall cry, "I am lost utterly — my hope is hypocrisy — what can I do? What shall I do?" Let me assure you that under such exercises it is no wonder if the soul of the Christian faints in him. Be it remembered, also, that soul-fainting is the worst form of fainting. Though Jonah in the whale's belly could not use, his eyes, he did not need them; and if he could not use his arms or his feet, he did not require to do so. It mattered not if they all failed him; but for his soul to faint — this was horror, indeed! So is it with us. Our other faculties' . may go to sleep if they will, but when our faith swoons, and our confidence staggers, things go very hard with us. Do not, however, my brother, when in Such a state write yourself down as a hypocrite, for many of the most valiant soldiers of the cross know by personal experience what this dark sensation means.

The same faintness will come over us at times through the prospect of prolonged pain or of severe trial; You have not yet felt the cruel smart, but you are well aware that it must come, and you shudder at the prospect. As

it is true that “we feel a thousand deaths in fearing one,” so do we feel a thousand trials in the dread of one single affliction. The soldier is often braver in the midst of the battle than before the conflict begins. Waiting for the assault is trying work, even the crash of the onslaught is not. so great a test of endurance. I confess I feel an inward faintness in the prospect of bodily pain; it creates a swooning sickness of heart within me to consider it for a moment. And, beloved friend, it is no strange thing that is happening to you if your soul also faints because of difficulties or adversities that lie before you. May you have wisdom to do what Jonah did — to remember the Lord — for there and only there your great strength lieth.

Faintness will also come upon true Christians in connection with the pressure of actual sorrow. Hearts may bear up long, but they are very apt to yield if the pressure be continuous from month to month. A constant drip is felt even by a stone. A long day of drizzling rain is more wetting than a passing shower of heavy drops. Men cannot always be poor, or always be sick, or always be slandered, or always, friendless, without sometimes being tempted to say, “My heart is weary, when will the day break and the shadows flee away?” I say again, the very choicest of God’s elect may, through the, long abiding of bitter sorrow and heavy distress, be ready to faint in the day of adversity.

The like has happened to earnest Christians engaged in diligent service, when the, y have seen no present success. To go on tilling a thankless soil, to continue to cast bread upon the waters and to find no return, has caused many a true heart to faint with inward bleeding. Yet this is full often the test of our fidelity It is a noble thing to continue preaching, like Noah, throughout a life-time, amid ridicule, reproach, and unbelief; but it is not every man who could endure to do so. The most of us need success to sustain our courage, and we serve our Master with most spirit when we see immediate results. Faint hearts of that kind there may be among my fellow soldiers, ready to lay down the weapons of their warfare because they win no victory at this present; — my brethren, I pray you do not desert the field of battle, but, like Jonah, remember the Lord, and abide by the royal standard still.

It may be that inquiries will be made as to why and wherefore we should thus enlarge upon the different ways in which Christians faint. Our reply is, we have been thus particular in order to meet the temptation so common among young Christians, to fancy that they are singular in their trials.

“Surely no one has ever felt as I feel,” says many a young Christian, “I don’t suppose another person ever hung down his head and his hands and became so utterly overcome as I am.” Do not listen to that suggestion, for it is devoid of truth. Faintness is very common in the Lord’s hosts, and some of his mightiest men have been the victims of it. Even David himself, that hero of Judah, in the day of battle waxed faint, and had been slain if a warrior had not come to the rescue. Do not give way to faintness — strive against it vehemently; but, at the same time, should it overcome thee, cast not away thy confidence, nor write thyself down ‘as rejected of God[or one fatally fallen.

And now, brethren, we will notice *the saints’ resort*. Jonah when he was in sore trouble tells us, “I remembered the Lord.” What is there for a faint heart to remember in the Lord? Is there not everything? There is, first, his nature. Think of that. When I am faint with sorrow, let me remember that he is very pitiful and full of compassion: he will not strike too heavily, nor will he forget to sustain. I will, therefore, look up to him and say, “My Father, break me not in pieces. I am a poor weather-beaten barque which scarce can escape the hungry waves; send not thy rough wind against me, but give me a little calm that I may reach the desired haven.” By remembering that the Lord’s mercies are great, we shall be saved from a fainting heart.

Then I will remember his power. If I am in such a strait that I cannot help myself, yet *he* can help me. I have exigencies and sharp pinches, but there are no such things with him. There are no emergencies and times of severe pressure with God. With him all things are possible, therefore will I remember the Lord. If the difficulty be one which arises out of my ignorance, though I know not which way to take, I will remember his wisdom. I know that he will guide me; I will remember that he cannot mistake, and committing my way unto him my soul shall take courage. Beloved, all the attributes of God sparkle with consolation to the eye of faith. There is nothing in the Most High to discourage the man who can say, “My Father, ray God, in thee do I put my trust.” None who have trusted in him have ever been confounded; therefore, if thy soul sink within thee remember the nature, and character, and attributes of God.

When you have remembered his nature, then remember his promises. What has he said concerning souls that faint? Think of these texts if you think of no other : — “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Thy shoes shall be

iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be.” “My grace is sufficient for thee ;. for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” “No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.” When we get upon this strain and begin to talk of the promises, we :need hours in which to enlarge upon the exceeding great and precious words, but we mention only these — -we let fall this handful for some poor Ruth to glean. When your soul is faint, catch at a promise, believe it., and say unto the Lord, “Do as thou hast said,” and your spirit shall speedily revive.

Remember, next, his covenant. What a grand word that word “covenant” is to the man who understands it. God has entered into covenant with his Son who represents us, his people. He has said, “As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart; from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.” Truly, we may say with good old Samuel “Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” When everything else gives way, cling in the power of the Holy Spirit to covenant mercies and covenant engagements, and your spirit; shall be at peace.

Again, when we remember the Lord we should remember what he has been to us in past times. When some of us fall to doubting and fearing we are indeed blameworthy, for the Lord has never given us any occasion for doubting him. He has helped us in sorer troubles than we are passing through at; this time. We have tested his faithfulness, his power, and his goodness at a heavier rate than now, and though hardly tried they have never failed us yet; they have borne the strain of these twenty years and more, and show no signs of giving way; wherefore, then, are we distrustful? Many saints have proved the Lord’s faithfulness for fifty, sixty, or even seventy years ;~ how can they be of doubtful mind after :his? What, has your God been. true for seventy years, and cannot you trust him a few more days? Has he brought you to seventy-five, and cannot you trust him. the few months more that you are to remain in the wilderness? Call to remembrance the days of old, the love of his heart, and the might of his arm, when he came to your rescue and toot: you out of the deep waters, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings. He is the same

God still; therefore, when your sold fainteth within you, remember the Lord and you will be comforted.

Thus I have shown you the saint's plight and the saint's resort, and now, observe, *the success Of his prayer*. Jonah was so comforted with the thoughts of God that he began to pray, and his prayer was not drowned in the water, nor choked in the fish's 'belly, neither was it held captive by the weeds that; were about his head, but up it went like an electric flash, through waves, through clouds, beyond the stars up to the throne of God, and down came the answer like a return message. Nothing can destroy or detain a real prayer; its flight to the throne is swift and certain. God the Holy Ghost writes our prayers, God the Son presents our prayers, and God the Father accepts our prayers, and with a Trinity to help us in it, what cannot prayer perform? I may be speaking to some who are under very severe trials — I feel persuaded I am — let me beg them to take this promise to themselves as their own; and I pray God the Holy Ghost to lay it home to their hearts and make it theirs, — “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” God will not fail you though you fail yourself. Though you faint, he fainteth not, neither is weary. Lift up your cry, and he will lift up his hand. Go to your knees, you are strongest there; resort to your chamber, and it shall be to you none other than the gate of heaven. Tell your God your grief — heavy to you, it will be light enough to him. Dilemmas will all be plain to his wisdom, and difficulties will vanish before his strength. Oh, tell it not in Gath that Israel cannot trust in God; publish it not in the streets of Askelon that trouble can dismay those who lean upon the eternal arm. With Jehovah in the van, O hosts of Israel, dare ye fear? The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. What man's heart shall quail, or what soul shall faint;? Lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees. Say unto the feeble in heart, “Be strong; fear not. God is with you; he will help you and that right early.”

Now we must change the subject altogether. Having addressed the people of God, we feel very anxious to speak to those concerning whom the Lord has designs of love, but who are not yet made manifest. The sinner when God comes to deal with him is brought into the same plight as Jonah. His soul faints in him. What does that show? It shows very much which we are glad to see. When a man's soul faints within him, iris clear that his carelessness is gone. He used to take things very easily, and as long as he could make merry from day to day, what cared he about heaven or hell? The preacher's warnings were to him so much rant, and his earnestness

fanaticism; but now the man feels an arrow sticking in his own loins, and he knows that there is a reality in sin, it is to him in very deed an evil and a bitter thing. Now the cup of gall is put to his own lips, and he feels the poison in his own veins. His heart hints within him, and he remains careless no longer; which is no small gain in the preacher's estimation. His faintness also shows that he will be self-righteous no longer. Once he hoped he was as good as other people, and perhaps a little better; and for all that he could see, he was every whit as excellent, as the saints [hemselves. They might speak about their' trusting in Jesus Christ, but he was working for himself, and expected by his regular habits to win as good a place in the world to come as the best of believers. Ah! but now God has dealt with him, and let in the daylight into his soul, and he sees that his gold and silver are cankered, and that his fair linen is filthy and worm-eaten; he discovers that; his righteousnesses are filthy rags, and that he must have something better than the works of the law to trust in, or he must perish. So far so good. Things are hopeful when there is no more self-reliance left in the sinner. The worst of human nature is that though it cannot lift a finger in its own salvation, it thinks it can do it all; and though its only place is the place of death, and it is a mercy when it comes to burial, yet that same human nature is so proud that it would, if it could, be its own redeemer. When God make man's conscience a target for his fiery arrows, then straightway he feels that his life is no longer in him, and that he can do nothing, and he cries out, "God be merciful to me." O that the two-edged sword of the gospel would slay all our spiritual self-reliance, and lay us in the dust at the feet of the Crucified Savior. Perhaps I speak to some who faint because, though they have given up all self-righteousness now, and relinquished all self-dependence, they yet have not laid hold upon Christ and his salvation. "I have been trying to believe," says one, "but I cannot succeed." Well do I remember the time when I labored to believe. It is a strange way of putting it, yet so it was. When I wished to believe, and longed to trust, I found I could not. It seemed to me that the way to heaven by Christ's righteousness was as difficult as the way to heaven by my own, and that I could as soon get to heaven by Sinai as by Calvary. I could do nothing, I could neither repent nor believe. I fainted with despair, feeling: as if I must be lost despite the gospel, and for ever driven from Jehovah's presence, even though Christ had died. Ah! I am not sorry if you also are come to this, The way to the door of faith is through the gate of self-despair. Till thou hast seen thy last hope destroyed thou wilt never look to Christ for all things, and yet thou wilt never be saved until thou

dost; for God has laid no help on you, he has laid help upon one that is mighty, even Jesus only, who is the sole Savior of sinners. Here, then, we have before us the sinner's plight; and I will venture to call it, though it is a very wretched one, a very blessed one: and I heartily wish that every unconverted man were brought into such condition that his soul fainted within him.

Now, hear ye the gospel — incline your ear to it, and ye shall live. The way of salvation to you is the way which Jonah took. When his soul fainted, he remembered the Lord. I beseech you by the living God now to remember the Lord; and if you ask me what it is you should remember, I will tell you in a few words; Remember the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, him that suffered in the room of the guilty. Know, assuredly, that God has visited upon him the transgressions of his people. Now the sufferings of such an one as Jesus must have power to cleanse away sins. He is God, and if he deigns to die, there must be such merit in his death that he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. You are bidden at this moment, in God's name, to trust your soul in those hands that were nailed to the cross, and rest your life with him who poured out his soul unto death that you might live. In yourself you may well despair, but remembering his name, coupled with the names of Gethsemane and Golgotha, remembering all his pains, and griefs, and woes, unutterable — remembering these by faith, there shall be salvation for you at this moment. Do I hear you sigh out, "Oh! but I have nothing good within me?" Know, then, that all good is in him for thee; go to him for it. "But I am unworthy." He is worthy; go to him for worthiness. "But I do not feel as I should." He felt as he should; go to him for all thou shouldst feel. If thou bring a rusty farthing of thine own, God will not have it; it would only insult the precious gold of Ophir which Jesus freely gives thee, if he should allow thy cankered counterfeits to be mixed therewith. Away with thy rags! Wouldst thou add them to the garment which Christ has woven? Dross, nay dung, the Apostle says our best works are, if we venture to put them side by side with the merits of our Redeemer. None but Jesus can save. Oh, remember him, and live!

"But," says one, "I have tried to remember the Lord, but I find that while I can trust him to pardon my sins, yet I have such a hard heart, and so many temptations, and I am so weak for all that is good that I still despair." Harken, then, yet again: remember the Lord. At this time remember the Holy Ghost. When Jesus ascended on high, the Holy Ghost was given, and

he has never been recalled. The Holy Ghost is here in this assembly now, and in the Holy Ghost is your hope against indwelling sin. You comic lain that you cannot pray, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. You mourn that you cannot believe, but; faith is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. A tender heart, a penitential frame of mind, a right spirit — these are the work of the Holy Ghost in you. You can do nothing, but the Holy Ghost can work everything in you. Give yourself up to those {tear hands that were pierced, and the power of the Holy Spirit shall come upon you. A new heart will he give you and a right spirit will he put within you; you shall learn his statutes and walk in his ways. Everything is provided for the believer that he can possibly want. Oh, young man, anxious to be saved! the salvation of Jesus Christ precisely suits your ease. Oh, seeking soul! whatever it is thou cravest to make thee fit to dwell where God is for ever, it is all to be had, and to be had for the asking, for it is all provided in the covenant of grace; and if thou wilt remember Jesus the Lord, and the Holy Ghost — the indweller who renews the mind, thou wilt be cheered and comforted.

Yet let me not forget another person of the sacred majesty of heaven — remember the Father as well 8s the Son and the Spirit; and let me help thee to remember him. Thou, trembling sinner, thou must not think of God as severe or stern, for he is love. Wouldst thou be glad to be saved? He will be gladder still to save thee. Dost thou wish to return to thy God to-night? Thy God already meets thee and bids thee come. Wouldst thou be pardoned? The absolution is on his lips. Wouldst thou be cleansed? The fountain of atoning blood was filled by his mercy and filled for all who believe. Come and welcome, come and welcome! The child is glad to be forgiven, but the father is gladder still to forgive. Jehovah's melting bowels yearn to clasp his Ephraim to his breast. Seek him at once, poor souls, and ye shall not find him hard and cold, but waiting to be gracious, ready to forgive — a God delighting in mercy. Thus if you can think of God, the Son, the Spirit, and the Father, though your soul faint within you, you may be encouraged.

And so I close by bidding you, if such be the case, imitate Jonah's example, and send up a prayer to heaven, for it will come up even to God's holy temple. Jonah had no prayer-book, and you need none. God the Holy Ghost can put more living' prayer into hall-a-dozen words of your own them you could get out; of a ton weight of paper prayers. Jonah's prayer was not; notable for its words. The fish's belly was not the place for picked

phrases, nor for long-winded orations. We do not believe that he offered a long prayer either, but, it came right up from his heart and flew straight up to heaven, It was shot by the strong bow of intense desire and agony of soul, and, therefore, it speeded its way to the throne of the Most High. If you would now pray, never mind your words — it is the soul of prayer that God accepts. If you would be saved, go to your chamber, and rise not from your knees till the Lord has heard you. Ay, where you now are let your souls pour out themselves before God, and faith in Jesus will give you immediate salvation.

THE MARVELOUS RESERVOIR

AMONG the greatest marvels which the traveler will see near Naples is the Piscina Mirabiles, a vast underground reservoir, to which water was brought from fifty miles distance by an aqueduct. Upon descending into it by a long flight of forty steps, it appears to be fitted for a temple or a palace, its area is so extensive and its architecture so imposing; it measures 220 feet by 83, and its vaulted roof of massive masonry is supported by forty-eight enormous pilasters, the whole structure being as firm as when it was first put together. It chills the visitor to his very marrow, and makes him glad to escape to the sunny air above. Once it was put to valuable use, and contained refreshing floods, but now it is as dark as it is stupendous. Such is Calvinistic doctrines: if the life be in it, it is a fountain of living waters, a splendid store-house of vital nourishment, a gathering up of sacred streams from the divine wellhead of truth; but if the inward vitality be gone it is dark and dreary, repulsive to many, and chilling to all who enter it. We have known men who have dwelt in its empty vaults till they have become wretched as ghosts wandering among the tombs, and fierce as mountain wolves. To them the purposes of God were only dark retreats from the responsibilities of life, or prisons for the hopes of their fellow men. Pour in the life-bearing floods, and then you shall see the glory of that marvelous system, which comprises more of divine revelation than any other which the mind of man has ever discovered in the inspired page. Calvinism, or, better still, Pauline doctrine, is a collection of the living waters of the gospel and so abundant are the stores which it treasures that they are the daily joy and rejoicing of ten thousand saints. We prize the reservoir, not for its masonry but for its contents; and so we value Calvinism; not so much for its massive logic, its stupendous grandeur, its

sublime conceptions, and its vast compass, as for the gospel of our salvation which from its depth it has poured forth for the supply of human needs. Let its professors see to it that it becomes to them no dry doctrine, empty and void and waste; but let them receive it in its spiritual fullness and divine energy, and they need never blush to own in all companies that their faith is bound up with it. Our creed is no pigmy's fancy, no ephemeral creation; — it is worthy of the loftiest genius, though plain enough to be comprehended by the wayfaring man. It is alike sublime and simple, for it is truth. C. H. S

A SIN OF OMISSION

OUR sojourn in Italy has almost made us forget the near approach of Christmas, and the needs of the boys, as to a festival. Last year, kind friends sent us all the materials for a noble Christmas dinner, and plenty of fruits, and toys. We were delighted to see the poor lads so happy. Will not our friends give them the same treat again? Those who have happy family circles of their own, would show their gratitude in a fitting manner if they sent a portion for the fatherless; and those who are bereaved or childless will find joy for themselves in giving joy to others. The Orphanage itself is needing substantial help; but this appeal is for an extra treat, at which the President presides. Please send the good things to the Stockwell Orphanage, or the money to buy them to C. H. Spurgeon, Nightingale Lane, Slapham. We shall be very grateful.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

A RECORD

OF

COMBAT WITH SIN AND OF LABOR FOR THE LORD.

EDITED BY C. H. SPURGEON.

1873.

“They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.” — Nehemiah 4:17:18.

PREFACE.

FRIENDLY READER,

THROUGH another year I have tried to cater for you, hunting up topics of interest with no small degree of anxiety, and sending forth my monthly magazine with earnest desires that it might not only win a hearing, but produce beneficial results of all kinds. You are the best judge as to how far I have succeeded in avoiding dullness, and at the same time providing solid matter. It is mine to thank you for the courtesy which has borne with me, and the generosity which has continued to give the periodical the benefit of your perusal; I do thank you very heartily, and beg at the same time to wish you in all sincerity the benedictions of God at this season.

The year 1873 is now a matter of history. To each one of us in the retrospect it wears a different visage, but to each one it has doubtless been a year of great mercy, for which we do well to bless the name of the Lord. Let us shut the gate of the year with thanksgiving, even as we opened it with hope. To the church of God, as a whole, it has not, we fear, been a year conspicuous for growth. Its color is not altogether black, but certainly not altogether bright; it has been a mingled season, calling forth both regrets and praises. The zeal of God's people is not dead, neither is it distinguished for fervor; the character of the work done is not to be censured, neither can it be greatly praised. Our progress has been but slow, yet progress there has been. Our light is not clear, neither is it turned into darkness. There is a general need of improvement, revival, and refreshing; but there is a sense of this need pretty widely felt, and this is a very hopeful sign. Every moment of the wheat's history, from the time of sowing to the day of reaping, is big with importance to the husbandman, and so every year of the history of the church is a crisis, upon which vital interests depend; the present time is probably neither more nor less fraught with peril than eras now past and forgotten, but it assuredly is a period in which there is need of great faith, and no room for vainglorious exultation. The most sanguine must see reasons for watchfulness, and the despondent may be excused if they suffer from a measure of serious anxiety. Clouds are gathering, storms are threatening, and the vessel had need be kept in good trim, with all her crew at their posts. Superstition possesses the public mind, and divides the empire of current thought with her equally deadly

rival, unbelief. Both from the side of ritualism and of skepticism there have come developments little expected, which cause us to wonder at the perversity of fallen humanity. Nothing seems too absurd for men to believe, nothing too sacred for them to cavil at. Now is the time for the upholders of the truth of Jesus Christ to be firm and unflinching: to waver now will be treason to men's souls. Now also is the hour for vigorous action, and intensely ardent endeavors to disseminate true religion. May my readers not be found backward, but be among the vanguard of the Holy War.

I would venture to request my friends who are interested in the magazine to do their best to increase its circulation. A little effort from each one would double our area of usefulness, and increase our means of doing good. As the pastor of a large church, president of a college, chairman of an orphanage, etc., etc., I have little time to spare, and am most anxious that the work I do should tell to the greatest advantage, and this depends much more upon my friends than upon anything which I can do myself. I edit this periodical most conscientiously, giving it my personal attention, and I spare no pains to make it as good as I can; I cannot expect help from those who do not sympathize in my views and modes of action; but from those who are in accord with me I do affectionately seek continued and increased cooperation. They can render me great aid by assisting the College, Orphanage, and Colportage; they can do it almost as well by increasing the number of my readers; failing both of these, they can do it by their prayers. Soon will editor, writer, and readers be beyond the region of earthly service; may we be able to render in a good account of our stewardship.

Possibly some of my readers are unsaved. The Lord grant that ere the year closes they may taste his love. May faith in Jesus now be wrought in them and be exercised by them. This is at this moment my soul's prayer. Unsaved reader, will you not say *Amen* to it?

In any case, I am,
Your hearty friend.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JANUARY, 1873.

ACTA NON VERBA.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

A CHURCH, in the United States, lately advertised for a minister, and stated that, having been for some years over done with eloquence, they desired a pastor who would preach to them the gospel of Jesus Christ: there are churches on this side of the Atlantic, sickened with essays and “intellectual treats,” whose aspirations are much of the same kind. Fine language amuses the ear, as the tinkling of their little bells pleases the continental coach-horses, but it cannot satisfy the soul any more than the aforesaid tintinabulations can supply the place of corn and hay. The art of arranging words, and balancing sentences, is a mental jugglery, as astonishing when perfectly practiced, as the feats of the Chinese or Japanese artistes who just lately have charmed vast audiences at the Crystal Palace; but *cui bono?* what is the good of it, and who is the better for it? Who was ever convinced of sin by an oratorical flourish? What heart was led to Jesus, and to joy and peace in believing, by a fine passage resplendent with all the graces of diction? What chaff is to the wheat, and dross to gold, that is the excellence of human speech to the simplicity of the word of God. For awhile fascinated by the siren voice of vain philosophy and affected culture, many of the churches have drawn perilously near to the rocks of heresy and doubt, but divine grace is visiting them, and they will shake off the spell. Everywhere there is a cry for the gospel, for men who will preach it in the love of it, for ministers who will live it, and inoculate others with its life: the church is growing sick of essayists, and asks for men of God. She is weary of word-spinners, and pretenders to deep thought, and she cries for men full of the Holy Spirit, who are lovers of the word and not speakers only. Soul-winners will soon be in demand, and your genteel essayists will have to carry their dry goods to another market. Sane men do not need fiddlers, while the life-boat is being manned to save yonder perishing ones from the devouring deep.

The intensely practical character of Christianity might be inferred from the life of its founder. In Jesus we see no display, no aiming at effect, nothing spoken or done to decorate or ornament the simplicity of his daily life.

True, he was a prophet, mighty in words as well as in deeds; but his words were downright and direct, winged with a purpose, and never uttered for speaking's sake. Nobody ever looks at Jesus as an orator to be compared with Cicero. "Never man spake like this man." He was not of the schools. No graver's tool had passed over his eloquence. In his presence Demosthenes is seen to be a statue, carved with great skill, and the very counterfeit of life; but Jesus is life itself, not art's sublimest *fac simile* of nature, but the living truth. Jesus, whether speaking or acting, was still practical. His words were but the wings of his deeds. He went about, not discoursing upon benevolence, but "doing good;" he itinerated not to stir up a missionary spirit, but "to preach glad-tidings to the poor." Where others theorized he wrought, where they planned he achieved, where they despaired he triumphed. Compared with him, our existence is a mere windbag; his life was solid essential action, and ours a hazy dream, an unsubstantial would-be which yet is not. Most blessed Son of the Highest, thou who workest evermore, teach us also how to begin to live, ere we have stumbled into our graves while prating about purposes and resolves!

The first champions of the cross were also men in whom the truth displayed itself in deeds rather than in words. Paul's roll of labors and of sufferings would contrast strangely with the diary of a reader of pretty little sermonettes; or, for the matter of that, with the biography of the most zealous among us. The apostles were intensely active, rather than intellectually refined; they made no pretense to be philosophers, but thought it sufficient to be servants of Jesus Christ. Their hearers remembered them, not because they had melodiously warbled sweet nothings into their ears; but because they spoke in the demonstration of the Spirit and in the power of God. They were no mystics, but workmen; not elocutionists, but laborers. We track them by the cities which they evangelized, the churches which they founded, the tribes which they converted to Christ. By some means or other, they came to grapple with the world hand to hand, whereas the good men of these times do anything but that: they tell us what was done of old, what should be done now, and what will be done in the millenium, but they themselves mingle not in the fray. Where are the heroic combats of the first ages of the faith? Where hear we the din of real fighting? We see shaking of fists, feints, and challengings in abundance, but of downright blows there is a lamentable scarcity; the modern battle of church and world is too frequently a mere stage imitation, a sham fight of the most wretched order. See the

combatants of those days — a whole-souled fight was theirs. The world, like a veteran gladiator, defied the young combatant with fierce terms of hate, and gazed upon him with tiger-like ferocity, determined to wash his hands in the intruder's blood; while the church quailed not in the presence of her savage opponent, but avowed her determination to make no terms with sin, and accept no truce with idolatry. They meant fighting, and they fought! A divine of the modern school is of opinion that the lines have faded considerably between what is known as the church and the world, arising from a mutual movement towards each other; we cannot look upon this fact with the complacency which he manifests, but we are compelled to observe and lament it. Many professors play at being Christians; they are not real in their church-membership, not in very deed separate from sinners, or devoted to the service of God; hence the world has no care to oppose them, and leaves them utterly ignorant of the very meaning of the word "persecution." Of course, if we never rebuke the world's sin, nor bear witness against its follies, it will have no cause of offense, and will leave us unassailed. The apostles' blows were laid on with a will, and left their impress where they fell. Fussy officials they were not; pompous dignitaries they could not be; but real workmen of the Lord they evidently were; hence their power under God to move their age, and all succeeding ages.

The marks by which, according to the Scriptures, genuine believers are to be known, are very matter-of-fact tokens. "By their fruits shall ye know them," is a pretty plain intimation that no amount of profession or religious talk can evidence godliness, if holy actions be absent. At the last great day, the blessed of the Father are not represented as having advocated the relief of the poor, but as having actually fed the hungry. No mention is made of writers upon the inspection of gaols, or the suppression of mendacity; but a hearty word of praise is given to those who visited the prisoner and gave drink to the thirsty. The main point seems to have been the real and actual doing of good; whatever went with it is cast into the scale without mention, as being comparatively insignificant. True faith proves itself not by its boastings, but by its effect upon the life of its possessor.

Here is the bone of contention which the earnest man will have with himself. We know what we ought to be, but are we all that? Our neighbors perish for lack of the gospel, but do we carry it to them? The poor swarm around us, in what measure do we feed them? They would be well enough off if good intentions and excellent suggestions could clothe and feed them,

but as it is, they derive small benefit from us. To know how to do good, and to leave it undone, is no small sin. Accountability grows with the amount of information. Mountains of lead ought to press down consciences which now lie at ease in the bosoms of men of great powers, who have eloquently proclaimed duties which they do not touch with one of their fingers; nor much less should be the discomfort of those who have again and again resolved upon duties which they have never yet performed. They own their obligations to the poor, but no orphan is fed by their help: they lament the ignorance of the people, but no ministry is aided by their gifts; they long to see zealous evangelists sent forth, but no student is succored by their bounty. Alas! for the piety which ends in feelings and words! It is vain as the foam of the sea!

Everywhere the evil is the same. Saying over-rides doing. One of the most evident weaknesses of most religious societies is a lack of practical common sense. They are great in red tape, rich in committees, and positively gorgeous with presidents and vice-presidents, and secretaries, and honorary secretaries, and minute secretaries, etc., etc.; but what comes of it all? We behold a fine display of wooden cannon and pasteboard soldiery, but conquests there are none. There will be a sub-committee on Tuesday, and surely something will come of it; or, if not, the quarterly board-meeting will doubtless work wonders: — no, there will be cackling and cackling, but of eggs none — or addled. In many of our denominational conferences resolutions are picked over word by word, as if every syllable might conceal a heresy; amendments are moved, seconded, re-amended, fought for valorously, or withdrawn; hours are spent, and lung force without stint, and what comes of the parturition of the mountain? Has the pitiful mouseling strength enough to crawl across the floor of the assembly? If any holy project needs putting out of the world in a legal fashion, so that no charge of willful murder shalt be laid against any one of its destroyers, consign it to a committee: it will have every care and loving attention, and the soothing syrup will be of the most excellent quality. If, perchance, the thing of beauty remain among us, it will be a joy for ever; never viciously fanatical, or vehemently enthusiastic, but, clothed in a regulation strait-waistcoat, its life will be spent within those sacred bounds which officialism is inspired to prescribe. If it be asked to which or what society we refer, our reply must be, “Let every dog follow its own master:” to some more, and to some less, our strictures apply. In general, a society is a creature of the imagination, a group of shades impalpable, a collection

of names without persons; if its business be well worked, the credit is due to one or two worthy men, who are, in fact, the society; if it be badly managed, it is because it is nobody's business, being generally understood to be everybody's. The fault does not lie in the principle of association — which is excellent — but in the everlasting overlaying of the hand by the jaw: the mistaking words for actions, speeches for service. A dozen or two General Grants, eloquently silent, would form a fine board of management; men who can give, and work, and pray, are worth a hundred times as much as those who can compose resolutions, cavil over expressions, move the previous question, discuss and re-discuss, till all is blue-moulded or green with verdigris. Not that we would kill off the talkers, we are not intent upon signing our own death-warrant; but a little gentle choking of those who will neither be quiet nor practically helpful, we humbly venture to prescribe. The fact is, we don't get at the work before us. The drowning heathen lies at the bottom of the pond, and our drags do not touch the body, much less fetch it to shore. The ignorant masses around us glide from our fingers like slippery eels, we have not learned the knack of holding them. We seem to be bobbing after our great objects like boys trying to bite at apples which swim in a tub of water. We are planning, suggesting, arranging; but when are we going to begin? For scores of years we have been tuning up: when will the music commence? So much time is spent in chopping the chaff, and bruising the oats, that poor Bucephalus is getting lean as Rosinante.

Gentle reader, has no self-accusing thought crossed your mind while trying to keep yourself awake over these lines? No; you are really active, and by no means loquacious. It is well! All honor to you But where do you live, and of what mother were you born, and what is your age next birthday? The writer inquires eagerly, and will be glad if you should. turn out to be one of a numerous family. Our own confession tells no such flattering story. We have, by God's grace, done something, but how little! It is as nothing! Compared with high resolves, and day-dreams, and proposals, what are our achievements? Tears are the fittest comments upon our life's review. We long to begin to live. We have loitered long, like too many more, and work undone accuses and condemns us. Shall we write about it, or from the pulpit pour out a verbal plaint which will die away with its own echo? No; but if God will help us we will try to glorify him, and publish his salvation. To lift up Christ is real work; to cry "Behold the Lamb!" is practical ministry. To teach the ignorant, to feed the hungry, to reclaim the

lost, this is Christlike service. What is all else, if we serve not the Lord Christ?

For the year 1873 we suggest the motto, "ACTA NON VERBA," — Deeds not Words.

THE RELIGION OF ROME

WE welcome the publication of a volume entitled "The Religion of Rome." It consists of letters published in a Roman Journal, which have been translated from the Italian, by Mr. William Howitt. In these times, when liberality is the only popular virtue, and zeal for truth the cardinal sin, it is worth much to let the public know assuredly that Popery is not the angel of light it professes to be. "Distance lends enchantment to the view;" but, to the rightminded, to see Romanism is to abhor it. It is a system which is as dangerous to human society, as it is hostile to true religion. We would by no means abridge the civil rights of a Catholic, or a Mormonite, but whether in any community the confessional or polygamy ought to be endured is not a question with us. The system of confession to priests is the sum of all villanies. Murphy was martyred for speaking the truth about the confessional, and in his person the liberty of public speech received a serious blow. The day will come in which that man's name and fate will be looked upon in a different light, and many will regret that he was given over as a victim to Romish bigotry, when they feel that bigotry burdening themselves. We have seen with our own eyes that which would make the blood of any decent man boil within him. In the confessional boxes in Germany and Italy, anybody may see for himself, exhibited in the compartment allotted to the priest, a list of the sins concerning which the confessor is to inquire; these include crimes which we will not pollute our paper by mentioning; he must be a hardened profligate who would dare allude to them in the presence of a young girl. Not in the pages of a folio reserved for studious eyes did we read the degrading memoranda of which we speak, but in the confessional itself, where every passer-by may see them if he will. True, the document is in Latin; but, unfortunately, such words as *abortio*, *sodomia*, and the like, need no translation. But we dare not trust our hand to write more, — the superstition of Rome is the worst of all the evils which have befallen our race; may the Lord arise, and sweep it down to the hell from whence it arose.

Mr. Howitt has seen Old Giant :Pope at home, and marked for himself the monster's baleful influence, even hi times when advancing light, tends to mitigate the evils of his reign. To his testimony we can add our own corroborating witness, and so, we believe, can every sojourner in Italy. He says — "Well may the people of Italy rejoice over the fall of this incubus of the ages! If anyone would satisfy himself of what Popery is at its center; what it does where it has had its fullest sway, let him make a little tour, as we have lately done, into the mountains, in the vicinity of Rome, and see in a country extremely beautiful by nature, what is the condition of an extremely industrious population. In the rock towns of the Alban, Sabine, and Volscian hills, you find a swarming throng of men, women, and children, asses, pigs, and hens, all groveling in inconceivable filth, squalor, :and poverty. Filth in the streets, in the houses, everywhere; fleas, fever, and smallpox, and the densest; ignorance darkening minds of singular natural cleverness. A people brilliant in intellect, totally uneducated, and steeped in the grossest superstition.

These dens of dirt, disease, and, till lately, of brigandage, are the evidences of a thousand years of priestly government! They, and the ,country around them, are chiefly the property of the great princely and ducal families which sprung out of the papal nepotism of Rome, and. have by successive popes, their founders, been loaded with the wealth of the nation. The pope-originated aristocratic families live in Rome, :in their great palaces, amidst every luxury and splendor, surrounded by the finest works of art, and leave their tenants and dependants without ally attention from them. Some steward or middleman screws the last soldo from them for rent; and when crops, fail, as they did last year from drought, lifts not a finger to alleviate their misery.

And the Papal Government, too — a government pretendedly based .on the direct ordination of Him who went about doing good — what has it done for them? Nothing but debauch their minds with idle ceremonies and unscriptural dogmas, lying legends, priests, monks, and beggary ! The whole land is a land of beggars, made so by inculcated notions of a spurious charity. Every countrywoman, many men, and every child, boy or girl, are literally beggars — -beggars importunate, unappeasable, irrepressible ! What a condition of mind for a naturally noble and capable people to be reduced to by — a religion !

And is this the *religion* which so many of our educated countrymen and countrywomen, and still more signally the clergy, are so anxious to give us in exchange for the freedom and intelligence of Protestantism? What a stupid blunder, to say the least of it !"

The letters which are translated for 'us in this volume, touch upon a wide range of subjects, and are written with great vigor and vivacity. It is a remarkable sign of the times that they should have appeared in a daily paper in the Eternal City itself. Here is a paragraph upon "Kissing the foot of the Pope ": —

"Why does the pope cause his foot, or rather his Slipper, to be kissed? When did this custom begin? We will give our readers a brief answer to these queries.

Theophilus Rainaldo and the Bollandist fathers, as well as other Roman Catholic authors, tell us a gallant story of Pope St. Leo I., called the Great, which, if it were true, might show the origin of the practice. They say that a young and very handsome devotee was admitted on Easter day, to kiss the hand of Pope St. Leo after the mass. The pope felt himself very much excited by this kiss, and remembering the words of the Savior, 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee' (Matthew 5:30), he at once cut off his hand. But as he was unable to perform mass with only one hand, the people were in a great rage. The pope therefore prayed to God to restore his hand, and God complied: his hand: was again united to the stump. And to avoid such dilemmas in future, Leo ordered that; thereafter no one should kiss his hand, but only his foot. A very little common sense is sufficient to make us understand that such was not the origin of this custom.

The first who invented this degrading act of kissing feet was that monster in human form, the Emperor Caligula. He, in his quality of Pontilex Maximus, ordered the: people to kiss his foot. The other emperors refused such an act of base slavery. But Heliogabalus, as emperor and Pontilex Maximus, again introduced it. After that impious wretch, Heliogabalus, the custom fell into disuse; but the Christian emperors retaining some of the wicked fables given to the pagan emperors, permitted the kissing of the foot as a compliment on the presentation of petitions. We may cite a few instances. The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon say that Fszius, Bishop of Tire, in

his petition to the emperor, said, 'I supplicate, prostrate, at your immaculate divine feet.' Bassianus, Bishop of Ephesus, says, 'I prostrate myself at your feet.' Eunomius, Bishop of Nicomedia, says, ' [prostrate myself before the footsteps of your power.' The Abbot Saba, says., ' I have come to adore the footsteps of your piety.' Procopius, in his ' History of Mysteries,' says that the Emperor Justinian, at the instigation of the proud Theodora, his wife, was the first amongst the Christian Emperors who ordered prostrations before himself and his wife, and the kissing of their feet.

The ecclesiastics, the bishops, and, finally, the popes, were not exempt from paying this homage to the emperors. The prelates of Syria held this language to the Emperor Justinian : — 'The pope of holy memory, and the archbishop of ancient Rome, has come to your pious conversation, and has been honored by your holy feet' Pope Gregory I., writing to Theodorus, the physician of the Emperor Mauritius, in the year A.D. 593, said, 'My tongue cannot sufficiently express the great benefits that I have received from God Almighty, and from our great emperor, for which I can only love him and kiss his feet.' In the year AD 681, Pope Agathon, sending his legates to the sixth council, writes to the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus : — ' As prostrate in your presence, and embracing your feet, I implore you,' etc. In the seventh century, therefore, not only did the popes not have their feet kissed, but they themselves were obliged to kiss those of the emperor. Becoming sovereigns of Rome, they soon began to adopt the same custom. Pope Eugenius II., who died in 827, was the first who made it the law to kiss the papal foot. From that time it was necessary to kneel before the popes. Gregory VII. ordered all princes to submit to this practice.

From what we have said, it is clear that the origin of feet kissing was entirely pagan and idolatrous. That this system is in total contradiction to the precepts of the Gospel would be a waste of words to assert. Jesus Christ was so far from desiring people to kiss his feet, that he set himself on one occasion to wash the feet of his disciples. These are the words of the Gospel: 'He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash

the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.'

This act of Jesus Christ is in perfect keeping (John 13:4, 5) with all his precepts, with his inculcations of modesty, equality, humility, and with his condemnation of those who set themselves above others. Who would have said that a day would come in which those claiming to be his vicars should cause people 'to kiss their feet? How thoroughly has Catholicism borrowed from paganism its idolatries? And with all this, with this so flagrant a violation of the religion of Christ, a herd of people go and press their lips on the slipper of the pope, as was done formerly to the Roman emperors, the pontifices maximi, that is to say, the priests of „love. The comparison is sufficiently eloquent."

Very terrible is the chapter upon Excommunications and the Holy Office of the Inquisition: it is indeed sickening. The story of Rome's bloody persecutions of all who differed from her, when told in the mildest manner, is yet a thing to chill the blood and make the flesh creep. Blessed be God she has such horrors no longer in her power; but if she had her fangs untrimmed as of old, it would not be long; before her victims would be aware of it. We will give but a brief extract, referring to times of comparatively modern date.

"The times changed , and being no longer able to burn the heretics and the excommunicated publicly, the holy office found means ,f putting them to death without the *shedding of blood* and for the glory of *God*, by means of walling-up and ovens.

The walling-up was of two kinds, the *propria*, and *impropria*, or complete and incomplete. By the first they punished dogmatists, by the second, the professors of witchcraft and sorcery. To punish the former, they made a niche in a wall, 'where standing upright on his feet, they placed the condemned, binding him well to the wall with cords and chains, so that he could not move in the least. They then began to build from the feet to the knees, and every (lay they raised the wall a course, at the same time giving the prisoner to eat and to drink. When he died, and God knows with what agonies, the wall was built up. But dead or alive, it was closed in such a manner that no one could see where the niche had been and that ~ body remained there.

The incomplete walling-up, or enclosure, was made by sitting the condemned in a pit bound hand and foot, so that his head only was above ground. The pit was then filled up with quicklime, and moisture from the body soon acting on it, converted it into fire, and the miserable wretch was burnt alive with the most frightful torture.

As knowledge and civilization increased, and the people began to see through the impostures of the priests, they feared lest, spite of their secrecy, such atrocities might creep abroad amongst the corrupt sons of the age, and in order to retain the knowledge of these *holy* proceedings amongst a few, they dismissed the building-up, and adopted a plan more anticipative of the pains of hell, and this was by burning the condemned without flame, and without *shedding of blood*. They invented ovens or furnaces, which being made red-hot, they lowered the condemned into them, bound hand and foot, and immediately closed over them the mouth of the furnace. This barbarous punishment was substituted for the burning pile, and in 1849. these furnaces at Rome were laid open to public view in the dungeons of the *holy* Roman Inquisition, near the great church of the Vatican, still containing the calcined bones."

The manufacture of relics would be a deeply interesting subject if some one behind the scenes would write upon it; and we need not, despair of that desideratum, for many of the works of darkness have of late, by accident or otherwise, been brought to light. The following extracts will show that even in the depths of roguery which surround relic-making, there is yet a lower depth, and even counterfeits are counterfeited : —

"A sudden and terrible blow has fallen on the popedom in the discovery of a most extensive manufacture and sale of false relics by the priest officials of the papal court. Before, however, stating the particulars of the illicit traffic in relics, it will be as well to take a view of what is the regular practice at the Vatican in regard to relics. It is well known that for ages the papacy has carried on a trade in relics, and that they abound in all parts of the world amongst Catholics, who put the most profound faith in them, and believe them possessed of wonderful supernatural power. These have all issued from the manufactory of the Vatican under authority of the successive popes, and many of them have been expressly blest by them. Notwithstanding that on this system they have two heads of St. Peter in Rome, as many as four, five, six, seven bodies of the same saint in different

places, and as much wood of the true cross as would build a navy, these things do not in the least shake the faith of devotees. The priests say, that there being such things only makes the miracle the greater. The Vatican has for ages had a distinct department for the production and dissemination of relics, at the head of which is placed the Pope's vicar. This vicar appoints a superintendent of relics, a Jesuit by-the-way, who pronounces to what saint the body about to be cut up into relics belongs, and these are prepared in the Vatican itself.

In the Roman daily paper, *La Capitale*, on the 6th of April, 1871, there appeared an announcement of the discovery in the papal archives of a judicial trial or investigation into a charge of an extensive manufacture of false relics by the official priests of the Lipsanotica, or relic department of the Vatican. The documents of this inquiry had by some means fallen into the hands of the Italians, since their forcible entry into Rome on the 20th September, 1870.

The publication of so astounding a fact was immediately declared by the papal journals to be a totally groundless and atrocious calumny. But unfortunately for this denial, immediately appeared one Guiseppe Colangeli, who had been the porter of the Lipsanotica at the time of this lucrative traffic, and had been charged, not only as an accomplice, but as one of the greatest offenders. He had been imprisoned on this charge in St. Angelo, condemned, and, as we shall see, as suddenly liberated and dismissed. He now came out, with a long and circumstantial letter in his own defense in the *Capitale*, thus putting the truth of this official process and of these records of it beyond all doubt. From the documents which have been published, and are on sale in Rome, and from Colangeli's letter, we arrive at the facts, of which we proceed to give a brief

Besides Colangeli, two other laymen were accused as concerned in this unholy but most lucrative trade — Vincenzo Campodonico, chaplet-maker, and Guiseppe Campodonico, maker of shrines for the false relics. Amongst the priests implicated were, the Rev. Dr. Guiseppe Gaggi, Jesuit and official of the Lipsanotica; Brother Benoit, also a Jesuit priest; the Abbot Spirito Rembert, a minorist priest; Norberto Constantine, and the Rev. Dr. Archangelo Scognamiglio, the custodian of the Lipsanotica, Bembo Nare, Don Antonio Anselmi, and Don Guiseppe Milani, priestly officers in the Lipsanotica, who, having access to the seals of the cardinal vicar, the head

of the relic department, freely used them for authenticating these forged relics.

It appears that so far back as 1828 this trade was going on, and at that time Agostino Campodonico, the father of the present Campodonicos, was largely concerned in it. At the trial before the cardinalvicar of the pope, Guiseppe Campodonico was known to be in the habit of making little shrines, or calendars, for the false relics, and that Vincenzo Campodonico supplied these with pieces of bones of sheep and hares, or of human bones, old and carious, taken from the catacombs, but such as were probably those of pagans, certainly not of saints and martyrs whose names they affixed to them. These bits of bones were fixed into little images of wax, professed to be the likenesses of the saints they had belonged to, and were secured to the backs of the shrines by threads of silk, and then by seals, purporting to be the seals of the papal office, and to bear the signature of the custodian of the Lipsanotica. Giuseppe Colangeli, the porter of the Lipsanotica, was represented to be the medium by which these lots of trumpery were conveyed to the Lipsanotica, and the necessary authentications of the custodian obtained, after which he carried them back to the Campodonicos, who dealt in them.

Enormous sums were given by English noblemen, and others, English ladies and gentlemen, by wealthy Spaniards, and Spanish ladies, by rich and religious Belgian dupes, and, in fact, the false relics were sent all over the Catholic world, and sold in the different monasteries and convents. Brother Benoit, the Jesuit, was a great agent in this traffic, and all parties were reaping a rich harvest from it. The custodian of the Lipsanotica, Dr. Archangelo Scognamiglio, defended himself by saying that Colangeli, being employed by him, in consequence of the large sale of *genuine* relics, that is, such relics as the Vatican calls genuine, to write out the authentications for his signature, wrote out twice as many as ordered, and appropriated half to his own use in this nefarious trade. To this shallow pretense, Colangeli, in his published letter, properly replied, that, had this been the case, the custodian would at once have noticed the extra number, and he assured the public that the custodian, with his assistants, Anselmi and Milani, were as deep in the business as any of the set.

The Jesuits play a prominent part in these transactions, as they do in most Catholic affairs. Father Gaggi, we are told, put the authenticating seal to the false relics, some of which were in shrines, and others in settings of

gold or silver. Brother Benoit was the great wholesale dealer in them, and during the trial, with their usual cunning, the Jesuits took care that he could not be found. It was confidently believed that he was secreted in the headquarters of the Jesuits at Lyons. No means whatever were taken by the pope, or his court, to make known the existence of this legion of forged relics, so that, so far as they were concerned, the thousands and tens of thousands of dupes might go on for ever worshipping the bones of sheep and hares, and carrying them to the sick in the hope of their being healed by them.

The exposure of this most scandalous manufacture of and traffic in the bones of sheep, hares, and old pagans, within the precincts of the Vatican, and by the spiritual officers of the pope himself, has produced a profound sensation throughout Christendom, and has invalidated the whole of the pretended holy relics in existence. The report of this trial, and the letter of Colangeli, are printed in a small book, and sold for two francs, little more than eighteen pence, and have been translated into German and other languages. (Processo delle reliquie false. Rome, via de cessarini 76, Prezzo 2 lire.) In combination with the shock given to the popedom by the resistance to the dogma of infallibility, this exposure has gone far to shake the great papal imposture to its deepest foundations. What a religion must that be, which trading on the ignorance and superstition which it has itself created in such vile fetich wares as these, makes its impostures so gross and palpable, that its very priests, seeing all its impudent greed, themselves extend the base delusion on their own account.”

Another subject may also interest the reader. At the further end of St. Peter's, one may see what is said to be the *chair of Peter*. It is raised above a majestic altar, composed of fine marbles, and is supported by four gigantic figures. Angels hover all around, and above it is a field of transparent glass, colored to represent light, and so to typify the presence of the Holy Spirit. Is this the chair of Peter or no? Common sense is quite able to give the answer, and her verdict is abundantly sustained by rumor and fact. The whole story of this blessed chair lies in a nut shell; here it is :

—

“Lady Morgan, in her work on Italy, in the fourth volume, relates a story about the famous chair of St. Peter, which is venerated in Rome with so much solemnity, which account we now give in her own words : — ‘The sacrilegious curiosity of the French, in their occupation of Rome, in the

beginning of this century, overcame all obstacles, and would see the chair of St. Peter. They took off the precious case of gilt bronze, and laid open the relic. Through the dust they saw the traces of antiquity, and some figures cut in the wood, which resembled letters. The chair, being taken out and exposed to the light, after clearing away the cobwebs and dust, they made an exact copy of the inscription, which proved to be the well-known Mahometan confession of faith, ‘There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet.’ It is supposed that this chair was one of a number of relics brought by the Crusaders from the East in times of ignorance.”

We have no desire to insist on the truth of the statement of Lady Morgan, which would make this out to be the chair of some devout Mahometan, instead of being that of St. Peter; but we do not think the reply made by the theologians to the English traveler was either serious or conclusive. The most telling reply is that which the theologians of Rome gave to demonstrate the impossibility of this chair having belonged to a Turk — namely, that the Turks do not use chairs. But the Roman theologians, if they knew the history and customs of the East, would know that the Orientals, though they do not use chairs in their houses, at least commonly, yet they use them in their mosques to preach from. Al Jannati, a famous Arab writer, relates that Mahomet caused a chair to be made by one Nakum, a Greek workman, to preach from; and says that upon this chair both Mahomet and all the Califs, his successors, preached; and, in imitation of this, there is in every mosque a chair to preach from. What wonder, then, if the chair of which Lady Morgan speaks should be one of these chairs taken by the Crusaders from some mosque? And this the more, that the sacred motto of the Mahometans is only found on sacred objects. For the rest, the testimony of Lady Morgan begets at least a doubt; therefore, let the Roman priests expose to view this famous chair without its covering of bronze, and then it will be seen whether Lady Morgan has erred, or has spoken the truth.

The identity of this chair has been placed in doubt — or, rather, denied by the learned and pious Father Tillemont, the Benedictine, who says — “It is pretended that the episcopal chair of St. Peter is preserved in Rome, and Baronius says that it is of wood; but people who saw in 1666 that which was about to be solemnly placed in the church of St. Peter, asserted that it was of ivory, and that the sculpture upon it was antique, and of the third or fourth century, and that it represented the twelve labors of Hercules. How happens it, then, that Baronius and Tillemont are not in accordance? How

can possibly be found on the same chair the twelve labors of Hercules and a profession of the Mahometan faith? These two things certainly cannot exist together, and especially in a chair of St. Peter. This is probably the truth of the matter. In the time of Cardinal Baronius, the chair was really one of the old curule chairs of ivory, and had upon it sculptured the twelve labors of Hercules. Cardinal Baronius caused Clement VIII. to observe that, if it was important to have in Rome the chair of St. Peter, it was still more important that the Protestants and the incredulous should not find in this an evident argument for the denial of its antiquity. A curule chair, with the labors of Hercules sculptured on it, was a thing incredible as a chair of St. Peter. The pope was convinced of this, and caused the chair to be changed, without any publicity, the public not being able to observe this change, since the chair was in a case of gilt copper. Into this case was put an old chair of wood, in the Gothic style, and this is the chair of wood of which Barcnius speaks.

Sixty years later, Alexander VII. caused the famous altar of the cathedral to be erected, as described above; but when they were about to put the chair into the present case, it was remarked that the Gothic style did not exist in the time of St. Peter. Then they rejected the chair selected by Baronius, and wished to restore the former one; but here the labors of Hercules presented an equal obstacle. The warehouse of relies was then visited, and there they found an ancient chair brought from the East, by the Crusaders, and this was it which was put into the new case, and which is the one spoken of by Lady Morgan. So then the grand proof of the Roman clergy of St. Peter having been in Rome, is a chair from a Mahometan mosque!

Here we are reminded of the trial about the false relics! If they falsify even chairs, can you then believe in their bones? What reason had Pope Ganganelli, who suppressed the Jesuits, to exclaim, 'If one put faith in all the relies that they exhibit in all countries, one must many times be persuaded that a saint had ten heads and ten arms!' It was a pope who said this — that is, an infallible person — and not we only."

Essence of lies, and quintessence of blasphemy, as the religion of Rome is, it nevertheless fascinates a certain order of Protestants, of whom we fear it may be truly said that "they have received a strong delusion to believe a lie, that they may be damned? Seeing that it is so, it becomes all who would preserve their fellow-immortals from destruction to be plain and earnest in

their warnings. Not in a party-spirit, but for truth's sake, our Protestantism must protest perpetually. Dignitaries of the papal confederacy are just now very prominent in benevolent movements, and we may be sure that they have ends to serve other than those which strike the public eye. A priest lives only for his church; he may profess to have other objects, but this is a mere blind. Our ancient enemies have small belief in our common sense if they imagine that we shall ever be able to trust them, after having so often beheld the depths of Jesuitical cunning and duplicity. The sooner we let certain Archbishops and Cardinals know that we are aware of their designs, and will in nothing co-operate with them, the better for us and our country. Of course, we shall be howled at as bigots, but we can afford to smile at that cry, when it comes from the church which invented the Inquisition. "No peace with Rome" is the motto of red, son as well as of religion

C. H. S.

CONFESSING CHRIST

"Ye are members one of another." "Now ye are the body of Christ." "This do in remembrance of me."

THIS language expresses the fellowship which exists among believers springing from union with Christ their Head. The body which represents it is called the Church, a collection of persons who are governed by the will of God, taught by the Holy Spirit, and whose excellencies spring from a heavenly principle within — 'the church of God,' which Christ, the fuller accounts of the New Testament go on to say 'purchased with his own blood,' 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

It is the 'household of God,' with spiritual ties and relationships like the natural ties and relationships which bind together the members of a family.

This spiritual household exists visibly in the world, with an organization to provide for its welfare, look out for its interests, and help on its work. If you are a child of God, you will wish to be recognized as such by entering

his visible fold; you will wish to be seen and found there. It is your first and highest duty, as well as privilege.

‘But cannot I be as good out of the Church as in it, and as useful?’

No, emphatically, no. The condition of growth and usefulness consists in separating yourself from the world and entering into covenant and fellowship with Christ and his people. We have no right to live merely as individual Christians, each one walking his own way; we are a whole consisting of many parts, that exist *for* each other and *through* each other. Nor have we any right to set up our private judgment against the express will of its Divine Founder. The Acts of the Apostles shows us that those who repented and believed were ‘added to the Church.’ Repentance is not enough; you must own it by joining the people of God. Both rest upon the same authority. Standing aloof is no way of showing our allegiance and love. To remain an alien is a poor preparation and worse position for either getting or doing good.

‘But I am afraid I shall not act up to my profession. I fear I shall be inconsistent, and fall short of what a Christian ought to be.’

Our Lord foresaw that we should not love, obey, and worship the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as we ought to, and yet he enjoins our covenanting with his people, and enjoins it as a means of bringing our practice into closer correspondence with what it is our aim to reach, and our duty to become. You cannot stand selfishly apart by yourself, and fulfill Christian duty. It is not God’s way of educating us for heaven. We must become a part of the ‘body of Christ’ in a close, living, visible union.,

‘Having had our bodies washed with pure water,’ says the apostle, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; ‘that is, within the fold, our *stand taken*, we are in a position to make good our obligations to faithful and loving service.

The Holy Supper was instituted and enjoined by our Lord himself, in the upper chamber where he last ate with his disciples. Your presence at his table declares you from choice and affection a disciple of Christ, and you thus seek to deepen and strengthen the spirit and purposes which mark the disciple.

There are some who seem to regard a seat at his table as an end attained, a goal reached, after which they may sit down securely, without further

occasion for watchfulness or fighting. This is a great and, in many cases, a fatal mistake, and accounts for the cold, selfish, and unfruitful lives of many whose names are indeed on the records of the church, and that is all. No spiritual increase in grace or good works proves them *living* members of the body of Christ.

Let it never be forgotten that the Lord's Supper is especially designed to help and strengthen us, to revive and quicken us to greater diligence and faithfulness in making 'our calling and election sure.' It is one of the great means of carrying on the new life begun within us, and which has made as yet but little progress towards maturity.

And since he has said, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' we must needs inquire what it is to remember Jesus in his word and his works, in his sympathy and sufferings, in his death and resurrection for us, with all the hopes, privileges, and blessings which flow to us, and will for ever flow to us from his cross. And as he, 'the author and minister of our faith, for the joy set before him, enduring the cross, despising the shame,' so in looking to him, and believing in him, we gain strength to endure and to suffer, to watch and to pray, animated by the hope set before us of entering into the joy which our dying and risen Lord has already won for us.

The real value and efficacy of the Lord's Supper, as a means of grace, must depend upon our own sincerity and earnestness. If we are cold, inconsiderate, and unprepared, it will be but an idle ceremony. If our attention is lively and our hearts tender; if by suitable thoughtfulness, prayer, and self-examination, we come with a temper prepared to receive the grace and the Spirit of the Lord, we shall go away strengthened, comforted, and refreshed from communion with him.

Our Lord took the most common and wholesome things as symbols of his redeeming love, thus teaching us that his mercy and grace do not flow to us in rare and costly appointments, difficult to be had and hard to be understood. Bread and water are ever found where hunger and thirst urge sinful and needy creatures to seek his grace.

Our union with the Lord unites us in a close and vital relation to the Lord's people. 'Ye are members one of another.' All true love is service, living for others. Neither high nor lowly station can release us from responsibility to the Church; nor should any member feel that he can, from any pretext, withdraw himself from taking part with his fellow-believers in Christian

fellowship and Christian work. An attentive study of the twelfth chapter of the first of Corinthians fully instructs us on this point. ‘There are indeed, as the apostle says, ‘diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; differences of administration, but the same Lord; diversities of operations but the same God which worketh all in all.’

‘As the body is one and hath many members, all the members of that one body being many, *are* one body:’ ‘the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee; much more then members of the body which are more feeble are necessary. And the members should have the same care one for another; if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now are ye the body of Christ, and members one of another.’

St. Paul plainly teaches that the gifts of God and his grace are not bestowed upon believers for their own individual good solely, nor only for the honor and glory of their Divine Giver, but that they are held, as it were, in trust for others, and that in thus using them, they strengthen and sanctify the whole.

The principle of union is love. ‘By this shall all men *know* that ye are my disciples’ said the Lord, ‘if you *love* one another.’ And the office of love is to promote peace and harmony; to root out strife, division, jealousy, exclusiveness, and neglect — to *unite* and not *divide*. It teaches us also to submit to the order and discipline of the Church, and to weigh well both our motives and our acts, if they oppose its requirements.

We can all understand the pain of a true father’s heart over the refractory conduct of a self-willed child; much more grievous must it be to the heart of our heavenly Father to find indifference, coldness, and alienation among his children, and to see them so absorbed in their own separate and selfish ends as quite to forget each other.

It is a bad sign for us to forget or neglect the ‘power of welcome.’ ‘Come,’ is the sweetest word which fell from the lips of Jesus — the first full utterance of the love which came to bless us. Let us always keep in mind that this love is not only the life of the Church, the badge of discipleship, but also the *conquering* power of the people of God.

In our Lord’s prayer for all who should believe in his name, we find this striking petition ‘That they all may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me and I

in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world *may believe that thou hast sent me.*' A body of people under every diversity of condition and character, breathing the Spirit and living the life of Christ, must be a most powerful argument for his divine and redeeming work.

The world, it is true, has not yet seen this argument, as it some time will. The oneness of God's people is yet to be apprehended as a victorious power. When all that is separating and hindering shall drop away, the Church will arise and shine in her glory and strength.

May the Lord hasten that time, towards which all true hearts are yearning, for which all true hearts are praying, and to which all true work is tending.

METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE COLPORTAGE ASSOCIATION

THE COLPORTEUR. — Can nothing be done to meet the evil which is being wrought in England by the cheap pernicious literature which finds so ready a sale at the present day? This question must have occurred to everyone who has observed the enormous increase of late in the number of sensational publications circulated among our youth of both sexes, and of which the chief attraction is the vice portrayed therein and disguised under the specious name of heroism. These, together with several weekly newspapers, which consist for the most part of records of crime and licentiousness, and thousands of obscene prints and photographs, are working incalculable injury to the nation, and without exaggeration may be said to be one of the greatest curses of our time, the debasing effects of which are but too apparent around us.

Encouraged by the success of Colportage in Scotland in supplanting this injurious literature, and substituting for it pure and good reading, the Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association was commenced six years since with the view of carrying out the same plan in our more southern counties, and at the same time of providing a means of evangelization which is so much needed among our rural population.

The testimony of its agents has amply confirmed the value of such efforts, both in increasing the sale of good literature and in carrying the gospel to the very homes of the people. It is but too true that multitudes of our

fellow countrymen and women, lack not alone the grace of salvation but the opportunity of hearing of it. "As sheep without a shepherd" is but too faithful a description of the condition of the inhabitants of most of our villages and many of our towns. "No one ever visits *us*," is the complaint of many to the Colporteur, while, alas, in too many of the places of worship within their reach, the power of Christ to save, though nominally the subject of discourse, is but rarely actually so. In the best of neighborhoods, however, in town or country, there is opportunity and need of service which none can supply better than the Christian Colporteur. The books he carries are selected as those that speak of the weightless matters under heaven, and often has the word of God contained therein been blessed to the soul's salvation.

Were this only an effort to extend the sale of purer reading, it would surely be deserving of the earnest support of all well wishers to the truth.

The Colporteur, however, does not only sell, he gives a tract at many doors; but better still, warm loving words of comfort to the troubled, warning to the careless, and direction to the seekers after God. He goes where others could not; his pack of books being his introduction, he can freely visit at the cottage or the mansion, in the field or on the highway; and passing by no door without a call, is the best known man in all the district round. What opportunities he has of reading with the sick, inviting to a cottage meeting, or the house of God, or offering in the market-place the truth that sets men free! The books he sells are as seed sown for Christ; and, far from hindering his mission work, help to maintain him, make his visits regular, and open the way for him to speak the truth in unlikely places.

During the last six years twenty-five districts have thus been worked by this Association, but not all at one time, for lack of funds has limited the number; and though thirteen districts are now in operation (the largest number yet maintained), unless contributions are more freely forthcoming it is feared they must be diminished before the end of the year.

The expense of management is but small; all the officers giving their time freely to the work, and most of the districts assist by local subscriptions; but still there is a large deficiency to be made up. All who know the work feel its value, and are most anxious to see it extended. Scotland has upwards of 200 men thus engaged. Ireland and America recognize the usefulness of the Colporteur, while each year sees fresh men thus employed

upon the Continent. England alone is without the agency to any great extent. Shall it remain so? This is not a Baptist Association, but seeks to serve the cause of Evangelical truth without regard to sect or party.

In order to multiply the number of Colporteurs, two things are needed. First, a guaranteed subscription of £40 a year from the district to be supplied; and for this purpose individuals or churches may unite, or local committees be formed as is the case at present in some districts; and secondly, by increased subscriptions and donations to the general fund, which if sufficiently large to enable the opening of fresh districts, will lead the way to a future guarantee.

Several friends of the Association who have already contributed most liberally, have offered to repeat their donations if others will assist to raise such a sum, as will enable the Committee to extend the work, and it is confidently hoped that the need and value of the agency having been stated, this appeal will not be made in vain.

The following are the Districts at present supplied by the Association

Ely, Cambridgshire: A. SMEE. — A very successful district for sales, which amount to upwards of £250 a year. The Agent visits some fifteen villages, and is heartily received by the people.

Eythorne, Kent: R. MARSHALL — One of the longest established, the guarantee for which is given by the Baptist Church at Eythorne. The Colporteur supplies one or two preaching stations, and his work is much appreciated.

Haydock, Lancashire: JOHN VARNHAIN. — A mining district, needing constant and earnest effort. The Agent here conducts frequent open-air services, night schools, and cottage meetings, and many souls have been won for Christ through his instrumentality.

Warminster, Wiltshire: S. KING. — The Agent here travels as much as twenty miles from his center, very often accomplishing the journey on a velocipede, and his visits are eagerly watched for and highly valued by many of God's aged people, while his testimony to sinners has not been in vain.

Haroldwood, Essex: A. E. INGRAM. — The Colporteur here in addition to his rounds has the charge of a small chapel. The population of the district is

sparse, but a fair attendance is secured, and the worshippers assist in the support of the Agent.

Bushton, Wiltshire: B. SUMMERSBY. — Rather an extensive district like that at Warminster, but equally successful; the Colporteur being assisted in his journeys by a pony and cart. Many souls have been blessed in this district.

Minster, Isle of Sheppy: W. BAKER. — This Colporteur has been greatly used of God in the conversion of souls. Several meetings weekly are held in various parts of the Island, and are well attended and much blessed, especially the Bible classes held by the Agent at his own house.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

FEBRUARY, 1873.

ACTA NON VERBA

BY C. H. SPURGEON

PART II.

THOSE words which have the excuse for their utterance are generally the least acceptable. Speak to the point with practical aim, and either somebody's toes will be trodden upon, or a hubbub will be raised by theorizers as to possible toes which may have been inconvenienced. For instance, in the Preface to the last volume of *The Sword and the Trowel*, we recorded our fear that the Nonconforming Churches had not enjoyed a prosperous year, and that the lean kine were eating up the fat kine. We believe that we stated facts; at any rate, we had consulted and had followed statistics which are usually relied upon. We did not pour forth the unfounded imaginings of a morbid mind, or speak as if the end had come, and our churches must cease to be: on the contrary, we bade our brethren be of good courage, and hope for brighter days, and work in expectation of them. We little knew that in even mentioning a gloomy fact, we were sinning grievously. *The Christian World*, in a leading article, came down upon us heavily, because we had written what the enemies of Dissent could quote, and had already quoted, to show the decline of our cause. What was that to us? What do we care what use our adversaries may make of a truthful statement? David might have refused to write psalms, because the devil would quote them for the worst of purposes, if the possible uses to which writings may be turned are to be taken into consideration. Are we to represent everything which concerns Nonconformity with the *colour de rose*? So it would seem, not only from this little incident, but from the general manner and attitude of certain Nonconformist advocates. Everything that has to do with Dissent is to them necessarily good, and to be gloried in, and the faults of our systems are either to be defended or denied. They have probably borrowed this evil habit from their opponents,

for the rabid Episcopalian is equally resolved to fight for every whim and crotchet of mother church. This seems to us to be an unwise and unworthy course of action; it is childish, and even wicked. We sincerely wish that all our Dissenting churches were sound in the faith, earnest in Christian labor, and increasing with the increase of God — but we shall never try to prove our zeal for the grand old cause by asserting that these things are so when we fear they are not? We wish that all Nonconformist ministers were paragons, all their plans perfection, their spirit angelic, and their success unbounded, but in order that our loyalty to Dissent should be placed beyond all suspicion are we to declare that these *desiderata* are already possessed? If so, we rebel. We shall no more think of lying or suppressing truth to aid Dissent, than dream of glorifying God by blasphemy. When we observe an evil we shall point it out; when we see a failure we shall speak of it as such, and if perchance this injures the cause, let it be injured. If truth hurts an interest or party, let it be hurt. It is the height of madness to pretend that we, the Nonconformist churches, make no mistakes, are always prospering, never quarrel, are quite able to do everything, and are far beyond the need of improvement. Such crowing may be practiced so successfully that we may even rival the noble chancleers of the Establishment, whose voices are peculiarly loud, and clear, but what is the good of it? Suppose they brag of the blessing of a national church, is it really the best way to answer them to cry up our working of the voluntary principle, as if we had done all we could or should? The principle is perfect but we sometimes fail to carry it on to its full triumphs, and when we come short, the manliest plan is to admit the fault. The bepraising of our noble selves is not a beneficial exercise, it tends to foment party pride and prevent real progress.

Still, says one, it is a pity to mention anything which our enemies can use against us. So think the timorous, whose faith in the invincibility of truth is hampered by their greater belief in caution and policy. We feel too sure of the ultimate victory of our principles to care much for the screams and yells of our adversaries when they hear us heave a sigh, or utter a lament. Suppose *The Church Times* did rejoice over the witness of a well-known dissenter to the want of success among his own sect — what of that? Did that make us any the weaker, or the Ritualists any the stronger? Who winces at such things save cowards who cannot bear a sneer? For the life of us we cannot see how we “furnished our foes with an argument.” What was the argument? How did it run? The Dissenting Churches did not

increase last year, therefore — therefore what? Therefore they never will — is that the idiotic inference? Therefore they are in the wrong — is that the insane conclusion? To all the legitimate comfort which Anglicans can draw from such facts we make them heartily welcome. For our part, we feel that with truthful principles, and an honest heart on his side, a man may give his opponents leave to make the most they possibly can of all his personal confessions of imperfection, and admissions of occasional failure; and it will never enter his head to look around before he dares to speak, lest haply a listening chiel should take notes and print what he may say.

We beg permission to say if the Voluntaries will *do* more, they may without injuring their cause, *say* less about their doings, and if Dissenters will evangelize the country more thoroughly, they may spare some of those modest eulogiums which their worthy advocates are so prone to utter. Having said thus much, we shall proceed to the practical matter which made us take up our pen, and at the risk of further transgressing we shall point out a fault in most of our religious systems.

It is a singular fact that our churches have suffered the chief agency for carrying the gospel into new regions to fall into almost total disuse. The settled ministry among us, especially when it brings out and wisely directs the gifts of the church, is eminently adapted for conservative purposes, for edifying the saints, training young converts, and cultivating the soil which has been already fenced in by religious agencies; but only to a very small degree is the ministry aggressive or can it be. If it does its homework well it has enough to do, and its further efforts will never be very extensive as a rule. To carry the gospel into the regions beyond, and form new churches — whose business is this? Among the heathen we have our missionaries, but what agency are we employing in our own country? In a small way in connection with regular organizations the work is attempted, and irregular agencies perform it on a larger scale, but for all that, most of the Christian churches, as such, are negligent in the service, *and have no specific agents set part to attend to it as a matter of church work*. To extend the Redeemer's kingdom and win the world for Jesus is the great purpose for which the church exists, and yet, to a very large extent, she leaves this, her supreme vocation, to hap-hazard.

Our Lord, when he would arouse Palestine, sent forth seventy evangelists. Not one of these was bidden to settle in any place, or to become a pastor, but to go and preach the gospel from town to town. They were itinerant

gospellers. After Pentecost, the disciples being scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word, they broke up new ground, and made the truth known among those who had never heard it before; so far they did the work of evangelists, and the kingdom of Christ came with power. The apostles and others traveled into regions where the name of Jesus had not been known, and everywhere told forth the glad tidings of salvation: whatever else they were, they certainly fulfilled to the full the office of evangelists. We have a few who exercise that office now, but, they are rather tolerated than appointed, and certainly their work is not regarded as a part, and a necessary part, of our ecclesiastical action. It would be easy to prove that in all times of her spiritual health and growth, the church has owed much to her holy pioneers who have led the way to sacred conquests. Without burdening the reader with church history we may cite the Methodist revival as an eminent case in point, for it was mainly due to those who left regular pulpits and gospel-hardened congregations to preach Jesus among colliers and street crowds. It would be equally easy to prove that by ministries exercised in churches and chapels we can never reach those who shun all religions edifices, neither can we hope to found new churches in neglected counties unless we send forth men whose direct object it is to labor to that end.

In many districts of England there are no Baptist churches, and we will make these districts the example for our present object. Now, as far as the Baptist churches are concerned, have we any men, appointed by the church, whose business it is to spread the gospel, as we believe it, in these places? We know of very few. But our conviction is that if we were doing our duty after the apostolic fashion we should soon find in our midst, thrust forth by the Holy Ghost, evangelists who would till these fields of labor. Suppose a man of power, full of the Holy Ghost, and gifted for the work were maintained in a county — say Cumberland or Westmoreland, with the view of preaching all through the region, and forming churches wherever the Lord might bless his word; might we not expect to see the churches increased in those parts. He ought not to be a mere common man, much less an inferior preacher for whom an office is made because no regular congregation will hear him. We should like to see the experiment tried with one of our best men, we would have him liberally supported, and supplied with ample means for traveling, and hiring rooms and halls. We should almost envy him the opportunity for toil, self-denial, and success. If the Lord anointed such a man he would be the pioneer for scores of

pastors who would take up the young Christian communities as fast as they were formed, while the evangelist would move on and dig out new foundations for other churches. A dull commonplace official would make a miserable mess of such work, and disappoint those who support him, but we think we know at this moment two or three men who, by God's blessing, would make full proof of their calling.

Our belief is that scripturally there should be at least as much work done evangelistically as pastorally. Now we provide for pastors, and rightly so, but; few, if any, churches provide for evangelists. We have the right men, but no organization for their support. We serve out their rations (often scanty enough) to the militia who defend the country, but for our brave Uhlans who are in the van of our conquering hosts we make little or no provision. Some few churches have their evangelistic missionaries, but, alas, how few! And these are usually in connection with their own immediate neighborhood, so that still the neglected large towns, and immense agricultural regions are left, as far as we are concerned, without the gospel.

We rejoice in the zeal of Methodists and Independents in spreading themselves in every direction throughout England; if we were a Free Churchman we should like to see a Free Kirk in every village in Scotland; and being a Baptist we desire to see a Baptist church in every town in England. This, of course, is judged to be a very wrong desire by those who think that we should interfere with their monopolies, but the desire to us seems natural and laudable. How then can it be accomplished? How can any Christian community cover the land with its adherents? We see no means at all comparable to the support of good, efficient, well-sustained *evangelists*.

Thus much we can give in evidence to support our opinion. From our College we have in a considerable number of instances sent forth men to preach where there was no church to support them, finding thrum maintenance for a season, and promising aid for the needful expenses of worship at the commencement. The brethren at home have mentioned these pioneers continually in their prayers, and the Lord has heard their requests. From the efforts of these brethren churches have sprung up in quarters where no Baptists were known to exist, and such churches have been a clear gain to the denomination. There is, under God, no limit to this work so far as we are concerned, if we had the pecuniary means. We are

content to wait the Lord's mind as to further effort; he will indicate it by furnishing supplies. The experiment, however, has succeeded beyond our hopes.

The Colportage Society also is a fine instrumentality for ploughing up new ground. The Colporteur takes a full survey of the country while selling his books, and his calls bring him into personal conversation with each inhabitant — he is therefore one of the best of pioneers. In the course of time by holding cottage meetings, and preaching out of doors he collects the nucleus of a congregation, perhaps he is able to do so in each of the larger villages of his district, and thus he prepares the way for the settled ministry. He is the cheapest and most efficient agent for clearing the backwoods, and preparing for future tillage.

Now, work like this, it seems to us, should be carried on widely, and be made the *specialite* of the churches. Not alone should colporteurs and young students be employed in it, but some of our very best men should be set apart to it. Think of an apostolic man in the neglected county of Surrey; or better still, in those parts of the crowded regions of Lancashire and Yorkshire where our community is scarcely represented, — what might he not achieve, with God's blessing? Let him be a man fit to lead others, a genial spirit who will co-operate with those who are already on or near the spot, a man full of faith and mighty in the Scriptures, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, his work would soon prove the sacred value of his office. One or two wealthy men may, perhaps, be led to find the silver and the gold for such a man's support, and we believe they will never spend money in a manner more profitable for the cause of God and truth: but the churches also, as such, should undertake the work, which beyond all others is their own.

WE MUST GROW. We MUST make the pure gospel to be known in every corner of the land. Public meetings, in which we glory in our-principles, are well enough if they do not lead to glorying in the flesh;

but we must put forth vehement efforts to spread those principles. He knows not the truth who does not desire others to know it. The religion which is not worth propagating is not worth believing. Prayer to God for the advance of the Redeemer kingdom is most commendable, but the prayer which does not lead to effort is hypocrisy. Effort, then, there must be; let it be wise, let it follow the New Testament model, let it be most hearty and sustained. With all our heart we beg the churches to consider

the question which we have now raised. *Ought we not to pray for evangelists, and prepare to support them when the Lord sends them, even as at this time we support the pastors of the churches?*

CHRIST AND HIS TABLE COMPANIONS

A MEDITATION AT THE COMMUNION TABLE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.” — Luke 22:14.

THE outward ordinances of the Christian religion are but two, and those two are exceedingly simple, yet neither of them has escaped human alteration; and, alas! much mischief has been wrought, and much of precious teaching has been sacrificed, by these miserable perversions. For instance, the ordinance of baptism as it was administered by the apostles betokened the burial of the believer with Christ, and his rising with his Lord into newness of life. Men must needs exchange immersion for sprinkling, and the intelligent believer for an unconscious child, and so the ordinance is slain. The other sacred institution, the Lord’s Supper, like believers’ baptism, is simplicity itself. It consists of bread broken, and wine poured out, these viands being eaten and drunk at a festival; — a delightful picture of the sufferings of Christ for us, and of the fellowship which the saints have with one another and with him. But this ordinance, also, has been tampered with by men. By some the wine has been taken away altogether, or reserved only for a priestly caste; and the simple bread has been changed into a consecrated host. As for the table, the very emblem of fellowship in all nations — for what expresses fellowship better than surrounding a table and eating and drinking together? — this, forsooth, must be put away, and an altar must be erected, and the bread and wine which were to help us to remember the Lord Jesus are changed into an “unbloody sacrifice”, and so the whole thing becomes an unscriptural celebration instead of a holy institution for fellowship. Let us be warned by these mistakes of others never either to add to or take from the word of God so much as a single jot or tittle. Keep upon the foundation of the Scriptures and you stand safely, and have an answer for those who

question you; yea, and an answer which you may tender at the bar of God; but once allow your own whim, or fancy, or taste, or your notion of what is proper and right, to rule you instead of the word of God, and you have entered upon a dangerous course, and unless the grace of God prevent, boundless mischief may ensue. The Bible is our standard authority; none may turn from it. The wise man in the Proverbs said "I counsel thee to keep the King's commandment;" we would repeat his advice, and add to it the sage precept of the mother of our Lord, at Cana, when she said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

We shall now ask you in contemplation to gaze upon the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. You perceive at once that there was no altar in that large upper room. There was a table, a table with bread and wine upon it, but no altar. And Jesus did not kneel — there is no sign of that — but he sat down, I doubt not after the Oriental mode of sitting, that is to say, by a partial reclining — he sat down with his apostles. Now, he who ordained this Supper knew how it ought to be observed, and as the first celebration of it was the model for all others, we may be assured that the right way of coming to this communion is to assemble around a table and to sit or recline while we eat and drink together of bread and wine in remembrance of our Lord.

While we see the Savior sitting down with his twelve disciples, let us inquire *what did this make them?* then, secondly, *what did this imply?* and, thirdly, *what further may we legitimately infer from it?*

I. First, then, we see the Great Master, the Lord, the king in Zion, sitting down at the table to eat and drink with his twelve apostles — **WHAT DID THIS MAKE THEM?**

Note what they were at first. By his first calling of them they became his *followers*, for he said unto them, "Follow me." That is to say, they were convinced, by sundry marks and signs, that he was the Messiah, and they, therefore, became his followers. Followers may be at a great distance from their leader, and enjoy little or no intercourse with him, for the leader may be too great to be approached by the common members of his band. In the case of the disciples their following was unusually close, for their Master was very condescending, but still their intercourse was not always of the most intimate kind at the first, and therefore it was not at first that he called them to such a festival as this supper. They began with following, and this is where we must begin. If we cannot enter as yet into closer

association with our Lord we may, at least, know his voice by his Spirit, and follow him as the sheep follow the shepherd. The most important way of following him is to trust him, and then diligently to imitate his example. This is a good beginning, and it will end well, for those who walk with him to-day shall rest with him hereafter; those who tread in his footsteps shall sit on his throne.

Being his followers, they came next to be his *disciples*. A man may have been a follower for a while, and yet may not have reached discipleship. A follower may follow blindly and hear a great deal which he does not understand; but, when he becomes a disciple, his Master instructs him and leads him into truth. To explain, to expound, to solve difficulties, to clear away doubts, and to make truth intelligible is the office of a teacher amongst his disciples. Now, it was a very blessed thing for the followers to become disciples, but still disciples are not necessarily so intimate with their Master as to sit and eat with him. Socrates and Plato knew many in the Academy whom they did not invite to their homes. My brethren, if Jesus had but called us to be his disciples and no more, we should have had cause for great thankfulness; if we had been allowed to sit at his feet and had never shared in such an entertainment as that before us, we ought to have been profoundly grateful; but now that he has favored us with a yet higher place let us never be unfaithful to our discipleship. Let us daily learn of Jesus, let us search the Bible to see what it was that he taught us, and then by the aid of his Holy Spirit; let, us scrupulously obey. Yet is there a something beyond.

Being the Lord's disciples, the chosen ones next rose to become his *servants*, which is a step in advance, since the disciple may be but a child, but the servant has some strength, has received some measure of training, and renders somewhat in return. Their Master gave them power to preach the gospel, and to execute commissions of grace, and happy were they to be called to wait upon such a Master, and aid in setting up his kingdom. My dear brethren and sisters, are you all Christ's servants consciously? If so, though the service may at times seem heavy because your faith is weak, yet be very thankful that you are servants at all, for it is better to serve God than to reign over all the kingdoms of this world. It is better to be the lowest servant of Christ than to be the greatest of men, and remain slaves to your own lusts, or mere men-pleasers. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. The servant of such a Master should rejoice in his calling, yet is there something beyond.

Towards the close of his life our Master revealed the yet nearer relation of his disciples, and uttered words like these “Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you *friends*, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” This is a great step in advance. The friend, however humble, enjoys much familiarity with his friend. The friend is told what the servant need not know. The friend enjoys a communion to which the mere servant, disciple, or follower has not attained. May we know this higher association, this dearer bond of relationship. May we not be content without the enjoyment of our Master’s friendship. “He that hath friends must show himself friendly;” and if we would have Christ’s friendship we must befriend his cause, his truth, and his people. He is a friend that loveth at all times; if you would enjoy his friendship, take care to abide in him.

Now, note that on the night before his passion, our Lord led his friends a step beyond ordinary friendship. The mere follower does not sit at table with his leader; the disciple does not claim to be a fellow-commoner with his master; the servant is seldom entertained at the same table with his lord; the befriended one is not always invited to be a guest; but here the Lord Jesus made his chosen ones to be *his table companions*; he lifted them up to sit with him at the same table, to eat of the same bread, and drink of the same cup with himself. From that position he has never degraded them; they were representative men, and where the Lord placed them he has placed all his saints permanently. All the Lord’s believing people are sitting, by sacred privilege and calling, at the same table with Jesus, for truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. He has come into our hearts, and he sups with us and we with him; we are his table companions, and shall eat bread with him in the kingdom of God.

Table companions, then, that is the answer to the question, “what this festival made the apostles?” This is what this festival shows all the members of the church of Christ to be, through divine grace, table companions with one another, and with Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. So now we shall pass on, in the second place, to notice, WHAT DID THIS TABLE-COMPANIONSHIP IMPLY?

It implied, first of all, *mutual fidelity*. This solemn eating and drinking together was a pledge of faithfulness to one another. It must have been so understood, or otherwise there would have been no force in the complaint; “He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” Did not

this mean that *because* Judas had eaten bread with his lord he was bound not to betray him, and so to lift up his heel against him? This was the seal of an implied covenant, having eaten together they were under bond to be faithful to one another. Now, as many of you as are really the servants and friends of Christ must know, that the Lord Jesus in eating with you at his table, pledges himself to be faithful to you. The Master never plays the Judas — the Judas is among the disciples. There is nothing traitorous in the Lord; he is not only able to keep that which we have committed to him, but he is faithful, and will do it. He will be faithful, not only as to the great and main matter, but also to every promise he has made. Know ye then assuredly, that your Master would not have asked you to his table to eat bread with him if he intended to desert you. He has received you as his honored guests, and fed you upon his choicest meat, and thereby he does as good as say to you, “I will never leave you, come what may, and in all times of trial, and depression, and temptation, I will be at your right hand, and you shall not be moved, and to the very last you shall prove my faithfulness and truth.”

But, beloved, you do not understand this Supper unless you are also reminded of the faithfulness that is due from you to your Lord, for the feast is common and the pledge mutual. In eating with him you plight your troth to the Crucified. Beloved, how have you kept your pledge during the past year? You have eaten bread with him, and I trust that your hearts you have never gone so far aside as to lift up your heel against him; but have you always honored him as you should? Have you acted as guests should have done? Can you remember his love to you, and put your love to him side by side with it, without being ashamed? From this time forth may the Holy Ghost work in our souls a jealous fidelity to The Well-beloved which shall not permit our hearts to wander from him, or suffer our zeal tot his glory to decline.

Again, remember that there is in this solemn eating and drinking together a pledge of confidence between the disciples themselves, as well as between the disciples and the Lord. Judas would have been a traitor if he had betrayed Peter, or John, or James so, when ye come to the one table, my brethren, ye must henceforth be true to one another. All bickerings and jealousies must cease, and a generous and affectionate spirit must rule in every bosom. If you hear any speak against those you have communed with, reckon that as you have eaten bread with them, you are bound to defend their reputations. If any railing accusation be raised against any

brother in Christ, reckon that his character is as dear to you as your own. Let a sacred Freemasonry be maintained among us, if I may liken a far higher and more spiritual union to anything which belongs to common life. Ye are members one of another, see that ye love each other with a pure heart fervently. Drinking of the same cup, eating of the same bread, you set forth before the world a token which I trust is not meant to be a lie. As it truly shows Christ's faithfulness to you, so let it as really typify your faithfulness to Christ, and to one another.

In the next place, eating and drinking together was a token of *mutual confidence*. They, in sitting there together, voluntarily avowed their confidence in each other. Those disciples trusted their Master, they knew they would not mislead or deceive them. They trusted each other also, for when they were told that one of them would betray their Lord, they did not suspect each other, but each one said — "Lord, is it I?" They had much confidence in one another, and the Lord Jesus, as we have seen, had placed great confidence in them by treating them as his friends. He had even trusted them with the great secret of his coming sufferings, and death. They were a trustful company who sat at that supper-table. Now, beloved, when you gather around this table, come in the spirit of implicit trustfulness in the Lord Jesus. If you are suffering do not doubt his love, but believe that he works all things for your good. If you are vexed with cares, prove your confidence by leaving them entirely in your Redeemer's hands. It will not be a festival of communion to you if you come here with suspicions about our Master. No, show your confidence as you eat of the bread with him. Let there also be a brotherly confidence in each other. Grievous would it be to see a spirit of suspicion and distrust among you. Suspicion is the death of fellowship. The moment one Christian imagines that another thinks hardly of him, though there may not be the slightest truth in that thought, yet straightway the root of bitterness is planted. Let us believe in one another's sincerity, for we may rest assured that each of our brethren deserves to be trusted more than we do. Turn your suspicions within, and if you must suspect, suspect your own heart; but when you meet with those who have communed with you at this table, say within yourself — "If such can deceive me, and alas! they may, then will I be content to be imposed upon rather than entertain perpetual mistrust of my fellow-Christians."

A third meaning of the assembling around the table is this *hearty fraternity*. Our Lord, in sitting down at the table with his disciples, showed himself to be one with them, a brother indeed. We do not read that there was any

order of priority by which their seats were arranged. Of course if the Grand Chamberlain at Rome had arranged the table, he would have placed Peter at the right hand of Christ and the other apostles according to the dignity of their future bishoprics in graduated positions, but all that we know about their order is this, that John sat next to the Savior and leaned upon his bosom, and that Peter sat a good way off — we feel sure he did, because it is said that he “beckoned” unto John; if he had sat next to him he would have whispered to him, but he beckoned to him, and so he must have been some way down the table, if, indeed, there was any “down” or “up” in the arrangement of the guests. We believe the fact was that they sat there on a sacred equality, the Lord Jesus, the Elder Brother, among them, and all else arranged according to those words “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” Let us feel then, in coming to the table again at this time, that we are linked in ties of sacred relationship with Jesus Christ, who is exalted in heaven, and that through him our relationship with our fellow-Christians is very near and intimate. O that Christian brotherhood were more real. The very word “brother” has come to be ridiculed as a piece of hypocrisy, and well it may, for it is mostly used as a cant, phrase, and means very little in many cases. But it ought to mean something. You have no right to come to that table unless you really feel that those who are washed in Jesu’s blood have a claim upon the love of your heart, and the activity of your benevolence. What, will ye live together for ever in heaven, and will ye shew no affection for one another here below? It is your Master’s new command that ye love one another — will ye disregard it? He has given this as the badge of Christians, — “Hereby shall ye know that ye are my disciples” — not if ye wear a gold cross, but — “if ye have love one to another.” That is the Christian’s badge of his being, in very truth, a disciple of Jesus Christ. Here, at this table, we find fraternity. Whosoever eateth this sacred supper declares himself to be one of a brotherhood in Christ, a brotherhood striving for the same cause, having sincere sympathy, being members of each other, and all of them members of the body of Christ. God make this to be a fact throughout Christendom even now, and how will the world marvel as it cries, “See how these Christians love one another!”

But the Table means more yet: it signifies common enjoyment. He eats, and they eat, the same bread. He drinks, and they drink, of the same cup. There is no distinction in the viands. What meaneth this? Doth it not say to us that the joy of Christ is the joy of his people. Hath he not said — “That

my joy may be fulfilled in them that their joy may be full?" The very joy that delights Christ is that which he prepares for his people. You, if you be a true believer, have sympathy in Christ's joy, you delight to see his kingdom come, the truth advanced, sinners saved, grace glorified, holiness promoted, God exalted; this also is his delight. Oh! but my dear brethren and fellow-professors, are you sure that your chief joy is the same as Christ's? Are you certain that the main-stay of your life is the same as that which was his meat and his drink, namely, to do the will of the heavenly Father? If not, I am afraid you have no business at this table; but if it be so, and you come to the table, then I pray that you may share the joy of Christ. May you joy in him as he joys in you, and so may your fellowship be sweet.

Lastly on this point. The feast at the one table indicated *familiar affection*. It is the child's place to sit at the table with its parents, for there affection rules. It is the place of honor to sit at the table — "Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table," but the honor is such as love suggests and not fear. Men at the table often reveal their minds more fully than elsewhere. If you want to understand a man you do not go to see him at the Stock Exchange, or follow him into the market; for there he keeps himself to himself; but you go to his table, and there he unbosoms himself. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ sat at the table with his disciples! 'Twas a meal; 'twas a meal of a homely kind; intimate intercourse ruled the hour. Oh! brethren and sisters, I am afraid we have come to this table sometimes and gone away again without having had intercourse with Christ, and then it has been an empty formality and nothing more. I thank God that coming to this table every Sabbath-day, as some of us do, and have done for many years, we have yet for the most part enjoyed the nearest communion with Christ here that we have ever known, and have a thousand times blessed his name for this ordinance. Still, there is such a thing as only seeing and eating the bread and the wine, and losing all the sacred meaning thereof. Do pray the Lord to reveal himself to you. Ask that it may not be a dead form to you, but that now in very deed you may tell to Christ your heart, while he shall show to you his hands and his side, and make known to you his agonies and death, wherewith he redeemed you from the wrath to come. All this, and vastly more, is the teaching of the table at which Jesus sat with the twelve. I have often wondered why the Church of Rome does not buy up all those pictures by one of its most renowned painters, Leonardo da Vinci, in which our Lord is represented as sitting at the table with his disciples, for these are a contradiction of the

Popish doctrine on this subject. As long as that picture remains on the wall, and as long as copies of it are spread everywhere, the Church of Rome stands convicted of going against the teaching of the earlier church by setting up an altar when she confesses herself that aforetime it was not considered to be an altar of sacrifice but a table of fellowship, at which the Lord did not kneel, nor stand as an officiating priest, but at which he and his disciples sat. We, a least, have no rebukes to fear from antiquity, for we follow and mean to follow the primitive method. Our Lord has given us commandment to do this until he comes — not to alter it and change it, but just to “do this,” and nothing else, in the same manner until he shall come.

III. We wilt draw to a close by asking WHAT FURTHER MAY BE INFERRED FROM THIS SITTING OF CHRIST WITH HIS DISCIPLES AT THE TABLE

Answer — First, *there may be inferred from it the equality of all the saints*. There were here twelve apostles. Their apostleship, however, is not concerned in the matter. When the Lord’s Supper was celebrated after all the apostles had gone to heaven, was there to be any alteration because the apostles had gone? Not at all. Believers are to do this in remembrance of their Lord *until he shall come*. There was no command for a change when the first apostles were all gone from the church. No, it was to be the same still — bread and wine and the surrounding of the table, until the Lord came. I gather, then, the equality of all saints. There is a difference in office, there was a difference in miraculous gift, and there are great differences in growth in grace; but still, in the household of God, all saints — whether apostles, pastors, teachers, deacons, elders, or private member being all equal, eat at one table. There is but one bread, there is but one juice of the vine here. It is only in the church of God that those words so wild politically can ever be any more than a dream, “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.” There you have them — where Jesus is; not in a republic, but in the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, where all rule and dominion are vested in him, and all of us willingly acknowledge him as our glorious Head, and all we are brethren. Never fall into the idea that olden believers were of a superior nature to ourselves. Do not talk of *Saint Paul*, and *Saint Matthew*, and *Saint Mark*, unless you are prepared to speak of *Saint William* and *Saint Jane* sitting over yonder, for if they be in Christ they are as truly saints as those first saints were, and I ween there may be some who have attained even to higher saintship than many whom tradition has canonized. The heights of saintship are by grace open to us all, and the Lord invites us to ascend. Do not think that what the Lord wrought in the

early saints cannot be wrought in you. It is because you think so that you do not pray for it, and because you do not pray for it you do not attain it. The grace of God sustained the apostles, that grace is not less to-day than it was then. The Lord's arm is not shortened; his power is not straitened. If we can but believe, and be as earnest as those first saints were, we shall subdue kingdoms yet, and the day shall come when the gods of Hindooism, and the falsehoods of Mohammed, and the lies of Rome, shall as certainly be over-thrown as were the ancient philosophies and the classic idolatries of Greece and Rome by the teaching of the first ministers of Christ. There is the same table for you, and the same food is there in emblem, and grace can make you like those holy men, for you are bought with the same blood, and quickened by the same Spirit. Believe only, for all things are possible to him that believeth.

Another inference, only to be hinted at, is this — *that the wants of the Church in all ages will be the same, and the supplies for the Church's wants will never vary.* There will be the table still, and the table with the same viands upon it — bread still, nothing more than bread for food; wine still, nothing less than wine for drink. The church will always want the same food, the same Christ, the same gospel. Out on ye, traitors, who tell us that we are to shape our gospel to suit this enlightened nineteenth century. Out on ye, false-hearts, who would have us tone down the everlasting truth that shall outlive the sun, and moon, and stars, to suit your boasted culture, which is but varnished ignorance! No, that truth which of old was mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, is mighty still, and we will maintain it to the death! The church wants the doctrines of grace to-day as much as when Paul, or Augustine, or Calvin preached them; the church wants justification by faith, the substitutionary atonement, and regeneration, and divine sovereignty to be preached from her pulpits as much as in days of yore, and by God's grace she shall have them too.

Lastly, there is in this truth, that Christ has brought all his disciples into the position of table-companions, *a prophecy that this shall be the portion of all his people for ever.* In heaven there cannot be less of privilege than on earth. It cannot be that in the celestial state believers will be degraded from what they have been below. What were they, then, below? Table-companions. What shall they be in heaven above? Table-companions still, and blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham,

and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God,” and the Lord Jesus shall be at the head of the table. Now, what will his table of joy be? Set your imagination to work, and think what will be his festival of soul when his reward shall be all before him and his triumph all achieved. Have ye imagined it? Can ye conceive it? Whatever it is, you shall share in it. I repeat those words — whatever it is, the least believer shall share in it. You, poor working-woman. oh! what a change for you, to sit among princes, near to your Lord Jesus, all your toil and want for ever ended! And you, sad child of suffering, scarcely able to come up to the assembly of God’s people, and going back, perhaps, to that bed of languishing again — you shall have no pains there, but you shall be for ever with the Lord, and the joy of Christ shall be your joy for ever and ever! Oh! can you not realize those words of Dr. Watts: —

*“Yes, and before we rise
To that immortal slate,
The thought of such amazing bliss
Should constant joy create?”*

In the anticipation of the joy that shall be yours, forget your present troubles, rise superior to the difficulties of the hour, and if you cannot rejoice in the present, yet rejoice in the future, which shall so soon be your own.

We finish with this word of deep regret — that many here cannot understand what we have been talking about, and have no part in it. There are some of you who must not come to the table of communion because you do not love Christ. You have not trusted him; you have no part in him. There is no salvation in sacraments. Believe me, they are but delusions to those who do not come to Christ with their heart. You must not come to the outward sign if you have not the thing signified. Here is the way of salvation — believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. To believe in him is to trust him; to use an old word it is recumbency; it is leaning on him; resting on him. Here I lean, I rest my whole weight on this support before me; do so with Christ in a spiritual sense: lean on him. You have a load of sin, lean on him, sin and all. You are all unworthy, and weak, and perhaps miserable, then cast on him the weakness, the unworthiness, the misery and all. Take him to be all in all to you, and when you have thus trusted him, you will have become his follower; go on by humilily to be his disciple, by obedience to be his servant, by love to be his friend, and by communion to be his table companion.

The Lord so lead you, for Jesus' sake.

RARA- AVIS — A BOOK

A REVIEW, BY C. H. SPURGEON.

Preachers abound but divines are few. The printing press pours forth a mass of matter but a real book is a phenomenon. We count ourselves happy, for we have met with a divine in D. James Culross, late of Stirling, and now of Highbury Hill, London, and in his new work entitled "John, whom Jesus loved," we have found *a book*. It is a part of our appointed suffering in this present life, to be compelled to winnow heaps of literature with great results in chaff and dust, and small gain in bread-corn; and therefore our rejoicing is the greater when grain comes to our garner as clean provender, in good weight and measure. It is essential that great truths should be popularized, and those who exercise themselves in so doing answer a most useful purpose, therefore we have not a word to say against certain teeming bookmakers, except that we wish they diluted their material a little less, and were not so given to hammering out a thought to the extremity of thinness. To the student, the productions of these vendors of evangelical milk and water are less profitable than wearisome, and he turns with eagerness to those who will give him condensed thought, and truth in solid form. In reading certain of the Puritan authors, one feels that he has come into a land wherein a man may eat bread without scarceness — a land whose very dust is gold. The art of writing books like theirs is not wholly lost, for now and then we are gladdened by a volume of the same solidity: the work before us is a case in point. It is a great book for matter though very modest in size. It is perhaps compressed a little too much for the general reader, which is a virtuous fault for students. We can conceive of many readers suffering from indigestion after reading one of the chapters, for in our own case, a few pages sufficed us for a day's nutriment, and we were compelled to pause, and meditate.

The opening paragraphs are a fair specimen of the whole, and therefore we submit them to the reader's own judgment. The chapter deals with John — *the Man*, and our extract treats of his relation to his Lord: — "The central point of history is the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh. Even those who deny his higher nature must admit that his appearing is the new

beginning of the ages. His brief sojourn on earth exhibits a perfect love, combined with perfect truth and righteousness, which men had not even imaged to themselves as possible. In his presence sin becomes exceeding sinful, and holiness exceeding lovely. He is the faultless Type of humanity; the 'Express Image,' in our nature, of the Invisible God; the Revealer of heavenly things; the Redeemer from evil; the Founder and King of a new creation; the Dispenser of the Holy Spirit; the Life from whom all life flows. The Secret of nature, providence, and grace is unlocked in him, 'for whom are all things.' It is a mighty step taken when I exchange my barren abstraction of 'Deity' for the I AM of the Old Testament; a still mightier when I see the I AM livingly in Jesus Christ. During his brief and lowly transit through mortal life, glorifying the Father and bearing the burden of our salvation, comparatively few eyes were drawn to him; and even of these few, many 'seeing, saw not;' the place he occupied was that of a Stranger whom the world did not know. That all the ends of the earth, and all ages, might have tidings of him, he chose certain followers, and received them into the inner circle of communion, who should hear his words, see his works, witness the disclosures of his glory, become penetrated with his light, receive the impress of his personality; and who in turn should declare, with human lips, what they had seen and heard, and show, in human life, the Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them: an infinitely more gracious thing for us, more suited to the needs both of our intellect and heart, than if he had left behind him some stereotyped book setting forth in naked abstractness what we must believe and do.

Because he himself was so truly and deeply *the Wonderful*, it was necessary that his witnesses, who were also to be the future organs of his Spirit, should be men of broadly varied nature — not copies one of another, like images of clay cast in kindred mould, but differing in mental constitution, experience, spiritual affinities, and faculty of vision. No single man could take in his full image, or apprehend, in its completeness and unity and infinite reaches of application, the truth revealed in him; and therefore the 'chosen witnesses' were many and many-natured. And farther, as no single flower can show forth all that is in the sun — as it takes the whole bloom of the year to do so, from the first snowdrop that pierces the dark earth to the latest flower of autumn — so he needed them all for the adequate forthtelling of his holy personality."

Many writers are mere echoes of other men's voices, and are mainly of use in stirring up pure minds by way of remembrance; they imitate the good

steward in bringing forth things old, but things new are quite out of their way. Dried fruits are their merchandise; such a thing as a freshly-gathered peach is never seen in their basket. One of the excellencies of Dr. Culross is the freshness of his thought. The dew is on his branch; he is no withered bough of the autumn forest. His mind allows young flowers to break through its soil after their own fashion, and to blossom in their own sweet way; take this as a specimen: — “So far from being unpractical, there is nothing *more* practical — for all kinds of true work — than this letting the love of Christ get in and about the roots of our being. In a window, this summer, there was a flower-pot containing a plant whose use it was to be odorous and beautiful. The leaves were just beginning to curl up. I poured a cupful of water into the saucer in which the flower-pot stood; and a child, looking on, asked, *What good will that do? Why did you not rather pour water on the leaves?* It was a child that asked — and I answered the best way I could, that when God would bring beauty and fragrance and healthfulness into our lives, he waters us at the root. And his rain does good by going down there.”

Here is another equally instructive parable: — “Once, I remember, in looking through a painter’s portfolio, which contained a number of unfinished sketches, — just as they flashed up before his inner eye, — one little sketch attracted and interested me specially. It was the sketch of a martyr’s face. Noticing the interest which his sketch excited, he took me into another room, and showed me the picture finished and almost living to the eye; and in the finished picture I saw at once the earlier sketch. Even so — if one may reverently use the parable — Christian men and women are the unfinished sketch; but God sees the perfect Christ in each of them — the Christ to whose glorious image they shall one day be perfectly conformed; and each of them he sees in the perfect Christ.”

The following is a remarkable description of John: — “A traveler, giving an account of an ancient volcano which he visited, tells of a verdurous cup-like hollow on the mountain summit, and, where the fierce heat had once burned, a still, clear pool of water, looking up like an eye to the beautiful heavens above. It is an apt parable of this man. Naturally and originally volcanic, capable of profoundest passion and daring, he is new-made by grace, till in his old age he stands out in calm grandeur of character, and depth and largeness of soul, with all the gentleness and graces of Christ adorning him — a man, as I image him to myself, with a face so noble that

kings, might do him homage, and so sweet that children would run to him for his blessing.”

A still more vivid instance of the freshness of our author’s thought will be found in his explanation of what is usually thought to be the ambitious request of the mother of Zebedee’s children for her two sons; in this he runs counter so generally received notions, and not without much reason. There is room for discussion upon the point, but there can be no two opinions as to the thoughtfulness of the suggested explanations.

“With heartless and blind pertinacity, commentators ground accusations which they fail to prove, upon this request, and oftener reveal their own evil thoughts than enter into the spirit of the two disciples. As the story is told in the Gospels, I do not read ‘selfish ambition’ in it, nor ‘immense egotism,’ nor a ‘proud contempt of Others,’ nor ‘a proof of the weakness and wickedness of human nature,’ nor a violation by ‘that woman’ and her sons of the primary conditions of brotherhood. On the contrary, I read John’s faith in Jesus as the ‘King most wonderful,’ his love to him, his high-hearted fortitude, and desire for the glory that he alone gives. We wrong the man by detaching his request from its historical connection, and inventing a connection of our own for it. It is like the buying of land in Rome, when the city was in the power of an enemy. The Lord had just foretold, in vivid and awful terms, his approaching sufferings — how he should be condemned, mocked, scourged, spit upon, crucified, and the third day should rise again. No words could have been plainer. It is at this moment, in connection with this announcement, and not knowing what the ‘rising’ on the third day might mean, that the brothers ask places at his right hand and his left, in his glory. What if they remember his large and varied teaching about exaltation in the kingdom of heaven? What if they understand, however dimly, that the greatest greatness is that which can bear to be despised and rejected of men — that the chiefest power is that of suffering love? What if they understand, however dimly, that all greatness under him is held in like manner — that all power under him is like-conditioned? What if their desire on this occasion has been quickened into energy by his very prediction of the cross, and is kin to that of Paul, ‘that I may know . . . the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead’? When it is put to them, they hold themselves prepared to suffer with him — to drink of his cup and to be baptised with his baptism, sharing his sufferings of both kinds, inward and outward. It is

true, they knew not what was involved in their request, and the means of its accomplishment, and the Lord tells them so: — who knows all that lies in his own prayers? — but the Lord reads their sincerity of heart, and accepts them, and they shall learn afterwards, in good time, how deep and serious their word was. It is noticeable that while Jesus explains that places in glory are given by the Father to those for whom they are ‘prepared,’ he does not blame the ambition of the brothers, but (if at all) their ignorance. I do not say that unworthier thoughts were not present in their minds; but I cannot join in the sweeping assertions which ascribe to them a mere selfish and vulgar ambition, as if they were trying to drag down others from their seats and to mount in their stead. (“It may be that an action displeases us, which would please us if we knew its true aim and whole extent.” — *Letter of Meta Klopstock*.) I do not think they could have brought *that* (as they did) under the eye of the meek and lowly One. Ambition there is; but I would venture to call it noble, though as yet untaught in the highest truth; not that soiled and unholy thing, the selfish lust of power or of human admiration — the thirst of fame, which is well-nigh as base as the thirst of gold, but that *greatness of mind* which the Lord himself creates, and to which he makes appeal, as when he promises his apostles to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel — when he tells that the faithful servant shall have dominion over many things — or when he says, ‘If any man serve me, *him will my Father honor*.’ We shall not know the Apostle John till we recognize his ‘high humility,’ his noble ambition to be great, seated by the side of the suffering King in His glory. Were we more Christlike, we should be able to enter more sympathetically into this aspect of his Christianhood. The spirit of simple contentment with lowly things is of Christ’s giving (and is one of his most precious gifts) — as in the shepherd-boy in the Valley of Humiliation, who sang —

*‘He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide,’*

but so too is the princely spirit. The one evil thing in high or low is selfishness.”

The excellent author deals with John — the man, the companion of Jesus, the apostle after the ascension, the writer, and the theologian; giving us also a chapter upon his influence, and an appendix of legends and traditions concerning him, thus furnishing us with a full length portrait of “that

disciple whom Jesus loved.” He has evidently chosen a congenial subject, and has such sympathy with the man before him, that he is able to see far into his mind and heart. It is a small matter to recapitulate the mere facts of a great life, but to unveil their secret springs requires a mind in harmony with the person described. One could hardly imagine Luther writing upon John with any great unction, nor would the judgment of Knox be peculiarly appreciative: they could either of them have represented him grandly as the son of thunder, but the tenderer side of his character would have baffled them. Even to comment upon John’s writings is far from easy, he is so simple, and yet so fathomlessly deep, he uses so many of those pregnant monosyllables, so much more expressive than long words. Dr. Culross is a Christian of the Johannean stamp, and hence he is at home with the beloved disciple. He has not fallen into the common mistake of depicting John as a molluscous character, a sickly sentimentalist, whose sweetness of disposition was due to the effeminacy of his nature; he has more justly depicted the brave apostle. Upon this point we quote the following: — “Like all men of true, powerful, and loving nature — yea, like the Lamb himself — he is capable of vehement and burning anger. This characteristic shows itself — very mistakenly indeed, and so as to need rebuke — in his proposal to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village that would not receive Jesus. It shows itself also — so as *not* to need rebuke — very largely throughout his writings. Nowhere else, save from the lips of Incarnate Mercy, do we find such awful words launched against sin: all the more terrible that they are so very calm, and so evidently proceed from a tender and loving heart. (“Anger is one of the sinews of the soul. He that wants it hath a maimed mind, and, with Jacob, sinew-shrunk in the hollow of his thigh, must needs halt.” — *Thomas Fuller*.) Because he speaks so much of love, he has frequently been pictured as one of those shrinking and yielding natures, deficient in nerve and stamina, unfit for the battle-strife, that are left at home to comfort the women and children; whereas, in reality, though gentle as a child, he carries in his bosom the germ of all strength and heroism; and the volume and force of his being are as remarkable as its quality. He is not in the least sentimental. Nowhere does he exhibit trace or taint of that false liberality which bids truth and lie shake hands and be friends, or judicially binds them over to keep the peace; far less of that ‘philosophic breadth’ which places Jesus Christ, Zoroaster, Sakya-Mouni, Mahomet (and why not by-and-by-Joseph Smith?) in the same Pantheon. He is full of the grand intolerance of love; incapable of compromise or truce with falsehood, however mighty or loftily throned. If

a man come and bring not the doctrine of Christ, whosoever biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds. He never puts himself forward in the sight of others, challenging observation, but yet is ever found by his Master's side in the hour of danger, quietly, and as of course; one of those who willingly offered themselves, and did not turn back in the day of battle. Thus, on the night of the betrayal, he closely follows Jesus from the garden, goes in along with him to the place of trial and judgment, and never for a moment falls away from him. Peter, too, follows, but afar off, and takes his place with the officers and servants, as if he belonged to their company; and there lay his weakness and danger. John goes in with Jesus, quietly, and as a simple matter of course; and in this very cleaving to the Lord lay his safety. Again, at the crucifixion, he held his station near the cross of his Master all day, a witness of his dreadful sufferings; exhibiting that rarest form of courage, which so few even of strong men are capable of — the courage to stand still and look upon the sufferings of a beloved friend, protracted and intensifying from hour to hour, which we can do nothing whatever to relieve. Ah, it takes courage of the loftiest order for *that!*”

That our author is himself by no means undecided in his views, or wishful to gain the cheap honors which are awarded to modern “liberality” is clear enough from many passages of this work. Some of the notes are so especially happy on this point, and so accurately hit the nail on the head, that we cannot do better than reproduce them: even when they are quotations they will reveal the man, for the set of an author's thought may be seen as clearly in his quotations as in his original matter. Here are two notes from page 23: —

“There is a legitimate place for compromise, but it is not the realm of truth. Take an illustration which keeps clear of all theological complication. One man says, *-Five times six are thirty.* Another says, *-Five times six are twenty-eight.* Our liberal friend steps forward and says, *Come now, don't fight about it; you must love one another; split the difference, and say, Five times six are twenty-nine.* Even in arithmetical discussions, men should show a right spirit, and not be overbearing or selfish or bitter; they are all the likelier to arrive at truth in this way; but compromise is no step toward truth — does not even lie on the road to it at all.”

“The vague cloudy men are always talking against intolerance. Why, our very calling is to be very intolerant; intolerant of proved error and known sin. The evil is, that we are not intolerant enough; though, at the same time, we are not benevolent enough. A man, however, must have a clear eye and a large heart, before he has a right to be intolerant, either towards concrete error or concrete sin.” — *Colloquia Peripatetica: Dr. John Duncan.* — “Thou knowest the serpent cunning of this liberal spirit It is killing our children; it hath already slain its tens of thousands; this city is sick unto death, and dying of the mortal wounds which she hath received from it.” — *Edward Irving.*

Another note deals a well-aimed blow at the modern doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, a dogma which has deluded thousands, and is as deadly an error as ever reeked from the bottomless pit. If all men are sons of God already, there is no need of the new birth, and conversion is a superfluity. One of the theories which have been invented to justify infant baptism required this flattering falsehood to bolster it, and therefore it has been received pretty extensively among Congregationalists, to whom we wish grace enough to renounce both the theory and its buttress. Dr. Culross says: — “There is a theology — I hope not growing — which gives the ‘relationship’ in the unqualified New Testament sense, without the ‘birth.’ Milton makes the devil say:

*‘The son of God I also am, or was;
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are sons of God,’*

I think I have met this very reasoning in prose, — only not put in the devil’s mouth. If believers are but as Adam was — if *creaturehood* is all that lies in John’s expression, ‘*sons of God,*’ (then to say the least) the expression is poorer than it looks. As to the doctrines that ‘*humanity was born again, in the incarnation of the Son of God,*’ I do not find it anywhere in John’s writings, nor do I see proof of it in the world’s actual condition. ‘*As many as receive him*’ are ‘sons,’ — however scorn, fully such a doctrine may be talked out of ‘enlightened’ and ‘intellectual’ circles.”

It is altogether without reserve that we commend the work before us. It is not a bottle of milk for babes, but a portion of meat for men. A half-a-dozen readings will only make it more interesting to those who meditate upon what they read.

We have heard of a gentleman who entered an hotel and ordered a dinner of chops. One chop was brought him with due state, this being considered to be sufficient for a meal. The hungry diner inserted his fork into the lonely portion of flesh, and as he put it upon his plate, he said, "Yes, this is the sort of thing, bring me a dish of them." So have we risen from the perusal of many a modern book, feeling that the one or two thoughts which we had obtained were good, but we wanted more of them: no such tantalizing have we undergone while reading this work, but on the contrary, we have had a feast of fat things full of marrow.

A POLITICAL DISSENTER

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

DURING the last month it has been our lot to be abused both in public and by letter as few men have been, for having in a few sentences expressed our belief that Caesar had better mind his own things, and let the things of God alone. Many of the letters we have received are of such a character that they would disgrace the cause of Beelzebub himself. Certainly, the alliance of Church and State, will never come to an end from want of bullies to defend it. A few communications have been courteous, and even rational, but by far the larger proportion have been simply an amalgam of abusive epithets and foolish bombast. We are by no means fond of such things, and yet so far from being depressed by them they have even caused us a little extra mirth. Our experience as to the effect of furious attacks has been somewhat similar to that of Luther, of whom Michelet has the following note: "Being one day in very high spirits at table, 'Be not scandalized,' he said, 'to see me so merry. I have just read a letter violently abusing me. Our affairs must be going on well, since the devil is storming so.'"

From the remarks which follow we most emphatically exempt certain honorable clergymen who love a man none the less for being outspoken, and do not require silence as the price of their friendship. Some such we know and honor. They are men of a noble stamp; fair antagonists when they must oppose, and brethren in Christ even then. Would God there were more such, and then the exasperations which now embitter discussion

would give place to mutual concessions, or at worst to courteous arguments.

Among the charges hurled at us is one which our accusers evidently regard as a very serious one. They call us "*a Political Dissenter*," and seem as if they had delivered themselves of a terrible epithet, whose very sound would annihilate us. It is a curious that that neither the sound nor the sense of those awful words has impressed us with fear, or moved us to repentance. Politics, if they are honest, are by no means sinful, or the office of a legislator would be fatal to the soul, and Dissenters, if they dissent from error, are commendable individuals: as, therefore, neither the "*political*" nor the "*dissenter*" is necessarily bad, the mixture of two good or indifferent things can scarcely be intolerably evil. One would imagine from the mouthing which our opponents give to the words, that a political Dissenter must be a peculiarly ferocious kind of tiger, a specially venomous viper, or perhaps a griffin, dragon, or "monster dire, of shape most horrible;" but as far as we can make out the meaning of the words, he is only a Dissenter who demands his natural civil rights, a Nonconformist who longs for that religious equality before the law which impartial justice should award to every citizen. A Dissenter who is godly and humble, and knows his duty to his betters, and walks in a lowly and reverential manner to them, is never political; he is styled *pious*, and held up to admiration at meetings of the Church Defense Association, though at other places, seeing that with all his piety he is still a Dissenter, he is duly snubbed by the same parish priests who so much admire him. If a Dissenter would have a good report of those within the Established pale he must toady to all rectors, vicars, and curates — he must "bless God for raising up such a bulwark for our Protestant liberties as the Church of England as by law established," or at least; he must be contentedly silent under his wrongs, and never open his mouth to obtain his rights. Cease to be a man, and you will be a *pious Dissenter*; but speak out and show the slightest independence of mind, and you will be an odious *political Dissenter*. Be thankful for *the toleration which you enjoy*, and eat your humble pie in a corner, and the rector will condescend to meet you at the Bible Society's meetings; but dare to call your soul your own and you shall be put into the black books, among those dreadful emissaries of Mr. Miall. Piety in the clerical mind is pretty generally synonymous with subservience to their reverences, but we hope that without being utterly impious we may question the correctness of their judgment. Some of the most prayerful, spiritual, and Christ-like men we

have ever met with, were as fully convinced of the evils of the present establishment, and as earnest for separation between Church and State, as ever we can be. They were saints, and yet political Dissenters: they lived near to God, and enjoyed daily fellowship with heaven, and yet, like the apostle Paul, they valued their civil rights, and spoke out when they saw them invaded. As names and forms of departed worthies rise before us, men of whom the world was not worthy, who were the political Dissenters of their day, we feel reassured, and are by no means disposed to change our company. The men who judged the piety of our predecessors, as they now judge ours, must be little acquainted with what piety means if they separate it from courage and independence. Their endorsement of our piety we never asked, and if they gave it we should begin to suspect our own position before God. Far from us be the cringing, cowardly sycophancy which makes the poor dissenting minister the patronized minion of the aristocratic rector; equally far from us be the obsequious silence which gains custom for the Nonconformist tradesman who sells his conscience as well as his wares. If these be *pious*, may we be clear of such piety. To us let it happen to speak the truth and bow the knee to no man, if this be what is meant by being political.

It is easy to throw stones at others, but glass houses should whisper caution. If it be so terrible an evil for a Dissenter to be political, what must be the condition of a *political Churchman*? Yet every clergyman is just *that*, since he is the employee of a political church, or rather he is commissioned by the political authorities to attend to the national religion; he is therefore a political Churchman *ex officio*. Moreover, if it be a serious injury to the piety of a Dissenting minister to attend a meeting of the Liberation Society once in a year, is there no loss of grace in attending a Church Defense Association? Mr. Spurgeon speaks about a score sentences in a sermon upon Caesar and his proper sphere, and this is so detrimental to his soul's prosperity that he receives letters by the score from excessively gracious Churchmen who are in agonies over his spiritual declension. This is very kind, and motherly, but is the like care taken with that excellent man, Mr. Ryle, who has not only delivered a great many political speeches, but has written pamphlets on the subject of Church and State? We trust our worthy brother has been nursed with much watchfulness, for he has the political disease very heavily upon him it we may judge from certain of his tracts. He is a fearful instance of a Political Churchman. We believe the High Church party consider him to be a

Dissenter, and we rejoice to believe that they are pretty near the mark, judging the good man doctrinally; and if they are right in their views Mr. Ryle is a political Dissenter himself, only he is out of his proper place. Will some of his friends remind him of his danger? And will they at the same time take note, that for every word upon politics spoken by us, pious churchmen can be found who have uttered ten or a hundred. In them it seems to be commendable, and in us censurable: how is this?

To the spiritual Churchman we would say : — Take the eighteen volumes of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, and see if you can find eighteen pages of matter which even look towards politics; nay, more, see if there be one solitary sentence concerning politics, which did not, to the preacher's mind, appear to arise out of his text, or to flow from the natural run of his subject. The abstinence of the preacher from such themes would be eminently praiseworthy, if it were not possibly censurable; for he may have neglected a distasteful duty.

The truth is that many of us are loath to touch politics at all, and would never do so if we were not driven to it. Our life-theme is the gospel, and to deal with the sins of the State is our "strange work," which we only enter upon under the solemn constraints of duty. To see Popery made the national religion has aroused the gentlest among us. An evangelical church, imposed upon us by the State, was a grievance and a wrong, but to force a shamelessly Ritualistic Establishment upon us as the national religion is a tyranny which no Englishman ought to bear. Is an Anglican priest to swing his censer in our faces in the name of the nation? Are the idols and breadden deities of Ritualism to be held up before us, with this exclamation, "These be thy gods, O England!" The case is so, and we protest for we are Protestants — we will not tamely endure it for we worship the living God. We will go on with our spiritual duties quietly enough if those in power will deal out equal measure to all religions. We shall be delighted to have no more grounds of appeal to public justice, and no more reasons for difference with our fellow Christians. If we are political, give us our rights and we shall be so no more. If our spirituality be precious to our antagonists, let them deliver us from the temptation which puts it in peril.

For a Christian minister to be an active partisan of Whigs or Tories, busy in canvassing, and eloquent at public meetings for rival factions, would be of ill repute. For the Christian to forget his heavenly citizenship, and occupy himself about the objects of place-hunters, would be degrading to his high

calling: but there are points of inevitable contact between the higher and the lower spheres, points where politics persist in coming into collision with our faith, and there we shall be traitors both to heaven and earth if we consult our comfort by slinking into the rear. Till religion in England is entirely free from State patronage and control, till the Anglican Papacy ceases to be called the national religion, till every man of every Faith shall be equal before the eye of the law as to his religious rights, we cannot, and dare not cease to be political. Because we fear God, and desire his glory, we must be political — it is a part of our piety to be so. When nearest to God in prayer, we pray that his church may neither oppress nor be oppressed; when walking in holiest fellowship with Jesus, we long that he alone may be head of the church, and that she may no more defile herself with the kings of the earth. Let not our opponents mistake us: we dare carry our cause before the throne of God, and habitually do so. Our protests before man are repeated in our prayers to God. Our deepest religious emotions are aroused by the struggle forced upon us. We will not say that Nonconformists who are not abused as political Dissenters are not pious, but we will say that, if *we* shirked the work which makes *us* political, we should prove ourselves traitors to the Lord our God. The curse of Meroz would fall upon us if we came not up to the help of the Lord in this the day of battle. The history of the nation, and the destiny of millions, may depend upon the faithfulness of Nonconformists at this hour, and our persuasion is that the day will come when it shall be fame rather than dishonor to have been reckoned — A POLITICAL DISSENTER.

A SERMON AND A REMINISCENCE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” — 1 Peter 2. 7.

WHEN one has a cold in the head it is a very effectual hindrance to thought; you may do what you will, and select what subject you may, but somehow or other the mind has lost its elasticity. I frankly confess that for this reason I selected this text for my discourse. I thought that perhaps if the head would not work, the heart might; and, that if the thoughts came not, yet the emotions might. Emotions may well be stirred in the preacher if not in the hearer by the memories awakened by this passage. For I remember well

that more than twenty-two years ago, the first attempted sermon that I ever made was from this text. I had been asked to walk out to the little village of Teversham, some little distance from the town of Cambridge, in which I lived, to accompany a young man whom I supposed to be the preacher for the evening, and on the way I said to him that I trusted God would bless him in his labors. "Oh dear," said he, "I never preached in my life. I never thought of doing such a thing; I was asked to walk with you, and I sincerely hope that God will bless *you* in *your* preaching." "Nay," said I, "but I never preached, and I don't know that I could do anything of the sort." We walked together till we came to the place, my inmost soul being all in a tremble as to what would happen. When we found the congregation assembled, and no one else there to speak of Jesus, though I was only sixteen years of age, as I found that I was expected to preach, I did preach, and this was the text. If a raw recruit could speak upon anything, surely this theme would suit him. If one were dying this would be the text, if one were distracted with a thousand cares this would be the text, because its teaching is experimental — its meaning wells up from the inner consciousness, and needs neither a clear brain nor an eloquent tongue. To the believer it is not a thing which somebody else has taught him; it is a matter of fact, which he knows within his own soul, that Christ is precious *to him*, and he can bear testimony concerning it, although not always such bold testimony as he could wish. I intend to let my heart run over like a full cup, just as the thought comes to my heart it shall be poured out. Let us go then at once to our text, and speak a little, first, *about believers*; then, *about their appreciation of Christ*; and then about how they show it.

I. ABOUT BELIEVERS. "Unto you which believe." Believers are getting to be rather scarce things now-a-days: the doubters have it: they are the men who claim all the wisdom of the period. There is scarcely a singly historical fact but what, is doubted now. I fancy the existence of the human race must be a matter of question with some persons. I believe some imagine that not even themselves are actually existent; certain ideas of themselves exist, but not themselves! We know not how far the human mind will go in this direction: but surely there must be a limit to doubting. Wonderful is the capacity of faith, but a hundred times more wonderful is the capacity of unbelief. The most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers. He who refuses to swallow the gnat of scriptural difficulty, usually swallows camels in large quantities of other difficulties of all sorts. The text speaks of

believers, and for my part I am happy to know that a man is reckoned among believers of any sort rather than with doubters.

But the believers mentioned here are not mere believers, they are spiritual believers, Christian believers, they believe in Christ Jesus. It is only to such that Christ is precious. In the word of God there are many expressions with regard to believing in Christ. We read of believing in him, believing *upon* him, and believing him. Now, if I understand aright, believing *in* him means this: believing that he is what he claims to be; as, for instance, that he is the sent One of God, the Messiah, that he is King in Israel, that he is the Son of God, that he is the Word that was God and was in the beginning with God, that he is the Priest making atonement for our sins, that he is the Head of the Church. and so on. That is to believe in him, to accept him as being what God's Word says he is, to believe God's testimony concerning his Son. But believing *upon* him goes further, for when a man believes upon Jesus, or, on Jesus, he trusts him, he rests himself upon him; for the pardon of his sin he relies upon the Savior's atoning sacrifice; for eternal life he rests upon the Savior's immortality; for his resurrection he looks to the Savior's power; for everything he looks to his Redeemer; he leans upon him, he believes on him. And this, mark you, is essential to salvation, for we may believe Christ to be God, and yet perish; we may believe Christ to be the priest putting away sin by his atoning sacrifice, and yet perish. The faith that saves is a trusting faith, a reliant faith, a sacred recumbency, confidence, and leaning upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear hearer, do you possess it? Has the Holy Spirit given to you to cast yourself once for all upon him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin? If you have, sure you will through grace proceed to the third form of faith, you will believe him — his person as well as his words. You will believe him whatever he may say, you will believe him whatever he may do; you will be persuaded that he is himself the essential truth, according to his word — "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" and then you will know what Paul meant when he said, "I know whom I have believed," — not "in whom," but "whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." If you asked a true believer in Christ's day "What is your creed?" he would have pointed to his Master; he would not have repeated certain articles, but he would have said, "I believe that glorious man; my trust is in him; I believe him." We have seen many books labeled upon their backs, "Body of Divinity," but of a truth Jesus is the only real "body of divinity." If you want theology, he is the true

Theologos, the essential word of God. It is a grand thing when a man believes Jesus to be what Jesus is — a Savior from sin; and then believes the Christ to be what Christ is — the anointed of the Lord; and so makes him to be his Alpha and Omega — all his salvation and all his desire.

Divide yourselves upon this question as to how far you are believers, for we cannot assert that Christ is precious to you if you are not believers. We know he will not be your heart's monarch if you have no faith, He will be the very reverse. But if you be believers in and upon him, he will be precious to you beyond all comparison,

II. Let us, then, consider the BELIEVER'S APPRECIATION OF HIS MASTER; and observe, first, that every believer appreciates Christ himself — his very person: "Unto you therefore which believe *he* is precious." *He*. Some think the ordinances, which they call the sacraments, very precious: so they are; but only for *his* sake. Others reckon the doctrines to be very precious, and always thrust doctrine into the forefront. We will not deny that every doctrine is precious, but it owes its value to the fact that Christ is in it. Dry doctrine is nothing better than a sepulcher for a dead Christ to be buried in; but the doctrine preached in relation to his person becomes a throne on which he is exalted. It is a great pity when any of you Christians forget that you have a Savior who is alive, and overlook the personality of Christ. Remember that he is a real man, and as a real man on Calvary he died for you, and as a real man he is gone into heaven. He is no ideal personage, but an actual personage; and the very marrow of Christian experience lies in the realization of the personality of the Savior. "Unto you that believe, *he* is precious." If you make doctrine the main thing, you are very likely to grow narrow-minded; if you make your own experience the main thing, you will become gloomy and censorious of others; if you make ordinance the main thing, you will be apt enough to grow merely formal; but you can never make too much of the living Christ Jesus. Remember that all things else are for his sake. Doctrines and ordinances are the planets, but Christ is the Sun; the stars of doctrine revolve around him as their great primal light. Get to *love* him best of all. Yea, I know you do, if ye are believing in him. You love the doctrines, and would not like to give one of them up, but still the incarnate God is the sum and substance of your confidence; Christ Jesus himself is precious to you.

Now, as this appreciation concerns Christ, it may here be remembered that it is in the case of every believer *a personal appreciation*. As we appreciate

Christ's person, so we each in person appreciate him. We do not pretend to appreciate Christ because others say so; nor do we run with the multitude, but we judge for ourselves. Unto those that believe in him, Christ is precious on his own account, from their own personal knowledge of him. They have not borrowed it. They do not cry, "Yes, he is precious," because their dear mother, who is gone to heaven, used to say so; her memory helps them, but they have a better reason than that. He is precious to *them*. Beloved, there is nothing like personal religion. The religion which you inherit, if at the same time it is not yours personally, is not worth one single farthing. You will not be saved by hereditary godliness. If any man should say: "My ancestors believed so and so, and therefore I do," that would be a reason why we should have been Druids, for our ancestors were such. If our religion has come to us as an heirloom like the family pew, and we have merely taken it at second-hand, it is of poor account. You must value Christ because you have tried him, and know him for yourself; for nothing short of a personal appreciation, and a personal appropriation, of the Lord Jesus, by faith, to your own case, and in your own heart, will ever bring you to heaven. Everything short of personal godliness falls short of eternal life. Remember that nobody can be born again for you. Ye yourselves must be regenerated. Nobody can renounce "the pomps and vanities of the world" for you. Sponsorship in religion is the most transparent of frauds. Nobody can love Christ for you; your own heart must beat high with affection towards his dear name. It must be a personal religion.

As there must be an appreciation of the person of the Lord Jesus by our own selves, so, let me add, our experience must be the basis of that estimate. Christ is precious to us this day, because we have proved him to be precious. What has he done for us? He has delivered us, first, from all the guilt of our past sins. You have not forgotten the day when —

"Laden with guilt and full of fears,"

you crept to the cross foot, and looked up and saw him suffering for you: and while you believed in him the burden fell from off your shoulders, and you received a liberty unknown before. Christ is very precious to the man who has once felt the work of the law on his conscience. I wish that some people who slight him, had been cast where some of us once lay, in spiritual wretchedness and deep depression of spirit. Oh, the misery of a tortured conscience! We trembled in anticipation of the flames of hell, while our sins stared us in the face; but in an instant, by virtue of the

application of the precious blood, fear was gone, guilt disappeared, and we were reconciled to God by Christ Jesus. Is he not precious if this has been the case?

Beside this, he has emancipated us from the chains of sin. Afore-time passions mastered us; the flesh stood at the helm and steered the vessel which way it would. Sometimes a fierce self-will, at another time the baser passions of the flesh ruled us. We could not overcome ourselves; Satan and the flesh were tyrants over us; but now the vices once so dear have become detestable, the chains of sin are broken, and we are the Lord's free men; and though sin strives to get the mastery over us, and we have much to mourn over, yet that same sword which has slain some sins is close at the throat of others, and by grace divine we know that we shall slay them all ere long. There is such a change in the character of some in this place, to my knowledge, that Christ, the great transformer, must be precious to them. Once at the alehouse where sinners congregate; once frequenting nameless haunts of vice; once a swearer, once passionate, once dishonest, once a liar, once everything that is evil; but now washed and sanctified you cannot but prize your Deliverer. Oh, when I meet the reformed drunkard, and when I gaze into the face of the Magdalene, who now rejoices to wash the Savior's feet with her tears, I know that to such he is precious. A renewed character going with pardoned sin, as it always does, endears the Savior to the soul.

And, O beloved, beside that, he is precious to us because he has changed the whole bent and current of our thoughts. We were selfish once, and cared for nothing else; but since the Lord Jesus Christ has saved us we serve not self but Christ; we do not live now to hoard money, or to get ourselves honor, or even to save our own souls; for that is completed; we now rise above the groveling love of self, and our whole being is devoted to Jesus. He is precious beyond all price, for he has taught us to live for God's glory, and for the welfare of our fellow men.

He is precious to us by experience, because he has helped us in many a dark hour of trial. I shall not tell you to-night how often he has cheered me. If any spirit here is more than ordinarily inclined to despondency, perhaps it is mine; but, ah, the sustaining influences of the presence of Christ! I can rise even to the seventh heaven of ecstasy when I do but fully come back to a simple faith in his precious name. Some of us could not live without Jesus Christ. It has come to this — it is hell here if we do not have Christ with

us. I remember slipping the cable of my belief once, and being driven out to sea before a furious wind of doubt. At first I reveled in that speedy sailing across a sea of fierce unbelief; but, ah, when I began to see whither I was going, and when I stood at the prow of the vessel and marked the dreary cloud-land that lay before me, and knew not what rocks might be ahead, I felt a horror of great darkness, and cried for deliverance right loudly, and was glad when the anchor held fast again and my dreadful cruise was over. On Christ my soul has a hold as tight as the drowning man's death-grip, and I cling with all my might to his everlasting love, his personal love to my poor soul, and to the merit of his substitutionary sacrifice on my behalf. Believe me, he is precious to all whose whole mental thought has come to an anchorage in him, whose faculties feel that their utmost reach and stretch cannot go beyond him, for he is all in all. Yes, the text says, "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious."

Perhaps you imagine that speak only of the past, as though Jesus had been precious. I meant that; but he is precious *now*: "Unto you therefore which believe, he *is* precious." When one of the saintly martyrs had been tormented by persecutors they said to him, "What can Christ do for you now?" and he replied, "He can help me to bear with patience that which you inflict upon me." When the murdered Covenanter's head was carried by the dragoon to the poor bereaved wife, and he asked her what she thought of her husband's face now, she said that he never looked bonnier when he lived than he did now that he had given up his life for Christ. Verily, we can say to-day, that Christ never looked bonnier than he does to-night, when we think of him as slain for us. We could gladly sing that hymn —

"If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

Some people grow less lovely upon close acquaintance, but all lovers of Christ testify that his beauties bear the closest inspection; those who lie in his bosom longest love him best, and those who have served him seventy years are the most fluent, and also the most sincere, in singing his praises. O, he is a most precious Savior now! Young man, do you trust; Christ to-night? If you do, he is precious to you, and if he is not precious to you, then you have not believed in him. May you be led to do so by the power of his Spirit, and then Christ will be precious to you indeed!

But I must add, although Christ is precious to us now on account of past experience and present enjoyment, he is precious to us with a dash of

expectation. We expect soon to enter the cold shades of death, and it will be precious to have the Savior with us then. The question will sometimes come over every thoughtful mind, — “Shall we, after all, die when we die? Are we like so many mites in a cheese, and shall we soon be crushed out of being and cease to be?” Oh, dark and dreary thought! But, then, we remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, — if any historical fact is certain, that is. There may be doubts about whether Caesar was slain by Brutus, or whether Alfred was ever king in England, for there are not evidences one half so positive on those points as those which prove the resurrection of the Savior. I know not that anybody died as a witness for Caesar’s death, but many shed their blood joyfully rather than deny that the Christ who was bandied upon the cross actually rose again from the tomb. In that fact lies our hope of resurrection. A man, a real man, who died on a tree, has risen from the dead, and we are one with that glorious man, who was also God, and because he lives, we shall live also! He is precious to us when we think of dying, and that should not be seldom. We shall soon come to it. Those who are strongest and most hale are nearing their last hour, and those who are sickly are nearer still, it may be. Oh, it is sweet to have Christ to live with, for then — let death come when it may, it will be a joyful thing for us, and once reconciled to our Maker through his Son, what have we to fear?

III. Some Christians seldom acknowledge that THEY ARE SUCH. It is a beggarly business to love Christ in a corner and to be ashamed to own him. He was never ashamed to confess himself the sinner’s friend, yet, there are sinners who profess to be saved by him who are ashamed to be known as his followers. “O,” says one, “If I were to say I am a follower of the Crucified, and join with his church and people, I should expect to be laughed at.” And are you afraid of a fool’s laughter? Was Christ ashamed to be laughed at for you? O, coward, to be ashamed to be ridiculed for him! “O, but my friends would make a hubbub at home.” And did not his friends, who should have helped him, cast him out, and reject him? Yet he bore it for your sake. O, craven spirits that will not take sides with Jesus; take heed when he cometh, for those who deny him before men, shall be themselves denied before God and the holy angels. This day the standard floats in the breeze; let all who are on Christ’s side rally to it, for the hosts on the other side are many and bold. The foes of Jesus insult him to his face — some deny his deity and others thrust a human priest into his place.

*“Ye that are men now serve him
Against unnumbered foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.”*

If he is precious to you, you will never blush to be called a fool for his sake.

Those who really judge Jesus to be precious rejoice in possessing him. One cannot understand those Christians who say, “Christ is mine,” and yet go fretting and worrying through life. Dear brother, if Christ is yours, you have no cause for fretting. “What, none?” saith one. “I am very poor.” You are not poor. He who can call Christ his own cannot be poor. “But I am comfortless.” How can that be, when the Lord Jesus has given you a comforter? “But I am bereaved.” Truly so, but you have not lost your Lord. Come, dear brother, if a man were to go through the streets of London with twenty thousand pounds in his pocket, and, when he reached the bank, found that a thief had stolen his cotton pocket handkerchief, I think the reflection that would rise in his mind would be, “Thank God I have not lost my money,” and the very loss of his handkerchief would only make him the more grateful that he had not lost his treasures. Look on all things you have here as nothing compared with Jesus, and say, —

*“How can I bereaved be
Since I cannot part with thee?”*

If you esteem Christ as you should, you will refuse to give him up at any cost, and under any circumstances you will hold to what you believe. You will have to suffer loss, it may be, in social position or in business. Very well, do it gladly, and only wish you could suffer more for his dear sake. One might almost envy the martyrs, that they could earn that ruby crown which is not now within our reach. Let us at any rate be willing to take such little rebukes and rebuffs as may be given us for Christ’s sake. If you love Jesus Christ, my brothers and sisters, you will be willing to make sacrifices for his cause. I wish this spirit were abroad throughout all the church, that Christ was really precious to saints, so that they consecrated themselves and their substance to him. We want personal consecration. I have heard that word pronounced “*purse-and-all* consecration,” a most excellent pronunciation certainly. He who loves Jesus consecrates to him all that he has, and feels it a delight that he may lay anything at the feet of him who laid down his life for us.

Once more, he who really has this high estimate of Jesus will think much of him, and as the thoughts are sure to run over at the mouth, he will talk much of him. Do we so? If Jesus is precious to you, you will not be able to keep your good news to yourself; you will be whispering it into your child's ear; you will be telling it to your husband; you will be earnestly imparting it to your friend; without the charms of eloquence you will be more than eloquent; your heart will speak, and your eyes will flash as you talk of his sweet love. Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor. Recollect that. You either try to spread abroad the kingdom of Christ, or else you do not love him at all. It, cannot be that there is a high appreciation of Jesus and a totally silent tongue about him. Of course I do not mean by that, that those who use the pen are silent: they are not. And those who help others to use the tongue, or spread that which others have written, are doing their part well: but that man who says, "I believe in Jesus," but does not think enough of Jesus ever to tell another about him, by mouth, or pen, or tract, is an impostor. You are either doing good, or you are not good yourself. If thou knowest Christ, thou art as one that has found honey; thou wilt call others to taste of it; thou art like the lepers who found the flood which the Syrians had cast away: thou wilt go to Samaria and tell the hungry crowd that thou hast found Jesus, and art anxious that they should find him too. Be wise in your generation, and speak of him in fitting ways and at fitting times, and so in every place proclaim the fact that Jesus is most precious to your soul.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

APRIL, 1873.

THE PASTORS' COLLEGE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

I HAVE so often written the story of the Pastors' College at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, that I do not feel it to be necessary to repeat it yet again. Success in preaching the gospel always leads on to further modes of service, and every advance in holy enterprise renders a yet further advance needful. My ministry was blessed of God to the conversion of a gifted brother who commenced preaching; his education was defective; I felt it to be my duty to help him to supplement it, none of the colleges at that time commended themselves to me as suitable for him, and *therefore* he was sent to a tutor for education. His progress encouraged me; other men presented themselves, they also were received, till at last the work grew into the Pastors' College. It was no project of mine, it grew without sound of my axe or hammer; grew because it could not be otherwise — God in his providence would have it so.

The design from the first has been to instruct men who have proved themselves able to preach the gospel. His call to the ministry is the first thing inquired into, and if it be not thought clear, the applicant is declined. Mistakes are doubtless made, for we are very fallible, but these do not arise from want of intense desire to help forward the chosen men, and to reject the incompetent and uncalled. It is quite beyond man's province or power to make a minister, all that he can do is to imitate the example of Priscilla and Aquila in the case of Apollos, and teach young men the way of God more perfectly. An earnest exhorter is all the better for being able to speak the English language correctly, and when he can do that he will be none the worse for having some acquaintance with general literature. God does not need man's knowledge, but neither does he need man's ignorance. If it be not absolutely essential for a religious teacher to be able to read the word of God in the original tongues, it is certainly very desirable that he should

do so, and it is eminently to be wished that he should also be a proficient in sound theology. We frequently hear of ecclesiastical functionaries who confess that they never studied theology, and do not know what it means unless it be something akin to Butler and Paley. It is a strange thing that in every other calling men make their own work the main object of study, but in the preparation for the ministry arranged by some sections of the church, everything else is provided for the student except the very matters which he most requires. Our one aim has been to train preachers and pastors. Let the men be scholars by all means, to their fullest bent, but first and foremost let them study their Bibles, hold the faith clearly, and know how to defend it valiantly. If they become so bookish that they cannot speak except in a pedantic latinised language, their education has failed; if they grow so refined and affected that they cannot condescend to men of low estate, their learning has made them fools; and if they are so fascinated by literary pursuits that they think lightly of the preaching of the gospel, they have missed the mark: but should they be rendered humble by the knowledge which they gain, should their minds be well stored, should their tongues become more fluent, and their thoughts more deep, and above all should their piety be strengthened and their graces be cultivated, it will prove an essential benefit to the men, and an immense gain to the churches, that they have passed through a college course. Such has been the aim of the Pastors' College, and its success may be judged of by its fruits.

Providence has greatly favored the College by sparing to it throughout its whole history, its invaluable tutor, Mr. George Rogers. This venerable divine was prepared for his post by special circumstances, for he had for years been looking for similar occupation, and making ready for it; he is moreover a man of Puritanic modes of thought and action, and withal a genial spirit, fond of young men and in full sympathy with them. It is a great joy to me, that although my beloved friend has passed his threescore years and ten, he retains his vigor, and commands the increasing love and respect of all concerned. The like good hand of the Lord has sent to me each of the other valuable fellow-workers in our important engagement; and best of all, the invaluable addition of my beloved brother, J. A. Spurgeon, to the staff, has strengthened the directing and supervising power, and made our instructing department as complete as human affairs can be. We were never more efficiently at work than at this moment, nor ever enjoyed more richly the divine blessing.

The supply of men as students has been always very large, and at this time more are applying than ever. This gives us a good field from which to select, and as we are not bound to receive either more or less, we make our choice with the utmost care, and with an earnest desire to receive none but the most suitable men. Should so few good men offer that our number should be reduced to twenty, we should follow the indications of divine leading; and, if on the other hand, two hundred promising men should be forthcoming, we should feel no difficulty in giving them all a welcome. The Lord knows best how many men he would have us educate, and we are sure that he will always find means for carrying on his own work. At present we have a class of men around us of whom we expect great things, for both in temper, spirit, ability, and diligence they are equal to the best set of students we have ever had. The spirit of prayer is well maintained among them, and love to their work is most apparent.

I have seen no reason to alter the plan by which the College was made into a Home Missionary Society for the spread of the gospel. The students are most of them engaged in preaching the word, and many new churches have sprung out of their labors. This, it is true, has some injurious effect upon their studies, and unless a man works beyond measure, he cannot keep up his College work and his preaching too; but the most of those who attempt it manage to perform the double labor, and those who do so are all the better for it. A man is kept in right relation to his future ministry when he is not taken wholly away from preaching and confined to study; he is less in danger of losing sympathy with the activities of the church, and more likely to increase his gifts of utterance. Preaching can only be learned by practice; disuse of the speaking faculty means decrease of its power, and hence we believe it to be a gain rather than a loss to a ministerial student to be called upon frequently to conduct services. No doubt the College suffers in repute, for those who hear our raw recruits are apt to censure all for the faults of one, and to blame the institution for those very blots which it labors to remove; but as our object is not to gain reputation, we cheerfully endure the loss of it. The benefit is in any case far greater than the injury; for souls won to God are results beyond all price.

It will gratify some of our friends to know that one of our students, Mr. F. E. Suddard, was first, in 1872, among seven competitors for one of the Dr. Williams's Scholarships at the University of Glasgow. The fact is interesting as helping to show that our course is not quite so elementary as has been wrongly supposed.

This employment of the students in preaching involves a considerable outlay in the hire of rooms and halls, and in the needful expense attending the commencement of new interests. Success in these cases leads to yet larger demands, for chapels must be built to house the new churches, and schools in which the young of the neighborhoods may be taught on the Sabbath-day. Several thousands of pounds have been well and economically spent in this line of action, for the sums granted have induced the friends in the different localities to contribute largely, and so our pound has gained ten pounds. This is one of the readiest modes of increasing our churches, and more has been accomplished by it than by any other agency in the same space of time. In the metropolis alone we have founded some forty-five churches, besides preaching the gospel temporarily in various parts of our great city. In many parts of the country believers have been gathered into church fellowship, many sinners converted, and influential centers of usefulness created. Great has been the Lord's goodness in allowing some of the brethren to labor, and to suffer poverty for Christ's sake, in order to build not upon other men's foundations, but upon new ground. It would be invidious to mention the name of one where so many have done and are doing valiantly; may the Lord reward them. Along the Northern Coast of Kent, Sittingbourne, Faversham, and Whitstable are instances of new ground broken, up, and in the same manner, along the Sussex shore, Newhaven, Eastbourne, Portslade, and Shoreham, in rapid succession, saw the rise of new and vigorous interests, which have much to struggle with, but will live and prosper. In all directions our bough has run over the wall, and would do so yet more if we were not compelled to stay from entering upon many a hopeful field from want of men and money. We do not complain, but yet we sometimes mourn when we are hampered in the Lord's work, and remember that hundreds of his people have heaps of gold and silver cankering in their coffers.

Here we may joyfully call attention to the statistics of additions to the churches over which our brethren preside, which show beyond all doubt that these have prospered, as a rule, far above the average of the churches of the denomination. To God be all the glory. This is our richest and best reward. The Lord make the increase to be ten times greater in years to come.

In the matter of funds we have to magnify the Lord that so much has been forthcoming. The beloved friends at the Tabernacle, by their weekly offerings, furnish more than £1,800 of our income, and, at the supper given

by our generous friend and deacon, Mr. Phillips, a similar sum is usually given. God moves the hearts of his people to send the rest that is needed; may he graciously influence far more. One brother in Christ aids us annually in the chapel-building part of the enterprise, and to him, under God, we owe much of our power to launch forth into new spheres. It is the more remarkable that our needs have been supplied for this work because so few comparatively see the importance of it. Appeal to any man for an Orphanage, and human sympathy moves him to assist, but only a believer in Christ comes to aid a young minister in his studies; and even among Christians there are grave differences of opinion upon the need of such institutions as ours, and the right method of managing them: consequently the area from which we draw our supplies is a limited one, but the great Lord knows how to make it yield sufficient. The cruse of oil and the handful of meal have never failed and never will. No paid collector calls upon regular subscribers, in fact we have no list of such. Friends give as they are moved and when they are moved, and their help generally comes at the most welcome time. There are occasions when donations appear to be timed to the hour, to prevent anxiety and provide for need. He who has the care of this work resting upon him is often refreshed by manifestations of the divine favor, and therefore, having obtained help of God, he continues to this day.

Prayer has been often offered that men might be called from among our number to occupy the mission field, and we have lately received the first fruits of the gracious answer. Our beloved brother, Mr. Pegg, having labored awhile in Turk's Island, is now commencing evangelistic operations in the island of Santa Domingo, and so great has been his success in gathering congregations that he has been obliged to visit this country to collect the means for erecting a commodious meeting house. Few spheres promise so well, and few men are better fitted for such a work. If the Lord be with him, Mr. Pegg will be the apostle of Santa Domingo and Hayti. Two of our young brethren have gone to Spain to preach the word, and are now in Barcelona learning the language, and meanwhile distributing Bibles and Gospels on a large scale. They are not connected with any society, but they have faith that their needs will be supplied. Another friend has gone out to serve the Lord under the direction of Mr. Hudson Taylor in China, whose mission is one of the grandest efforts in modern times; and yet another has commenced his studies in Edinburgh with the view of becoming a medical missionary. May the Lord

prosper these brethren and make them to be but the first rank of a numerous band of missionaries.

I am delighted to hear from our brethren in Canada and the United States. They appear to find churches with remarkable ease, and to be well appreciated by their congregations. The pastor is not, by our American friends, starved down to the lowest living point, but is liberally supported, and treated with respect and liberality; the absence of a State Church, no doubt, to a great extent, accounts for this. There are twenty-one ministers upon our College list now preaching in America, besides others who were dismissed from the College before their time was fulfilled because the tutors and myself feared that they would not succeed in the ministry: two or three of these last named are said to be acceptable across the sea, and we can assure them that we are right glad to hear of it, and we earnestly hope that their future career may prove how mistaken we were. Seven of our host are now in various parts of the great Southern world of Australia, and there are openings for more, but the expense of transit will always restrict the numbers as compared with those in America. It is our belief that in future years the United States will receive a far larger number of our brethren, and that the lack of ministers in that vast and growing country wilt thus be, in a measure, supplied. The universal kindness expressed towards our brethren is hereby very gratefully acknowledged.

There is, in connection with the College, a Loan Fund to assist in the erection of places of worship, amounts being lent out to be returned by annual instalments, without interest. This was intended to be £5000, but remains several hundreds short of that sum. In all probability, some donor will see it right to complete that part of our machinery.

The great want of our College remains to be spoken of. We are in urgent need of suitable rooms. The rooms under the Tabernacle become worse and worse for light and air as the surrounding buildings become higher and more numerous. Gas has very frequently to be burned all day long, or the men could not see their books; indeed, on ordinary days, all the year round, the period of sufficient light is very brief. The rooms being underground become close and stifling after the classes have been in them for a short time. For one day in a week this may be borne, but for every day it becomes a hardship. Much inconvenience would have been put up with had we not found the health of the men suffering materially. Very much time has been lost during the last winter through illness, and the men who have

not succumbed have many of them exhibited great lassitude after a few weeks in our subterranean apartments. The tutors and president feel it personally, but the students most of all. They have not complained, but we feel that we cannot afford to have them so often laid aside, and that it will be the truest economy to build a proper home for our school of the prophets. We cannot go up to the forest to cut every man a beam, or we would gladly do so; we are, therefore, dependant upon the Lord's servants for our new house, and we trust they will not deny us. Let all who believe in our work help us. Let all who count us faithful help us. Let all who would do us a personal favor help us. The College is my dearest enterprise, and I would earnestly plead its claims now in the time of its need. If my sermons have refreshed any hungry hearts, and been food to any weary souls, and if these desire to show me a token of their love, let them have a stone in the College Home. I might say more, for it is not for myself that I ask anything, but for the sake of the gospel, and the Lord of it, I am bold to beg. I commit the case to God, and next I look to all my friends who have in times past aided me, and who love me still for my work's sake. This year the work must be done. The plans are preparing, the contract will soon be put up to competition, the need is urgent. A word to the wise will suffice.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JUNE, 1873.

A WORD FOR BRUTES AGAINST BRUTES

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THE newspapers for the last few weeks have been a source of grievous affliction to humane minds. The brutalities which they have recorded have shown a diabolical refinement of cruelty which makes us blush to belong to the race of man. When we read of a wretch driving a poor horse for miles with its feet broken, bleeding at every step it took upon its poor stumps, we shudder and our blood runs cold; but when we hear a trifling sentence pronounced upon such a monster we feel that same blood tingling in our cheeks as our whole nature churns with indignation at such a failure of justice. If there be no law which would award the lash to such a fiend incarnate an Act ought to be passed at once, or Mr. Justice Lynch might for once be invoked to give the demon his reward in an irregular manner. The hideous story brings to our mind the none too forcible lines of a much-abused poet, Martin Tupper, when he pleads for a worn-out horse: —

*Liveth there no advocate for him? no judge
to avenge his wrongs?
No voice that shall be heard in his defense?
no sentence to be passed on his oppressor?
Yea, the sad eye of the tortured pleadeth
pathetically for him;
Yea, all the justice in heaven is roused in
indignation at his woes;
Yea, all the pity upon earth shall call down
a curse upon the cruel;
Yea, the burning malice of the wicked is
their own exceeding punishment.
The Angel of Mercy stoppeth not to comfort,
but passeth by on the other side,
Anti hath no tear to shed, when a cruel man
is damned.”*

Close upon the heels of this torturing of a horse comes the case of a man who, as a matter of business, picks little birds' eyes out with a pin to make them sing better: whipcord is too good a thing for this being; and if we were not averse to all capital punishment we should suggest that nothing short of a rope with a noose in it would give him his deserts. Is this the nineteenth century? Then may we have patience to endure with our fellow men till we get out of it into a better century, if such will ever come. Swift is right, man is often a mere yahoo, a two-legged brute, and this *yahoo* proves himself to be the worst possible master to the other animals; he is a viler tyrant than the wolf or the hyena would have been: unhappy are the creatures to be ruled by such a lord!

Since it is useless to be indignant and declamatory, if we are nothing more, let every humane person bestir himself to put down the reign of terror towards the animate creation, wherever it comes under his notice. Cruelty to animals must be stamped out. Each case must be earnestly dealt with. Where the laws are violated humane persons must undertake the unpleasant duty of prosecuting the offenders, or must at least report them to the proper authorities: and where no law exists to protect the unhappy victims, instances of cruelty should be reported by the press, that shame may be aroused and a right public sentiment treated. Children should be taught to avoid everything approaching to unkindness; the wanton destruction of birds' nests, the atoning of birds, beating of donkeys, worrying of fowls, and a hundred petty cruelties in which boys are often encouraged, should be promptly denounced. The works issued by Messrs. Partridge and Co., in connection with "The British Workman" ought to be scattered "thick as leaves in Vallambrosa;" for the woodcuts are striking, and with the letterpress, make up an advocacy for animals of the noblest kind. Every other means which would come under the head of example or precept, reward or punishment, should be continually employed; and no exertion should be spared till cruelty to animals shall be an unknown vice, or at least shall be universally regarded as the distinguishing mark of the lowest and basest of the people.

It is not only for the sake of the creature subject to cruelty that we would plead for kindness, but with a view to the good of the person causing the pain; for cruelty hardens the heart, deadens the conscience, and destroys the finer sensibilities of the soul. The most eminently spiritual men display great delicacy towards all living things, and if it be not always true that "he prayeth best who loveth best both male and bird and beast," yet the

converse is assuredly the fact, for the man who truly loves his Maker becomes tender towards all the creatures his Lord has made. In gentleness and kindness our great Redeemer is our model. Our Lord would not deprive a poor ass of the company of its foal when he rode into Jerusalem, and he talked of the most common and insignificant of birds as the object of the Great Father's care. His best followers are gentle towards all things which live and feel, and, taught by his Spirit, they have learned —

*“Never to blend their pleasure or their pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that breathes.”*

A holy mind sympathises with Cowper in his refusal to enter on his list of friends the man “who needlessly sets foot upon a worm,” and fully agrees with Dr. Blair that it is “shameful to treat even the meanest insect with wanton cruelty.” In proportion as men decline from the highest standard of goodness their sympathies become blunted, they lose delicacy, and tenderness, and becoming more selfish become also less considerate of others. He who dwells in God has a great heart which encompasses all creation, and as it were lives in it all like the soul in the body, feeling akin with all, yea, one with all life, so that it joys in all true joy, and sorrows in all sorrow. The man of dead heart towards God has a heart of stone towards the Lord's creatures, and cares for them only so far as he can make them minister to his own wealth or pleasure. Hardness of heart towards poor flies, so that he found amusement in piercing them with pins, was in Domitian a sure mark of a hard heart towards the Lord and all goodness. Cock-fighting and bull-baiting were not only detestable things as involving needless torturing of living things, but as corrupting, depraving, and preparing for eternal perdition all who delighted in them. A cruel action is as a hot iron to the soul searing it, and preventing its feeling the touch of the gentle hand of mercy's angel. We remember reading a story some, what to the following effect: — A lad while strolling through the fields with his sister found a nest of young rabbits. The sister was charmed with the little creatures, but the rough boy seized them, mimicking their squeaks and their struggles. In vain his sister wept and entreated; he flung them up into the air, and shouted as each fell dead upon the stones. Ten years after, that sister sat weeping again by that lad's side. He was in chains, sentenced to be hanged for shooting a farmer whilst poaching: they were waiting for the awful procession to knock at the cell door. “Sister,” he said, “do you remember the nest of rabbits ten years ago, how you begged and prayed, and I ridiculed? I verily believe, that from that day,

God forsook me, and left me to follow my own inclinations. If I had yielded to your tears, then, you and I would not be weeping these bitter tears now." There may have been a great deal more truth in this remorseful confession than at first blush some would imagine; at any rate, we will go the length of affirming that no person really penitent for sin can be cruel, that no man who feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart can find pleasure in giving pain, and furthermore that wanton cruelty to an animal may be that last deadening deed of ill which may for ever leave the heart callous to all the appeals of law and gospel.

Perhaps we may each one do most to serve the cause of kindness to animals by setting a high example ourselves. Possibly we cannot like Cowper keep tame hares and sing about them, or like Dr. Elford Leach, walk about the streets, attended by an obsequious wolf, but we may set up a high ideal of treatment towards creatures both tame and wild, and act upon it. A famous saint was wont to call birds and beasts his brothers and sisters, and Mr. Darwin apparently goes in for that relationship most literally: we do not contend for anything so high as that, but we do ask to have them viewed as our Father's creatures, to be treated well for his sake, and to be regarded as our friends. There really can be no reason honorable to our humanity to account for the fact that every living thing flees from us the moment we appear, as if we were the ogres of creation who delight in doing mischief to all within reach. We have often felt as if we should like to tell the birds that they misunderstand us, that we have no wish to drive them away, that we beg their pardon for being so rough in our manners, for really we are their very good friends, and would like to cultivate their acquaintance. Pray, little sparrow, do not trouble yourself to leave those crumbs because we happen to be going by, we assure you we would not hurt you, and will even turn back and go round the garden by another path if you will only not be alarmed at us. What a pity that men should have deserved the bad opinion of so many of God's most lovely creatures! Long years of wrong-doing have gained for us the universal dread of beast and bird; only dogs and cats will trust us, and they do so probably because they are tolerably well able to take care of themselves, by biting or scratching us: the defenseless animals feel that they have no chance with us, and fly at our approach. Cannot we redeem our character, and persuade our furred and feathered friends to trust us, and learn at the same time to trust *them*? Can none of our fair readers ever become an Amoret to whom the river-god sings —

*“Not a fish in all my brook
That shall disobey thy look,
But, when thou wilt, come sliding by,
And from thy white hand take a fly.”*

Surely to that same privileged maiden it will be more than safe to say —

*Do not fear to put feet
Naked in the river, sweet;
Think not leech, or newt, or toad,
Will bite thy foot, when thou hast trod.”*

The fancy picture may be realized. We once saw in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris a young lady take her seat, and in a few moments the air was fall of birds of every wing. They were all around and upon her, pecking crumbs from her shoulder, her hand, and her lips. They hawked for particles of bread which she threw into the air, they alighted on her bonnet, they perched upon her fingers. It was a pretty sight, though a sadly rare one, yet might it be common enough if we earned the love of our feathered friends as she had done by supplying their humble wants every day. The like kindnesses will earn the like gratitude and confidence. Of this we are gathering evidence by daily experience. We do not allow a gun in our garden, feeling that we can afford to pay a few cherries for a great deal of music, and we now have quite a lordly party of thrushes, blackbirds, and starlings upon the lawn, with a parliament of sparrows, chaffinches, robins, and other minor prophets. Our summer-house is occupied by a pair of blue-martens, which chase our big cat out of the garden by dashing swiftly across his head one after the other, till he is utterly bewildered, and makes a bolt of it. In the winter the balcony of our study is sacred to a gathering of all the tribes; they have heard that there is corn in Egypt, and therefore they hasten to partake of it and keep their souls alive in famine. On summer evenings the queen of our little kingdom spreads a banquet in our great green saloon which the vulgar call a lawn; it is opposite the parlor window, and her guests punctually arrive and cheerfully partake, while their hostess rejoices to gaze upon them. Some of them are now so tame that, when fresh provision is brought out to them, they take no more notice of the lady servitor than a child at table would of a servant who brings in a fresh joint. In a more secluded place, with more time to spare to look after them, we could educate the *fera naturae*, or in plain words the wild creatures, into a high degree of confidence. They would very soon become as familiar with us as Alexander Selkirk found them to be with himself on his desert island:

we should not, however, say as he did, "Their tameness is shocking to me." Kindness would speedily re-establish mankind in bird estimation and remove that ill opinion which makes them startle at our approach. If all around, children, servants and visitors, could be bound over to keep the peace, there might again be seen around the good man's house a sort of Paradise Regained, and of the husband and wife it might be said as of our yet unfallen parents —

*About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den."*

That such a state of things may be realized is clear, for to a large degree it has been produced by many persons of kindly spirit. Mr. Jacox in his very remarkable work entitled "Traits of Character" has a passage in which he mentions the power over animals possessed by several remarkable men. With that extract we shall dismiss the subject, hoping that we may not in vain have opened our mouth for the dumb.

"Rousseau piqued himself on the liking manifested towards him by the pigeons, and he would spend hours at a time in teaching them to trust him. A very difficult bird to tame, to teach confidence, he affirms the pigeon to be; and all the greater the *kudos* claimed by Jean Jacques for succeeding in inspiring his window visitors with such confidence in him that they followed him whithersoever he went, and let themselves be taken whensoever he would. At last he could never make his appearance in the garden or yard, but instantly two or three of them were on his shoulder or his head; and their attentions of this kind became so pressing, and *ce cortege* became *si incommode*, that he was obliged to check their familiarity. But he ever took a singular pleasure in taming animals — those in particular which are wild and timid. It seemed to him a charming thing to inspire them with a confidence which he never betrayed or abused. His desire was to have them love him while they remained absolutely free. He carried on the like system of tactics with bees, and with like success.

Mr. Froude declares 'all genuine men' to be objects of special attraction to animals (as well as to children); and in his biographical sketch of Bishop Hugh of Lincoln, he recounts the 'very singular instance' of the liking shown for that prelate by the big swan of Stone Manor, usually so unmanageable and savage: the bishop knew the way to his heart; fed him, and taught him to poke his head into the pockets of his frock to look for

bread crumbs, which he did not fail to find there. Ever after, it is said, he seemed to know instinctively when the bishop was expected, and flew trumpeting up and down the lake, slapping the water with his wings; and on the arrival of his right reverend friend, he would strut at his side, and sometimes follow him up stairs. It was a miracle of course, adds the biographer, to the general mind, though explicable enough to those who have observed the physical charm which men who take pains to understand animals are able to exercise over them.

“Coleridge is the ‘noticeable man with large grey eyes,’ who, in the well-read description by his brother bard, would entice a congenial comrade to share his outdoor idlesse, the two together being as happy spirits as were ever seen:

*‘If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a maiden-queen.’*

Professor Lowell would have made a happy third — even if he had quizzed them afterwards, and himself. His essay on his *Garden Acquaintance* told us how all the birds looked on him as if he were a mere tenant-at-will, and they were landlords. ‘With shame I confess it, I have been bullied even by a humming-bird.’ Scarce a tree of his but has had, at some time or other, a happy homestead among its boughs. ‘I love to bring these aborigines back to the mansuetude they showed to the early voyagers, and before (forgive the involuntary pun) they had grown accustomed to man and knew his savage ways. Savage Landor had anything but savage ways with the *creatures ferae naturae* on his estate, whether at Lanthony or at Fiesole; and proud he was to assert in octosyllabics his good fellowship with the good creatures in question, all and sundry:

*‘Cares if I had, I turned those cares
Toward my partridges and hares,
At every gun and dog I heard
Ill-auguring for some truant bird
Or whiskered friend of jet-tipt ear,
Until the frightened eld limpt near.
These knew me, and ‘twas quite enough.’“*

COLPORTAGE

B Y C. H. SPURGEON.

IT has been our lot to attend many anniversary meetings of societies during the present May meeting season, but none of them were so interesting, amusing, and full of real life and vigor as the meeting of the Colportage Society at the Tabernacle. The society had brought up from their country districts most of their book-hawkers, and some of these told their experiences with hearty simplicity, in language full of racy expressions and striking provincialisms. Probably the audience obtained a better idea of the work of colportage through these *viva voce* descriptions than could have been communicated to them by a score of annual reports. Fine language and feeble propriety spoil many public meetings, but in this case there were both force and freedom, and a degree of vivacity which was quite refreshing. One brother appeared with the model pack upon his back — in *harness*, as he said — and described his dangers from “dawgs.” His district is in Lancashire, where “dawgs” abound, beautiful bull-pups among them, whose education has been so neglected that they are constantly mistaking a man’s leg for a shin of beef, and are never more happy than when they can make their teeth meet in something alive. Amid abundant laughter, our friend declared that he had not fought wild beasts at Ephesus, but had often been forced to do so round by Haydock; he had found it well to trust in God and *carry a big stick*. Another excellent colporteur, who rides a velocipede, described his journeys twenty miles in all directions, from his center at Warminster, Wilts, giving a graphic account of the lone farm-houses and hamlets which he visits. He appeared to be a very acceptable and laborious preacher of the gospel, carrying the word of God on his tongue as well as upon his back. The laborer in the Isle of Sheppy also gave details of the power of the gospel, and of the eagerness to hear it evinced by the villagers everywhere. It was clear enough to all present; that the rural districts need just such an agency as the Colportage, that the society has found a staff of right men, and that the work ought to be indefinitely extended, Nonconformity will not for many years be strong enough to support a sufficient staff of ministers in the more sparsely populated districts; many of the church clergy are worse than useless, and make the darkness around them darker still; those of them who are evangelical are glad of the colporteurs’ aid, for they cannot get at all

classes, and the best, if not the only available means, of saving the benighted people is to reach them by means of the colporteur. To a district subscribing £40 a year the society sends a man to sell books, who will visit the sick, distribute tracts, gather prayer-meetings, preach on the green, and probably form bands of hope and temperance societies. It is the cheapest agency known to us. The excuse of selling his wares makes the colporteur bold to push in where otherwise he might not dare to call. He knocks at the doors of the rich as well as the poor, and has a word for old and young. As his report of sales will have to come before the committee he has a capital reason for diligence in business, and is not likely to loiter. If he is a live man, as our colporteurs mostly are, he finds abundance of work all around him, and opens doors for himself where at first he found but little scope. Instances of conversion have been very many by the means of our colporteurs, and we expect yet more. The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

We should like it to be understood that we wish to see a Colportage society, including all denominations, and if some brother will take over the work we shall be glad for the present society at the Tabernacle to become a branch of it. If this does not occur we hope the Tabernacle Committee will plod on until they convince Englishmen that the work is good and necessary, and ought to be taken up with spirit. Our own solemn conviction is that Colportage, as an agency, is second to none. It ought to be worked by a society as large as the Bible Society, or the Religious Tract Society. We have nowadays an association for almost every supposable purpose, from the feeding of stray dogs to anti-vaccination, surely Colportage cannot be long neglected.

At the annual meeting, our excellent Committee presented a report from which we will make extracts: —

The object of this association, the increased circulation of religious literature, is carried out in a twofold manner: — 1st. By means of colporteurs, whose whole time is devoted to the work, and who are paid by a fixed salary. 2nd. By Book Agents, who canvas for orders for periodicals, and supply them month by month; these receive a liberal per-centage on the sales to remunerate them for their trouble. The first of these methods its the more important, as the colporteur is thereby enabled to engage in Christian labor in all parts of the district; and his regular visits afford an opportunity of

teaching the people in their own homes. The average total cost of a colporteur is £80, but the committee will appoint a man to any district for which £40 a year is subscribed, *if the funds of the association permit*. The second method is admirably suited to the requirements of village churches and Sunday schools, where the guarantee for a colporteur cannot be obtained. Shopkeepers, or other persons willing to become book agents, may communicate with the secretary, Metropolitan Tabernacle. The association is unsectarian in its operations “doing work for the friends of a full and free gospel anywhere and everywhere.” [By this second method friends who are shopkeepers might aid in spreading pure literature by keeping a small stock in a corner of their window. Village general shops might be thus used.]

The number of colporteurs in the employ of the association at the commencement of the year was nine, but at its close thirteen, and through the kind liberality of two gentlemen deeply interested in colportage work, eighteen men are now engaged in various parts of the country.

The sales effected during 1872, by an average of eleven colporteurs, reached the sum of £1,238 0s. 2d., and consisted of 66,835 different publications, nearly all of a religious tendency and for the most part circulated among those who would not otherwise have purchased them. In addition to these our book agents have disposed of good literature to the value of nearly £120. The total expense of the association for the year (deducting profit on the sales) was £539 8s. 5d., while the subscriptions and donations amounted to £662 ls. 5d., including one large contribution of £100 received just as the year closed, which has enabled the committee to make the extension in its operations previously referred to.

The colporteur, in his constant, regular rounds, has some of the best possible opportunities for evangelistic work, and our agents have not been behind in their efforts in this direction, 121,100 visits have been paid, the sick and dying read and prayed with, careless sinners exhorted to repentance, and many thousand tracts distributed monthly; but in addition to this valuable work very much has been done in holding cottage meetings, Sunday services, Bible classes, and in some instances night schools, and the

testimony of many has been borne to their efficacy, through the blessing of God, in leading souls to a saving knowledge of the truth. Notably in one instance a gracious revival of religion, resulting in the conversion of scores, has followed the faithful labors of the colporteur, but in many other cases good evidence has been given of the working of the Holy Spirit of God through this agency.

These facts lead the committee to hope that since colportage has been proved to be as successful in England as elsewhere, a larger response may be given to their appeal for subscriptions, that they may be enabled not only to maintain the present number of agents, but very largely to extend their operations during the present year. Never was the need greater, both for pure literature and for faithful dealing with the souls of men, than at present, and no form of agency seems better suited to the requirements of the time, or obtainable at so moderate an expense.

The increase in the number of agents has rendered it necessary to enlarge the staff of officers, by engaging the services of a permanent paid secretary, the honorary officers finding the efficient working of the association now demands more time than they can possibly devote to it after their own business hours, and the committee have obtained the assistance of Mr. W.Gordon Jones in that capacity, which choice they trust may tend to the welfare and extension of the association.

The committee desire to record their obligations to the District Local Committees for their assistance in supervising the work of the agents, and to the Religious Tract Society, London, and the Dublin Tract Society, for liberal grants of tracts and books.

In the following extracts from the journals of the colporteurs it will be seen that the work is both appreciated and successful.

THE COLPORTEUR APPRECIATED.

Often such an expression as this comes to my ears: "If it were not for the colporteur there would not be any spiritual influence in these villages," and I hear this from the most thoughtful and spiritually-minded people. Wherever I go the people seem to have a

word ready to cheer me, and express sympathy with our work. Every Christian person seems to say that he believes colportage to be one of the best agencies for spreading Christian principles in these dark villages. Only yesterday I called at a clergyman's house. After he had asked me into the study he eulogized our work, and said that such efforts as ours were the best means to bring about a higher spiritual life, which he greatly desired.

A Wesleyan minister writes concerning one of the colporteurs: — “Having had frequent opportunities of meeting him at public meetings in the villages around, I am fully convinced that he is doing a good work for our Lord and Master. Many have been led to the Savior by him. The aged and afflicted are especially looked after and regularly visited by him. It is the opinion of all I have met with that he is the right man in the right place.”

THE COLPORTEUR AN EVANGELIST.

I am thankful to say that God is doing wonders here. He has blessed the word to eighteen souls, and a glorious work is still going on among the young men and women. For the last month I have been holding special services, and though at first a heavy cloud seemed to hang over the meeting, at last the cry broke out. “What shall I do?” The whole congregation was in tears. Last Sabbath I preached at H..... The people flocked in and the place was filled long before the time. Some were up the staircase, and many had to return home. God blessed the word to six souls that night. Two young men came to hear me on Sunday night and to have a bit of fun, but while there the Lord pricked their hearts. My persecutions have been great and my name scandalously spoken of, but I care not for this as Christians are stirred up and souls saved. After a week of special prayer and addresses the colporteur writes, we had a glorious meeting at my house, for there two found the Savior, and several others are under deep conviction. I go to G..... once a month to preach on Sunday, and the chapel there that was in a dead state seems all alive; last time I was there it was crowded. I have to walk six miles there and six miles back again, and go three miles each way by water, and sometimes it is very rough, but God is with me. I visit the Union and I believe God has made me a great blessing to several in it. I am engaged by Wesleyans, Independents,

Primitive Methodists, and Baptists to preach once a month, beside week-night Bible classes and prayer meetings. The Sunday before I had a hard day's work. I went to G.... and preached, and a young man told me what a blessing the Lord had been made to him. I landed at at half-past eight and then took the Ragged School service. Praise God! a revival broke out there: it would have done you good to have heard eighteen or twenty on their knees praying for salvation. I believe they all found it. After that I had to go visiting the people's friends. They took me about to the sick and I did not get to bed until twelve o'clock.

THE COLPORTEUR; A TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE.

As I was going from house to house in a back street, on opening a door I found myself unexpectedly in a public house. I thought it best not to beat a retreat, but to stand like the brave with my face to the foe. In the first room there were six or seven women drinking. One of them said, "Why, you have come to a public house!" I said, "Yes, and I wish you were all teetotallers." Looking for a suitable tract I found one entitled, "Scotch Jim, the drunken Ballad Singer." A man then called me into the next room where about twenty men sat smoking and drinking. They commenced laughing at me, one in particular, to whom I then gave a tract called "Don't laugh it off." I also supplied each with a tract, and invited them to the house of God. One asked me to have a sip of beer, but I told him I did not mind having a glass of water and paying for it, which the landlord kindly fetched free of charge.

It will, we trust, interest our readers if we subjoin a list of the eighteen Colporteurs and their spheres of labor. Will the number ever increase to eighty? Perhaps some wealthy person who will read this, carries the answer in his pocket.

DISTRICTS SUPPLIED WITH COLPORTEURS BY THIS ASSOCIATION.

Ely, Cambridgeshire: A. SMEE. — A very successful district for sales, which amount to upwards of £250 a year. The agent visits some fifteen villages, and is heartily received by the people.

Eythorne, Kent: R. MARSHALL. — One of the longest established, the guarantee for which is given by the Baptist Church at Eythorne. The colporteur supplies one or two preaching stations, and his work is much appreciated.

Haydock, Lancashire: JOHN VARNHAM. — A mining district, needing constant and earnest effort. The agent here conducts frequent open-air services, night schools and cottage meetings, and many souls have been won to Christ through his instrumentality.

Warminster, Wiltshire: S. KING. — The agent here travels as much as twenty miles from his center, very often accomplishing the journey on a velocipede, and his visits are eagerly watched for and highly valued by many of God's aged people, while his testimony to sinners has not been in vain.

Harold Wood, Essex: A. E. INGRAM. — The colporteur here in addition to his rounds has the charge of a small chapel. The population of the district is sparse, but a fair attendance is secured and the worshippers assist in the support of the agent.

Bushton, Wiltshire: B. SUMMERSBY. — Rather an extensive district like that at Warminster, but equally successful. The colporteur being assisted in his journeys by using a pony and cart. Many souls have been blessed in this district.

Minster, Isle of Sheppey: W. BAKER. — This colporteur has been greatly used of God in the conversion of souls. Several meetings weekly are held in various parts of the Island, and are well attended and much blessed, especially the Bible classes held by the agent at his own house.

Burnley, Lancashire: JOSEPH POWELL. — A manufacturing population, among whom the last agent labored with success. The present agent is only recently appointed, but writes encouragingly of the prospects of the work.

Ross, Herefordshire: S. WATKINS. — The local Baptist Union subscribes for the support of this district, which comprises a large number of villages regularly canvassed, and several services conducted therein.

Arnold, Nottinghamshire: D. J. WATKINS. — A manufacturing district, recently commenced and partly maintained by a Bible class at the Tabernacle. This promises to become a very successful agency.

Sunderland, Durham: F.W. BLOOMFIELD. — A good sphere for a colporteur. The agent here will labor in connection with a Mission Church situated near the Quay, where an earnest band of Christian working men welcome his co-operation.

Forton, Hampshire: H. C. ALGAR. — This district consists of a number of villages in the neighborhood of Portsmouth. The labors of an earnest man are much needed here, and it is hoped that the colporteur may be much blessed.

Riddings, Derbyshire: H. BOYD. — This agent has recently commenced the work here, and met with much encouragement. It is a very promising sphere.

Tewkesbury, Gloucester: R. TRENCHARD. — A very favorable locality for a colportage agency.

Stafford: T. RICHARDS. — This district is in great need of such an agency, and is supported by the kind liberality of a Christian lady.

Gloucester: S. SHEPHERD.

Long Eaton: C. SLACK.

Shrewsbury: J. H. CHARLTON.

The last three are new districts commenced on trial in the hope of obtaining local support.

Scotland is well supplied with this class of laborers, and they are even more wanted in England; will not friends be found to subscribe £40 per annum that a man may give all his time and energies to the district in which they take a special interest? In the county of Surrey a half a dozen men could be most usefully employed. We mention it because it lies at our door, and is peculiarly in need. We should like to have a man at work in a district running from Clapham to Croydon, Sutton, Epsom, Kingston, and Wandsworth, and hoping some loving friend will supply the means, we will set a man going at once in full confidence that the funds will be

forthcoming. Although quite willing that our little society should be merged in a larger one, we should be still more gratified if it should grow into a large institution, and remain attached to us, for we can see many advantages connected with its present working which might be lost in a society with a wider constituency and less firm in its principles. We ask and we expect help. The Christian public will not allow so excellent a work to languish; above all, the Great Head of the Church will look upon it and supply all its needs. This enterprise is of God, and must go on. The more we see of its working, the more we are enamored of it; it only needs thorough working to be made a mighty means for good.

A SEARCHING WORD

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THOU sayest, "I have faith." I will ask thee a second question. Does that faith make thee obedient? Jesus said to the nobleman, "Go thy way," and he went without a word; however much he might have wished to stay and listen to the Master, he Obeyed. Does your faith make you obedient? In these days we have specimens of Christians of the most sorry, sorry kind; men who have not common honesty. I have heard it observed by tradesmen, that they know many men who have not the fear of God before their eyes, and yet are most just and upright men in their dealings; and on the other hand, they know some professing Christians who are not positively dishonest, but they can back and hedge a little; they are not altogether lame horses, but every now and then they jib; they do not keep up to time if they have a bill to pay; they are not regular, prompt, scrupulous and exact; in fact, sometimes — and who shall hide what is true? — you catch Christians doing dirty actions, and professors of religion defiling themselves with acts which merely worldly men would scorn. Now, sirs, I bear my testimony as God's minister, too honest to alter a word to please any man that lives, you are no Christian if you can act in business beneath the dignity of an honest man. If God has not made you honest, he has not saved your soul. Rest assured that if you can live in disobedience to the moral laws of God, if you are inconsistent and lascivious, if your conversation is mixed up with things which even a worldling might reject, the Love of God is not within you. I do not plead for perfection, but I do plead for honesty; and if your religion has not made

you careful and prayerful in common life; if you are not, in fact, made a new creature in Christ Jesus, your faith is but an empty name, as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

I will ask you one more searching question about your faith, and I pray you answer it. Thou sayest, "I have faith." Has thy faith led thee to bless thy household? Good Rowland Hill once said, in his own quaint way, that when a man became a Christian, his dog and his cat would be the better for it; and I think it was Mr. Jay who said that a man, when he became a Christian, was better in every relation. He was a better husband, a better master, a better father, than he was before, or else his religion was not genuine. Now, have you ever thought, my dear Christian brethren and sisters, about blessing your households? Do I hear one saying, "I keep my religion to myself?" Do not be very anxious about its ever being stolen, then; you need not put it under lock and key; there is not enough to tempt the devil himself to come and take it from you. A man who can keep his godliness to himself has so small a proportion of it, that it will be no credit to himself, and no blessing to other people. But you do sometimes, strange to say, meet with fathers who do not interest themselves in their children's salvation any more than they do about poor children in the back slums of St. Giles's. They would like to see the boy put out well, and they would like to see the girl married comfortably; but as to their being converted, it does not seem to trouble their heads. It is true the father occupies his seat in a place of worship, and sits down with a community of Christians; and he *hopes* his children may turn out well. They have the benefit of his hopes — certainly a very large legacy: he will no doubt when he dies leave them his best wishes, and may they grow rich upon them! He has never made it a matter of anxiety of soul, as to whether they shall be saved or not. Out upon such religion as that! Cast it on the dunghill; hurl it to the dogs; let it be buried like Koniah, with the burial of an ass; cast it without the camp, like an unclean thing. It is not the religion of God. He that careth not for his own household, is worse than a heathen man and a publican.

Never be content, my brethren in Christ, till all your children are saved. Lay the promise before your God. The promise is unto you and unto your children. The word does not refer to infants, but to children, grand-children, and any descendants you may have, whether grown up or not. Do not cease to plead, till not only your children but your great grand-children, if you have such, are saved. I stand here to-day a proof that God is not untrue to his promise. I can cast my eye back through four generations,

and see that God has been pleased to hear the prayers of our grandfather's father, who used to supplicate with God that his children might live before him to the last generation, and God has never deserted the house, but has been pleased to bring first one and then another to fear and love his name. So be it with you and yours. In asking this you are not asking more than God has promised to give you. He cannot run back from his promise. He cannot refuse to give you both your own and your children's souls as an answer to the prayer of your faith. "Ah," says one, "but you do not know what children mine are." No, my dear friend., but I know that if you are a Christian, they are children whom God has promised to bless. "But they are such unruly ones, they break my heart." Then pray God to break their hearts, and they will not break your heart any more. "But they will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Pray God then that he may bring their eyes with sorrow to prayer, and to supplication, and to the cross, and then they will not bring you to the grave. "But," you say, "my children have such hard hearts." Look at your own. You think they cannot be saved: look at yourselves; he who saved you can save them. Go to him in prayer, and say, "Lord, I will not let thee go except thou bless me;" and if thy child be at the point of death, and, as you think, at the point of damnation on account of sin, still plead like the nobleman, "Lord, come down ere my child perish, and save him for thy mercy's sake." O thou that dwellest in the highest heavens, thou wilt ne'er refuse thy people. Be it far from us to dream that thou wilt forget thy promise. In the name of all thy people we put our hand upon thy Word most solemnly, and pledge thee to thy covenant. Thou hast said thy mercy is unto children's children of them that fear thee and that keep thy commandments. Thou hast said the promise is unto us and unto our children; Lord, thou wilt not run back from thine own covenant; we challenge thy word by holy faith at this time, and plead with thee, saying, "Do as thou hast said."

REVIEWS

Traits of Character and Notes of Incident in Bible Story. By FRANCIS JACOX. Hodder and Stoughton.

THIS is the book from which we have made the long extract which closes our first article. Mr. Jacox appears to have read through the Bodleian and all other collections of books; he does not talk like a book, but like the

British Museum Library. He quotes far more from works of fiction than we like, but his gatherings upon the subjects which he takes up are quite marvelous. We do not know any books in modern times at all like Mr. Jacox's, they are unique; in fact, they are curiosities of literature. Spirituality we have not, but versatility, cleverness, research, and suggestiveness. The man must be a cyclopaedia; we expect to come across him one day, and to find him bound in cloth, lettered. He ought to be in several volumes, but we suppose they are bound up in one thick royal octavo, and contain more matter than a hundred volumes of Dr. Going or Dr. Septimus Losequick. It is a literary treat to read such a work. The motto upon the frontispiece, odd as it is, is accurately descriptive: —

“That from all books the Book of books may gain
 He mingle-managles sacred and profane:
 Quotes Swift with DANIEL; Byron with SAINT PETER;
 EZEKIEL with the English opium-eater:
 Hood with HABAKKUK; Crabbe with ZECHARIAH;
 Landor with Job; and Lamb with JEREMIAH;
 The prophet SAMUEL with his namesake Pepys;
 Bunyan and Jean Paul with th' APOCALYPSE;
 King SOLOMON with Shakespeare, Scott, Racine;
 ESTHER with Edmund Spenser's Faery Queene;
 With Moses, Dryden, Dante, Doctor Donne;
 'Accomplish'd St. John with divine SAINT JOHN.”

Phases Of Belief. By The Rev. JAMES WALKER, Hamilton, Adams, And Co.

WE have no desire that our belief should pass through that phase which is evidently the settled conviction of Mr. Walker. He sets forth his own views with considerable power, but we cannot endorse them. We preach the gospel to all mankind as freely as he does, but we hold the doctrines of election and predestination most tenaciously, and we are persuaded that he who fights against them goes to war with the word of God. We do not believe that the wings of the angel of the church are pinioned by Calvinism; we might retort but we will not.

Light From Beyond To Cheer The Christian Pilgrim. BY CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D. Strahan And Co.

SOME thirty excellent sermonettes, with a brief prayer or a piece of poetry at the conclusion of each. We do not see the appropriateness of the title, for several of the brief discourses are of a warning or hortatory character. Much confusion arises from the absurd practice of naming books of sermons after the title of the first discourse. It is not only an idle way of saving the author the trouble of seeking out a fitting title, but it misleads the public. In the present case the error is less glaring than in any other we have met with, but we mean to protest against the practice in every case until it is dropped. We have much pleasure in commending both the matter and manner of Dr. Geikie's book.

Christian Edification; The Sheltering Blood, Or The Sinner's Refuge. BY W. POOLE BALFERN, author Of "Glimpses Of Jesus." Passmore & Alabaster.

MR. Balfern is issuing in monthly papers, price two-pence, a work which aims to show the way of peace, and to unmask false theories of the Atonement. He always writes well. As an author he is not of the flimsy school, but thinks out his subjects, and is not afraid of the deep things of God. Experience has also its due place in his testimony, and the whole is perfumed with love to "the Master." We wish him much success in this new work.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JULY 1873.

NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE PASTORS' COLLEGE

BY. C. H. SPURGEON.

THE frontispiece of this month's number represents the proposed new buildings for the Pastors' College. They are simple and unpretentious, but we trust they will not appear unworthy of the Institution. The ground upon which they will be erected adjoins the site of the Tabernacle, and as this was an indispensable matter, we have to be content with a position in a street at the rear, the land nearer the front being occupied by the parochial schools and valuable business premises which it would not have been possible to purchase at any price. For this reason also we were glad to obtain a plot of ground of a very inconvenient shape, and we can but admire the ingenuity of the architect (Mr. Currey, of Norfolk-street, Strand) who has managed to cover almost every inch of it, and to give us exactly the accommodation we require.

We thought it wise to present our readers with the plans of the interior, that they might judge of the amount of accommodation provided. Upon the ground story many of the Class-rooms will be used for the Sabbath School on Lord's-days, and for various other uses in connection with the work at the Tabernacle. Where movable partitions are indicated, the object is to form one large room for tea-meetings: and especially for the meals of the Annual Conference, which will hold its sessions for the future in the Large Hall above.

On the first story the College proper will be carried on, and better arrangements for that end we can hardly imagine. The Library will be lit by a lantern in the roof, so as to give as much wall-space as possible for books. The Large Hall will be available for the Sabbath School on Sundays, and for College purposes at all times. The whole will be put in trust in connection with the Tabernacle.

We have now one very earnest appeal to make to our own flock, to our sermon readers, to all our friends, and to Christians in general who approve of our work. Do help us, and help us at once. The work will be done, for it is of the Lord, and already a large proportion of the money is in our hands; but much more is needed. We shall proceed to build, believing that the money will be forthcoming, and forthcoming it will be. We thank the many donors who have aided, but our hope is that many more will be added to the list. The building is needed, needed for the best of purposes. God has intrusted many of our friends with substance, and here is a method of confessing and exercising their stewardship. The noble gift of £1,000 by one unknown donor may be beyond the imitation of the great majority, but many little will achieve the result quite as surely. This work is peculiarly dear to our heart, and no one can do us a greater pleasure or service than by aiding to erect this new house for the school of the prophets.

The ministers who have been educated at the College have resolved to raise £1,000 towards the work. This is a large sum, and they cannot realize their wish unless all their churches aid them heartily. May we press this matter with special earnestness in that direction? Such churches are those to which we naturally look for assistance.

It is not needful to say more. Our friends are of such a kind that for them to know that our work has need is quite enough to move them to generous action.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

AUGUST, 1878.

FOOLISH DICK: AN EXAMPLE FOR MEN OF ONE TALENT

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

IN our Lord's parable, it is the man of one talent who is represented as hiding his Lord's money in the earth. This does not teach us that persons of larger ability are always free from this sin, but we may safely infer from it that those of lowest degree in gift are peculiarly in danger of it. The temptation to think themselves too unimportant to be responsible has great influence over some minds; they cannot shine as stars, and therefore they excuse themselves from shining at all; they cannot hope to achieve a giant's marvels, and therefore they will not contribute an ounce of power. Under the convenient mask of modesty, idleness often conceals itself. They would not be too forward, they say, and therefore they avoid all service. If they were to try their hands at any Christian work, they fear they should blunder in it, and so they think it wise to save their own reputations, and spare themselves by doing nothing; thus providing for two evil propensities at one time, pandering both to pride, and sloth. This kind of talk is wicked, very wicked, and is an aggravation of the sins which it tries to cover. The man of slender gift is as much bound to serve his Master as his neighbor with ten talents; his responsibility may not be so great, but it is just as real; the burial of the one talent in the earth mined the slothful servant quite as effectually and as deservedly as if he had buried five. None of us will be called to account for abilities which we did not possess, but we shall surely have to answer for all we have.

In the important business of publishing abroad the gospel, the ignorant, the poor, and the obscure often think themselves excused. They cannot see that anything is in their power or can be required of them; and yet, if they judged aright, and were full of zeal for God's glory, they would soon find something to do, and would by-and-by achieve great things for the Lord's

cause. Nobody knows what he can do till he has tried. Dormant faculties are in most men, and only an earnest attempt to do good will ever awaken their whole nature. As in the village churchyard there lie in the neglected graves —

*“Hands which the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre,”*

so in the vaults of timorous lukewarmness and despairing inactivity there may be found mouldering in their shrouds singular capacities and rare originalities, which only need quickening, and they will stir the world.

Men quite simple in matters of common life have, nevertheless, been made by God wise to win souls; they have been ranked among fools, and yet have been taught of God to bless their fellow men. Doing all that came in their way to do, they have been honored of the great Master, and though last in ability while here, they will at the last day be first in reward, because they were faithful in their stewardship. Such persons, it must be confessed, labor under great disadvantages at this period; for the church is now far too fine and grand to encourage their labors if they become at all public. Taste is now in the ascendant, grammar is essential, and gentlemanly deportment as needful as grace itself: in fact, there are many professors who will tolerate false theology and unspiritual preaching, but will be altogether savage if the preacher offend against Lindley Murray. If the original fishermen of the Galilean lake should come among us again, they would be hard put to it to find a pulpit which would lower itself by allowing such uncultivated persons to preach in it; they were never at college, and were quite countrified in their dialect: the poor men might be sent out as evangelists among the poor, and they might be useful as city missionaries, but they would never do for the splendid new chapel with its sky-piercing spire, its delightful stained glass, and magnificent organ. In many quarters vulgarity is the sin of sins, and gentility the queen of virtues. Whether souls are lost or saved matters little to some people, so long as the service is attractively conducted, and is suitable for persons of cultivated taste. Hence the idea of employing the rough and uneducated in preaching the gospel may scarcely be mentioned, unless it be with the assurance that they shall not come nearer to our gentility than the East of London, or the slums of our great cities. Great talent is worshipped, and little ability is so despised as to be thrust aside with contempt. In all such cases the sin of burying the one talent is not confined to the individual, but

is shared in by those who surround him, and drive him into a corner. The cold contempt which chills a man's soul is as guilty a thing as the weakness which allows itself to be so chilled; perhaps it is far more evil in the sight of God.

Thoughts like these, and many of like tenor, have passed through our mind while reading a queer little book by Mr. Christophers, entitled "Foolish Dick: an autobiography of Richard Hampton, the Cornish Pilgrim Preacher." (Published by Houghton and Co., 10, Paternoster Row.) Foolish Dick was certainly well named from the ordinary point of view, for in many matters he was scarcely half-witted. "One of his masters conceived that he might be capable of orderly thought in manual labor, so far, at least, as to distribute manure over the surface of the field. He was put to work in the morning, and fairly instructed how to wheel out the manure from the heap in the corner of the field, and drop the several barrowfuls in smaller heaps at certain distances, so that when the whole was thus laid out, the manure might be scattered from the smaller heaps over the entire space. Dick was left to his work. But, in the evening, the manure was found still in a large heap in the corner, as it had been in the morning.

"'Why, Dick,' said the master, 'you have done nothing all the day.' 'Iss I have, master,' was the prompt reply, with a look of mingled humor and self-content; 'iss I have; I ded aall you towld me, and feneshed by denner time; but I thoft it; wud'n do to taake a whoal day's waages for a haaf-day's work, so, arter denner, I wheeled ut aal back agen!'

"He had been put to weeding-work in the garden, too, and particularly shown how to distinguish the young leeks, or onions, or radishes, from the weeds. The result was the dismay of the employer, when Dick, with a kind of triumphant light in his squinting eye, pointed to the entirely tenantless beds, emptied alike of weeds and crops, and said, 'Theere now, I've done un butaful, and weeded un clain!'"

The portrait of Dick, which is placed as a frontispiece to Mr. Christophers' book, leads the observer to put him down among those poor naturals, or half-daft persons, of whom a specimen may generally be found in every village; his dress and form being grotesque to the last degree. Dick's account of his education is quaint enough. "My paarents sent me to a raiding school, kept by a poor owld man caaled Stephen Martin. My schoolin' cost three a'penee a-week. I was kept theere for seven months, and so my edication was wurth no less than three shillin' and sex-pence —

there's for ee! When my edication was feneshed, as they do say, I was took hum, seven months' larnin bein' aal that my poor parents cud affoord for me. But I shall have to bless God to aal eternaty for that edication. At that deear ould man's school I larnt to raid a book they caaled a Psalter; an', havin' larnt so fur, when I got hum I gore myself to raidin, and kept on keepin' on tell I end raid a chaapter in the Testament or Bible. Aw, my deear! what a blessin' thes heere larning a' ben to the poor idyat!"

Despite his natural deficiencies and want of education, Richard Hampton showed great shrewdness and originality, especially in any matter which concerned religion. His Bible and hymn book were all his library, but these he studied so well, and worked them so thoroughly into his nature, that they were a part of his being, and for him to answer a scoffer with an appropriate and scriptural text was as natural as for a bird to sing. "He was one day waiting in the office of an influential firm, having been sent on a business errand by his friend and employer.

"Richard," said one of the gentlemen, "they say you know a good deal about the Bible; go home and look, and you will find in the fourth chapter of Habakkuk a passage that will do for a text for you: the words are: "Rise, Jupiter, and snuff the moon!"

"No, maaster, I don't believe that they words are in the Bible," he replied, "and there es no moare than three chapters in Habakkuk, nuther: but I d'knew that in the eighteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Revelation you will find thaise words: 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book!'"

His mode of quieting a person who wished to pry into his master's business was as clever as it was efectual. We have it in his own words: "When I cum into the count-house the aagent was setting to breakfast, an' he begun to ax me 'bout a mine that I knawed was poor at that time, and gove but melancholy prospic. I knawed what he wanted to find out, so says I to he, 'Do'ee knaw what the apostle says? 'No,' says he; 'what es ut?' 'Why,' says I, 'whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake.' That was 'nough for he; he went on faaster than ever swallowing hes brekfast, and ded'n stop to ax me any moore questins 'pon that head."

Being early converted among the Methodists, Dick was always most devout and enthusiastic, regular at the class meeting, and zealous for all the

ordinances of his church. His remarkable gifts in prayer were not allowed to rust, but few thought that he had any degree of adaptation for the pulpit. His call to the ministry is one of the oddest things we ever remember to have read, and we enjoyed a hearty laugh at the Cornish orator pelted into fame, and finding a tongue amid the jests of his persecutors. His own words are more telling than ours can possibly be.

“Now, the way I was fust drawve out is like these heere. My cap’n sent me weth a letter to Redruth poast-offis; the letter had a bill in un with a hunderd poun’s. Cap’n towld me to be sure I gove un in aall saafe, an’ then to car’ a noate to Maaster Joseph Andrew. I ded so, but while I was stannin’ at hes door tell I had hes aanswer, a young wumman, as she was washin’ the wenders (windows), glazed at me, an’ says she, ‘That theere young man can look *ninety-nine* ways at waance. Says I to she, ‘What man having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the *ninety and nine* in the wilderness and go alter that which is lost, until he find it? and when he hath found it, he layeth it on him shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over *ninety and nine* just persons that need no repentance.’

“Some boavs stannin’ near, got in ‘round me, an’ at laast a mob gethered, and they foached (pushed) me down the strait. In the por (bustle) I lost my hat, tell gittin cloase to a mait-stannin’ (shambles), to save myself from being stanked (trampled) under fut, I got up and set down ‘pon the stannin’; and then, aw, I felt my sawl all a-fire weth love for everybody theere, and sprengin’ to my feet, I begun to ex’ort, and then to pray. Soon as I spoke, they wore aall quiet; norra wann had a word to say, and they looked, seeryus, an’ at laast tears begun to run: aw, what a plaace et was — ‘twas ‘the house of God’ sure ‘nough. My sawl was so happy! everybody wad cam forth simmin to shaw how kind they end be. They got my hat for me agen, and some of ‘em wud gev me money ef I wud taake ut, but no, ‘twasn’ silver or gowld that I looked for. I was happy, and hill of love, and in thut staate I went back hum.”

From that day forward Mr. Hampton was continually engaged in lifting up the Savior among sinners, and many were the souls led to the cross by his entreaties and exhortations. He was frequently advertised as “the Cornish

fool,” and this secured him congregations, but, there was a weight and power about his utterances which soon proved to the audience that he was no fool in the things of God. At first his exhortations were confined to small meetings and out-door gatherings, but by degrees the large Methodist chapels were open to him in many circuits of Cornwall and Devon, and even these were not always able to hold the crowds which gathered to hear him. He spoke the people’s own tongue, and spake of the Gospel in terms level with their own understandings, and he won many hearts. Zealous ministers in the various districts were glad to use him in stirring up their people, and if here and there the more dignified repelled him, Dick was always a match for them. Being on one occasion sharply told that he ought not to venture before chapel congregations, Dick’s response was ready, and proved to be more complete than his reprover desired. “I hope no ‘‘ffence, I’m sure. I ded’n know. I wud do all things ef I cud, decently and in order. You’re a great man, you are, maaster, I knaw, an’ a wise man, I ‘spose. Now, master, don’t ‘ee fall out weth a fool, for it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” You are a larned man, too, I reck’n,’ he added, with one of those curious glances of his twisted eye which seemed to screw their way into one; ‘Can ‘ee taalk Greek, maaster, can ‘ee? Will ‘ee plaise to say ewer a bit of ut to me?’ Dick’s squint, and the comical turn of his lip, made the question unmistakable. The official felt that he was unexpectedly brought to a standard of learning which he would rather not be measured by, and so, wisely taking Dick’s advice, he let the ‘fool’ have his way.”

Very comical were Dick’s adventures in Devonshire, where he itinerated for several weeks, and was introduced to society of a higher grade than any he had mingled with before. A conversation with Dick about his first visit to Devonshire is given by our author, with details, which will thoroughly amuse the reader, and indeed, the whole of the little volume combines instruction with interest in a very high degree, so that we can heartily commend it to those who wish to while away an hour at the sea-side, or anywhere else.

Foolish Dick is an extreme case; but we have felt none the less free in using it, since our intelligent readers will readily supply the grain of salt which the example may require. Very far are we from agreeing with the famous Cobbler How in all that he advances in his “Sufficiency of the Spirit’s teaching without Human Learning,” for he sets himself to show that human learning is no help to the spiritual understanding of the Word of God, and

yet it is clear as the sun at noon-day that the most spiritual man living could not have read the original Scriptures if he had no acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek, and there would have been no translation to help him if the translators had not possessed human learning. We are not, however, fearful that any of our readers will run into the extreme thus indicated. We should be very sorry to see every fool set up for a preacher; perhaps the market in that direction may be regarded as sufficiently stocked; but if there be men of rough natural ability who are muzzled by our present craving for superior elocution, we would say, "In the name of God, loose them and let them go." We desire to see them go forth, not to become antagonists of the regular ministry, not to foam out their own shame by boasting of their ignorance, not to become leaders of factions, but in a Christian spirit to be fellow-helpers with the pastors of the churches, and useful auxiliaries of all other organized labors. We have heard of one-minister who gloried in what he elegantly called "choking off" earnest young men who aspired to preach, and perhaps there may be more of his breed; we would, however, rather believe that our brethren will welcome all who, with true hearts, desire to testify to the truth as it is in Jesus, will cheerfully appoint them such service as they are capable of, and assist them in qualifying themselves for greater usefulness. This will be easy work for the pastors if the brethren are all of the same spirit as Richard Hampton. One of the last records of his experience runs thus: — "My expearyance at thes time es, that I have laately found a grawin' in graace, an' have injoyed braave, cumfert ov laate. I have no end in view in going round as I do, from plaace to plaace but the gloary of God, an' the good of sawls. In times past, I cud'n help shaakin' an' trem'lin' when I used to see anybody cam that I thoft was come to shaw a bad sperrit, or to loff an' grizzle, but the Lord have took away the feear of man from me — I doan't knaw notbin' 'bout et now, I've ben a straanger to et ever sence; thank the Lord! I do love every Methody 'pon the faace ov the eaarth weth a partikler love, but saame time I do raily long an' desire that aall mankind shud be saaved. I shud like to be consedered a member ov society in Porthowan class so long as I do live. I doan't waant to laabour in no circuit no further foath than is plaisin' to the praichers in that circuit: an I do wish all'ays to be in subjecshun to they that are ewer the flock, as 'they must account.' God es my wetness, I never look to praich in laarge chaapels nuther: owld baarns, staables, or any plaace like that; an' I b'lieve the Lord will shaw, in the day of account, how hes poor sarvent have tried to maake the best of the-taalent that he gove me."

Foolish Dick went across the Jordan not very long ago, leaving behind him many who remember his name and work with devout thankfulness. He was never married, but he rejoiced greatly in his spiritual sons and daughters, who were on earth his comfort, and will be in heaven his crown. It was grand to hear him singing, as we trust many of us may be able also to sing,

*“O the fathomless love that has deign’d to approve,
And prosper the work of my hands!
With my pastoral crook I went over the brook,
And behold I am spread into bands!
“Who, I ask in amaze, hath begotten me these?
And inquire from what quarter they came?
My full heart replies, they are born from the skies,
And gives glory to God and the Lamb.”*

WHAT WAS BECOME OF PETER?

A SERMON BY C. H. SPURGEON.

Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. — Acts 12:18.

WE can very well understand that there would be great excitement. It was the most improbable thing in the world that Peter should escape from custody. In the innermost dungeon, securely chained, watched by a four-fold guard, with no powerful friends outside to attempt a rescue — it was marvelous that in the morning the bird was flown: the prison doors were closed and the guards in their places, but Peter — where was he? We marvel not that “there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter”?

We will use this striking narrative as an illustration — what if we make it into an allegory? The sinner fast bound in his sin is, by the mercy of God, set free, brought out from his spiritual prison into the streets of the New Jerusalem, and then there is no small stir among his old companions, what has become of him. Many questions are asked, and many strange answers are given. They cannot understand it. The vain world esteems it strange: much it admires, but hates the change. The carnal mind cannot understand conversion. There is “no small stir, what has become of Peter.”

We shall, first of all, dwell a little upon the escape of Peter, as illustrating the salvation of certain sinners; then upon the consequent stir about it, and then upon the quiet conduct of the man who is the object of all this stir, — “What has become of Peter”

I. First, then, THE IMPROBABLE EVENT. Peter was *in prison*. It was a most unlikely thing that he should come forth from Herod’s gaol, but it is a far more unlikely thing that sinners should be set free from the dungeons of sin. For the iron gate which opened into the city to turn upon its hinges of its own accord was wonderful; but for a sinful heart to loathe its sin is stranger far. Who can escape from the grasp of sin? No person is more straitly shut up than is the sinner in the prison-house of original depravity; it is not around us merely, but in us, compassing our path, whether we lie down or rise up. Stronger than granite walls and bars of iron are the forces of evil. Evil has penetrated our souls, it has become part of ourselves. Whither shall we fly from its presence? or how shall we escape from its power? Vain are the wings of the morning; they cannot enable us to fly from our own selves.

O, marvelous thing, that the Ethiopian should escape from his blackness, and the leopard from his spots! There are some men in whom evil is more than ordinarily conspicuous. They have done violence to conscience; they have quenched, as far as possible, the inner light; they have defied the customs of society; they have resolved to sin at random, and they do so. What a miracle it is that such as these should be emancipated from the slavery they choose so eagerly; that these, who are set fast in the stocks of vice, in the innermost dungeon of transgression, should ever be set at liberty! And yet how often this has happened! The foundations of the prison have been shaken, and every one’s bands have been loosed. The saints of God can, all of them, bless him for liberty from sin; “the snare is broken and they are escaped”! Ay, and many of them can praise him for deliverance from very great sins, black sins, iron sins, sins which had entered into their souls and held their spirits captive. No man can set another man free from iniquity, nor can any man burst down his own prison-doors: no Samson is strong enough for that; but there is One, “mighty to save,” who has come to proclaim liberty to the captives of sin, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound by iniquity, and he has so proclaimed it that many of us are now free through his grace. O that many others now shut up in the spiritual Bastille may be set free!

But, besides being in prison, Peter was *in the dark*. All the lamps had been quenched for the night in his miserable place of confinement. Such is the estate, spiritually, of every unconverted sinner, he is in the dark; he does not know Christ, nor apprehend his own condition, nor comprehend eternal realities. What a state of darkness is he in who has never heard the gospel! But alas! there are some who have heard it, often heard it, and yet their eyes are holden so that they cannot see the light, and they are as badly in the dark as those upon whom the lamp has never shone. Does it not seem impossible to convert such darkened ones? You have held up, as it were, the very sun in the heavens before their eye-balls, while you have preached salvation by Christ, and yet so blind are they that they have seen nothing! Can these blind eyes see? Can these prisoners of midnight escape from the prison through its long corridors and winding passages? The thousands in this city who never attend the house of prayer, — is it possible ever to get at them? Can the grace of God ever come to them? Yes, we bless God that, as the angel came into Peter's prison and brought a light with him, so the Spirit can come into the prison of man's sin and bring heavenly illumination with him, and then he will see, in a moment, the truth as it is in Jesus, which he never knew before. Glory be to God, he can lead the blinded mind into daylight, and give it eyes to see and a heart to love the truth divine. We can testify of this, for so hath God wrought upon *us*, and why should he not thus work upon others; but it is a great marvel, and, when it is performed, there is "no small stir."

Peter's case, in the third place, had another mark of hopelessness about it. He was in prison; he was in the dark; and *he was asleep*. How can you lead a man out of prison who is sound asleep? If you cannot enter and arouse him, what can you do for him? Suppose the doors were opened and the chains were snapped, yet if he remained asleep how could he escape? We find that the angel smote Peter on the side. I dare say it was a hard blow, but it was a kind one. Oh, how I wish the Spirit of God would smite some sleeping sinner on the side at this moment! I would not mind how sharp or cutting the blow might be for the time being, if it made him start up, and say, "How can I escape from this dreadful cell of sin?" My brethren, how difficult it; is to arouse some minds from their indifference. The most indifferent people in this world are those who have prospered in business for a long time without a break; they are accumulating money as fast as they can count it, and they have not time to think about eternal things. Another very hardened class consists of those who have enjoyed good

health for a long time, and have scarcely known an ache or a pain. They do not think about eternity. It is a great blessing to enjoy health, but it is also a great blessing to suffer sickness, for it is often the means of awakening the slumbering heart. Many dream that because things go smoothly with them they are all right; and yet they are peculiarly in danger. O Spirit of the living God, smite them on the side! I have known this smiting come to some by a sermon, to others by the personal remark of a friend, to others by the death of a companion, or by the loss of a dear child, or by great trouble and want. Well, if your souls are saved, you will not in after days be sorry for the awakening: trouble which helped to bring you to the Savior. Yes, the most indifferent have been awakened; and why should it not be so again? The church prayed for Peter, and those prayers brought the angel to awaken him; let us pray for indifferent sons and careless daughters; let us pray for the godless, Christless population around us, and God's Spirit will yet arouse them. and make them cry with a bitter cry, "Lord save us, or we perish!"

There was further difficulty about Peter's case. He was in the prison, in the dark, asleep, and he was also *chained*. Each hand was fastened to a soldier's hand. How could he possibly escape? And herein is the difficulty with some sinners, they cannot leave their old companions. Suppose the gay young man should propose to think about religion? Why, this very night he would be ridiculed for it. Suppose he endeavored to walk in the ways of holiness, is there not chained to his left hand an unholy companion? It may be some unchaste connection has been made; how shall he break away? Let a man be joined to an ungodly woman, or let a woman have once given up herself to an unholy alliance, and how hard it is to set them free! Yet, Peter did come out of prison, though he was chained to his guards; and Christ can save a sinner though he is bound hand and foot by his intimate association with other sinners as bad as himself. It seems impossible that he should be set at liberty; but nothing is impossible with God. There may be some here who have had to snap many an old connection, and get rid of many an evil association; but by divine grace it has been done. We give God the glory of it, and do not wonder at the "stir" which it has made.

In addition to all this, Peter was not only chained, but he was *guarded* by soldiers placed outside the prison. And, oh, how some sinners God means to bless are similarly guarded! The devil seems to have an inkling that God will save them one day, and therefore he watches them. Fearful lest by any

means they should escape out of his hands, he guards them day and night. When men receive a tender conscience, or have their minds a little aroused, Satan will not trust them to enter the house of prayer; or if they do come, he comes with them, and distracts their attention by vain thoughts or fierce temptations; or if they are able to hear the sermon attentively, he will meet them outside and try to steal away the good seed from their hearts. He will assail the man with temptation here and temptation there; he will assault him through some chosen instrument, and then again by another messenger of a like character, if by any means he may keep him from being saved. But when the Lord means to save, he makes short work of the guards, the prison, the darkness, the chains, the devil and all his allies. If the Lord means to save you, man, whoever you are, he will overcome your old master and his guards; the Lord's eternal will shall assuredly overcome your will and the will of Satan, and the lusts of the flesh, and your own resolves, and, although you may have made a league with death and a covenant with hell, yet if the eternal Jehovah wills it, he can break your covenant and set you free, and lead you a captive at the wheels of his chariot of mercy; for with God nothing is impossible.

Once more, Peter was, in addition to all this, *on the eve of death*. It was his last night, the night before his execution. It is a very sweet thing to think of Peter sleeping. It reminds one of the saint whom we read of in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. When the gaoler's wife came in the morning to call him up, he was so sweetly asleep that she had to shake him to arouse him. It was a strange thing to disturb a man and say, "It is time to get up and be burnt!" But he slept as sweetly as though he should be married that morning instead of meeting a cruel death. God can give his people the greatest peace in the most disturbing times. So Peter slept. But that is not the point I wish to dwell upon. The next morning he was to die; but God would not have him die. Perhaps some one who hears or reads these words is despairing, — so despairing that he is ready to lay violent hands upon himself; or perhaps there is one so sick that if the Lord does not appear very soon it will be too late. Blessed be God, he never leaves his elect to perish in sin. He never is before his time, but he never is behind it. He cometh in at the last moment, and when it seems as though eternal destruction would swallow up his chosen one, he stretches out his hand and achieves his purpose. May this remark be a message from God to someone. Though you have gone far in sin and are near your end, yet the

Lord, who can do anything and everything, may come to you and save you even now, at the eleventh hour, and then there will be a “stir” indeed.

We have thus remarked upon a whole series of improbabilities, but I have noticed that it is often the most unlikely people who are saved. There are many of whom I thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me,” and I have been disappointed in them; and there are many others who came to hear out of curiosity, and were the least likely to be impressed, who nevertheless have been met with by sovereign grace. Does not this encourage you to say, “Why should not the Lord meet with me?” Ah, dear soul, why not? And, what is more, he will regard thee if thou listenest to this word of his, “Whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life.” To believe in Jesus Christ is simply to trust. Trust him; for if thou dost trust thy guilty soul entirely on Jesus, he *has* met with thee, thou *art* saved, *now*. Go and sin no more; thy sins which are many are forgiven thee! That is salvation in a nut-shell. Whosoever reposes his trust in Jesus is saved. God grant such faith to you!

2. Secondly, in consequence of this great event, THERE WAS NO SMALL STIR, what was become of Peter. ‘When the Lord saves an unlikely individual, there is sure to be a stir about it.

The text says, “There was no small stir *among the soldiers*.” So, generally, the stir about a sinner begins among his old companions. “What has become of Peter? I thought he would have met us to-night at our drinking bout. What has become of Peter? We were going to the theater together. What has become of Peter? We intended to have a jolly time of it at the horse races. ‘What has become of Peter? We had agreed to go to the dancing saloon together!’” Those who were his old companions say, “We did not believe he would ever have been made religious. He’ll never make a saint! We’ll fetch him back. He has got among those canting Methodists, but we’ll make it too hot for him. We will jest at him and jeer at him till he can’t stand it, and if that does not do, we will threaten him, cast doubts on his creed, and set fresh temptations before him.” Ah! but if God has set him free from sin, he is free indeed, and you will never lead him back to prison again. When you meet him, you will find him a new man, and you will be glad to get away from him again; for he will prove too strong for you. Often when a man’s conversion is thorough, not only is he rejoiced to get away from his old companions, but his old companions are wonderfully glad to keep clear of him. They do not like the manner of him. He is so

strange a man to what he was before. They say, "What has become of Peter? His ways are not ours. What has happened to him?" If a dog were suddenly turned into an angel, the other dogs would be puzzled, the whole kennel would take to howling at him.

But after the soldiers came *Herod*. Herod wondered, "What has become of Peter? Did not I put sixteen men to guard him? Did I not provide heavy chains for his feet? Did I not chain him wrist to wrist to a soldier? Did I not put him in the innermost ward of the prison? What has become of Peter?" Herod grew very wroth. He was delighted to have killed James, and he meant to have killed Peter, and therefore he cried, in great chagrin, "What has become of Peter?" What a sight it would be to see the Devil when he has lost some chosen sinner, — when he hears the man who once could swear beginning to pray! — when he beholds the heart that once was hard and adamant beginning to melt! I think I hear him say to himself, "What has become of Peter? Another of my servants has deserted me! Another of my choice followers has yielded to my foe! What, has Christ taken another lamb from between the jaws of the lion? Will he leave me none? Shall I have no soldiers? Shall none of my black-guard be left to me? Am I to be entirely deserted? What has become of Peter?" Oh, it is a glorious thing to cause a howling through the infernal regions, and to set devils biting their tongues because poor sinners have snapped their chains. Pray that as the prayers of the church set Peter free and made Herod angry, so the prayers of the church may set sinners free and put the Devil to shame.

But we must not forget *the Jews*. They had expected to see Peter die, and when they found that they would have to eat the Passover with the bitter herb of Peter's escape from prison, they began to say to one another, "What has become of Peter?" They could not understand his escape. Many in these days are like the Jews. They are outsiders; they do not associate with sinners in their grosser vices, but they look on. Whenever they hear of a man converted, if he be indeed really changed, they say, "What has come to him? We don't understand him!" They put him down as a fanatical fool. Their maxim is that if you like to go to a place of worship, all well and good, and if you like to have a religion, all well and good, but don't make a fuss about it; don't get carried off your legs by it; keep it to yourself, and be quiet over it. They think that to be lukewarm is the finest condition of mind; whereas the Savior has said, "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." When a man becomes genuinely converted, especially if he has been a notorious sinner, these irreligious

religious people cry out, "What has become of Peter?" The Lord grant there may be much of this outcry!

And surely, also, there was no small stir amongst *God's own people*. There was a great stir in that prayer-meeting when Rhoda went back and said, "There's Peter at the gate! "Never, never!" "But I know his voice, He has been here many times; I can't be mistaken." "Ah," said one, "it, may be his ghost: it can't be Peter himself. It is impossible. So, sometimes, when a sinner who has been very notorious has been converted, after he has been the subject of many prayers, God's people will say, "What, that man converted! It cannot be." When Paul, who had persecuted the church, was brought to be a Christian, it was very hard to make the disciples believe it. They had heard by many of this man, and how he had put the saints to death; surely he could not have become a disciple! There was no small stir what was become of Paul in those days. Christians could hardly think his conversion true. I pray the Lord in these times to convert some very terrible opposer of his gospel, some notorious enemy of the truth. I pray that some of those great philosophers of this learned age, who are always startling us with new absurdities, may be made to feel the power of the sovereign grace of God. I do not know why they should not. Let us pray for it, and it will come to pass. Let us ask the Lord to save even those who brandish their silly learning in the face of the eternal wisdom, and they may yet be brought down to sit humbly at the Savior's feet, and then there will be no small stir in the church, "What has become of Professor this and that?" O Master, for thine own glory's sake grant that it may be done.

III. The last point is this: THE QUIET CONDUCT OF THE MAN about whom there was all this stir. What had become of Peter? He was out of prison, Where was he? I will tell you. In the first place he had *gone to a prayer-meeting*. It is a very good sign that a man has been really awakened when he goes uninvited to a prayer-meeting. I love to see a stranger come stealing in, and sit in a corner, where God's people are met for supplication. Any hypocrite will come to worship on a Sunday, but it is not every hypocrite who will come to the meeting for prayer. Anybody will come to listen to a sermon, but it is not everybody that will draw near to God. Surely when the prayer-meeting comes to be loved, it is a good and hopeful evidence. What is become of Peter? He is not at the gin-palace. What has become of Peter? He is not at the races. What has become of Peter? He is not with his old associates at the skittle ground. No, but he is

drawing near to God, where a humble band are crying to the Most High for a blessing.,

The next thing was, *he joined the Christians*. I do not say that Peter had not done so before; but on this occasion he went to where the Christians were, and sat down with them. So that sinner whom God sets free from sin straightway flies to his own company. “Birds of a feather flock together,” and those who bear the true feather of the white dove, and have been washed in Christ’s blood, “fly as a cloud, and like doves to their windows.” You do not love Christ if you do not love his people. If you love the Lord who has saved you, you will love the people whom the Lord has saved, and you will, like Peter, find out your brethren, and join with them. See then, you who have been making a stir about what has become of Peter: we have told you where he is. He has joined the church of God, he is going to be baptized, and he is following Christ through evil report and good report. What say you to that?

I will tell you yet further what has become of Peter. He has begun to *tell his experience at a church-meeting*. Peter did that very soon. He beckoned with his hand, and told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. What a delight it is to see a man, who was just now black in the mouth with blasphemy, stand up and bless the Lord for what his grace has done for him. “I should think it strange,” says one, “if that ever happened to me.” My dear hearer, I should not think it strange, but should bless God for it. God grant it may happen, and that I may hear of it. No experience in the world is so sweet as that of a sinner who has been in captivity to evil, and has been brought out with a high hand and an outstretched arm. An uncommon sinner who has been remarkably converted tells a more than ordinarily encouraging story in our *church-meetings*, and we delight in such glad tidings. That is what has become of Peter.

And then, lastly, it was not long before Peter was *preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. And oh! you who have been wondering what has become of some ungodly companions of yours, I should not be surprised if you hear them telling others what God has done for their souls. I should like to have heard John Newton’s first sermon after he had been a slave-dealer, with his life full of all manner of villainy, and God had met with him in mercy. Oh, it must have been a sweet sermon, wet with tears. I will be bound to say there were no sleepy hearers. He would talk in a way that would melt others’ hearts, because his own was melted. I should like to have heard

John Bunyan, though under a hedge, preaching the Gospel of Jesus, while he told what God had done for a drunken tinker, and how he had washed him in the precious blood of Jesus and saved him. Those who know what sin is, and what the Savior has saved them from, can speak with demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. Peter could say, "I was in prison but I gained my liberty. It was the gift and work of God." He could bear good testimony to what God had done.

I hold up the blood-red standard at this time: I am a recruiting sergeant, and want in God's name to enlist fresh soldiers beneath the standard of the cross. "Whom will you enlist?" says one. "What must their characters be?" They must be guilty. I wilt have nothing to do with the righteous. The Savior did not come to save those who are not sinful; he came to save sinners. I looked out of my window last winter, when it had been raining for several months almost incessantly, and I saw a man with a garden-hose watering plants, and I looked at him again and again, and to this moment I cannot understand what he was at: it did seem to me an extraordinary thing that a man should be watering a garden when the garden had been watered by the rain for a hundred days or so with scarcely a pause. Now, I am not going to water you who are already dripping with your own self-righteousness. Nay, nay, what need have you of grace? Christ did not come to save you good people. You must get to heaven how you can, on your own account. He has come to wash the filthy and heal the sick. And oh, ye filthy ones, before you I hold up the Gospel banner and say again, "Who will enlist beneath it?" The great Captain of salvation will take your guilt away, and cast your sins into the depths of the sea, and make you new creatures through his power.

"Well," says one, "if I am enlisted and become a new creature, what shall I do?" I will not say what you *shall* do, but, if the Lord saves you, you will love him so much that nothing will be too hard, or heavy, or difficult for you. You will not need driving, if you once receive his great salvation; you will be for doing more than you can, and you will pray for more grace and strength to attempt yet greater things for his name's sake. A man who has had much forgiven, what will he not attempt for the service and glory of him who has forgiven him! May I be fortunate enough to enlist beneath the Savior's banner some black offender. That is the man — that is the man for Christ's money. That is the man who will sound out his name more sweetly than anybody else. That is the man who will be afraid of no one. That is the man who will know the power of the Gospel of Christ to a demonstration.

Oh that the Lord would bring such among us, for we want them in these days — men who will come right out, without doubt, fear, or quibbling, facing all criticisms, defying all opinions, and saying, “Sinners, Christ can save you, for he saved me. I was a drunkard and a thief, but God has forgiven, and cleansed, and washed me, and I know the power of his salvation.” Pray, members of the Church, that both among men and women there may be many such conversions, and that throughout this City of London there may be no small stir “What is become of Peter,” and may that stir be to the praise and glory of God. — Amen.

THE SWORD THE TROWEL

SEPTEMBER, 1873.

SUNDEW, A STRANGE PLANT

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

IN a swampy part of the New Forest, in Hampshire, we met with a plant which was quite new to us. To our unlearned eyes it looked like a lichen or a small red cactus, and yet, it almost as much resembled a zoophyte; we did not know what to make of it, it was so old-world and weird-like. An abundance of red glandular hairs covered each leaf, and upon its surface glistened sparkling dew drops. To gather specimens and send them home by post in a box was a process suggested and carried out by a friend; our samples, however, did not endure the transit, and so we have not since seen our floral novelty. Upon making enquiry, the plant turns out to be the SUNDEW, or as the learned call it *Drosera*, from the Greek word *drosys*, dew. The olden writers call it *Ros-solis*, which is but the Latin of its English name. From Anna Pratt's most interesting work entitled, "The flowering Plants, Grasses, Sedges, and Ferns of Great Britain," we have gathered several facts which may not unfitly be woven into parables, and made to illustrate truth.

Sundew is the tempting name of this plant, and what would seem more safe, attractive, and proper for an insect to light upon? Surely it might wisely sip the crystal drop and fly away refreshed: but "things are not what they seem," and there are lovely names which cover deadly evils. The gauzy-winged insect alights, drinks of the shining drops, and becomes henceforth a captive.

*"For when there's moisture in the brake,
The clammy sundew's glistening glands
'Mid carmine foliage boldly make
Slaves of invading insect bands."*

That dew was never born of the sun, neither is it exhaled by it; it is so viscid that when touched with the finger it will draw out in threads of more than an inch in length, and it is hardly possible that a small insect once caught by its glue can ever escape; in fact, the more it struggles the more it is covered with the clammy moisture, and the more surely is it held. It is too late now, thou pretty victim, thou hast been beguiled to an untimely fate, and escape is impossible. Like Jonathan, thou mayest complain, "I did but taste a little honey and I must die": only that which seemed a tempting sweetness to thee was not so, but acrid to the last degree, so that thou hast a double disappointment to bewail. Struggle thou mayest, but thy case is hopeless. A watchful naturalist has seen the hairs upon the leaves close in upon the insect victim, and the edges of the leaf itself curl inwards, remaining in that condition long after the captive had died. The Sundew is an ogre towards flies, a cunning fowler among little winged wanderers, a vegetable spider, a deceiver and a devourer. Flies much like our common house flies, have been seen to be captured by one of the leaves; and held fast until the relaxing hairs of the plant have laid bare the blackened remains of their prey. One might naturally expect this from a plant bearing the name of Snapdragon, Catch-fly, or Swallow-wort, but who would have conjectured that Sundew would be the name of a deadly trap? Yet all around us are such deluding names and flattering deceits. Do not men call unhallowed lust by the sacred name of love? Is not drunkenness spoken of as good cheer? Are not profligate habits labelled generosity? and is not slavery to the basest passions denominated free living? There is much in a name after all, as Satan knows full well, and well pleased is he to get a name bright and fresh as that of Sundew, wherewithal to disguise the true character of his temptations. Fascinating are the counterfeit dews of youthful lusts; does it not seem a Puritanic harshness to deny them to the young? May they not taste and away? Nay, the dew is not dew, but clammy bird-lime for the soul, it will hold the youth and hold the man, and he will be utterly unable to escape, though he may become aware of his captivity and alarmed at the destruction which will follow upon it. The pleasures of sin cannot be enjoyed for a season and relinquished just when we will. We may say of them, as Virgil does of hell,

*"Avernus' gates are open night and day,
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way;
But to return to heaven's pure light again,
This is a work of labor and of pain."*

True, the grace of God may interpose to rescue the prisoner from the fetters which he has forged for himself, but no man has a right to reckon upon such a deliverance, much less to tempt the Lord by plunging into enslaving habits on the ground that others have been, through infinite mercy, emancipated from them. Who in his senses would take poison because in some cases an antidote has been supplied before death has closed the scene? Who wishes to be plague-stricken because a few survive amid the general mortality? O man, be wise, and shun the tempter and his honey-dew, lest thou be fatally ensnared and fastened down to certain ruin. Lives have no warning, but men have, therefore let them take it, and flee far away from the destroyer. Leave off vice before it be meddled with, is an allowable alteration of the wise man's proverb. Prevention is better than a cure, abstinence is better than reformation. Touch not, taste not, handle not that Sundew which is not from heaven and prepares for hell.

We have not done with the singular tenant of the bog, but will use it for another purpose. Its flower is very seldom seen expanded. For some reason unknown to botanists, and apparently in no way dependent on the shining of the sun, this flower often remains closed during the greater part of its flowering season. One enquirer asks, "Has any person ever seen the blossoms of the round-leaved Sundew fully expanded? Wishing to obtain a specimen of this little plant in full bloom, to sketch from, I have visited in almost every hour of the day a bog traversed by a small rivulet, whose margin is thickly dotted with its glowing leaves, looking as if they had, indeed, impaled drops of the morning dew to cool them through the day. I have watched it from the time in which its slender scape first rises from amidst a bunch of circinate leaves to that at which it forms at top into a nodding raceme, but never have I seen its minute white flower-buds unclose." Many other watchful observers declare that, even in the fairest weather and brightest sunshine, they have looked in vain for opened flowers. Here and there a watcher has seen a flower unfold itself in the morning and close at noon to open no more, but the sight seems to be a great rarity even to the most attentive naturalists. One would not wish to follow the example of so rare a blooming, yet are there men of kindred spirit. They must surely have good times, seasons of affection, moments of generous impulse, when the soul reveals its best, but those around them have looked in vain for such rare occasions. They are so miserly that seldom are they moved to pity and relieve the needy, so churlish that scarcely ever can they utter a kind encouraging word, so cold that never

are they seen to warm into enthusiasm. Children of the marsh, they are damp even to the core, sunlight cannot woo them into blossoming, the genial influences which rule other hearts scarcely affect them for good. Woe to those who are compelled to live with them, they watch in vain for sympathy or love. Unhappy is the Abigail who is married to such a Nabal. Perhaps now and then, to some favored companion, they become for the moment cordial, but they scarcely forgive themselves for the aberration, and relapse into the closed-up state again, to unfold their affections no more. Around them are men and women fall of love, smiling and flourishing the various seasons through, perfuming their surroundings with kindly fragrance of good thoughts and deeds, yet do they abide shut up within themselves. May heaven pity them in boundless mercy, and save them from themselves. 'Twere better far to die of love than live without loving. Disappointment and heartbreak are infinitely to be preferred to selfishness and isolation: the one is an affliction which may happen to the nobles, the other is the vice of the base and groveling. Give the heart room to blossom like the rose, even though the hand of the cruel should pluck at it; our nature sinks even below its natural depravity when we refuse to love. Be it ours to open wide our full soul beneath the smile of the Sun of Righteousness, and so to grow as the lily, and give forth a sweet smell as Sharon's ruddy flower; and never, never may we yield to the power of selfishness, which is as deadly to the heart itself as it is pernicious to those whom it despises.

Old writers highly praise the essence of the Sundew as a remedy for many diseases: it was celebrated under the name of *aqua rosa solis*, or spirit of Sundew. One old herbalist declares that it is good for the lungs, and for nervous faintness, and, though it will raise blisters upon the skin, he considers it to be very useful inwardly, and puts it down as a great cordial. Ladies used it as a cosmetic, and perhaps do so still, but we are not learned in such matters; the country people use it to destroy warts and corns, so that after all it has uses, and perhaps this brief paper may conserve some little of its virtues, to the benefit of manners and of men. Good lies latent in things evil, but the hand of wisdom extracts it; be thus wise, dear reader, and thy profiting shall be known unto all.

LANGUAGE BY TOUCH

ALL our readers are, or ought to be, well acquainted with the wonderful case of Laura Bridgman, the blind, deaf, and dumb girl, whom Dickens saw in America, and so graphically described. She not only learned to sew and knit, but to read, write, and calculate. Although every avenue of communication with her seemed to be closed, she was instructed through the sole medium of touch till she became a highly intelligent girl. The name of Doctor Howe, her patient instructor, deserves to be had in grateful remembrance; he was the pioneer in the difficult task of teaching blind, deaf mutes, and all who have followed him confess their obligations to his example.

It is not, however, at all generally known that Mr. Patterson, of the Parochial Schools of the Manchester Union, has achieved the same result in other cases. A small shilling book, by George Wallis, of the South Kensington Museum, gives a brief account of the cases of Mary Bradley and Joseph Hague, who were by Mr. Patterson's persevering efforts upraised from a condition of living death into active mental life. The girl Mary Bradley was abandoned by her mother in a damp cellar, while suffering from some virulent disease, and so lost both sight and hearing at three years of age. She was, when first noticed, a motherless and fatherless child, without ear or eye, a most wretched inmate of the infant department of a workhouse, where the other children cruelly made sport of her, hitting and pulling her with their hands, while she screamed and vainly stretched out her hand to seize them. Happy for her was the day when she was admitted to the institution for the deaf and dumb. It was, however, far more easy to take her into the institution than to know what to do with her. "The obvious course for her instructor seemed to be to watch her habits, and to endeavor to adapt his own course and the efforts of those around her to them. With this view she was left for some days to her own resources, in order that the bent of her inclination might be seen and judged of. Finding herself in a new position, she was occupied for a time in becoming acquainted with the locality, and the persons and things by which she was surrounded. She made no attempt to make known her wants by signs, as is usual in the case of the deaf and dumb. If she required help her habit was to shout and scream; and, as her utterances were by no means agreeable, every one was interested in relieving her wants. Since her loss of hearing and sight she had been in no position in which signs could have

been understood, had she made any; but it never seemed to occur to her to do so. In fact, she was at this time one of the most uncouth and wild-looking objects it is well possible to conceive. She had recently had her head shaved in consequence of some disease in the skin of the scalp, and with a crouching, groping attitude, she had more the appearance of a scared and timid animal seeking some mode of escape from danger, than of a human being endowed with a rational soul."

The first step in teaching was to make her acquainted with the names of things around her. Mr. Patterson placed before her objects distinctly differing in shape, such as a pen, a book, a slate. As the visible letters could not be placed before her, the signs used by the deaf and dumb were used instead, but as she could not see them, her fingers were touched by Mr. Patterson in the proper form. This plan was a complete failure for a long time, for the poor girl failed to connect the pen or the book with the sign appropriate to it. Every day the work had to be commenced anew; the appliances were varied, and great kindness and patience exercised, but no beam of intelligence entered the darkened mind for five weeks. But to the resolute nothing is hopeless, God rewards determination: all at once, as with a sudden burst of sunshine, Mary Bradley's face lit up with full intelligence; she had found the clue, she had connected the sign with the thing signified, and she proceeded to sign upon the fingers of her teacher the names of each of the articles. This was a grand beginning, and was energetically followed up. "Mr. Patterson then cut out the letters of the alphabet in cardboard, and gummed them to a sheet of stiff pasteboard, so that they stood in relief, and could be sharply felt and distinguished from each other by the fingers. By this means she soon became acquainted with all their forms, and mentally associated — say *pen* — with the signs upon her fingers and the object which these signs represented. Her progress now became daily more and more evident. She took great delight in her work, and with the limited time at Mr. Patterson's disposal, it was difficult to keep pace with her desire for the knowledge of names. From these she was taught the quality of things. When new words of this kind were intended to be taught, the objects were generally placed before her, as an illustration of comparison: for instance — a large book and a small one, a light object and a heavy one, thick and thin, rough and smooth, hard and soft, sweet and sour. Objects possessing opposite qualities were placed within her reach, and she very readily acquired the words to express them. Thus the work went on step by step, every day's lesson being a preparatory one for the

next day. Verbs were taught much in the same way, the word being given with the action: standing, sitting, walking, eating, drinking, laughing, crying, etc., etc., generally in the form of the present participle, and in connection with a noun, as being an easy change from the adjectives — as, a boy standing, a girl crying, etc..

“At length the great inconvenience presented itself of the want of a lesson-book adapted to meet the case. In order to supply this want, a case of type for printing in relief was obtained, and some lessons were printed, which were readily deciphered by the pupil through the sense of touch. It was, however, soon discovered that the operation of composing the type was an exercise which was not only very amusing to her, but also very instructive. A little box was constructed in which she could arrange the type in sentences, etc., which were dictated to her by natural signs, the teacher using her hands in the same way as he would use his own to sign similar sentences to a seeing deaf child, and this became a never-failing source of interest. It made her familiar with the various modes of construction, — the greatest difficulty which the deaf and dumb have to encounter. Every new word was at once applied to its appropriate meaning.”

When she was ten years old, and had been under instruction two or three years, she learned to write, and before long exchanged letters across the Atlantic with her sister in deprivation, Laura Bridgman. With this mental growth the girl’s temper improved, and her manner became subdued, though before she had been exceedingly irritable. She lived to the age of twenty-six, suffering with great patience during the later years of her life. The great truths of revelation had been made known to her, and she greatly rejoiced in reading the gospels in the form printed for the use of the blind. Calling together her chief benefactors, she calmly and formally declared how she wished her small possessions to be disposed of, then fell asleep, we trust to wake in the image of Jesus. The little book before us only fails with regard to spiritual experience, of which we should have liked far more; however, as it is sold for the benefit of the deaf and dumb, we have no heart even to hint at a fault. That which is described awakens gratitude in our heart, and leads us to pray that all other poor creatures in a like case may come under similar judicious and generous influences.

The boy Joseph Hague was the son of a deaf and dumb mother, was born deaf, and became blind before he was two years of age. When he was eight years old he became the fellow pupil of Mary Bradley, who was delighted

to communicate all she knew to her young companion. Only imagine one poor blind, deaf, and dumb child teaching another. With the boy much the same process had to be gone through as in the case of the girl, and the two together progressed much more rapidly than could have been anticipated when Mary alone was the pupil. Joseph aspired to do all that other blind boys could do, and soon progressed from making his own bed to the manufacture of baskets, in which he became a clever workman, and left the institution in due time to live with his father and mother.

Both cases are very wonderful, and read like a reproduction of Laura Bridgman and Oliver Caswall, described in "American Notes." It has even suggested itself to us that God allowed two such unhappy little ones to be upon the stage of life at the same time that they might together feel their way into intelligence. The practical lesson to us all is to be thankful for our senses, educate them to perfection, learn all we can by means of them, and use them for the glory of God. Ye who have eyes, observe the handiwork of your Maker, consider his marvelous works, and read constantly in his word. Eyes are not sent to aid us in regarding vanity, or to flash with the glances of passion, but to weep for sin, and to be lifted in gratitude to the Redeemer God. Ye who have ears, hear the word of God with attention and grateful obedience. Such delicate organs are not intended to pollute the mind with the hearing of lascivious or idle talk, but to edify the soul with holy instruction. Ye who have tongues, sing unto the Lord, and speak well of his name. Let those who are fluent consecrate their utterance unto the Lord, proclaiming to all around them the gospel of Jesus; and let all, whether old or young, endeavor to sing the praises of God, ay, and to sing them well too; let the voice be cultivated, so that public worship in the department of song may be rendered to the Lord in the best and most harmonious manner. Surely it cannot be right that the devil and the flesh should have the best music. No, let us give eye and ear and tongue to him who in his bounty gave to us these precious boons, and in his tenderness has preserved to us the use of them.

C. H. S.

JOHN PLOUGHMAN ON MOTHERS

MOST men are what their mothers made them. The father is away from home all day, and has not half the influence over the children that the

mother has. The cow has most to do with the calf. If a ragged colt grows into a good horse, we know who it is that combed him. A mother is therefore a very responsible woman, even though she may be the poorest in the land, for the bad or the good of her boys and girls very much depends upon her. Just as she bends the twigs the trees will grow. As is the gardener such is the garden, as is the wife such is the family. Samuel's mother made him a little coat every year, but she had done a deal for him before that: Samuel would not have been Samuel if Hannah had not been Hannah. We shall never see a better set of men till the mothers are better. We must have Sarahs and Rebekahs before we shall see Isaacs and Jacobs. Grace does not run in the blood, but we generally find that the Timothies have mothers of a godly sort.

Little children give their mothers the headache, but if she lets them have their own way, when they grow up to be great children they will give her the heartache. Foolish fondness spoils many, and letting faults alone spoils more. Gardens that are never weeded will grow very little worth gathering; all watering and no hoeing will make a bad crop. A child may have too much of its mother's love, and in the long run it may turn out that it had too little. Soft-hearted mothers rear soft-headed children; they hurt them for life because they are afraid of hurting them when they are young. Coddle your children, and they will turn out noodles. A boy who is his mother's duck generally grows up to be a great goose. You may sugar a child till everybody is sick of it. Boys' jackets need a little dusting every now and then, and girls' dresses are all the better for occasional trimming. Children without chastisement are fields without ploughing, and vines without pruning. The very best colts want breaking in. Not that we like severity; cruel mothers are not mothers, and those who are always flogging and faultfinding ought to be flogged themselves. There is reason in all things, as the madman said when he cut off his nose.

Good mothers are very dear to their children. There's no mother in the world like our own mother. My friend Sanders, from Glasgow, says, "The mither's breath is aye sweet." Every mother is a handsome woman to her own son. That man is not worth hanging who does not love his mother. When good women lead their little ones to the Savior, the Lord Jesus blesses not only the children, but their mothers as well. Happy are they among women who see their sons and their daughters walking in the truth.

He, who thinks it easy to bring up a family never had one of his own. A mother who trains her children aright had need be wiser than Solomon, for his son turned out a fool. Some children are perverse from their infancy; none are born perfect but some have a double share of imperfections. Do what you will with some children, they don't improve. Wash a dog, comb a dog, still a dog is but a dog: trouble seems thrown away on such children. Such cases are meant to drive us to God, for he can turn blackamoors white, and cleanse out the leopard's spots. It is clear that whatever faults our children have, we are their parents, and we cannot find fault with the stock they came of. Wild geese do not lay tame eggs. That which is born of a hen will be sure to scratch in the dust. The child of a cat will hunt mice. Every creature follows its kind. If we are black, we cannot blame our offspring if they are dark too. Let us do our best with them, and pray the Mighty Lord to put his hand to the work. Children of prayer will grow up to be children of praise; mothers who have wept before God for their sons, will one day sing a new song over them. If boys are not born with a chifney bit in their mouths, and therefore run wild, the Lord can bring them back, however far afield they may gallop. Some colts often break the halter, and yet become quiet in harness. God can make those new whom we cannot mend, therefore let mothers never despair of their children as long as they live. Are they away from you across the sea? Remember the Lord is there as well as here. Prodigals may wander, but they are never out of sight of the Great Father, even though they may be "a great way off."

Let mothers labor to make home the happiest place in the world. If they are always nagging and grumbling they will lose their hold of their children, and the boys will be tempted to the public-house or the billiard table, or some other dangerous ground. By the way, those billiard tables at public-houses are everywhere now-a-days, and are desperate snares to young fellows who have time on their hands. Home is the best place for boys and men, and a good mother is the soul of home. The smile of a mother's face has enticed many into the right path, and the fear of bringing a tear into her eye has called off many a man from evil ways. The boy may have a heart of iron, but his mother can hold him like a magnet. The devil never reckons a man to be lost so long as he has a good mother alive. O woman, great is thy power! See to it that it be used for him who thought of his mother even in the agonies of death.

REAL CONTACT WITH JESUS: A SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me — Luke 8:46.

OUR Lord was very frequently in the midst of a crowd. His preaching was so plain and so forcible that he always attracted a vast company of hearers; and, moreover, the rumor of the loaves and fishes no doubt had something to do with increasing his audiences, while the expectation of beholding a miracle would be sure to add to the numbers of the hangers-on. Our Lord Jesus Christ often found it difficult to move through the streets, because of the masses who pressed upon him. This was encouraging to him as a preacher, and yet, how small a residuum of real good came of all the excitement which gathered around his personal ministry. He might have looked upon the great mass and have said, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" for here it was piled up upon the threshing-floor, heap upon heap; and yet after his decease his disciples might have been counted by a few scores, for those who had spiritually received him were but few. Many were called, but few were chosen. Yet, wherever one was blessed our Savior took note of it; it touched a chord in his soul. He never could be unaware when virtue had gone out of him to heal a sick one, or when power had gone forth with his ministry to save a sinful one. Of all the crowd that gathered round the Savior upon the day of which our text speaks, I find nothing said about one of them except this solitary "somebody" who had touched him. The crowd came and the crowd went, but little is recorded of it all. Just as the ocean, having advanced to full tide, leaves but little behind it when it retires again to its channel, so the vast multitude around the Savior left only this one precious deposit — one "somebody" who had touched him and had received virtue from him.

Ah, my Master, it may be so again this evening! These Sabbath mornings and these Sabbath evenings the crowds come pouring in like a mighty ocean, filling this house, and then they all retire again; only here and there is a "somebody" left weeping for sin, a "somebody" left rejoicing in Christ, a "somebody" who can say, "I have touched the hem of his garment, and I have been made whole." The whole of my other hearers are not worth the

“somebodies.” The many of you are not worth the few, for the many are the pebbles, and the few are the diamonds; the many are the heaps of husks, and the few are the precious grains. May God find them out at this hour, and his shall be all the praise.

Jesus said, “Somebody” hath touched me,” from which we observe that, *in the use of means and ordinances we should never be satisfied, unless we can get into personal contact with Christ; secondly, if we can get into such personal contact we shall have a blessing; “I perceive that virtue is gone out of me;” and, thirdly, if we do get a blessing, Christ will know it;* however obscure our case may be, he will know it, and he will have us let others know it; he will speak, and ask such questions as will draw us out, and manifest us to the world.

I. First:, then, IN THE USE OF ALL MEANS AND ORDINANCES LET IT BE OUR CHIEF AIM AND OBJECT TO COME INTO PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Peter said, “The multitude throng thee and press thee,” and that is true of the multitude to this very day; but of those who come where Christ is in the assembly of his saints a large proportion only come because it is their custom to do so. Perhaps they hardly know why they go to a place of worship. They go because they always did go, and they think it wrong not to go. They are just like the doors which swing upon their hinges; they take no interest in what is done, at least only in the exterior parts of the service; into the heart and soul of the business they do not enter, and cannot enter. They are glad if the sermon is rather short, there is so much the less tedium for them. They are glad if they can look around and gaze at the congregation, they find in that something to interest them; but getting near to the Lord Jesus is not the business they come upon. They have not looked at it in that light. They come and they go; they come and they go, and it will be so till at the last they will come for the last time, and they will find out in the next world that the means of grace were not instituted to be matters of custom, and that to have heard Jesus Christ preached and to have rejected him is no trifle, but a solemn thing to be answered for in the presence of the Judge.

Others there are who come to the house of prayer, and try to enter into the service, and do so in a certain fashion; but it is only self-righteously or professionally. They would come to the Lord’s table; they would attend to baptism; they would join the church; but they have baptism, yet not the

Holy Spirit; they have the Lord's Supper, but they have not the Lord himself; they eat the bread, but they never eat his flesh; they drink the wine, but they never drink his blood; they have been buried in the pool, but they have never been buried with Christ in baptism, nor have they risen again with him into newness of life. To them to read, to sing, to kneel, to hear, and so on, are enough. They are content with the shell, but the blessed spiritual kernel, the true marrow and fatness, these they know nothing of. These are the many, go into what church or meeting-house you please. They are in the press around Jesus, but they do not touch him. They come, but they come not into contact with Jesus. They are outward, external hearers only, but there is no inward touching of the blessed person of Christ, no mysterious contact with the ever-blessed Savior, no stream of life and love flowing from him to them. It is all mechanical religion. Vital godliness they know nothing of.

But, "somebody," said Christ, "somebody hath touched me," and that is the soul of the matter. Oh, my hearer, when you are in prayer alone never be satisfied with having prayed; do not give it up till you have touched Christ in prayer; or, if you cannot get at him, at any rate sigh and cry until you do. Do not think you have prayed, but try again. When you come to public worship, I beseech you, rest not satisfied with listening to the sermon, and so on — as you all do with sufficient attention; to that I bear you witness; — but do not be content unless you get at Christ the Master, and touch him. At all times when you come to the communion table, count it to have been no ordinance of grace to you unless you have gone right through the veil into Christ's own arms, or at least have touched his garment, feeling that the first object, the life and soul of the means of grace, is to touch Jesus Christ himself; and except "somebody" hath touched him, the whole has been a mere dead performance, without life or power.

The woman in our text was not only amongst those who were in the crowd, but she touched Jesus; and therefore, beloved, let me hold her up to your example in some respects; though I would to God that in other respects you might excel her.

Note, first, she felt that it was of no use being in the crowd, of no use to be in the same street with Christ, or near to the place where Christ was, but she *must fret at him; she must touch him*. She touched him, you will notice, under *many difficulties*. There was a great crowd. She was a

woman. She was also a woman enfeebled by a long disease which had drained her constitution and left her more fit to be upon a bed than to be struggling in the seething tumult. Yet, notwithstanding that, so intense was her desire that she urged on her way, I doubt not with many a bruise, and many an uncouth push, and at last, poor trembler as she was, she got near to the Lord. Beloved, it is not always easy to get at Jesus. It is very easy to kneel down to pray, but not so easy to reach Christ in prayer. There is a child crying, it is your own, and its noise has often hindered you when you were striving to approach Jesus; or a knock will come at the door when you most wish to be retired. When you are sitting in the house of God, your neighbor in the seat before you may unconsciously distract your attention. It is not easy to draw near to Christ, especially coming as some of you do right away from the counting-house, and from the workshop, with a thousand thoughts and cares about you. You cannot always unload your burden outside, and come in here with your hearts prepared to receive the gospel. Ah! it is a terrible fight sometimes, a real foot-to-foot fight with evil, with temptation, and I know not what. But, beloved, do fight it out, do fight it out; do not let your seasons for prayer be wasted, nor your times for hearing be thrown away; but, like this woman, be resolved, with all your feebleness, that you will lay hold upon Christ. And oh! if you be resolved about it, if you cannot get to him, he will come to you, and sometimes, when you are struggling against unbelieving thoughts, he will turn and say, "Make room for that poor feeble one that she may come to me, for my desire is to the work of my own hands; let her come to me, and let her desire be granted her."

Observe, again, that this woman touched Jesus *very secretly*. Perhaps there is a dear sister here who is getting near to Christ at this very moment, and yet her face does not betray her. It is so little contact that she has gained with Christ that the joyous flush and the sparkle of the eye, which we often see in the child of God, have not yet come to her. She is sitting in yonder obscure corner, or standing in this aisle, but though her touch is secret, it is true. Though she cannot tell another of it, yet it is accomplished. She has touched Jesus. Beloved, that is not always the nearest fellowship with Christ of which we talk: the most deep waters are still. Nay, I am not sure but what we sometimes get nearer to Christ when we think we are at a distance than we do when we imagine we are near him, for we are not always exactly the best judges of our own spiritual state, and we may be very close to the Master, and yet for all that we may be so anxious to get

closer that we may feel dissatisfied with the measure of grace which we have already received. To be satisfied with self is no sign of grace, but to long for more is often a far better evidence of the healthy state of the soul. Friend, if thou canst not come to the table to-night publicly, come to the Master in secret. If thou darest not tell thy wife, or thy child, or thy father that thou art trusting in Jesus, it need not be told as yet. Thou mayest do it secretly, as he did of whom Jesus said, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee." Nathaniel retired to the shade that no one might see him, but Jesus saw him and marked his prayer, and he will see thee in the crowd and in the dark, and not withhold his blessing.

This woman also came into contact with Christ *under a very deep sense of unworthiness*. I dare say she thought, "If I touch the Great Prophet it will be a wonder if he does not strike me with some sudden judgment," for she was a woman ceremonially unclean. She had no right to be in the throng. Had the Levitical law been strictly carried out, I suppose she would have been confined to her house, but there she was wandering about, and she must needs go and touch the holy Savior. Ah! poor heart, you feel to-night that you are not fit to touch the skirts of the Master's robe, for you are so unworthy. You never felt so undeserving before as you do to-night. In the recollection of last week and its infirmities, in the remembrance of the present state of your heart, and all its wanderings from God, you feel as if there never was so worthless a sinner in the house of God before. "Is grace for me?" say you. "Is Christ for me?" Oh! yes, unworthy one. Do not be put off without it. Jesus Christ does not save the worthy, but the unworthy. Your plea must not be righteousness, but guilt. And you, too, child of God, though you are ashamed of yourself, Jesus is not ashamed of you; and though you feel unfit to come, let your unfitness only impel you with the greater earnestness of desire. Let your sense of need make you the more fervent to approach the Lord, who can supply your need. The woman came under difficulties, she came secretly, she came as an unworthy one, but still she obtained the blessing.

I have known many staggered with that saying of Paul's, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Now, understand that this passage does not refer to the unworthiness of those persons who come to the Lord's Table; for it does not say, "He that eateth and drinketh *being unworthy*." It is not an adjective; it is an adverb. "He that eateth and drinketh *unworthily*," that is to say, he who shall come to the outward and visible sign of Christ's presence, and shall eat of the bread

in order to obtain money by being a member of the church, knowing himself to be a hypocrite, or who shall do it jestingly, trifling with the ordinance: such a person would be eating and drinking unworthily, and he will be condemned. The sense of the passage is, not “damnation,” as our version reads it, but “condemnation.” There can be no doubt that members of the church coming to the Lord’s table in an unworthy manner, do receive condemnation. They are condemned for so doing, and the Lord is grieved. If they have any conscience at all they ought to feel their sin, and if not they may expect the chastisements of God to visit them. But, oh, sinner, as to coming to Christ — which is a very different thing from coming to the Lord’s table — as to coming to Christ, the more unworthy you feel yourself to be the better. Come, thou filthy one, for Christ can wash thee. Come, thou loathsome one, for Christ can beautify thee. Come utterly ruined and undone, for in Jesus Christ there is the strength and salvation which thy case requires.

Notice, once again, that *this woman touched the Master very tremblingly and it was only a hurried touch, but still it was the touch of faith.* Oh, beloved, to lay hold on Christ! Be thankful if you do but get near him for a few minutes, “Abide with me,” should be your prayer, but oh, if he only gives you a glimpse, be thankful! Remember that a touch healed the woman. She did not embrace Christ by the hour together. She had but a touch, and she was healed; and oh, may you have a sight of Jesus now, my beloved! Though it be but a glimpse, yet it will gladden and cheer your souls. Perhaps you are waiting on Christ, desiring his company, and while you are turning it over in your mind you are asking, “Will he ever shine upon me? Will he ever speak loving words to me? Will he ever let me sit at his feet? Will he ever permit me to lean my head upon his bosom?” Come and try him. Though you should shake like an aspen leaf, yet come. They come best sometimes who come most tremblingly, for when the creature is lowest then is the Creator highest, and when in our own esteem we are less than nothing and vanity, then is Christ more fair and lovely in our eyes. One of the best ways of climbing to heaven is on our hands and knees. At any rate, there is no fear of falling when we are in that position, for

“He that is down need fear no fall.”

Let your lowliness of heart, your sense of utter nothingness, instead of disqualifying you, be a sweet medium for leading you to receive more of Christ. The more empty I am the more room is there for my Master. The

more I lack the more he will give me. The more I feel my sickness the more shall I adore and bless him when he makes me whole.

You see, the woman did really touch Christ, and so I come back to that. Whatever infirmity there was in the touch, it was a real touch of faith. She did reach Christ himself. She did not touch Peter; that would have been of no use to her, any more than it is for the parish priest to tell you that you are regenerate when your life soon proves that you are not. She did not touch John or James; that would have been of no more good to her than it is for you to be touched by a bishop's hands, and to be told that you are confirmed in the faith, when you are not even a believer, and therefore have no faith to be confirmed in. She touched the Master himself, and do not, I pray you, be content unless you can do the same. Put out the hand of faith and touch Christ. Rest on him. Rely on his bloody sacrifice, his dying love, his rising rower, his ascended plea; and as you rest in him, your vital touch, however feeble, will certainly give you the blessing your soul needs. This brings us to the second part of our discourse, upon which only a word or two.

II. THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD DID TOUCH JESUS, AND, HAVING DONE SO SHE RECEIVED VIRTUE FROM HIM

The healing energy streamed at once through the finger of faith into the woman. In Christ there is healing for all spiritual diseases. There is a speedy healing, a healing which will not take months nor years, but which is complete in one second. There is in Christ a sufficient healing, though your diseases should be multiplied beyond all bounds. There is in Christ an all-conquering power to drive out every ill. Though, like this woman, you baffled physicians, and your case is reckoned desperate beyond all parallel, yet a touch of Christ will heal you. What a precious, glorious gospel I have to preach to sinners! If they touch Jesus, no matter though the devil himself were in them, that touch of faith would drive the devil out of them. Though you were like the man into whom there had entered a legion of devils, the word of Jesus would cast them all into the deep, and you should sit at his feet, clothed, and in your right mind. There is no excess or extravagance of sin which the power of Jesus Christ cannot overcome. If thou canst believe, whatever thou mayest have been, thou shalt be saved. If thou canst believe, though thou hast been lying in the scarlet dye till the warp and woof of thy being are ingrained therewith, yet shall the precious blood of Jesus make thee white as snow. Though thou art become black as hell

itself, and only fit to be cast into the pit, yet if thou trustest Jesus, that simple touch shall give to thy soul the healing which shall make thee fit to tread the streets of heaven, and to stand before Jehovah-Rophi's face, magnifying the Lord that healeth thee.

And now, child of God, I want you to learn the same lesson. Very likely when you came in here you said, — “Alas! I feel very dull; nay spirituality is at a very low ebb; the place is hot, and I do not feel prepared to hear; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak; I shall have no holy enjoyment to-day!” Why not? Why, the touch of Jesus could make you live if you were dead, and surely it will stir the life that is in you, though it may seem to you to be expiring! Now, struggle hard, my beloved, to get at Jesus! May the Eternal Spirit come and help you, and may you yet find that your dull, dead times can soon become your best times. Oh! what a blessing it is that God takes the beggar up from the dunghill! He does not raise us when he sees us already up, but when he finds us lying on the dunghill, then he delights to lift us up and set us among princes. Or ever you are aware your soul may become like the chariots of Amminadib. Up from the depths of heaviness to the very heights of ecstatic worship you may mount as in a single moment if you can but touch Christ crucified. View him yonder, with streaming wounds, with thorn-crowned head, as in all the majesty of his misery, he expires for you!

“Alas!” say you, “I have a thousand doubts to-night.” Ah! but your doubts will soon vanish when you draw nigh to Christ. He never doubts who feels the touch of Christ, at least not while the touch lasts, for observe this woman! She felt in her body that she was made whole, and so shall you, if you will only come into contact with the Lord. Do not wait for evidences, but come to Christ for evidences. If you cannot even dream of a good thing in yourselves, come to Jesus Christ as you did at the first. Come as if you never had come at all. Come to Jesus as a sinner, and your doubts shall flee away.

“Ay,” but saith another, “my sins come to my remembrance, my sins since conversion.” Well, return to Jesus, when your guilt seems to return. The fountain is still open, and that fountain, you will remember, is not only open for sinners but for saints; for what saith the Scripture — *There shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem*” — that is for you, church-members, for you, believers in Jesus. The fountain is still open. Come, beloved, come to Jesus anew, and

whatever be your sins, or doubts, or heavinesses, they shall all depart as soon as you can touch your Lord.

III And now the last point is — and I will not detain you longer upon it —
IF SOMEBODY SHALL TOUCH JESUS, THE LORD WILL KNOW IT.

I do not know your names; a great number of you are perfect strangers to me. It matters nothing; your name is “somebody,” and Christ will know you. You are a total stranger, perhaps, to everybody in this place, but if you get a blessing there will be two who will know it — you will, and Christ will. Oh, if you should look to Jesus this day, it may not be registered in our church-book, and we may not hear of it; but still it will be registered in the courts of heaven, and they will set all the bells of the New Jerusalem a-ringing, and all the harps of angels will take a fresh lease of music as soon as they know that you are, born again.

*‘With joy the Father doth approve
The fruit of his eternal love;
The Son with joy looks down and sees
The purchase of his agonies;
The Spirit takes delight to view
The holy soul he formed anew;
And saints and angels join to sing
The growing empire of their King.’*

“Somebody!” I do not know the woman’s name; I do not know who the man is, but — “Somebody” — God’s electing love rests on thee. Christ’s redeeming blood was shed for thee. The Spirit has wrought a work in thee, or thou wouldst not have touched Jesus; and all this Jesus knows about it.

It is a consoling thought that Christ not only knows the great children in the family, but he also knows the little ones. This stands fast: “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” whether they are only brought to know him now, or whether they have known him for fifty years. “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” and if I am a part of Christ’s body, I may be but the foot, but the Lord knows the foot; and the head, and the heart in heaven feel acutely when the foot on earth is bruised. If you have touched Jesus, I tell you that amidst the glories of angels, and the everlasting hallelujahs of all the blood-bought, he has found time to hear your sigh, to receive your faith, and to give you an answer of peace. All the way from heaven to earth there has rushed a mighty shock of healing virtue, which has come from

Christ to you. Since you have touched him the healing virtue has touched you.

Now, as Jesus knows of your salvation, he *wishes other people to* know it, and that is why lie has put it in my heart to say — Somebody has touched the Lord. Where is that somebody? Somebody, where are you? Somebody, where are you? You have touched Christ, though with a feeble finger, and you are saved. Let us know it. It is due to us to let us know. You cannot guess what joy it gives us when we hear of sick ones being healed by our Master. Some of you, perhaps, have known the Lord for months, and you have not yet come forward to make an avowal of it; we beg you to do so. You may come forward tremblingly, as the woman did; you may perhaps say, “I do not know what I should tell you.” Well, you must tell us what she told the Lord; she told him all the truth. We do not want any thing else. We do not desire any sham experience. We do not want you to manufacture feelings like somebody else’s that you have read of in a book. Come and tell us what you have felt. We shall not ask you to tell us what you have not felt, or what you do not know. But, if you have touched Christ, and you have been healed, I ask it, and I think I may ask it as your duty, as well as a favor to us, to come and tell us what the Lord hath done for your soul.

And you, believers, when you come to the Lord’s table, if you draw near to Christ, and have a sweet season, tell it to your brethren. Just as when Benjamin’s brethren went down to Egypt to buy corn, they left Benjamin at home, but they took a sack for Benjamin, so you ought always to take a word home for the sick wife at home, or the child who cannot come out. Take home food for those of the family who cannot come for it. God grant that you may have always something sweet to tell of what you have experimentally known of precious truth, for while the sermon may have been sweet in itself, it comes with a double power when you can add, “and there was a savor about it which I enjoyed, and which made my heart leap for joy!”

Whoever you may be, my dear friend, though you may be nothing but a poor “somebody,” yet if you have touched Christ, tell others about it, in order that they may come and touch him too; and the Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

OCTOBER, 1873.

HARLAN PAGE; OR,
PERSONAL WORK FOR JESUS

AN INTRODUCTION, BY C. H. SPURGEON.

OUR venerable friend, Cornelius Elyen, of Bury St. Edmund's, Suffolk, has finished his long and honorable career as a preacher of the gospel, and has gone to his reward. We were requested by a dear friend to "*weave a chaplet*" for his memory, but having few or no materials, we have been unable to do so; both heart and hand are willing, but the facts which, like amaranthine flowers, should fashion the *immortelle*, are not at hand, so that affection cannot perform its task. Our departed friend was a prophet honored in his own country, for he exercised his useful ministry in his native town, and in the place wherein he was born devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. When we had just commenced our youthful pastorate at Water-beach, Cornelius Elyen, as a man of mark in that region, was requested to preach the anniversary sermons in our little thatched meeting-house, and right well we remember his hearty compliance with our request. We met him at the station as he alighted from a third-class carriage, which he had selected in order to put the friends to the least possible expense for his traveling. His bulk was stupendous, and one soon saw that his heart was as large as his body. He gave us much sage and holly advice during his visit, advice which came to us with much the same weight as Paul's words came to Timothy. He bade us study hard, and mind and keep abreast of the foremost Christians in our little church; "for," said he, "if these men, either in their knowledge of Scripture, or their power to edify the people, once outstrip you, the temptation will arise among them to be dissatisfied with your ministry, and, however good they are, they will feel their superiority, and others will perceive it too, and then your place in the church will become very difficult to hold." We felt the common sense of the observation, and the spur was

useful. The sermons of the day were homely, very homely in style, and pre-eminently practical. We remember his reading the narrative of Naaman the Syrian, and his pithy comments thereon; but one thing above all others fixed itself upon our memory, and when we heard of the good man's departure it came before us with great vividness; he told us anecdotes of the usefulness of addressing individuals one by one about their souls, and urged the duty upon us with great earnestness, quoting again and again from the: life of a certain HARLAN PAGE. From that day to this, being busy with a thousand matters, we have never looked up the biography which he so strongly recommended; but though it must be now some three and twenty years ago since we heard the sermon, our first thought, 'when we learned of the death of Cornelius Elven, was HARLAN PAGE. We sent at once for the little book, and it has refreshed us greatly to read it; and as we wish every reader of *The Sword and the Trowel* to know all about HARLAN PAGE, we take this early opportunity of advising them to get the little book from the Religious Tract Society. Perhaps many of our friends will smile and reply, "We read the book years ago," and our answer will be, "Then read it again." Our own belief is that a book which is popular with one generation is often forgotten by the next, and that it is a good thing to bring it again under notice. We do not know of a more stimulating work for the common run of Christians, or one more likely to be of lasting service to them; and therefore with more than common earnestness we press its perusal upon all who value our judgment.

Mr. Harlan Page was an American mechanic of very ordinary abilities, who laid himself out to win souls for Jesus by personal conversations and by writing letters to individuals. His success was great, and, though he was no preacher, his power for good far exceeded that of most ministers. He lived only to lead sinners to Jesus, and probably brought himself to an early but honorable grave by the zeal which burned within his soul, and quite consumed him. He was no orator, but he knew how to pray and prevail. To gather children into the Sabbath-schools, to speak to wayfarers, to importune the careless, and encourage seekers — these were his daily occupations in every instant that he could spare from his workshop. One of his first efforts was to give away little cards, upon which he had printed striking words of warning to the impenitent, and his last office was in connection with the Tract Society of New York, which was happy enough to secure his priceless services. His whole biography is full of pleasing incidents of usefulness, but we have thought it best, instead of attempting

to abridge the whole, to give our readers parts of a chapter of the work, which may be regarded as a summary of the whole; and having thus introduced Harlan Page, we will let his actions speak for themselves.

“It may not be unimportant to bring together some of the characteristics of his efforts to honor Christ in the salvation of individuals as illustrated in the preceding history. It was the burden of his heart, and the purpose of his life. When engaged in his usual business, the religious welfare of persons with whose state he had become acquainted, was generally pressing on his mind; and it is now known, that for several years before he died, he almost always had by him a memorandum of the names and residences of a few individuals with whom he was to converse. On these he would call, as he went to and from his office, or religious meetings; and if no names were on his list, he felt that he was doing little good. He also uniformly had in his hat some awakening tracts, that he might present as he should judge them adapted to the state of those he met. Not unfrequently he would seize a few moments from his usual occupation, to go out and address some individual; and when the business of the day was closed, he hastened to some meeting or other religious engagement for the evening. It is believed that an entire month has frequently elapsed, during which he did not sit down for an hour, even in the bosom of his own family, to relax his mind, or rest. Every evidence of good accomplished gave him new joy; and every opening for usefulness added a new impulse to his efforts. He felt that, under God, the eternal joy or woe of immortal souls depended on his fidelity. Each evening and each hour brought its duties, which he felt could not be neglected or postponed. The present duty was still before him; and though “faint” he was still “pursuing.” His labors on the Sabbath were not less exhausting than on other days, and he doubtless thus failed of obtaining that “compensation for toil” which the animal constitution requires, and which is essential to a long life.

When urged, at the close of a day of fatigue, to spare himself and spend the evening at home, he would say, “Don’t attempt to persuade me away from duty. I have motive enough within myself to tempt me to enjoy repose with my family; but that will not save souls.” A little previous to his last sickness, as he returned from church, coughing, he was asked if he had not spoken too much in the Sabbath-school: “Perhaps I have,” he replied, “but how could I help it, when all eyes were fixed, and the children seemed to devour every word I said?”

It was not uncommon, at different periods of his life, for him in sleep to imagine himself addressing the impenitent, and to wake in a high state of excitement and in tears, occasioned by the deep sympathy he felt for their perishing condition. It is also known, that, when he saw no manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he would be at times in deep distress, would wrestle more abundantly in prayer, renew his efforts to arouse Christians to duty, and awaken the impenitent; and, more or less, conversions were almost always the result.

In short, it was not the great object of his spiritual life himself to be happy in religion, but rather by persevering labors and holy self-denial — like the apostle who testified that he died daily — to glorify God in winning souls to him. He ardently desired to devote the whole undivided efforts of his life to this work, and nothing but the duty of providing for the support of his family prevented it.

He had the most dear view of the necessity to every man of being born again. As soon as an individual came into his presence it seemed to be the first question of his mind, “Is this a friend or an enemy of God?” The next thing was, if impenitent, to do something for his conversion, or, if a Christian, to encourage him in duty. Whatever else he saw in an individual, he felt that it availed him nothing unless he had received Christ into his heart by a living faith. This he felt and urged to be the sinner’s first, great, and only duty in which he could be acceptable to God. This was exemplified at a meeting of his Sabbath-school teachers, when he called on each to know whether he thought he had a well-grounded hope in Christ or not, and recorded their several replies. Among them was an amiable young merchant, whom he highly respected, and who seemed not far from the kingdom of God.

“Have you a hope?” he tenderly inquired.

“No, sir,” was the reply.

“Then I am to put down your name as having no hope?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, I write down your name as having no hope.”

The young man pondered on this decision and record of his spiritual state; was troubled, and soon came to our brother, saying, “I told you to put me

down as having no hope, but I cannot say that.” He is now a member of the church, and a decided supporter of all her institutions.

He brought his efforts to bear upon individuals, and followed up impressions made. All the triumphs of the gospel, he knew, consist in the conversion and sanctification of *individuals*; and he was not satisfied with merely praying and contributing for the salvation of the world as a *whole*, or having a general impression made on the minds of a congregation. His intense desire was, that *individuals* should be turned from sin to God. Not unfrequently he would observe in the congregation a person unknown, to him, who seemed to give solemn attention to divine truth; ascertain who he was, and seek a personal interview; and, *in all cases*, if he left an individual to-day in an interesting state of mind, he would endeavor to see him again to-morrow, and follow up the impression at brief intervals, till there was no longer encouragement, or he had evidence of true conversion.

He had a clear sense of obligation, both in the sinner to repent, and in the Christian to devote all his powers to God. He felt, and labored to make others feel, that if any one neglected duty, the guilt was all his own; that God was ever ready to receive the returning prodigal; and that if any withheld their hearts, or aught they possessed from him, in the day of judgment they would be speechless. This sense of obligation he urged with unabating fervor. His heart was intent that it should *be felt*, and *immediately carried out* in an entire consecration to God.

“Brother,” said he to a Christian who watched with him, “when you meet impenitent sinners, do not merely say calmly, ‘Friend, you are in danger;’ but approach them with a holy violence, and labor to ‘pull them out of the fire.’ They *are* going to perdition. There *is* a heaven and a hell.”

As a brother from Boston, to whom several of his letters were addressed, had called, and was about taking leave, he asked the dying man if he had any particular thought on his mind to express as he bade them farewell. “Ah! I can say nothing,” he replied, “but what has been repeated over and over; but could I raise my voice to reach a congregation of sinners, I would tell them, ‘their feet shall slide in due time’ — they ‘*shall slide*’ — there is no escape but by believing in Christ.”

He not only endeavored to alarm impenitent men, but to bring them to a decision that they will be the Lord’s.

While in his native place, he was absent one evening till so late an hour that his wife remonstrated with him for unreasonably tasking his own health, and separating himself from home. "I have spent this time," said he, "in trying to persuade your poor impenitent brother to give his heart to Christ." That impenitent brother was soon brought to accept of mercy, pursued a course of theological study, and is now serving God in the ministry.

On another occasion, while residing in New York, he had gone to a religious meeting, and returned late in the evening, when he was reminded of the danger that his protracted efforts might be more than he could ultimately sustain. "I have been standing this hour," was his reply, "at the corner of the street, laboring with Mr. H. — (one of the teachers of his Sabbath-school), and trying to persuade him to submit to God." Within a few hours the young man found peace, soon resumed his studies, which he had been pursuing for other ends, and he is now a devoted minister of Christ, gathering a flourishing church in one of the principal cities of the west. A letter from this young clergyman, received as these sheets were going to press, thus confirms this brief statement: —

"The name of brother Page will ever be associated in my mind with all that is worthy of imitation in the Christian character. By the persuasions of an acquaintance, I was induced to engage as teacher in his Sabbath-school; and though I was then destitute of faith, he welcomed me, and won my confidence and love. Very soon he began to address me with the utmost apparent tenderness and anxiety in reference to my own salvation. His words sunk deep into my heart. They were strange words; for though I had lived among professors of religion, he was the first who, for nine or ten years, had taken me by the hand, and kindly asked, 'Are you a Christian?' 'Do you *intend* to be a Christian?' 'Why not *now*?' Each succeeding Sabbath brought him to me with anxious inquiries after my soul's health. On the third or fourth Sabbath he gave me the tract, 'Way to be saved,' which deepened my impressions. At his request I also attended a teachers' prayer-meeting, conducted by him, where my soul was bowed down and groaned under the load of my guilt. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Page took my arm as we proceeded on our way to our respective homes, and urged upon me the duty and privilege of an immediate surrender of my heart to Christ. As we were about to part, he held my hand; and at the corner of the street, in a wintry night, stood pleading with me to repent of sin and submit to God. I returned to my home, and for the first time in

many years bowed my knees in my chamber before God, and entered into a solemn covenant to serve him henceforth in and through the gospel of his Son. God was pleased, I trust, by his Holy Spirit, to seal my vows. If I have since had any Christian joy, or done anything to advance the cause of Christ, it is to be attributed to the Divine blessing on the faithfulness of brother Page.”

He expected success from God, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer. He felt that humble, self-denying effort, made in God’s strength, he would own and bless; but that for this he would be “inquired of” by his people. He loved prayer. Besides prayers at social meetings, with the families and individuals he visited, and on special occasions, frequently recurring, he regularly not only conducted family worship, accompanied by singing, but every morning and evening prayed with his wife as they retired and rose, and also poured out his heart to God alone in the closet. For the latter duty, when in his native place, he often retired to a consecrated spot in a grove, near his father’s house. If one of the household were about to take a journey, the family assembled and commended each other to God, which was frequently done on other occasions of special interest.

His prayers were usually short and fervent, and confined mainly to those topics which pressed with special force upon his mind. At all times prayer seemed to be a privilege, and the throne of grace a resting-place, and a solace to his heart. There is no doubt that it was by continual and fervent prayer that he imbibed that glowing sense of eternal things, that love to souls, and that heavenly unction which were, at once the spring of his fidelity, and, under God, the ground of his success.

So anxious was he that there should be more prayer in the churches, and such were his hopes, that, if the duty were properly presented, it would be felt and practiced, that he united with a brother, whose means were as limited as his own, in paying fifty dollars as a premium for a tract on prayer — himself drawing out minutely various hints to guide those who might write.

In his mind there was no jarring conflict between perfect obligation on the part of man, and perfect dependence in his relations to God. He knew both were revealed, momentous, eternal truths, and left all embarrassing questions of their consistency to be settled by God himself. It was enough to hear God speak, and to obey. He prayed as if all the efficiency and praise were God’s, and labored as if duty were all his own. His sense of

dependence threw him on his knees, and his sense of duty summoned him to effort; and prayer and effort, and effort and prayer, were the business of his life. Blessed day to the church when this endless source of contention and controversy shall thus be settled in every Christians heart!

He was uniform and unwearied. I know not who has made or heard the charge of inconsistency in his Christian character. Those who knew him best, best knew how supreme in his heart was the business of glorifying God in the salvation of men. I have well considered the assertion; when I say, that during nine years in which we were associated in labors, I do not know that I ever passed an interview with him long enough to have any interchange of thought and feeling, in which I did not receive from him an impulse heavenward — an impulse onward in duty to God and the souls of men. No assembly, even of professed Christians, from which the spirituality of religion was excluded, whether met for social enjoyment, or in furtherance of some benevolent design, received his countenance; nor was he satisfied with what too justly seemed the strange anomaly of excluding Christ from the hours of social intercourse, and then, as it were, atoning for the sin by closing the interview with prayer.

The only remaining particular, which it seems important now to mention, is his fruitfulness in devising means for doing good. Of this point the history of his life is but an exemplification.

As the father of a family, he labored for the spiritual welfare of all his household, especially for the early conversion of his children. Of thirteen individuals, who resided in his family at different times in the city of New York, twelve became deeply anxious for their salvation. One of these was a Roman Catholic, whose attention to family worship was forbidden by her priest; one who was hopefully reclaimed from her backsliding, has since died; and six others gave, and, so far as known, still give evidence of saving conversion to God. Of his fidelity to his children, the testimony contained in the following expression of filial gratitude from his son in transmitting, by request, the letters he had received from his father, will be excused: —

“In reviewing the letters I received from my father,” he says, “I see everywhere an expression of the tenderest solicitude, both for my temporal and eternal welfare; and oh! for some of that ardent desire for the salvation of souls to bear me forward in duty which impelled him onward, till he ceased his toils on earth, and entered on his rest in heaven.

“I cannot refrain from bearing testimony to my father’s fidelity to my own soul. Well do I remember his endeavors, in my early childhood, to lead me to the Savior — his prayers — his entreaties — and the anxiety with which he followed me, year after year, while under the paternal roof, and when away, till he could speak to me no more. His kind voice I shall no longer hear. His affectionate smile of approval, or tears shed over my waywardness, I shall no more see. His kind intercourse with the members of his family, we shall no more share. He will no more call us around the hallowed family altar, lead us in the hymn of praise, and in pouring out the soul to God. He is in a more endeared, a happier, and holier sphere, enjoying the smiles and presence of his God and Redeemer. Pray for me, that I may have grace to follow his example, as he followed Christ, and at last to unite in his songs.”

Many pious young men were by him sought out and directed towards the ministry.

To the cause of missions, both in our own and pagan lands, he was steadfastly devoted. He not only turned his eye away from the accumulation of property, as the object of his life, but felt the duty, and claimed the blessedness to his own soul, of imparting for the cause of Christ a portion of what he had. On his dying-bed he mentioned to Mrs. Page that five dollars, which before his sickness he had subscribed to a benevolent object, remained unpaid. “We have consecrated to God,” said he, “and I had rather it should be paid. You had better pay it, and trust him.”

His familiarity with the character and religious bearing of all the Society’s publications, and with the general state and wants of the community, rendered him skillful in selecting publications appropriate to the different fields and circumstances for which they are designed, and also in giving an impulse and a wise direction to the feelings and efforts of Christians who were continually calling for the transaction of business; and in all, it abundantly appears that he felt that the efficiency was alone with God, and that he mingled continual prayer for the gift of gifts, the accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit.

Is it wonderful that God should bless his efforts? — that in each church with which he stood connected, individuals when relating their religious experience, should be heard referring to his faithful endeavors as the means of bringing them to Christ? — that a revenue of souls should have been

gathered from the place of his nativity; thirty-two teachers he brought publicly to profess Christ from one of his Sabbath-schools, and nine of them have set their faces towards the ministry? — that thirty-four souls should hopefully have been gathered by him and his fellow-laborers from one ward of the city; and fifty-eight, in connection with his efforts and those of a few endeared associates, have been brought to join themselves to the people of God from the tract and Bible houses? — that individuals should come to his dying bed, and thank him, with tears, for his fidelity to their own souls? Is it wonderful that, in speaking to her who is now his widow, of his early departure, and looking back on his work on earth as ended, he should, with the solemnity of eternity on his countenance, say — “I know it is all of God’s grace, and nothing that I have done; but I think have had evidence that more than one hundred souls have been converted to God through my own direct and personal instrumentality”?

Look at the influence of such a Christian life on a large scale. Suppose every Christian labored, not to say with such talents, but with such a heart to the work. Suppose there were ten such Christians in every evangelical church throughout our land, and God should equally bless their labors! how would they rouse their fellow Christians to duty! how would they search the highways and hedges and by God’s grace compel the ungodly to come in! how would they instruct the rising age! how would they hold up the hands of faithful ministers! how would the Holy Spirit, be shed down in answer to their prayers! how would their influence penetrate through every vein of this great community! and how soon would living piety here pour its influence on every benighted land! Such a light as would then shine could not be hid. It would illumine the world, and Christ would come and possess the nations.”

A GOLDEN SENTENCE.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” John 4:34,.

THIS text contains in it much consolation for those who are desirous of salvation; more of example to those who are saved: and most of all of matter for praise concerning our Lord himself, who is its spokesman.

I. Let us begin by noticing that THE TEXT CONTAINS MUCH OF CONSOLATION FOR THOSE ANXIOUS ONES WHO WOULD FAINTLY FIND MERCY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

You who are trembling under a sense of sin will perceive that the *work of saving souls is called by Christ "his Father's will."* I know you are very prone to imagine that Christ is full of pity but that the Father is austere, severe, an avenging judge; you slander your God by such a supposition. "The work of mercy is the will of him that sent me," saith Christ, "all that I am doing when I am seeking the soul's good of a poor sinful Samaritan woman, at the margin of this well, is according to my Father's mind." Christ was not, as it were, introducing men to a mercy from which God would faintly keep them, but he was bringing to reconciliation with God those concerning whom the benevolent will of God was that they should be saved; and more, concerning whom the effectual will of God was that they should also be brought into covenant relation with himself, and should enjoy eternal life. Sinner, if thou gettest into the garden of the Lord's grace thou hast not come there as an intruder. The gate is open; it is God's will that thou shouldst come. If thou receivest Christ into thy heart thou wilt not have stolen the treasure; it was God's will that thou shouldst receive Christ. If with broken heart thou shalt come and rest upon the finished sacrifice of Jesus, thou needst not fear that thou wilt violate the eternal purpose, or come into collision, with the divine decree. God's will has brought thee into a state of salvation. One of the most vain fears that a man can entertain is the dread that the Father will be unwilling to forgive; or the equally absurd fear that he may possibly find a decree of God shutting him out when he is anxious to be reconciled. Where God gives the will to come to Jesus, we may be sure that the eternal purpose has gone before. O awakened sinner, thine anxious desire, thy prayerfulness, thy longing for God, are but the shadows of the divine will upon thine own will. Imagine not that thou canst get the start of God in the race of mercy.

***"No sinner can be beforehand with thee;
Thy grace is almighty, preventing and free."***

If thou desirest, God has long ago desired. If thou purposest in thy heart God has long ago purposed. Thou needest never be troubled about divine predestination. The Gospel which we preach is that to which thou shouldst give thine attention, Rest assured that God has never spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth, and said, "Seek ye my face in vain." He has never

passed a secret decree in the council-chamber which shall contravene the open promise of his mercy. “Whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” If thou comest to Christ and castest thyself upon him, thou needest entertain no suspicion that thou art violating the will of God, for salvation is the will of God which Jesus Christ has come to fulfill.

Another consolation is here given to every seeking soul, namely, that *Jesus Christ is sent into the world on purpose to save*. If I know that I am sick, and that a physician has come into the street on purpose to heal, I feel no difficulty about inviting him into my house. If I know that I am poor, and that a princely almoner has come with plentiful liberalities to distribute to the poor, I have no difficulty in asking of him: why should I, if I know that he has come with the very object and intent to do that which I want him to do? Now, wherever there is an empty sinner a full Christ has come on purpose to fill that empty sinner. Wherever there is a thirsty spirit the river of life is poured out on purpose for that thirsty soul to drink. If thou hungerest after Christ rest assured that Christ has met with thee, and discerns in thee one of those whom he came to call. He would not have made thee hunger, nor made thee thirst, nor made thee feel thine emptiness if it had not been his intention to remove thy hunger, slake thy thirst, and fill thine emptiness to the full. Look upon the Savior as being commissioned by his Father to save sinners, Never indulge the thought that he came to save better ones than thou art, and that thou art just beyond the pale of his mercy, but instead thereof let thy sinfulness, thy nothingness, thy conscious weakness, thine utter ruin and hell-desert — let these inspire thee with a surer hope that thou art such as Jesus Christ came to deliver. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Who more lost than thou art? Believe, then, that he came to seek and to save thee, and cast thyself upon him, and thou shalt find it so. Here, then, is a double comfort: it is both the will of God and the mission of Christ that sinners should be saved.

Perhaps the greatest consolation to a despairing sinner which this text affords is *the delight which Jesus Christ experiences in the work of saving souls*. It was his one object. From of old he looked forward to the day when a body should be prepared for him that he might come into the world to redeem. When the fullness of time was come he was no unwilling servitor to our souls. “In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God!” Down from the portals of the skies the Savior came with glad alacrity, willing, panting to save. When he was on earth he was nothing loth to seek out the guilty; nay, it was alleged against

him, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." He could have healed the leper, if he had pleased, while he stood at a distance, but he chose to touch him when he healed him, to show how near he had come to humanity, that he did not shrink from it, but that it was his delight to come into contact with all the woe and suffering of our fallen race. He did not retire from sinners to guard his holiness in solitude. He did not surround himself with a bodyguard to keep off the throng, but there he was among them, surrounded by a press of common folks, many thronged him, and some touched him who received healing virtue through their believing touch. He was at the beck and call of everybody. He had not time so much as to eat, and when he did, through weariness, seek a little rest, they followed him on foot and persecuted him with their entreaties; yet he was never angry, but always full of compassion towards them. He was a willing Savior; and found his soul's delight in winning souls. That great crowning work of suffering and death by which souls were effectually redeemed was no unwilling service. He said he had a baptism to be baptized with, and that he was straitened until it was accomplished. The cup was bitter as hell, but he longed to drink it. His death was to be at once the most ignominious and the most painful that could be devised, and yet he thirsted for it. "With desire, Lord, have I desired to eat this passover," said he. He did not hide himself away when he was wanted, but he went to the garden, and Judas knew the place, and when they sought him he said, "Wherefore have ye come out; to seek me as a thief with lanterns and with staves?" He was willing to yield himself up. No bonds could have bound him, and yet he bound himself. They could not have dragged him to the cross, nor myriads like them, but he went like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep before her shearers was he dumb, and opened not his mouth. All that wondrous passion upon Calvary was a free-will offering for us; it was a voluntary sacrifice to the fullest possible extent. What if I say that even in his deepest agony Christ had a joy unknown? I think we have too much forgotten the wonderful joy which must have filled the Savior's heart even when going to the cross. Beloved, you cannot suffer for others, if you have a benevolent nature, without feeling joy that you are taking the suffering from them: and we know that it was because of "the joy that was set before him" that he "endured the cross, despising the shame." As he dived into the black waves of grief he could see the precious pearl which he counted to be of greater price than all, and that sight sustained him with a latent joy, if I may so call it, which did not sparkle at the time, but which lay there slumbering within his soul even when "he was exceeding sorrowful, even

unto death.” And now that Christ has gone up on high, poor trembling sinner, he has no greater joy than this, in seeing of the travail of his soul in souls redeemed by him, both by price and. by power, from death and sin. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because it would not be saved, but Jesus rejoices greatly over sinners who repent. This is his joy, and his crown of rejoicing — even ye poor tremblers who come and look to his cross and find life in his death, and healing in his wounds.

I cannot bring out the comfort of this text to you as I could wish. Words fail me, but I would urge those of you who want to find peace and faith, to make a point of thinking very much about Christ. We not only lay hold on the cross by faith, but it is the cross which works faith in us. If you would think more often of the mercy of God, and the will of God, and the mission of Christ, and the lovingkindness of Christ, your, soul would probably be led by the Spirit, by that course of thought, to believe in Jesus. Your dwelling constantly upon your sin, and your hardness of heart, has a great tendency to drive you to despair. It is well to know your heart to be hard, and your sin to be great, but as a man is not healed by simply knowing that he is sick, and is not likely to get his spirits comforted by merely studying his disease, so you are not likely to find faith by ranking amongst the filth of your fallen nature, or trying to find something good in yourselves which is not there, and will not be there. Your wisest course is to think much of Jesus, and look to him. You will soon find hope in him if you look for it there. You will soon discover grounds for comfort if you look to God in the person of his Son. If you regard the will of God as it is revealed on Calvary, and read it in the crimson lines written adown the Savior’s pierced body, you will soon perceive that his will is love. Turn away from the wounds which the old serpent has given you, and look to the brazen serpent. Look away from your own death to the death of Jesus, and, recollect, that your repentance apart from Christ, will only be a legal repentance, full of bondage, and will be of no avail to you. As old Wilcocks says, “Away with that repentance which does not weep at the foot of the cross.” If you do not look to Jesus Christ when you repent, your repentance is not an evangelical repentance, but a repentance which needeth to be repented of. Do, I pray you, receive the truth which I have put before you, or, rather, which the text so plainly presents. The salvation of sinners is the will of God, the work of Christ, and the joy of Christ. Is not this good news?

II. But I said that the text WAS MUCH MORE AN EXAMPLE TO BELIEVERS, and so it is.

Every word here is instructive to the follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. "As he is, so are we also in this world," and the more we become like him the more have we attained to that which God would have us be.

Note in the text, first of all, *Christ's subserviency*. He says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He says nothing about his own will. Thus early did he say, "Not my will, but thine be done." The man of the world thinks that if he could have his own way he would be perfectly happy, and his dream of happiness in this state or in the next is comprised in this, that his own wishes will be gratified, his own longings fulfilled, his own desires granted to him. This is all a mistake. A man will never be happy in this way. It is not by setting up his own will, and crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" but perfect happiness is to be found in exactly the opposite direction, namely, in the casting down of our own will entirely, and asking that the will of God may be fulfilled in us. "This is my meat," says the sinner, "to do my own will." Jesus Christ points to another table, and says, "This is my meat, to do the will of him that sent me; my greatest comfort, and the most substantial nourishment of my spirit, are not found in carrying out my own desires, but in submitting all my desires to the will of God." Beloved, our sorrows grow at the roots of our self will. Could a man have any sorrow if his will were utterly subdued to the will of God? In such a case would not everything please him. Pain, if we did not kick against it, would have a wondrous sweetness; losses would positively become things to rejoice in, as affording opportunities for patience; we should even take joyfully the spoiling of our goods. When we have conquered ourselves we have conquered all; when we have won the victory over our own desires, and aversions, and have subdued ourselves, through sovereign grace to the will of God, then must we be perfectly happy.

Notice in the text, however, in the next place, not only subserviency, but also *a recognized commission*. O Christian, cultivate full subserviency to the divine will, and let it be your desire also to see clearly your commission from on high. It is the will of God; ay, but it is well for us to add "The will of *him that sent me*." If I am a soldier, when I am sent upon an errand I have not to consider what I shall do, but, having received my commands, I am bound to obey. Do not many Christians fail to see their commission? It has come to be a dreadfully common belief in the Christian Church that the

only man who has a “call,” is the man who devotes all his time to what is called the “ministry,” whereas all Christian service is ministry, and every Christian has a call to some kind of ministry or another. It is not every man that will become “a father in Israel,” for “ye have not many fathers;” it is not every man who can become even an instructor, or an exhorter, but each man must minister according to the gift he hath received. *Ye are* a nation of priests. Instead of having some one man selected who becomes a priest, and so maintains the old priestcraft in the Christian church, Jesus our Lord and Head has abolished that monopoly for ever. He remains the one great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and we in him are made, each one of us, through his grace, kings and priests unto God. You are each of you, as believers, sent into this world with a distinct commission, and that commission is very like the commission given to your Master. In your measure the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and he has sent you to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Into the atonement you cannot intrude, Christ has trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him, but in the place of service you will be no intruder, it is your dwelling-place. You are called to follow Christ your Lord in all holy labor for souls. “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you;” is not this a part of his dying commission, not to the Apostles only, but unto all the saints? Let us endeavor to recognize this. When Christ was sent of God he did not forget that he was sent. He did not come into this world to do his own business after he had once been sent to do his Father’s will. So you and I must not act as though we were living here to make money, or to bring up our families, and make matters comfortable for ourselves. We are, if we are Christians, sent into the world upon a divine errand, and oh! for grace to recognize the errand and to perform it.

Further, notice *the practical character of our Lord’s observations on these two points*, He says, “My meat is” — what? To consider? To resolve? To calculate? To study prophecy as to when the world will end? To meditate upon plans by which we may be able one of these days to do something great? Not at all. “My meat is *to do* the will of him that sent me.” The meat of some people is to find fault with others who do Christ’s will, they never seem to have their mouths so well filled as when remarking upon the imperfections of those who are vastly better than themselves. This is like glutting one’s self with carrion, and is unworthy of a man of God. Did you ever know a man whom God blessed who had not some crotchet or

singularity? I think I never knew such a man or woman either. Whenever God blesses us there is sure to be something or other to remind men that the vessel containing the treasure is an earthen vessel. Foolish people are so fond of crying "Look at the meanness of the vessel!" as though no treasure were contained within. Were they wise they would understand that this is a part of the divine appointment, that we should have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Could you do God's work better, think you? I wish you would try! It is generally true that those who cavil at others, find it inconvenient to walk in any path of usefulness at all.

There are others, of a somewhat better disposition, who find it their meat to project new methods. They invent grand schemes. There is a house to be built for God's people to worship in, and they always know how to build it, so many people are to give so much, and so many so much; the practical part of the business being how much they will give themselves, but upon that point they have remarkably little to say. They are always talking of some grand scheme or other for impossible Christian union, or some magnificent but impracticable Christian effort. Our Lord was practical. You are struck in the whole of his life with the practical character of it. He was no visionary, and no fanatic. Though his holy soul was on fire as much as the most fanatical zealot that ever lived, all his plans and methods were the wisest that could possibly be arranged; so that if men had sat down in their coolest prudence to devise schemes, had they been rightly led they must have devised the very schemes which this warm-hearted, passionate Savior carried out. He did not theorize, but act. My dear brethren and sisters, I hope we shall earn the same commendation. Many Christians are too fond of mysticisms, quiddities, oddities, and strange questions which minister not unto profit, I heartily wish they would try to win souls for Jesus in the old-fashioned Bible way. Every now and then some particular phase of truth crops up, and certain Christians go perfectly mad about it, wanting to pry between leaves that are folded, or to find out secrets which are not revealed, or to reach some fancied eminence of self-conceited perfection in the flesh. While there are so many sinners to be lost or to be saved, I think we had better stick to preaching the gospel. As long as this world contains millions of those who do not know even the elementary truths of Christianity, would it not be as well for us first of all to go into the highways and hedges, and tell men of our dying Savior, and point them to the cross? Let us discuss the millennium, and the secret rapture, and all

those other intricate questions by-and-by, when we we have got through more pressing needs. Just now the vessel is going to pieces, who will man the life-boat? The house is on a blaze, and who is he that will run the fire-escape up to the window? Here are men perishing for lack of knowledge, and who will tell them that there is life in a look at the crucified One? He is the man who shall give men meat to eat; but all others, though they may carry a dish of most exquisite china, will probably give them no meat, but only make them angry at being tantalized with empty wind. Christ's satisfaction of heart was of a most practical kind; he was subservient to God as a commissioned servant, and busy with actually *doing* the will of God.

But the gist of the text lies here. *Our Lord Jesus Christ found both sustenance and delight in thus doing the will of God in winning souls.* Believe me, brethren, if you have never known what it is to pluck a brand from the burning, you have never known that spiritual meat which, next to Christ's own self, is the sweetest food a soul can feed upon. To do good to others is one of the most rapid methods of getting good to yourselves. Read the diaries of Whitefield and of Wesley, and you will be struck with the fact that you do not find them perpetually doubting their calling, mistrusting their election, or questioning whether they love the Lord or not. See the men, preaching to their thousands in the open air, and hearing around them the cries of "What must we do to be saved?" Why, brethren, they had no time for doubts and fears. Their full hearts had no room for such lumber. They felt that God had sent them into this world to win souls for Christ, and they could not afford to live desponding mistrustful lives. They lived unto God, and the Holy Ghost so mightily lived in them that they were fully assured that they partook of his marvelous power. Some of you good people, who do nothing except read little Plymouth books, and go to public meetings, and Bible readings, and prophetic conferences, and other forms of spiritual dissipation, would be a good deal better Christians if you would look after the poor and needy around you. If you would just tuck up your sleeves for work, and go and tell the gospel to dying men, you would find your spiritual health mightily restored, for very much of the sickness of Christians comes through their having nothing to do. All feeding and no working makes men spiritual dyspeptics. Be idle, careless, with nothing to live for, nothing to care for, no sinner to pray for, no backslider to lead back to the cross, no trembler to encourage, no little child to tell of a Savior, no grey-headed man to enlighten in the things of

God, no object, in fact, to live for; and who wonders, if you begin to groan, and to murmur, and to look within, until you are ready to die of despair? But if the Master shall come to you, and put his hand upon you, and say — “I have sent you just as my Father sent me; now go and do my will,” you will find that in keeping his commandments there is great reward. You would find meat to eat that you know nothing of now. Let us have practical Christianity, my brethren. Let us never neglect doctrinal Christianity, nor experimental Christianity, but if we do not have the practice of it in being to others what Christ was to us, we shall soon find the doctrines to be without savior, and the experience to be flavored with bitterness. Christ found joy in seeking the good of the Samaritan woman, Her heart, hitherto unrenewed, satisfied him when he had won it to himself. Oh the joy of winning a soul! Get a grip from the hand of one whom you were the means of bringing to Christ; why, after that, all the devils in hell may attack you, but you will not care for them, and all the men in the world may rage against you, and say you do not serve God from proper motives, or do not serve him in a discreet way; but since God has set his seal upon your work, you can afford to laugh at them. Do but win souls beloved, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and you shall find it to be a perennial spring or joy in your own souls.

But, notice: our Lord says, in addition to his finding it his meat to do God’s will that he *also desired to finish his work*. And this is our satisfaction, to persevere till our work is finished. We shall never be content —

*“Till all the blood-bought race
Shall meet around the throne;
To bless the conduct of his grace,
And make his wonders known.”*

You do not know how near you may be to the completion of your work. You may not have to toil many more days. The chariot-wheels of eternity are sounding behind you. Hasten, Christian! Use the moments zealously, for they are very precious. You are like the work-girl with her last inch of candle. Work hard! “The night cometh wherein no man can work.” “I paint for eternity” said the painter; so let us do, let us work for God as those whose work will endure when selfish labors shall burn as wood, hay, and stubble in the last tremendous fire. To finish his work! To finish his work! Be this our aim. When the great missionary to the Indians was dying, the last thing that he did was to teach a little child its letters, and when

someone marveled to see so great a man at such a work he said he thanked God that when he could no longer preach he had at least strength enough left to teach that poor little child. So would he finish his life's work, and put in the last little stroke to complete the picture. It should be our meat and our drink to push on, never finding our meat in what we have done but in what we are doing and still have to do; finding constantly our refreshment in the present work of the present hour as God enables us to perform it, spending and still being spent. Never let us say, "I have had my day; let the young people take their turn." Suppose the sun said, "I have shone; I shall not rise to-morrow." Imagine the stars in their beauty saying, "We have for so long a time shot our golden arrows through the darkness, we will now retire for ever." What if the air should refuse to give us breath, or the water should no longer ripple in its channels, or if all nature should stand still because of what it once did — what death and ruin would there be! No, Christian, there must be no loitering for you; each day be this your meat, to do the will of him that sent you, and to finish his work.

III. And now, lastly, I have not strength, neither have you the time, to consider THE GLORY WHICH JESUS CHRIST SHOULD HAVE FROM US, when we know that he could truly say, "It is my meat to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." How could he ever have loved us? It is strange that the Son of God should have set his affections upon such unworthy beings. I should not have wondered, my brother, at his loving you, but it is a daily marvel to me that Jesus should have loved me. It is a wonder of wonders that he should come to save us; that when we were so lost and ruined that we did not even care about his love, but rejected it when we heard of it, and despised it even when it came with some degree of power to our hearts, that he should still have loved us notwithstanding all. "Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful"! Yet, so it is. He has no greater delight than in saving us, and in bringing us to glory. Shall we not praise him? Do not our hearts say within themselves, "What shall I do, my Savior, to praise? Wherewithal shall I crown his head? How shall I show forth my gratitude to him who found such delight in serving me?" Beloved, may the love of God be shed abroad, in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.

*Let every flying hour confess
We bring the gospel fresh renown;
And when our lives and labors cease
May we possess the promised crown.*

From this day forth may it be our meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent us, and to finish his work.

I leave the text with you, my brethren in Christ, and may God give you grace practically to carry out its meaning. I leave it with you, ye unconverted, and may it be as cords of love to draw you to Jesus Christ; and his shall be the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

WE laid the first stone of the new buildings for the Pastors' College on Tuesday, October 14, and the day will ever be one of the brightest recollections of our heart. Our loving people from seven in the morning to ten at night never ceased to pour in their offerings, each one saying a kind word to the pastor as the money was given. Happy is the minister who has such a people. Mainly by small sums the amount was made up to £1,000, and the ministers and students brought in another £300. We began the day with prayer, and the students continued the devotions right on. The day was fine, the people enthusiastic, the speakers in good trim, and all was as we could desire it, best of all the Lord was there. Our enterprise is now going on to completion, and if all our readers were now to send in their help we should soon crown the edifice. This will be done, and again, we shall have to magnify the God of grace. Never before was any work in our hands carried out with so little trouble.

It is delightful to read the account of the meetings of the Baptist Union at Nottingham; evidently the divine presence was enjoyed. The address of Dr. Landels on Ritualism was a splendid deliverance. "There is a future for you Baptists," said Neander, and we mean to realize it by the Lord's gracious help.

Like many of our readers, we were amazed to find the *Christian World* charging us with believing in the damnation of infants. Never did we give any man an excuse for such a calumny; we loathe the notion as we detest murder. The newspaper writer must have very sore withers, or he would not kick out so wildly at the touch of our hand. We accept his handful of mud as the evidence that his conscience pricked him. As to the editor of the *Christian World*, much as we dislike his theology, we cannot believe that he approves of such an assault; we have always found him a

gentleman, and therefore we expect the *amende honorable* at his hands before this reaches our readers.

A new Baptist interest is to be raised in Aldershot. One of our College men is to commence in a few days.

The friends who have met at Palmerston Hall, Wimbledon, have bought the hall, and made it their permanent place of worship. We have apportioned them £200, but they greatly need further aid.

It was a great joy to us to journey to Bradford to assist in the opening services of the new chapel of our brother, Mr. J. P. Chown. We had a good season in St. George's Hall, and the Lord was there. It is interesting to record that before we reached Bradford Mr. Chown's friends had cleared the new chapel of all debt, and therefore the collections were divided between the Bradford Infirmary and the Stockwell Orphanage. Our share is to be £125, and we are truly grateful for it; it cheers us at a time when subscriptions come in but slowly.

At Bedford, on October the 22nd. we preached in Mr. Howard's great implement house to three or four thousand people. The collections were divided between the Baptist and Wesleyan churches. We are coming nearer, for we both hate Ritualism and neology. Both denominations have definite views on the great gospel doctrines, and abhor the looseness of "modern thought."

The Sunday-school teachers at Tabernacle have had a very gracious season of special prayer, and are looking for a great blessing. The setting apart of a time for intercession by the Sunday School Union was a most wise and holy thought, we feel sure that throughout all Sabbath schools which duly observed the occasion the largest blessings will follow. O for living teaching, and the quickening of youthful hearts into immediate conversion to God!

We are requested to state in connection with the China Mission that a letter awaits J. J. S. at 422, Holloway Road Post-office, from T. P. H., 82, Dempsey Street. We may add that we hope the papers upon China will lead friends to help Mr. Hudson Taylor's Inland Mission, and any sums sent to us will be punctually forwarded.

Baptisms at Metropolitan Tabernacle, by Mr. J. T. Wigner: — September 29th, fifteen. By Mr. J. A. Spurgeon: — October 2nd, fourteen.

THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

DECEMBER, 1873.

TO WORKERS WITH SLENDER APPARATUS.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

WHAT are those ministers to do who have a slender apparatus? By a slender apparatus I mean that they have few books, and little or no means wherewith to purchase more. This is a state of things which ought not to exist in any case; the churches ought to take care that it should be rendered impossible. Up to the highest measure of their ability they should furnish their minister, not only with the food which is needful to sustain the life of his body, but with mental nutriment, so that his soul may not be starved. A good library should be looked upon as an indispensable part of church furniture; and the deacons, whose business it is "to serve tables," will be wise, if, without neglecting the table of the Lord, or of the poor, and without diminishing the supplies of the minister's dinner-table, they give an eye to his study-table, and keep it supplied with new works and standard books in fair abundance. It would be money well laid out, and would be productive far beyond expectation. Instead of waxing eloquent upon the declining power of the pulpit, leading men in the church should use the legitimate means for improving its power, by supplying the preacher with food for thought. Put the whip into the manger is my advice to all grumblers.

Some years ago I tried to induce our churches to have ministers' libraries as a matter of course, and some few thoughtful people saw the value of the suggestion, and commenced carrying it out. With much pleasure I have seen here and there the shelves provided, and a few volumes placed upon them. I earnestly wish that such a beginning had been made everywhere; but, alas! I fear that a long succession of starveling ministers will alone arouse the miserly to the conviction that parsimony with a minister is false economy. Those churches which cannot afford a liberal stipend should make some amends by founding a library as a permanent part of their

establishment, and, by making additions to it from year to year, it would soon become very valuable. My venerable grandfather's manse had in it a collection of very valuable, ancient Puritanic volumes, which had descended from minister to minister: well do I remember certain ponderous tomes, whose chief interest to me lay in their curious initial letters, adorned with pelicans, griffins, little boys at play, or patriarchs at work. It may be objected, that the books would be lost through change of users, but I would run the risk of that; and trustees, with a little care over the catalogue, could keep the libraries as securely as they keep the pews and pulpit.

If this scheme be not adopted, let another and simpler one be tried; let all the subscribers towards the preacher's support add ten per cent. or more to their subscriptions, expressly to provide food for the minister's brain. They would get back what they gave in the improved sermons they would hear. If some little annual income could be secured to poor ministers, to be sacredly spent in books, it would be a God-send to them, and an incalculable blessing to the community. They do not expect a garden to yield them herbs from year to year unless they put something upon the soil; they do not expect a locomotive to work without fuel, or even an ox or an ass to labor without food; let them, therefore, give over expecting to receive instructive sermons from men who are shut out of the storehouse of knowledge by their inability to purchase books.

But the subject is, what are men to do who have no stores, who have no church library, and no allowance made them to provide books? Let us remark at once that, if these men succeed, greater honor is due to them than to those who have large appliances.

Quintin Matsys is said to have had his hammer and the taken from him by his fellow-workmen, and to have produced his famous iron well-cover without them; so much the more honor to him! None can tell what credit is due to those workers for God, who have done great things without helpful tools. Their labor would have been greatly lightened if they had possessed them; but what they have done is the more wonderful. At the present International Exhibition at Kensington, Mr.: Buckmaster's School of Cookery is mainly admired because he produces such savory dishes from unpromising material; from a handful of bones and a little macaroni he serves up royal dainties. If he had all the materials employed in French cookery, and used them all, every person would say, "Well, anybody could

do that;" but when he shows you scraps of meat and bones, and tells you that he bought them at the butcher's for a few pence, and that he can make out of them a dinner for a family of five or six, all the good wives open their eyes, and wonder how on earth it can be done; and when he passes round his dishes, and they taste how delicious it is, they are full of admiration. Work away, then, poor brother, for you may succeed in doing great things in your ministry, and if so, your welcome of "Well done, good and faithful servant," will be all the more emphatic because you labored under serious difficulties.

If a man can purchase but very few books, my first advice to him would be, *let him purchase the very best*. If he cannot spend much, let him spend well. The best will always be the cheapest. Leave mere dilutions and attenuations to those who can afford such luxuries. Do not buy milk and water, but get condensed milk, and put what water you like to it yourself. This age is full of word-spinners — professional book-makers, who hammer a grain of matter so thin that it will cover a five-acre sheet of paper; these men have their uses, as gold-beaters have, but they are of no use to you. Farmers on our coast used to cart wagon-loads of seaweed and put them upon their land; the heaviest part was the water; now they dry the weeds, and save a world of labor and expense. Don't buy thin soup; buy the essence of meat. Get much in little. Prefer books which abound in what Dr. James Hamilton used to call "Bibline," or the essence of books. You require accurate, condensed, reliable, standard books, and should make sure that you get them. In preparing his "Harae Biblicae Quotidianae," which is an admirable comment upon the Bible, Dr. Chalmers used only the "Concordance," the "Pictorial Bible," "Poole's Synopsis," "Matthew Henry's Commentary," and "Robinson's Researches in Palestine." These are the books I use," said he to a friend; "all that is Biblical is there; I have to do with nothing besides in my Biblical study." This shows that those who have unlimited stores at their command, yet find a few standard books sufficient. If Dr. Chalmers were now alive, he would probably take Thomson's "Land and the Book," instead of Robinson's "Researches," and give up the "Pictorial Bible" for Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations;" at least I should recommend the alteration to most men. This is clear evidence that some most eminent preachers have found that they could do better with few books than with many, when studying the Scriptures, and this, I take it, is our main business.

Forego, then, without regret, the many books which, like poor Hodge's razors, of famous memory, "are made to sell," and do sell those who buy them, as well as themselves. Matthew Henry's Commentary having been mentioned, I venture to say that no better investment can be made, by any minister, than that peerless exposition. Get it, if you sell your coat to buy it.

The next rule I shall lay down is, *master those books you have*. Read them thoroughly. Bathe in them until they saturate you. Read and re-read them, masticate them, and digest them. Let them go into your very self. Peruse a good book several times, and make notes and analyses of it. A student will find that his mental constitution is more affected by one book thoroughly mastered than by twenty books which he has merely skimmed, lapping at them, as the classic proverb puts it "as the dogs drink of Nilus." Little learning and much pride come of hasty reading. Books may be piled on the brain till it cannot work. Some men are disabled from thinking by their putting meditation away for the sake of much reading. They gorge themselves with book-matter, and become mentally dyspeptic.

Books on the brain cause disease. Get the book *into* the brain, and you will grow. In D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature" there is an invective of Lucian upon those men who boast of possessing large libraries, which they either never read or never profit by. He begins by comparing such a person to a pilot who has never learned the art of navigation, or a cripple who wears embroidered slippers but cannot stand upright in them. Then he exclaims, "Why do you buy so many books? You have no hair, and you purchase a comb; you are blind and you must need buy a fine mirror; you are deaf, and you will have the best musical instrument!" — very well-deserved rebuke to those who think that the possession of books will secure them learning. A measure of that temptation happens to us all; for do we not feel wiser after we have spent an hour or two in a bookseller's shop? A man might as well think himself richer for having inspected the vaults of the Bank of England. In reading books let your motto be, "Much, not many." Think as well as read, and keep the thinking always proportionate to the reading, and your small library will not be a great misfortune.

There is very much sound sense in the remark of a writer in the *Quarterly Review* many years back. "Give us the *one* dear book, cheaply picked from the stall by the price of the dinner, thumbed and dog-eared, cracked in the

back and broken in the corner, noted on the fly-leaf and scrawled on the margin, sullied and scorched, torn and worn, smoothed in the pocket and grimed on the hearth, damped by the grass and dusted among the cinders, over which you have dreamed in the grove and dozed before the embers, but read again, again, and again, from cover to cover. It is by this one book, and its three or four single successors, that more real cultivation has been imparted than by all the myriads which bear down the mile-long, bulging, bending shelves of the Bodleian.”

But if you feel you must have more books, *I recommend to you a little judicious borrowing*. You will most likely have some friends who have books, and who will be kind enough to let you have them for a time: and I specially advise you, in order to borrow again, to return whatsoever is lent, promptly, and in good condition. I hope there is not so much need that I should say much at this time about returning books, as there would have been a few months ago, for I have lately met with a statement by a clergyman, which has very much raised my opinion of human, nature; for he declares that he has a personal acquaintance with three gentlemen who have actually returned borrowed umbrellas! I am sorry to say that he moves in a more favored circle than I do, for I have personal acquaintance with several young men who have borrowed books and never returned them. The other day, a certain minister, who had lent me five books, which I have used for two years or more, wrote me a note to request the return of three of them. To his surprise, he had them back by the next “Parcels’ Delivery,” and two others which he had forgotten. I had carefully kept a list of books borrowed, and, therefore, could make a complete return to the owner. I am sure he did not expect their prompt arrival, for he wrote me a letter of mingled astonishment and gratitude, and when I visit his study, I feel sure I shall be welcome to borrow again. You know the rhyme which has been written in many a man’s book —

*“If thou art borrowed by a friend,
Right welcome shall he be
To read, to study, not to lend,
But to return to me.
Not that imparted knowledge doth
Diminish learning’s store,
But books, I find, when once they’re lent,
Return to me no more.”*

Sir Walter Scott used to say that his friends might be very indifferent accountants, but he was sure they were good “book-keepers.” Some have even had to go the length of the scholar, who, when asked to lend a book, sent word by the servant that he would not let the book go out of his chamber, but that the gentleman who sought the loan might come and sit there and read as long as he liked. The rejoinder was unexpected but complete, when, his fire being slow to burn, he sent to the same person to borrow a pair of bellows, and received for answer that the owner would not lend the bellows out of his own chamber, but the gentleman might come and blow there as long as he liked. Judicious borrowing may furnish you with much reading, but remember the man’s axe-head in the Scriptures, and be careful of what you borrow. “The wicked borroweth and payeth not again.”

In case the famine of books should be sore in the land, *there is one book which you all have, and that is your Bible*; and a minister with his Bible is like David with his sling and stone, fully equipped for the fray. No man may say that he has no well to draw from while the Scriptures are within reach. In the Bible we have a perfect library, and he who studies it thoroughly will be a better scholar than if he had devoured the Alexandrian Library entire. To understand the Bible should be our ambition; we should be familiar with it, as familiar as the housewife with her needle, the merchant with his ledger, the mariner with his ship. We ought to know its general run, the contents of each book, the details of its histories, its doctrines, its precepts, and everything about it. Erasmus, speaking of Jerome, asks, “Who but he ever learned by heart the whole Scripture? or imbibed, or meditated on it as he did?” It is said of Witsius, a learned Dutchman, author of the famous work on “The Covenants,” that he also was able, not merely to repeat every word of Scripture in its original tongues, but to give the context, and the criticisms of the best authors; and I have heard of an old minister in Lancashire, that he was “a walking Concordance,” and could either give you chapter and verse for any passage quoted, or, *vice versa*, could correctly give the words when the place was mentioned. That may have been a feat of memory, but the study needful to it must have been highly profitable. I do not say that you must aspire to that; but if you could, it would be well worth the gaining. It was one of the fortes of that singular genius, William Huntington (whom I will not now either commend or censure), that in preaching he incessantly quoted Holy Scripture, and was accustomed, whenever he did so, to give the chapter

and the verse; and in order to show his independence of the printed book, it was his uncomely habit to remove the Bible from the front of the pulpit.

A man who has learned not merely the letter of the Bible, but its inner spirit, will be no mean man, whatever deficiencies he may labor under. You know the old proverb, "*Cave ab homine unius libri*" — *Beware of the man of one book*. He is a terrible antagonist. A man who has his Bible at his fingers' ends and in his heart's core, is a champion in our Israel; you cannot compete with him; you may have an armory of weapons, but his Scriptural knowledge will overcome you; for it is a sword like that of Goliath, of which David said, "There is none like it." The gracious William Romaine, I believe, in the latter part of his life, put away all his books and read nothing at all but his Bible. He was a scholarly man, yet he was monopolized by the one Book, and was made mighty by it. If we are driven to do the same by necessity, let us recollect that some have done it by choice, and let us not bemoan our lot, for the Scriptures will be sweeter than honey to our taste, and will make us "wiser than the ancients." We shall never be short of holy matter if we are continually studying the inspired volume; nay, it is not only matter that we shall find there, but illustration too; for the Bible is its own best illustrator. If you want anecdote, simile, allegory, or parable, turn to the sacred page. Scriptural truth never looks more lovely than when she is adorned with jewels from her own treasury. I have lately been reading the Books of the Kings and the Chronicles; I have become enamored of them; they are as full of divine instruction as the Psalms or Prophets, if read with opened eyes. I think it was Ambrose who used to say, "I adore the infinity of Scripture." I hear that same voice which sounded in the ears of Augustine, concerning the Book of God, "*Tolle, lege*" — "Take, read." It may be you will dwell in retirement in some village, where there is no one to converse with who is above your own level, and where you will meet with very few books worth your reading; then read and meditate in the law of the Lord both day and night, and you shall be "as a tree planted by the rivers of water." Make the Bible the man of your right hand, the companion of every hour; and you will have little reason to lament your slender equipment in inferior things.

I would earnestly impress upon all, the truth that a man who is short of apparatus can make up for it by *much thought*. Thinking is better than possessing books. Thinking is an exercise of the soul which both develops its powers and educates them. A little girl was once asked whether she knew what her soul was, and, to the surprise of all, she said, "Sir, my soul

is my think." If this be correct, some persons have very little soul. Without thinking, reading cannot benefit the mind, but it may delude the man into the idea that he is growing wise. Books are a sort of idol to some men. As the image with the Roman Catholic is intended to make him think of Christ, and in effect, keeps him from Christ, so books are intended to make men think, but are often a hindrance to thought. When George Fox took a sharp knife and cut out for himself a pair of leather breeches, and, having done with all the fashions of society, hid himself in a hollow tree, to think by the month together, he was growing into a man before whom the men of the books speedily beat a retreat. What a flutter he made not only among the Poperies, and Prelacies, and Presbyteries of his day, but also among the well-read proprietaries of Dissent. He swept no end of cobwebs out of the sky, and gave the bookworms a hard time of it. Thought is the backbone of study, and if more ministers would think, what a blessing it would be! Only, we want men who will think about the revealed truth of God, and not dreamers who evolve religions out of their own consciousness. Now-a-days we are pestered with a set of fellows who must needs stand on their heads and think with their feet. Romancing is their notion of meditation. Instead of considering revealed truth, they excogitate a mess of their own, in which error, and nonsense, and conceit appear in about equal parts; and they call this broth "modern thought." We want men who will try to think straight, and yet think deep, because they think God's thoughts. Far be it from me to urge you to imitate the boastful thinkers of this age, who empty their meeting-houses, and then glory that they preach to the cultivated and intellectual. It is miserable cant. Earnest thought upon the things which are assuredly believed among us is quite another matter, and to that I urge you. Personally, I owe much to many hours, and even days, spent alone, under an old oak-tree by the river Medway. Happening to be somewhat indisposed at the time when I was leaving school, I was allowed considerable leisure, and, armed with an excellent fishing-rod, I caught a few small fishes, and enjoyed many day-dreams, intermingled with searchings of heart, and much ruminating of knowledge gained. If boys would think, it would be well to give them less class work and more opportunity for thought. All cram and no digestion makes flesh destitute of muscle, and this is even more deplorable mentally than physically. If your people are not numerous enough to supply you with a library, they will make fewer demands on your time, and, in having time for meditation, you will be even better off than your brethren with many books and little space for quiet contemplation.

Without books a man may learn much by *Keeping his eyes open*. Current history, incidents which transpire under his own nose, events recorded in the newspaper, matters of common talk — he may learn from them all. The difference between eyes and no eyes is wonderful. If you have not books to try your eyes, keep them open wherever you go, and you will find something worth looking at. Can you not learn from nature? Every flower is waiting to teach you. “Consider the lilies,” and learn from the roses. Not only may you go to the ant, but every living thing offers itself for your instruction. There is a voice in every gale, and a lesson in every grain of dust it bears. Sermons glisten in the morning on every blade of grass, and homilies fly by you as the sere leaves fall from the trees. A forest is a library, a corn field is a volume of philosophy, the creek is a history, and the river at its base a poem. Go, thou who hast thine eyes opened, and find lessons of wisdom everywhere, in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth. Books are poor things compared with these.

Moreover, however scant your libraries, you can study *yourselves*. There is a mystic volume, the major part of which you have never read. If any man thinks that he knows himself thoroughly, he deceives himself; for the most difficult book you will ever read is your own heart. I said to a doubter the other day, who seemed to have got into a maze, “Well, really I cannot understand you; but I am not vexed, for I never could understand myself;” and I certainly meant what I said. Watch the twists and turns and singularities of your own minds, and the strangeness of your own experience; the depravity of your heart, and the work of divine grace; your tendency to sin, and capacity for holiness; how akin you are to a devil, and yet how allied to God himself! Note how wisely you can act when taught of God, and yet how foolishly you behave when left to yourself. You will find the study of your heart to be of immense importance to you as a watcher over the souls of others. A man’s own experience should be to him the laboratory in which he tests the medicines which he is to prescribe to others. Even your own faults will instruct you if you bring them to the Lord. Perfect men would be unable to deal with imperfect men and women. Study the Lord’s dealings with your own souls, and you will understand others.

Read other men; they are as instructive as books. Suppose there should come up to one of our great hospitals a young student, so poor that he could not purchase surgical books; it would certainly be a great detriment to him; but if he had the run of the hospital, if he saw operations

performed, and watched cases from day to day, I should not wonder but what he might turn out as skillful a surgeon as his more favored companions. His observation would show him what books alone could not; and as he stood by to see the removal of a limb, the binding up of a wound, or the tying up of an artery, he might, at any rate, pick up enough practical surgery to be of immense service to him. Now, much that a minister needs to know he must learn by actual observation. All wise pastors have walked the hospitals spiritually, and dealt with inquirers, hypocrites, backsliders, the despairing, and the presumptuous. A man who has had a sound practical experience in the things of God himself, and watched the hearts of others, other things being equal, will be a far more useful man than he who knows only what he has read. It is a great pity for a man to be a sort of college Jack-a-dandy, who comes out of the class-room as out of a band-box, into a world he never saw before, to deal with men he has never observed, and handle things with which he has never come into personal contact. "Not a novice," says the apostle; and it is possible to be a novice and yet a very accomplished scholar, a classic, a mathematician, and a theoretical theologian. We should have practical dealings with men's souls; and if we have much of it, the fewness of our books will be a light affliction. "But," says an inquiring brother, "how can you read a man?" I have heard of a gentleman of whom it was said that you could never stop five minutes under an archway with him but what he would teach you something. That was a wise man; but he would be a wiser man still who would never stop five minutes under an archway without learning from other people. If you are wise enough you can learn as much from a fool as from a wise man. A fool is a splendid book to read from, because every leaf is open before you, and there is a dash of the comic in the style, which entices you to read on; and if you gather nothing else, you are warned not to publish your own folly.

Learn from experienced saints. What deep things some of them can teach to us younger men! What instances God's poor people can narrate of the Lord's providential appearances for them; how they glory in his upholding grace and his faithfulness to his promises! What fresh light they often shed upon the promises, revealing meanings hidden from the carnally wise, but made clear to simple hearts! Know you not that many of the promises are written with invisible ink, and must be held to the fire of affliction before the letters will show themselves? Tried spirits are instructors to those of us whose days are less rough. And as for the inquirer, how much is to be

gathered from him! I have seen very much of my own stupidity while in conversation with seeking souls. I have been baffled by a poor lad while trying to bring him to the Savior; I thought I had him fast, but he has eluded me again and again with perverse ingenuity of unbelief. Sometimes inquirers who are really anxious surprise me with their singular skill in battling against hope; their arguments are endless and their difficulties countless. They put us to *a non plus* again and again. It is only the grace of God that at last enables us to bring them to the light. In their strange perversities of unbelief, the singular constructions and misconstructions which they put upon their case and upon scriptural statements, you will often find a world of instruction. I would sooner give a young man an hour with inquirers than a week in the best of our classes, so far as practical training for the pastorate is concerned.

Once more, be much at *death-beds*; they are illuminated books. There shall you read the very poetry of our religion, and learn the secrets thereof. What splendid gems are washed up by the waves of Jordan! What fair flowers grow on its banks! The everlasting fountains in the glory-land throw their spray aloft, and the dew-drops fall on this side the narrow stream! I have heard poor humble men and women talk as though they were inspired, uttering strange words, aglow with immortal glory. These they learned from no lips beneath the moon; they must have heard them while sitting in the suburbs of the New Jerusalem. God whispers them in their ears amid their pain and weakness; and then they tell us a little of what the Spirit has revealed. I will part with all my books, if I may see the Lord's Elijahs mount their chariots of fire.

Is not this enough upon our subject? If you desire more, it is time I remembered the sage saying, that it is better to send away an audience longing than loathing, and, therefore, Adieu!

HOW TO MAKE A.D. 1874 A YEAR OF OUR LORD

WE have seen an oak in the New Forest which, according to the evidence of credible witnesses, frequently puts forth leaves at Christmas time. There is truth in the statement, for this oak, and two or three others in the forest, send forth premature buds in mild winters, but the connection between

those hasty shoots and Christmas Day is mere poetry — pretty poetry, however, for it represents the very trees of the wood as glad at the birth of the Savior-King, and putting on their best attire to give him welcome. Whatever may be said of the realm of nature, it is an indisputable fact that the kingdom of grace puts forth its noblest life when the Son of God approaches. It is no fiction that the drawing nigh of Jesus to the soul causes the heart to send forth summer shoots, even when all around tells of spiritual mid-winter. However sorrowful or backsliding the soul may have been, the sap within leaps at the Lord's approach, quickens the entire inner life, and causes a blossoming of joy as beautiful as it is astonishing. Truly, as it is said of the stock of a tree which has been felled, "At the scent of water it will bud and send forth boughs like a pliant," so may it be said of our hearts; Let but the scent of the good ointments of Jesus' love be perceived, and the soul puts on her beauty and her comeliness, and hastens to bring forth fruit to her Bridegroom's praise. Though we were dead as stones, and cold as icebergs, a glance from the eyes of our Beloved would enliven us, and kindle in us heaven's own flame. The presence of Jesus in the soul penetrates to the heart's core, and acts like a spell upon our entire spiritual nature: it is so potent over every regenerated faculty that it works marvels, and were it uninterrupted it would effect still more, for is it not omnipotent? Miracles would be hourly wrought if the Lord Jesus dwelt always in our hearts, for he is a wonder-worker wherever he takes up his abode. As when spring comes it sends a thrill down deep into nature's heart, and rouses her from her long winter's sleep to enter upon a summer of delight, even thus the uprising of the Sun of Righteousness within the soul quickens and awakens all the inner man, and produces a time of blissful fruitfulness. What abundant reasons have we, whose life and liveliness depend wholly upon him, to pray without ceasing, "Lord, abide with us!" Without Jesus we are nothing, but when he abides in us we are filled with all the fullness of God.

*"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.*

*"The soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs that band divine:
Dwell thou within it; tune and touch the chords,
Till every note and string shall answer thine.*

*“Abide in me: there have been moments blest
When I have heard thy voice and felt thy power;
Then evil lost its grasp: and passion, hush’d,
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.*

*“These were but seasons, beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;
Fulfill at once thy precept and my prayer,
Come and abide in me, and I in thee.”*

Not alone does communion with Jesus quicken us, it also chases away all the evils which had been prowling within the recesses of our being, even as the light of dawn compels the beasts of the forest to hide themselves. Sunlight is life and health to plants; they are sallow and blanched without it, and their juices grow poisonous; herein they fitly image our need of our good Lord’s light and love. They say in Rome that a room on the shady side of the street is to be avoided, for where the sun does not enter the physician must. Many believers have found out to their cost that it is ill living out of fellowship with the Well-beloved; bitter medicine has been required to drive out the maladies engendered by failing to continue in Jesus’ love. Yet there is no cure for the loss of fellowship, except fellowship itself. If absence of Jesus makes us sick, Jesus alone can work our cure. Virtue goes out of him, a touch heals us, an embrace confirms us in all that is pure and strong. If we are sick even unto death, there is no necessity to resort to the acrid remedies of remorse, or the sharp potion of Moses and Sinai; our wisdom is to send at once for Jesus only, for he is all we need. We need not hesitate because we have been so cold towards him; he will come and heal us, notwithstanding our misbehavior; no one is so slow to take offense as he is. When the Laodicean church was so infected with disease as to be at death’s door, she had a remedy close at hand, she had only to open the door to him who knocked so lovingly, and bid him enter and sup with her and all her lukewarmness would have vanished at once. She was wretched and miserable, and poor and naked, but she was not bidden to send her ships to far off lands to bring home rare aromatics and foreign gems: no, her own loving Lord said, “I counsel thee to buy of ME.” In him was all that she needed from every point of view; there was no need to call in another. Jesus is not only the medicine of dying sinners, but also of sick saints. We may go to him always, even as we went to him at first: he saved us then, he will revive us now; our unfaithfulness has not diminished his power to save. In this weary time of declension, when men

are hot for the world, and only cold towards their best Friend, when religion has become more a name than a reality, all saintly eyes should be directed to Jesus as the panacea for the diseases both of the world and of the church. Thither would we turn our eyes, and sigh within our soul for the near and dear companionship of our own Lord.

*“Oh, Jesus Christ, grow thou in me,
And all things else recede;
My heart be daily nearer thee,
From sin be daily freed!*

*“Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be thou my life and aim.
Oh, make me daily, through thy grace,
More worthy of thy name;*

*“Daily more filled with thee my heart,
Daily from self more free;
Thou, to whom prayer didst strength impart,
Of my prayer hearer be!*

*“Let faith in thee, and in thy might,
My every motive move;
Be thou alone my soul’s delight,
My passion and my love!”*

Since fellowship with Jesus so wonderfully quickens and heals the soul, it is wonderful that any believer can live without it, and yet how very few, comparatively, are in the constant enjoyment of it. If we were to ask many a professor, “How long is it since you enjoyed real communion with Jesus?” he would find it difficult to answer. The great mass of professors are too much taken up with the world, too busy, too careful, too frivolous, or too unbelieving. They might feast every day upon the bread of heaven, but they prefer to starve or fill their mouths with the husks of earth; they might dwell in the palace of the great King, but they are content to abide in the smoke-grimed tents of Kedar. Was there ever a drearier infatuation? Milton pictures the fallen angel as wearing in Eve’s bower the form of a toad, but how much greater is the degradation when the Bride of Christ prefers to wear the appearance of a mole or an earthworm! It is shameful for an heir of heaven to choose this musty, mildewed world, and neglect the ever fresh and sparkling beauties of Immanuel. Our place is in the Savior’s bosom, and that always and for ever. There is no need for us to

suspend our communion, and no need can ever arise. The order of the Lord's household never renders it necessary that the bride of Christ should be on ill terms with her husband; all that mars their fellowship is outside of the Lord's arrangements and sinful. Never shall it be said "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." For ever here our rest must be. Jesus wearing the memorials of his dying love, and girt with the glories of his risen life, should be our perpetual company, his presence the sun which warms us, his love the atmosphere we breathe, his words our food, himself our all in all.

Brethren, the new year is within sight, and it will be a happy thing for us if we begin it upon a higher platform, with higher resolves, and enlarged faith. The time past may suffice us to have yielded to worldliness, and to the motions of sin in our members; it is time to rise out of the murky atmosphere of the fens of earth into the unclouded blue of "glory begun below." We may live the life of heaven upon earth. We are not shut up to dull, cold formalism, to doubting and trembling, or to wandering and backsliding. The highest forms of fellowship with Jesus are as open to us as to those who have gone before us: faith can reach them beyond all question. Let our resolve be deeply fixed and earnestly carried out, and so 1874 will be a glad and lightsome year, a year of the right hand of the Most High, and in very deed a YEAR OF OUR LORD. C.H.S.

NOTES CONCERNING THE STOCKWELL ORPHANAGE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THE Orphanages of our country are a great blessing, but while alleviating a vast amount of distress, it cannot be denied that some of them incidentally create much sorrow. The system of admission by votes, entailing great labor and expense in canvassing, is in itself a heavy yoke; but when those who have done their utmost fail at the end of the election, the grief they feel is of the bitterest kind. We have a few hours ago received a letter commencing —

"DEAR SIR, — By reading my printed appeal you will see that I have been for two years embarked in an expensive and fatiguing canvass, and the

election on the 27th being our *last* permitted poll, I am well nigh desperate.”

Such instances frequently come before us. Widows will spend from £20 to £50 in trying to secure the election of their children, and lose their object after all. The *Daily News* mentions a case in which £60 was spent to secure admission into one of the hospitals (we suppose for incurables), and was spent in vain. Imagine the heartbreak of the defeated candidate!! A great effort has been made, friends have been hunted up, and their generosity well tested, and all for nothing; the grand struggle has come to a close, and the needy one is in greater straits than ever. The witness of the daily press is a sorrowful one. “When the poll is over, and the result is known, the most trying scenes are witnessed. The defeated immensely outnumber the successful candidates, and they give way to their disappointment and grief. A poor widow has spent all she had or could get from her friends in the canvas for her crippled boy, and has failed. Two or three women have, undertaken six months’ work for a dependent relative, and their labor and sacrifices are in vain. The manifestations of disappointment are distressing. And this is charity! this is how institutions supported ‘by voluntary contributions’ make so large a show to the world.”

Thank God, from the Stockwell Orphanage no widow ever goes away lamenting over time, labor, and money spent in vain. The worst that can happen to her is to be refused, because there is no room, or her ease is not so bad as that of others; not a shilling will have been drained from her to print cards, to post applications, or to purchase votes, nor a day spent in securing influence, and cringing for patronage. Her case is judged upon its merits, and the most necessitous wins the day. We have now so many applicants, and so few vacancies, that women with two or three children are advised not to apply, for while there are others with five, six, or seven dependent upon them, they stand but little chance. The trustees are not open to influence and decline to submit to private pressure, they leave the cases to the persons appointed to judge of their merits. Where donors give sums which more than cover the expense of a child, the trustees naturally defer to their wishes, and accept their recommendations if they can do so in accordance with the rules of the institution; but money sent with the view of promoting the election of A or B is respectfully returned, as this would lead to a course of action totally at variance with that which we have hitherto pursued. By our system cases are really inquired into, and, as a rule, the most destitute obtain the benefits of the school. This entails great

labor, and frequently necessitates delay, for the investigations are carried on by gentlemen in business, whose time is much occupied, and no person is paid to do the work. The inquiries are intended to be thorough and searching, and as a rule they are so, though of course much must depend upon the tact and care of the person who acts as visitor to the case. Every effort is made to secure the benefits of the Orphanage to those who are most in need, and no applicant is left to the chances of a poll. Surely this must commend itself to the common sense of all benevolent persons, and they will do well to show their appreciation by aiding institutions so conducted.

It must not, however, be concealed that the common mode of electing orphans to schools by the votes of subscribers and canvassing is a great means of procuring funds. Very few of the institutions would live at all if the system were altered; it is essential to their very existence; the elections are their harvests, their sources of income, their props and pillars. Guineas are subscribed for particular cases, and the widows and their friends are practically collectors for the school, whippers-up of the donors, and pleaders for the charity. Rich old Hunks would not give his 10s. 6d. if he had not a voting-paper for it, nor even then, if it had not happened that the orphan's father was killed on his premises. The plan is not the best in the world, but it is the most easy in practice, and it would be dangerous to do away with it at present. Better that a good thing should be done in the second-best manner than not done at all. Election by subscribers brings subscribers, canvassing reminds them of their obligations, and the poll secures the discharge of them. When a school receives children without voting or canvassing, it loses all these advantages, and must count upon no such assistances. It is not every orphanage which could venture to give up the old system, or would long survive if it did. The Stockwell Orphanage is an exceptional case altogether, it is conducted by those who believe in God's power to supply the orphan's needs, and they prayerfully leave their cares at his feet: it is also connected, through its president, with a large Christian church, and a body of earnest believers all over the world, who take an interest in its welfare. Hence it has no need to use doubtful modes of raising money; but can afford to follow the best rather than the most expedient way. Yet its managers feel that providing the needful funds is, from the human side of it, no light matter, and they dare not condemn the methods of others, nor would they join in the popular clamor which is likely to assail kindred institutions, for they feel that it is more easy to find

fault than to suggest really practical improvements. Their own experience has, however, confirmed them in the belief that theirs is a more excellent way, and they appeal to all who approve of their method of procedure to support them in it by constant, regular, and generous gifts.

In the internal management of the Orphanage, our course has been, as a rule, very smooth and happy, but we could hardly expect it to proceed always without trouble and sorrow. Boys are boys all the world over, and their nature is not changed by entering within the enclosures of the Stockwell Home. All is done which can be done to render them obedient, industrious, truthful, and devout; and we are always; ready to learn, and to practice what others have proved to be valuable. The admission of new boys is always a trial. Children come into ordinary families as very welcome and very *little* strangers, but our increase comes to us sometimes in the form of boys of nine or ten, who have bad habits, evil antecedents, and ill dispositions. We do not pretend to take or to retain boys who are only fit for reformatories; but some such will get in, and they bring with them moral disease, which is as apt to spread as an epidemic. Then come times of battling with sin and crying to the Lord for help. Parents with a few children may imagine the heartaches which come to those who manage hundreds, and lovingly desire their welfare. Parents have, however, a hold over their children which we have not, for they *are* parents, and that fact confers upon them the mystic scepter of supreme authority. A wise writer has put our experience into a handy shape for us, and we quote her words. "It is sad to see the effects on the moral character of the lack of parental influence. Nothing is more difficult than to bring up the orphan well; and children whose parents are in India often show the same evil tendencies as do orphans — impatience of control, restlessness, and willfulness; healthy, loving, family discipline being unknown to them. Would that parents thought more of the ill effects upon their children of their long-continued separation from them, and that they would not content themselves with doing by proxy what God commands them to do, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Orphanages are under a peculiar disadvantage as to education, the great moral lever of affection to parents being unknown to the children. *Were it not for God's most special and tender words as regards the orphan, Christians might well shrink from the anxiety and loll involved in educating these dear helpless ones.*" So have we found it, but we have also found the grace of God equal to the emergency: and we are encouraged to persevere so long as the Lord

enables us. We have not been without success; a gracious tone has been given to the little community, many have come under impressions, and others have been converted to God. Those who have gone out into situations have almost in every case given us much satisfaction; where failure has occurred, it has arisen either from a craving for the sea, or from the interference of an unwise mother, and we hope that time and grace will remedy the evil. Some of the lads are already in good positions, and command the esteem of their employers. We are far from being depressed under our load, rather do we thank God, and take courage. We do, however, earnestly ask for the prayers of the Lord's people, that we may be graciously supported. Who is sufficient for these things? Who can hope to conduct such a work efficiently while a thousand other matters are upon his hands, unless divine strength be given?

Visitors are always welcome to inspect the Stockwell Orphanage, which is a place fair to look upon, and in summer will well repay a moderate journey. Those who have done so in former days have frequently written their opinions in the visitors' book, and we will trouble our readers with a few of their jottings: —

It has been quite a treat to me to visit this institution. Everything in order. May the Lord prosper it. W. T. BUCKLAND.

Very much pleased and encouraged in addressing the dear children on total abstinence and gospel truth. JONATHAN GRUBB.

Everything that is conducive to health and comfort. C. E. SAUNDERS, M.D.

I cannot speak too highly of all the arrangements, and of the admirable manner in which the institution is conducted. H. GERVIS, Esq., M.D., etc., etc.

Such an institution is a blessing to the country. J. LATHAM.

So delighted! So far surpassing what I had expected that I know not what to say. This I know, I find much to incorporate into my own work. W. C. VAN METER.

Worthy of its president and manager. REV. A. G. BROWN.

Nothing could be better than the arrangements. A most pleasant place to visit. REV. JOHN FOSTER.

Very much pleased with all the arrangements. REV. ALFD. BOURNE, B.A.,
Sec. British and Foreign School Soc.

Deeply interested and delighted with the boys. REV. T. G. HORTON.

An admirable institution. Good in design, and, if possible, better in
execution. F. J. MONAH, M.D. H. M. J. H BRIDGES, M.D. Inspectors.

Looking over a few of the papers of application, and the information
gathered for us by our friends who make investigations for us, we have
jotted down a few of the cases which we have lately received into the
school. They are fair specimens of the general run of admissions. The
sorrow which comes under our notice when hearing the sad stories of the
poor bereaved women is something terrible to think upon.

C. V. B., age seven. One of seven left unprovided for by death of father,
youngest child five months old. Mother does cleaning, and earns 5s. a
week. H. M., seven years old, and one of seven, Mother unable to follow
any employment, because the children require her attention. There are no
relations above the rank of domestic servants. The mother has long
struggled to keep her family respectable, and is a very hard-working
woman, but her husband was addicted to hard drinking. Her trials must
have been great indeed while he was alive, and they are heavier now.

F. H. M., eldest of six, being himself only eight years of age. One child
born after the father's death. No sort of provision.

S. W., aged six. Has lost both parents, and is supported, together with his
brother and sister, by his uncle, who earns a scanty living by selling winkles
and dried fish. Father was a respectable clerk, and died suddenly by a fall
down stairs. Uncle :finds that he is unable to continue to support the three
children, and his own family also.

G. H. C. Father was a boiler-maker, and was killed by an accident. There
are nine children, and another is expected. The two eldest keep themselves.
One child is blind and another imbecile. This boy is nine years of age.
Mother earns 3s. a week by needlework; has been occasionally helped by
husband's fellow-workmen. The contractors who employed her husband
are aiding her for the present, but this will soon cease, and her prospect is
distressing.

G. A., aged six, son of a farmer, who died leaving £10 a year, and his wife and nine children to live upon it. Mother gave way under the severe trial, and had to be sent to an asylum. Is now recovered, and keeps a little fancy shop, and works very hard with the needle, but her income is extremely scanty and precarious. No case can be more deserving.

Such details we could multiply without end, the difficulty is not which to select, but which to omit. We have to reject hundreds of deserving applicants, not because they are not needy, but because they are put out of court by others which surpass them in distress.

We have met with much gratitude from the poor mothers, and they have manifested it practically by collecting for the Institution. In all, the widows have brought in a very considerable sum, and thus have shown their interest in the work.

Sickness has but slightly assailed us, yet enough to make it wise to have a house at Ramsgate for the sickly ones during the season. So many of the fathers of our orphans died of consumption, that we are sure to have a number of rather weakly children, but, with kind care, they gather strength, and grow into vigorous men. Our diet is homely, but generous, and the boys thrive upon it.

A tailor advertises —

*“As for the boys who all day long
Their clothes to pieces tear,
We make them up so very strong
That out they’ll never wear.”*

We do not intend to deal with this house, but should be delighted to meet with garments deserving such a description, for clothes are always a very heavy item in our expenditure. Under garments are generally provided for us by generous ladies. We owe to them far more than we can express. In their good work may they find, as we do, a reward most precious.

As a work of charity and a labor of piety, orphanage work stands in the front rank, and among all the many schools which it has erected, we claim an honorable place for our own peculiar charge, the Stockwell Orphanage. The exchequer is just now but scantily furnished; hence this article, and the earnest request that, among the generous gifts which make Christmas so pleasant, we may have a share. It will help our friends to know what to

send if we remind them that *we need £10 every time the sun rises*. For the boys' sake, also, we want materials for an extra treat on Christmas-day.